

Criteria for Grading Essays

	Argument and Evidence	Research and History	Prose
A	Theoretical thesis is clearly presented; obvious alternative theses raised and argued against; modifications to original theory, if any, clear and logically coherent; detailed evidence tied clearly and explicitly to thesis	Reader gains clear overview of history of the era; all significant historical events taken into account; minor ones may be present as well, but recognized as of lesser importance; research based on critical examination of numerous academic (and perhaps other) sources; full, accurate and consistent citation of sources	In the best essays, a clear and intelligent voice peaks the reader's interest in the subject and the essay is a pleasure to read; grammatically error-free; elegant prose, clearly organized paragraph to paragraph
B	Theoretical thesis is clearly presented; evidence tied to thesis; clear evidence, if not extremely detailed	Reader gains basic overview of history of the era; most significant historical events taken into account; research based on several academic (and perhaps other) sources; full, accurate and consistent citation of sources	The essay has few grammatical errors; it is clear, well organized and understandable, if not particularly interesting or exciting; some sentences may be poorly constructed or unclear
C	Theoretical thesis vague at best; evidence only partially tied to thesis; evidence is at very broad and general level	Reader gains general understanding of history of the era; some significant historical events missing or minor ones given greater importance than they merit; research based on a handful of sources, disproportionately non-academic; partial and not fully consistent citation	The essay has numerous grammatical errors; much of the prose is vague or unclear; many sentences are poorly constructed; paragraphs are poorly organized, as is the logical flow from one paragraph to the next
D	No thesis; purely descriptive, based on very general and vague evidence	Reader cannot fully understand history of the era; many significant historical events missing; one or two, perhaps inappropriate, sources; little citation of sources	The essay has many grammatical errors; it is difficult to understand; organization is extremely unclear
F	No thesis and incoherent presentation of relatively little evidence	Reader gains little understanding of history of the era; based almost exclusively on single source; little or no citation	The essay has many grammatical errors; it is nearly impossible to understand; organization doesn't seem to exist