

Grades 9-12 Academic Writing Guide for Determining Instructional Decisions

| | | Exceeds Standards | Meets Standards | Approaching Standards | Below Standards |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| Ideas and Organization | Opener/Intro | Paper contains an opener that arouses interest, effectively frames the topic, and effectively organizes the essay. | Paper contains an opener that arouses interest and addresses the topic and contains necessary material to organize the essay. | Paper attempts an opener that addresses the topic and contains material that loosely organizes the essay. | Not in evidence or entirely incorrect. |
| | Thesis Statement | Paper contains an appropriately placed clear statement of purpose that responds to the prompt of the task concisely and purposefully. | Paper contains an appropriately placed single statement of purpose that responds to the prompt or task. | Paper contains a statement of purpose that responds to the prompt or task. | Not in evidence or entirely incorrect. |
| | Organization of Essay | The body of the essay is intentionally and effectively presented in a purposeful, unified, coherent order with a fluent use of transitions between paragraphs and ideas. | The body of the essay is presented in a purposeful, unified, coherent order with transitions between paragraphs. | The body of the essay may contain topic sentences in most paragraphs, but is not easy to read, needs cohesion, and/or often lacks transitions. | The body of the essay is difficult to read because of poor organization, lack of topic sentences, and/or lack of transitions. |
| | Organization & Development of Paragraphs | Each supporting paragraph contains an effective topic sentence, comprehensive and focused development, clear expression of ideas, and fluent use of transitions within paragraphs. | Each supporting paragraph contains a relevant topic sentence, adequate and unified development, coherent expression of ideas, and usage of transitions within paragraphs. | Paragraphs need a better connection between main ideas and supporting details, and a better sense of organization. Supporting paragraphs have relevance to the prompt, but ideas need elaboration. Transitions are used in a basic manner. | The paragraphs do not support the thesis. Paragraphs need evidence, organization, coherent ideas, and/or transitions. |
| | Conclusion | Conclusion effectively restates the thesis, contains an insightful reflection of the content, and a strong closing remark. | Conclusion contains a restated thesis, a relevant reflection of the content, and an appropriate closing remark. | Conclusion contains a restated thesis but is awkward and should better reflect the content. There may be an appropriate or weak closing remark. | Conclusion needs to restate thesis and/or reflect the content. Closing remark needs improvement. |
| | Evidence & Research | Evidence, research, or supporting detail is specific, relevant, and thorough and presented in an insightful manner. | Evidence, research, or supporting detail is relevant and sufficient and presented in a thoughtful manner. | Evidence, research, or supporting detail support the topic; evidence should be more relevant or better developed. | Evidence, research, or supporting detail should be more complete or more relevant. |
| Voice & Word Choice | Author exhibits an effective and insightful academic point of view and a skillful use of words. | Author maintains an appropriate academic point of view, word choice, and word usage. | Author makes minor errors in point of view, word choice, and word usage that do not hinder the effectiveness of the essay. | Author makes major or excessive errors in point of view, word choice, and/or word usage that hinder the effectiveness of the essay. | |
| Presentation | Documentation and format follow MLA style flawlessly. | Documentation and format follow correct MLA style with minor flaws. | Documentation and format follow MLA with significant flaws that do not affect the credibility to the essay. | Documentation may hinder the credibility of the paper. MLA format needs to be followed more closely. | |
| Conventions & Sentence Fluency | Few/no errors are made. | Noticeable mistakes may be present but do not interfere with the understanding of the author's intended purpose. | Numerous mistakes are present but do not interfere with the understanding of the author's intended purpose. | Mistakes are present that interfere with the understanding of the author's intended purpose. | |
| Audience & Purpose | Entire paper effectively addresses its intended audience and purpose. | Entire paper addresses its intended audience and purpose. | Paper has some interesting parts, but audience interest is not uniformly maintained and/or purpose is not always clear. | Paper needs to deliberately consider audience or purpose. | |

