Student Feedback Report

Student Name: Pfour six
Overall Score: 18/20

Overall Summary

The essay excels in organization, development, and critical analysis, providing a well-supported exploration of déjà vu with strong evidence integration. Minor improvements in thesis clarity and language formality would elevate it further.

Detailed Criteria Breakdown

Thesis and Argument: 3

Evidence from Essay:
• "Déjà vu is really common. Between 60 and 80 percent of people have felt it at least once."
• "The theory that makes the most sense is that déjà vu happens when two different memory systems in your brain get out of sync with each other."
Advice for Improvement: Strengthen the thesis by explicitly stating the main argument in the introduction and ensuring all sections tie back to it more directly. Avoid overly casual phrasing to enhance academic tone.
Suggested Revision: Although déjà vu is a common experience affecting 60 to 80 percent of individuals at least once, its occurrence can be explained primarily by a misalignment between two key memory systems in the brain, as supported by neurological evidence.

Organization and Coherence: 4

Evidence from Essay:
• "Scientists have been studying déjà vu for a long time. The term was first used back in 1876 by a man named Emile Boirac."
• "Here's how they normally work together. When you see your friend somewhere, the familiarity system fires first..."
Advice for Improvement: Maintain the strong logical flow by adding subtle signposting phrases at the start of major sections to guide the reader even more explicitly.
Suggested Revision: To understand this process, consider how the two memory systems typically collaborate: when encountering a familiar face, the perirhinal cortex first signals recognition, followed by the hippocampus retrieving specific details.

Development and Support: 4

Evidence from Essay:
• "(Raypole, 2020) The really weird part is that you know you haven't, but the feeling is so strong that your mind feels confused."
• "One of the strongest pieces of evidence comes from people who have epilepsy. Many epilepsy patients talk of having really intense déjà vu right before they have a seizure. (Krishna, 2017)"

Advice for Improvement: Continue integrating sources seamlessly, but ensure all citations are consistently formatted according to a standard style like APA to enhance professionalism.
Suggested Revision: As Raypole (2020) notes, this sensation creates cognitive dissonance, where individuals rationally know the experience is novel yet feel an overwhelming sense of prior occurrence, highlighting the brain's intricate processing.

Critical Analysis and Understanding: 4

Evidence from Essay:
• "The theory that makes the most sense is that déjà vu happens when two different memory systems in your brain get out of sync with each other. This theory is supported by evidence from epilepsy patients, brain scans, memory tests, and age patterns."
• "While the two-system theory has the most support, there's also interesting evidence for pattern matching... However, pattern matching doesn't explain everything."
Advice for Improvement: Deepen analysis by explicitly contrasting competing theories more thoroughly and incorporating potential counterarguments to demonstrate even greater critical depth.
Suggested Revision: Although the two-system theory is robustly supported by epilepsy studies and neuroimaging, the pattern-matching hypothesis, as explored by Cleary (2018), offers complementary insights into spatial familiarity; however, its inability to account for non-spatial instances underscores the superiority of the dual-system model.

Language, Style, and Mechanics: 3

Evidence from Essay:
• "That weird, creepy feeling where everything seems familiar but you can't remember why?"
• "psix twenty 1"
Advice for Improvement: Refine informal language for a more academic voice and proofread for typographical errors in headers or references to ensure polish.
Suggested Revision: This peculiar sensation of familiarity, despite knowing it is a novel experience, evokes an uncanny awareness without corresponding recollection.

Appendix: Submitted Text

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Déjà Vu
[STUDENT_NAME] [STUDENT_NAME]
Coquille High School
College Writing
Mr. Cooper
December 8, 2025

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Have you ever walked into a room and suddenly felt like you've been there before, even though you know it's your first time? That weird, creepy feeling where everything seems familiar but you can't remember why? That's called déjà vu, which is French for "already seen." It's one of the strangest things the human brain can do, and scientists are still trying to figure out exactly why it happens.
Déjà vu is really common. Between 60 and 80 percent of people have felt it at least once. It usually only lasts about 10 to 30 seconds, but during that short time, your brain is totally convinced that you've lived through this exact moment before. (Raypole, 2020) The really weird part is that you know you haven't, but the feeling is so strong that your mind feels confused. It's like your brain is arguing with itself.
Scientists have been studying déjà vu for a long time. The term was first used back in 1876 by a man named Emile Boirac. Back then, some people like Sigmund Freud thought it had to do with hidden memories. But now, most scientists believe it's actually about how your brain physically works. The big mystery is why we get this feeling of knowing something without any actual memory of it. Some scientists think it happens because your brain sees the same thing twice in a split second. Others believe it's about pattern matching, which means your brain

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notices that the layout or structure of a new place or moment is similar to something you've seen before, even if you don’t remember the previous experience.
The theory that makes the most sense is that déjà vu happens when two different memory systems in your brain get out of sync with each other. This theory is supported by evidence from epilepsy patients, brain scans, memory tests, and age patterns. Your brain has two different systems that work together to help you recognize things. The first system is about familiarity (perirhinal cortex). This part of your brain gives you the quick, "I know this!" feeling. The second system is about remembering details (hippocampus). It works slower because it has to search through all your memories.
Here's how they normally work together. When you see your friend somewhere, the familiarity system fires first and says, "This person is familiar!" Then your detail system catches

up and says "This is ___ from math class." But during déjà vu, something goes wrong. The familiarity system fires and tells you, "You know them!" But then the detail system doesn't follow up with any information. You're left with this strong feeling of familiarity but no memory to explain it.

So why do these two systems fail to sync up? Scientists believe it comes down to timing problems in how your brain processes information. Normally, both memory systems receive information at almost the same time and work together smoothly. But sometimes, the familiarity signal reaches your conscious awareness slightly before the detailed memory system can process the information. It's like getting the answer before the question. Some experts believe another type of brain malfunction may cause this timing problem. When your brain absorbs information, it generally follows a specific path from short-term memory storage to long-term memory storage. The theory suggests that sometimes short-term memories can take a shortcut to long-

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term memory storage, making you feel as if you're retrieving a long-ago memory rather than something that happened in the last second (Raypole, 2020).

One of the strongest pieces of evidence comes from people who have epilepsy. Many epilepsy patients talk of having really intense déjà vu right before they have a seizure. Back in the 1950s, brain surgeon Wilder Penfield did experiments on patients during brain surgery. When he touched parts of the brain near the memory centers with electricity, patients would suddenly report feeling intense déjà vu. (Krishna, 2017) This proved that déjà vu isn't mysterious or supernatural-it's just the result of certain neurons firing.

Modern technology has given scientists even more tools to study déjà vu. When researchers have scanned people's brains during déjà vu, they've found something interesting. The areas for familiarity show activity, but the areas for detailed memories don't show as much activity. Scientists also use memory tests that support the idea of two different systems. In "remember versus know" tests, people have to say whether they "remember" the item with details or they just "know" it was there without details. These tests show that people can have familiarity without details.

Another good piece of evidence comes from looking at who gets déjà vu and when. Déjà vu is most common in teenagers and people in their twenties. As people get older, they experience it less. Young people's brains are still developing, which means things can misfire more easily. As people age, their brains become more stable (McGrogan, 2023).

Stress and tiredness also play a big role. People report having more déjà vu when they're exhausted or stressed out (McGrogan, 2023). When your brain is tired, it doesn't work as well. According to researcher Akira O'Connor, "When your brain is fatigued like this, your neuronal firing is more likely to be a bit off and result in déjà vu" (McGrogan, 2023). There's also

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evidence about brain chemistry. A chemical called dopamine is involved in the familiarity

system, and drugs that change dopamine levels can affect how often people experience déjà vu. While the two-system theory has the most support, there's also interesting evidence for pattern matching. Researcher Anne Cleary at Colorado State University has done experiments using virtual reality to study déjà vu (Colorado State University, 2016). Cleary found that people were more likely to get déjà vu when they were in a new setting that had the same spatial layout as a previously viewed setting (WebMD, 2021). However, pattern matching doesn't explain everything. If déjà vu was just about pattern matching, it should happen all the time, not rarely.
Déjà vu reminds us how weird the human brain really is. Something that seems simple, a brief feeling of familiarity, actually involves multiple brain systems, precise timing, and chemical signals. The two-system theory shows us that memory isn't anything but different abilities that usually work together smoothly.
Looking to the future, scientists will keep studying déjà vu as technology improves. Better brain scanners might let us see the exact moment when the two memory systems disconnect. But even as we learn more about how déjà vu works, some parts of it might always remain mysterious. Science can tell us which neurons fire and which chemicals are involved, but it might never fully explain why the experience feels so eerie.
Déjà vu is a perfect example of how science can take something that seems mysterious and explain it in terms of biology and brain function. Your brain is so complex and fast that it can create an impossible feeling just because two signals arrived out of order by a fraction of a second. Déjà vu might be a glitch, but it's a glitch that shows us just how amazing the human brain really is.

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References
Cleary, A. M. (2022, October 3). What is déjà vu? Psychologists are exploring this creepy feeling
of having already lived through an experience before. Colorado State University.
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EurekAlert. (2016, March 9). Déjà vu and feelings of prediction: They're just feelings.
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Seed, S. (2021, April 9). What is deja Vu? WebMD.
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