

English 342: The Contemporary Novel Essay Grading Rubric

A 70- to 80-Point Essay (3.5-4.0, A Range)

- Has a substantive thesis and essay fully addresses the topic; the thesis is defensible, clearly explained, and supported in the body of the essay
- Shows substantial depth, fullness and complexity of thought
- Expresses ideas clearly and commands the reader's attention
- Demonstrates clear, unified and coherent organization
- Is fully developed and detailed with arguments supported by persuasive reasoning and references to text; there is an appropriate balance between providing evidence and analyzing that evidence
- Has a sophisticated style (remarkable variety of sentence pattern, smooth transitions between ideas, superior control of diction)
- Has few, if any, minor errors in grammar, usage or mechanics

A 50- to 69-Point Essay (2.5-3.4, B Range)

- Has a clear thesis and essay addresses the topic but may not do so completely; the thesis may be clear and well-argued, but could use additional support or development
- Shows some depth and complexity of thought
- Expresses ideas clearly
- Demonstrates effective organization
- Is well developed with sensible reasoning and appropriate references to text; however, some evidence may detract from the thesis and some ideas might not be fully explored
- Demonstrates balance between evidence and analysis for the most part, but balance may be weak in places
- Has an effective style (some variety of sentence patterns, transitions between ideas, accurate diction)
- Has few errors in grammar, usage or mechanics

A 30- to 49-Point Essay (1.5-2.4, C Range)

- Has a thesis that may not be entirely clear and essay does not fully address the topic
- Shows insufficient awareness of the complexity of issues addressed; may treat the topic simplistically or repetitively
- Communicates ideas clearly for the most part, but may have some lapses in clarity
- Has a recognizable organizational pattern, but the relation among parts is not consistently clear enough to provide a coherent focus
- Is unevenly developed; writer may offer sufficient reasoning or references to text for some of the ideas but not for others
- Demonstrates some balance between evidence and analysis
- Has an adequate style (limited variation in sentence patterns, transitions between most ideas, diction accurate for the most part)
- Has some errors in grammar, usage or mechanics, but demonstrates basic control of these areas

A 14- to 29-Point Essay (.7-1.4, D Range)

- Has an unclear thesis; essay discusses the topic and meets basic length requirements, but does not address the topic in any meaningful fashion
- Lacks focus or demonstrates confused, stereotyped or simplistic thinking; writer may demonstrate no overall conception of the issues raised by the topic
- May not communicate ideas clearly
- Is ineffectively organized, with no clear relationship between the parts of the essay
- May not provide adequate or appropriate reasoning or references to support generalizations, or may provide details without generalizations
- Demonstrates little relationship between evidence and the thesis
- Has stylistic weaknesses (no variety of sentence patterns, few transitions, imprecise diction)
- Has occasional major errors in grammar, usage or mechanics or frequent minor errors that interfere in the reader's understanding of the essay

A 0- to 13-Point Essay (0-.6, F Range)

- Has no thesis or has an incomprehensible thesis that does not engage the topic
- May be deliberately off-topic and demonstrate no understanding of the issues addressed by the topic
- Does not communicate ideas clearly
- Lacks coherent organization
- Shows no development of ideas; may simply summarize text
- Has an incoherent style (difficulties with sentence structure, pattern of diction errors)
- Has pervasive pattern of errors in grammar, usage and mechanics that renders the essay unreadable