A GRADING RUBRIC FOR ESSAYS

An A paper has some of these qualities:
- It fulfills the terms of the assignment thoroughly and interestingly or creatively.
- It has, at most, some minor problems of grammar or sentence structure.
- It has no pattern of mechanical errors, and no serious ones.
- It often explores ideas and texts in a more complex way than a "B" paper.
- It develops ideas in a full, satisfying way, often introducing interesting insights or making new connections.
- Organization is clear, smooth, a logical; transitions seem natural.
- Paragraphs are unified, coherent, and fully developed.
- The essay has a confident, energetic personal “voice.” The writer sounds in charge.
- The opening or conclusion is distinctive or especially interesting; both are woven into the paper as a whole.
- It has a clear, sharp, interesting thesis, totally supported by the essay.

A B paper has several of these qualities:
- It fulfills the terms of the assignment thoroughly.
- It has few significant sentence structure, grammatical, or mechanical errors.
- It uses varied, interesting sentence structure.
- It reads fluently; the reader doesn’t have to struggle.
- It effectively develops ideas with examples or details.
- Organization is clear and logical; transitions are smooth.
- Paragraphs are unified and coherent.
- Opening and conclusion serve the paper as a whole.
- It has a clear thesis or organizing idea.
- It is very competent, though not particularly probing or original.

A C paper has several of these qualities:
- It fulfills the assignment; it does the job minimally, not thoroughly or interestingly.
- It has some significant sentence structure or grammar problems.
- It has pervasive punctuation and mechanics problems (quotations, spelling, etc.)
- It is characterized by flat, simple sentence structure.
- It is hard to read in parts, or may be easy to read but only because of its simplicity.
- Its ideas are general or superficial, without depth, complexity, or detail.
- It demonstrates an organizational plan and uses paragraphs correctly for the most part, though there may be unclear transitions or disorganized paragraphs.
- It has a poor thesis—too broad, unclear, or simplistic.

(continued)
A D paper has several of these qualities:
   It attempts the assignment but falls far short; it misses the point.
   It has very poor sentence structure or serious grammatical errors throughout.
   It is so unclear or disorganized that it is difficult to read.
   It has no clear organizational plan or seems to have been written quickly and organized randomly, with no planning or revision.
   Its paragraphs don’t hold together or lack a unifying idea; they seem random.
   There is no identifiable thesis or organizing idea.

An F paper has at least one of these qualities:
   It is not turned in or is turned in so late that the grade has fallen to “F.”
   It fails even to attempt the assignment.
   It is so poorly written that it is unreadable.