

## ESSAY EVALUATION

### SUBSTANCE

**Observation:** Have you read the text with close, observant attention?  
Have you noticed important details and puzzles in the text?  
Do you stay close to the text, incorporating quotations from important passages into your paper to make your interpretation precise and specific?

**Questioning:** Does the paper show that you're asking good questions and grappling with them in a thoughtful way?  
Do you give evidence of an effort to learn from the author instead of merely bringing your own opinions to the text?

**Argument:** Do you move skillfully from observations about the text to draw valid inferences?  
Do you build these inferences into logical, persuasive arguments about what the author is saying?

### WRITING

**Citations:** Does each quoted sentence or phrase fit grammatically into the surrounding sentences? Do you cite the text correctly with proper documentation?

**Title:** Is the title informative? If you are responding to one of several writing prompts, is it obvious which one you are addressing?

**Introduction:** Does the opening paragraph set up the subject of the paper and show why it is interesting, puzzling, and important?

**Paragraphing:** Does each paragraph treat one clearly defined subject?

**Flow:** Does every sentence flow naturally and logically from the one before and lead logically to the next? Does the paper have adequate signposts making clear the direction and progression of your thoughts?

**Conclusion:** Does the conclusion both draw together your main thoughts and present some new and interesting idea about their significance?

**Clarity:** Is the meaning of every sentence crystal clear? Does every word convey the precise meaning you want to express?

**Conciseness:** Does every word pull its weight?

**Other:** Is the referent of every pronoun clearly identified, and does it match the pronoun in number? Have you used fresh, vivid, concrete language and avoided

jargon and fuzzy abstractions? Have you avoided the passive voice? Have you kept one verb tense wherever possible? Have you avoided split infinitives?