**English Department Essay Rubric**

**6 An *excellent* essay exhibits most of the following:**

-insightful and original response to the prompt

-mastery of the essay format (introduction, body paragraphs with topic sentences and transitions, and a conclusion)

-clear, focused, thought-provoking thesis

-convincing evidence (specific examples, details, facts, proof, and/or relevant quotes) included in each body paragraph

-insightful and perceptive commentary/analysis/interpretation provided to support specific examples

-reflective and thoughtful conclusion

-mature language, sentence structure, and voice

-very few errors in English conventions

*Response to informational text:* thoughtfully anticipates and addresses the reader’s potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

*Response to literary passages:* effectively demonstrates an awareness of the author’s use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

*Persuasive composition:* states and maintains a position, authoritatively defends that position with precise and relevant evidence, and convincingly addresses the reader’s concerns, biases, and expectations.

**5 A strong essay exhibits most of the following:**

-strong response to the prompt

-effective use of the essay format

-clear and focused thesis

-relevant evidence (specific examples, details, facts, proof, and/or relevant quotes) included in each body paragraph

-thoughtful commentary/analysis/interpretation provided to support each body paragraph

-reflective conclusion but may be less insightful than a “6”

-effective language, sentence structure, and voice

-minor errors in written English conventions

*Response to informational text:* anticipates and addresses the reader’s potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

*Response to literary passages:* clearly demonstrates an awareness of the author’s use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

*Persuasive Composition:* states and maintains a position, successfully defends that position with precise and relevant evidence, and addresses the reader’s concerns, biases, and expectations.

4  **An *adequate* essay exhibits many of the following:**

-adequate response to the prompt

-understanding of the essay format

-acceptable thesis statement

-evidence (specific examples, details, facts, proof, and/or relevant quotes) included in each paragraph

-thoughtful commentary/analysis/interpretation (may be simplistic)

-general and/or simplistic conclusion with limited reflection beyond text

-adequate control of language, but may contain lapses in diction and syntax

-errors in written English conventions but these errors do not impede the reader’s understanding

*Response to informational text:* addresses the reader’s potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

*Response to literary passages:* demonstrates an awareness of the author’s use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

*Persuasive Composition:* states and maintains a position, generally defends that position with precise and relevant evidence, and addresses the reader’s concerns, biases and expectations.

**3 A *basic* essay exhibits the following:**

-brief response to the prompt

-basic essay format

-simplistic and/or vague thesis statement

-little or no evidence (specific examples, details, facts, proof, and/or relevant quotes) included in each body paragraph

-brief commentary/analysis/interpretation (may be simplistic)

-basic conclusion with no reflection

-immature language choices and sentence structure

-many errors in written English conventions impede the reader’s understanding

*Response to informational text:* may address the reader’s potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations, but in a limited manner.

*Response to literary passages:* may demonstrate an awareness of the author’s use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

*Persuasive Composition:* defends a position with little evidence and may address the reader’s concerns, biases, and expectations.

**2 An inadequate essay exhibits the following:**

-off topic response

-lack of basic essay format

-no thesis statement

-no evidence (specific examples, details, facts, proof, and/or relevant quotes) included in each body paragraph

-no commentary/analysis/interpretation

-no conclusion

-ineffective language choices and sentence structure or voice not recognizable as student’s

-many errors in written English conventions inhibit reader’s understanding

*Response to informational text:* does not address the reader’s potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

*Response to literary passages:* does not demonstrate awareness of the author’s use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

*Persuasive Composition:* fails to defend a position with any evidence and fails to address the reader’s concerns, biases and expectations.

**1 This score is used for essays which have little if any redeeming value.**

**0 Evidence of plagiarism**