

Response Paper Grading Rubric

An A paper is an excellent paper. An A paper will usually have the following features:

- (1) A clearly stated and interesting (!) argument about one or more texts we are reading. A good test for the interest of the argument are: could you imagine someone intelligent who had also read the texts disagreeing with it, prior to reading the student's arguments? A squishier test: if the argument were established, would it contribute positively to our understanding of the texts, or would it induce a shoulder shrug?
- (2) Support for all views attributed to an author with textual citation or quotation
- (3) Anticipates and responds to any super obvious and pressing objections to the argument being advanced
- (4) No obvious mistakes about the authors' views
- (5) No irrelevant tangents
- (6) No fallacies of argument

An A+ is a truly remarkable paper. It does everything an A paper does, plus it contains some truly remarkable feature: gorgeous literary style, really creative argument, searing lucidity, etc.

An A— paper is almost an excellent paper, but possesses some minor flaws that give you pause: e.g. there may be a single (not totally derailing) mistake about the author's view, or the argument may get a little out of focus at one or more points.

A B paper is a good paper, and the most common. A B paper has the following features:

- (1) An interesting and more or less clearly stated argument
- (2) Support for most views attributed to the text
- (3) A somewhat clear argument
- (4) May or may not anticipate obvious pressing objections to the argument
- (5) Makes no major mistakes that would derail the paper
- (6) Does not go off on any major tangents that derail the paper
- (7) Does not employ fallacious reasoning that ruins the argument

A B+ paper is a little better than this, and a little worse than A- paper. It may have, for example a clear and interesting argument, but otherwise meet these criteria.

A B—paper is a little worse than this, and a little better than a C+ paper. It may lack attributions to the text or may have an unclearly stated argument.

A C paper is an OK paper. Most Bryn Mawr students, being good students, write papers that are better than this. A C paper has the following features

- (1) Possesses either an unclear argument, or one that is not interesting

- (2) May lack textual evidence for the views attributed to the author
- (3) May be subject to obvious, pressing objection that its unanticipated
- (4) May make a major mistake that takes the paper off the rails
- (5) May offer irrelevant, or fallacious arguments at one or more points

A C+ paper is a little better than this, but worse than a B-. For example, it may possess a somewhat clear and interesting argument but have other problems from this list.

A C- paper is a little worse than this, but better than an unsatisfactory paper.

A D paper is a poor paper. It is a sign that something is going seriously wrong in the writing process. If you receive a D you will be required to meet me immediately to discuss the situation and to receive the support you need to move forward and do better. A C paper has the following features

- (1) Possesses an unclear or trivial argument
- (2) Has an argument that is very confused and difficult to charitably reconstruct
- (3) Lacks textual evidence for the views attributed to the author
- (4) To the extent that the argument is intelligible, it subject to obvious, pressing objections that are unacknowledged

A D+ paper is a little better than this, but worse than a C-. For example, it may possess a somewhat clear argument but have the other problems listed.

A D- paper is a little worse than this, but better than a failing paper.

An F paper is an unacceptable, failing paper. It is a sign that serious interventions are needed to make progress in the class. If you receive a F you will be required to meet me immediately to discuss the situation and to receive the support you need to move forward and do better. This is also the grade that is assigned to plagiarized papers. An F paper has the following features:

- (1) Is plagiarized or,
- (2) Possesses an unclear argument or thesis.
- (3) Does not address the texts we read in the class, or ignores prompts or instructions (for example, consists almost solely of block quotations with little or no interpretation)
- (4) Does not have an argument
- (5) Does not cite the text where such a citation would be necessary

Numerical score and letter grade:

Grade Distribution

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
A (4.00)	93.00-100
A- (3.70)	90.0-92.9

B+ (3.30)	87.0-89.9
B (3.00)	83.0-86.9
B- (2.70)	80.0-82.9
C+ (2.30)	77.0-79.9
C (2.00)	73.0-76.9
C- (1.70)	70.0-72.9
D+ (1.30)	67.0-69.9
D (1.00)	65.0-66.9
F (0)	64.9 and below