

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
MOORPARK COLLEGE  
STANDARD GRADING CRITERIA**

These criteria apply to typical papers in English composition and literature courses. These standards do not consider a student's effort or ability; they apply only to the finished paper itself. A grade of C is considered adequate or satisfactory. Grades of A and B represent significantly higher performances, while D and F are not passing grades. The instructor may consider the context of the paper (type/level of the course, point in the semester, in-class preparation, focus of the assignment) in assigning a grade.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Thesis</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Development</b>	<b>Language</b>
A	clear, specific, original, significant, insightful.	logical, creative organization growing naturally from thesis and content; paragraphs linked to thesis and to each other using fluid transitions; strong introduction and conclusion.	paragraphs thoroughly developed and linked by unobtrusive, organic transitions; graceful use of varied rhetorical strategies as necessary (narration, cause & effect, process, etc.); rich variety of convincing reasons, explanations, examples, illustrations; concrete, powerful details.	grace and economy of expression; conscious choice of language; vivid, precise, original word choice. TONE/VOICE: authoritative, genuine authorial voice; awareness of audience. SENTENCES: rich variety and complexity of sentence structure; free of basic errors such as fragments, run-ons, subject/verb agreement. MECHANICS: mastery of conventions of edited standard English.
B	clear and purposeful.	logical organization; well-developed introduction and conclusion; paragraphs linked to thesis and to each other using effective transitions.	rhetorical strategies used as necessary (narration, cause & effect, process, etc.); coherent paragraphs, fully developed with supporting reasons, explanations, examples, illustrations; generalizations supported with relevant, specific details.	concise sentences; accurate and effective word choice. TONE/VOICE: Engaging authorial voice; some awareness of audience. SENTENCES: some variety and complexity of sentence structure; mostly free of basic errors such as fragments, run-ons, subject/verb agreement. MECHANICS: observes conventions of standard written English.
C	controlling idea may be overly general or not closely linked to content of essay.	some evidence of organization or rhetorical framework; clear beginning, middle, and end.	uses paragraphs and topic sentences; gives supporting reasons and examples, but may not be logically reasoned or fully developed.	clear writing, mostly accurate word choice. TONE/VOICE: inconsistent authorial voice, basic awareness of audience. SENTENCES: complete, mostly correct sentences; may contain occasional grammatical or syntactical errors. MECHANICS: free of distracting errors of spelling and punctuation.

D	unclear or vague, poorly linked to content of essay.	poorly structured or disordered.	underdeveloped; paragraphs overly long or short, arbitrarily or illogically ordered, incoherent or not unified; lack of support for ideas; lack of concrete detail; irrelevancies, redundancies, oversimplifications, filler. May not meet length requirement.	unclear or incoherent writing. TONE/VOICE: little awareness of audience. SENTENCES: wordy, confusing, or incomplete sentences; frequent grammatical or syntactical errors. MECHANICS: distracting mechanical errors.
F	lacks a thesis or controlling idea; does not address assigned topic.	lacks organizing principle; lacks clear beginning, middle, and end; lacks clear paragraphing.	severely underdeveloped; seriously and consistently illogical and/or predicated on false premises; absence of concrete detail.	obscure, vague writing; inaccurate word choice. TONE/VOICE: little or no awareness of audience. SENTENCES: numerous grammatical or syntactical errors. MECHANICS: numerous distracting mechanical errors.

**The A paper** is an outstanding performance; it may exceed the expectations of the assignment. It is thought-provoking and well crafted. It demonstrates excellence on all levels.

**The B paper** is a good, better-than-average performance. It meets the expectations of the assignment. It is interesting and clearly written. It demonstrates competency on all levels.

**The C paper** represents adequate, readable college-level writing that generally responds to the assignment.

**The D paper** is confusing, difficult to read, unfocused. It does not demonstrate competent college-level writing. It may fail to address all parts of the assignment.

**The F paper** is weak in several areas. It fails to communicate its ideas effectively. It may not address the assigned question. It may be late without instructor approval. Plagiarized papers merit an automatic F.