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| A: (80 & up) | Strikingly original or perceptive in subject matter, style, and treatment or compellingly persuasive in cogency or argument, reasoning, and clearness of ideas. Mature handling of the elements of composition and rhetoric. A delight to read. |
| B: (70-79) | Most of the above qualities, only not in such striking degree. The essay must show positive qualities; having little, if anything "wrong with it" mechanically, stylistically, and factually will not earn a "B." The grade can be given either for a brilliant essay which contains a serious fault or faults, or for one which contains no serious faults but does not show competence exceptionally beyond the expectations of the assignment. |
| C: (60-69) | "C" is the pivotal grade: it is generally what an essay with few major errors and general competence will earn. Although "C" is the "average" grade, it does not have to be given to the majority of students. The "C" paper is often adequately thought out and written but lacks the spark of originality, perceptiveness, vividness, or clarity which indicates that the writer has communicated his or her idea well. An ordinary topic treated in an ordinary manner. |
| D: (50-59) | Definitely substandard work, usually with serious errors in mechanics, logic, development, or style. The "D" paper is often characterized by superficial or careless work. Other "D" essays earn more than an "F" because they show some evidence of effort and a conscientious attempt to do the assignment. Frequently dull reading. |
| F: (below 50) | Unacceptable. This grade is generally given for one or more of the following reasons: a) not fulfilling the requirements of the specific assignment b) writing and mechanics below the level of a typical high school graduate c) a superficial treatment of already common ideas and observations used as a substitute for the student's own ideas and organization d) incoherent or illogical development and organization e) essay lacks a recognizable thesis or point of view in relation to the assigned topic f) disregard for elements of composition and rhetoric which have been stressed in class. |