

## Grading Guide

(Note: The following guidelines were written up by an expert commission on grading by the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.)

The following grading criteria will be applied to all writing assignments. Note that writing assignments are expected to be free of errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage. A significant number of errors will result in a lowered grade. Where errors as well as handwriting (in the case of in-class tests) interfere with readability, the paper will not be graded but will be returned for revisions or rewrites.

A. An A level paper is truly outstanding. It clearly conveys an interesting or provocative point that is well developed and well supported with sound reasoning and persuasive evidence. An A level paper shows evidence of critical thinking that moves well beyond the obvious and offers insight into the topic being discussed. Where needed, references to written sources are clear and meaningfully integrated into the writing. Overall, an A paper stands out from B level papers in terms of originality and coherence.

B. A B level paper is above average. Its content goes beyond the obvious; it is logically ordered, well developed, and clearly presented. The thesis is well supported with good reasoning and evidence. The writer may exhibit originality but lack discipline or there may be discipline but no originality. The writing of a B paper is usually more concise than that of a C paper; it does not contain irrelevant material but does address all facets of the assignment. Overall, a B paper communicates clearly and effectively.

C. A C paper conveys a point but may leave the reader with some questions or confused in some way. It may be focused but lack development. It may be developed but lack a focus. It may be very original but sloppily written or the writing may be clear but ideas may be obvious, lack originality, or merely re-present class discussion. One section of the assignment may be slighted or only dealt with by implication. The C paper gets the job done, but it lacks both depth of understanding and clarity of communication.

D. A D paper's treatment of the assignment is rudimentary, or reveals significant confusion about the issues at hand. The writing is generally unclear and unfocused and is not yet ready for an audience. The paper may show serious weakness in analytic thinking. While the paper may embody some good ideas, awkwardness, lack of effective organization, or other problems may impede clear understanding of the ideas presented. Major sections of the assignment may be missing. Overall the writing gives the impression of being conceived and written in haste.

F. An F paper is completely off track or has few redeeming qualities. It lacks discernible organization or fails to deal with the assignment in any meaningful way.