

A GUIDE FOR EVALUATING ESSAYS

I. Content.

1. Does the paper demonstrate independent thinking? Are the ideas earned, or merely borrowed from elsewhere?
2. Does the writer have a controlling idea or purpose? Is that idea or purpose always clear, or is the reader sometimes unsure of how the material is intended to be taken?
3. Are ideas clearly defined and fully developed? Does the writer explore the subject in depth, considering implications and possibilities, or is the thinking superficial?
4. Is there enough specific information, and is that information more than just common knowledge?

II. Point of View.

5. Is the writer's manner appropriate to the audience and purpose?

III. Organization.

6. Is the paper coherent? Would it be easier to follow if some of the material were rearranged? Is there any unnecessary material?
7. Is the material in the most effective order? Do the most important points get sufficient emphasis? Do lesser points get too much emphasis?
8. Are individual paragraphs unified, coherent, and fully developed?

IV. Style.

9. Can the writer vary the lengths and types of sentences to avoid monotony and achieve special emphasis?
10. Are the writer's words precise and distinctive, or do they tend to be vague, trite, or bland?

V. Mechanics.

11. To what extent do errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation detract from the readability and authority of the paper?

VI. Degree of Difficulty.

12. How ambitious is the paper? Has the writer attempted something difficult or played it safe?