

## Composition Essay Rubric

<p><b>CONTENT</b> Analysis - Does the writer understand the topic or text and think deeply about it?</p>	<p>Demonstrates mastery over topic or text by recognizing elements that most writers fail to consider; Profound thinking and complex connections result in discussion of universal significance; Rhetorical analysis includes discussion of advanced stylistic techniques, such as syntax and tone. (13)</p>	<p>Demonstrates solid understanding of topic or text that extends beyond surface to discover deeper meanings; Thinking is complex and at times insightful; Rhetorical analysis clearly links stylistic elements to the author's message. (11)</p>	<p>Demonstrates basic, partial, or imprecise understanding of topic or text; Thinking does not probe deeply, and discussion is obvious or repetitive; Rhetorical analysis may fail to connect author's message and style or the analysis may focus solely on elementary elements, such as diction or detail. (9)</p>	<p>Demonstrates weak understanding of the topic or text; Misinterpretations or inaccuracies are common; Some analysis may be present but much of the essay is devoted to summary. (7)</p>	<p>Demonstrates little or no understanding of the topic or text; Misinterpretations or inaccuracies are frequent; No analysis is present; Ideas are not coherent; Discussion does not relate to the assignment. (3)</p>
<p><b>CONTENT</b> Focus - Does the essay remain on-topic while fully answering the prompt? Is the thesis clear?</p>	<p>Remains on-topic while answering entire prompt clearly and deeply; Thesis is clear and complex. (12)</p>	<p>Remains on-topic while thoroughly answering all parts of prompt; Thesis is thoughtful and clearly stated in a single sentence. (11)</p>	<p>Answers all parts of prompt but may do so inconsistently; Thesis is simplistic or difficult to identify, but entire essay remains focused around one main idea. (9)</p>	<p>Fails to fully address the prompt or wanders off-topic in some paragraphs; Thesis is unclear or inaccurate. (7)</p>	<p>Demonstrates little or no understanding of the topic or text; Misinterpretations or inaccuracies are frequent; No analysis is present; Ideas are not coherent; Discussion does not relate to the assignment. (3)</p>
<p><b>CONTENT</b> Coherence - Is the essay organized logically and effectively?</p>	<p>Essay is organized for maximum rhetorical effectiveness; Paragraphs tightly integrate with other paragraphs and thesis; Advanced coherence devices, such as parallelism, artful repetition, and recursive structure, are used accurately and effectively. (13)</p>	<p>Clear, logical organization demonstrates careful planning; Effective use of transitions within paragraphs and throughout the essay; Paragraphs explicitly connect to thesis. (11)</p>	<p>Organization is clear and logical but may be simplistic, following five-paragraph template; Paragraphs clearly connect to thesis but this connection may be weak or implied; Simplistic but accurate use of transitions to connect paragraphs; Idea(s) repeated to fill space/word count. (9)</p>	<p>Organization is lacking or illogical; Paragraphs may be absent or attempt to cover too many topics; Paragraphs may fail to clearly connect to the main idea; Transitions are rarely or ineffectively used. (7)</p>	<p>Demonstrates little or no understanding of the topic or text; Misinterpretations or inaccuracies are frequent; No analysis is present; Ideas are not coherent; Discussion does not relate to the assignment. (3)</p>
<p><b>CONTENT</b> Development - Is the thesis thoroughly supported with effective evidence and thoughtful commentary?</p>	<p>Thesis is persuasively supported through extensive concrete evidence and thoughtful reasoning; Choice of details demonstrates vast background knowledge and deep thinking; Thoroughly integrates quotes by interpreting and analyzing their significance. (12)</p>	<p>Thesis is effectively supported using specific, relevant details and thorough reasoning; Effectively integrated quotes and concrete examples are common. (11)</p>	<p>Support mostly consists of generalities, although some concrete evidence may be used; Quotes and other support often lack explanation and too few examples may be used to effectively prove thesis; Occasional weak or irrelevant examples; Quotes lack effective integration. (9)</p>	<p>Support consists of generalities, and even shallow ideas are not clearly communicated; Inaccuracies or irrelevant examples are common; Paragraphs are often noticeably short; If essay is synthesized, it lacks minimum number of required sources. (7)</p>	<p>Demonstrates little or no understanding of the topic or text; Misinterpretations or inaccuracies are frequent; No analysis is present; Ideas are not coherent; Discussion does not relate to the assignment. (3)</p>

<p><b><u>CONTENT</u></b>  <b>Word Choice</b> - Is the writer's word choice appropriate and sophisticated?</p>	<p>Demonstrates mastery of academic language thorough formal tone, precise description, sophisticated vocabulary, and effective language devices, such as similes and personification. (13)</p>	<p>Word choice is formal, academic, sophisticated, and descriptive; Occasional wordiness or imprecision may occur, but it is rarely problematic. (11)</p>	<p>Word choice is somewhat descriptive and satisfactorily conveys the writer's ideas, but it lacks sophistication; Point of view shifts; Wordiness or imprecision may be a problem; Use of second-person "you" is common. (9)</p>	<p>Word choice is simplistic, too informal, or otherwise inappropriate for the audience and assignment. (7)</p>	<p>Word choice reflects lack of understanding of basic grammar and language conventions; frequent errors are distracting and make essay difficult to understand. (3)</p>
<p><b><u>STYLE</u></b>  <b>Sentence Structure</b> - Are the sentences varied and effective?</p>	<p>Sentences are varied by structure, length, and pace to develop the writer's style; Advanced devices, such as anaphora and parallelism, are present; No sentence errors. (12)</p>	<p>Varied, complex sentences are designed to more effectively communicate ideas by shifting focus to main points; Some advanced devices, such as parallelism, may be present; Essay has three or fewer sentence errors. (11)</p>	<p>Varied sentence structure includes complex sentences; Run-on and fragmented sentences; Essay has three to six sentence errors. (9)</p>	<p>Simplistic, "choppy" sentences with some sentence variety; Run-ons and fragments demonstrate little understanding of sentence conventions; Essay has more than seven sentence errors. (7)</p>	<p>Structure and style reflect lack of understanding of basic sentence and language conventions; frequent errors are distracting and make essay difficult to understand. (3)</p>
<p><b><u>CONVENTIONS</u></b>  <b>Mechanics</b> - Does the essay demonstrate mastery of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, and grammar?</p>	<p>Demonstrates mastery of complex language conventions and is virtually error free; Effectively uses sophisticated punctuation, rhetorical fragments, and other advanced devices to enhance style and meaning. (12)</p>	<p>Clearly demonstrates mastery of language conventions and is virtually error free; Uses semicolons, dashes, and other advanced punctuation correctly. (11)</p>	<p>Contains occasional errors, but they are rarely a distraction; Demonstrates understanding of most conventions, including spelling, capitalization, basic punctuation, grammar and most usage. (9)</p>	<p>Frequent or highly distracting errors throughout the essay; Demonstrates weak understanding of proper language conventions or lack of careful proofreading. (7)</p>	<p>Highly distracting errors throughout the essay make essay difficult to understand; Demonstrates no understanding of proper language conventions or no proofreading. (3)</p>
<p><b><u>CONVENTIONS</u></b>  <b>Documentation &amp; Support</b> - Does the essay effectively reflect the writer's use of research and supporting evidence?</p>	<p>Writer demonstrates mastery of usage of evidence to support ideas within the text through use of quotations and paraphrasing of researched materials; Demonstrates mastery of style guides and appropriate formatting; In-text citations are written correctly; Bibliographic citations are written correctly. (13)</p>	<p>Writer demonstrates understanding of usage of supporting evidence but there are some errors in the way quotations and paraphrased materials are linked to writer's views; more than three fourths of in-text and bibliographic citations are written correctly. (11)</p>	<p>Writer demonstrates lack of understanding of usage of supporting evidence; Quotations are presented but writer does not analyze their significance; Some in-text citations are missing; Some bibliographic citations are missing. (9)</p>	<p>No evidence of supporting evidence; In-text citations are missing or written in incorrect form; Bibliographic citations are missing or written incorrectly. (7)</p>	<p>Assignment is missing required bibliography OR assignment is missing supporting evidence OR assignment is missing supporting evidence and bibliography. (3)</p>
<p><b>Percentage</b></p>	<p>100</p>	<p>88</p>	<p>72</p>	<p>63</p>	<p>24</p>

**COMPOSITION ESSAY EVALUATION KEY:** *Notation(s) on your paper refer to a numeral; the explanation following the numeral in this key indicates the type of error and what is needed to fix the problem. An abbreviation may be used instead of a numeral if there are numerous errors of one kind.*

**PRESENTATION (PRES)**

- 1 Needs one-inch margins
- 2 Needs double-space throughout
- 3 Do not skip lines between paragraphs
- 4 Half-inch indent for first line of all paragraphs
- 5 Needs correct headers and/or heading
- 7 Needs correct use of typography: 12-point Times New Roman

**UNITY (UN)**

- 8 Needs adequately limited focus
- 9 Needs clear thesis statement
- 10 Needs topic sentences help prove thesis
- 11 Needs information relevant to your thesis
- 12 Needs information that captures attention
- 13 Needs fresh, insightful information

**INTRODUCTION (INTRO)**

- 14 Needs gripping opening sentence(s)/hook
- 15 Needs compelling introductory strategy (reader wants to read on)
- 16 Needs smooth transition between hook, thesis

**CONCLUSION (CONC)**

- 17 Needs thesis reiterated in light of your argument
- 18 Needs effective concluding strategy—not merely a summary of your essay

**ORGANIZATION (ORG)**

- 19 Needs clear and logical organization
- 20 Needs clear topic sentences in all paragraphs
- 21 Needs effective supporting sentences

**TRANSITIONS (CLEAR CONNECTIONS) (TR)**

- 22 Within paragraphs & between paragraphs
- 23 Between paragraphs and thesis
- 24 Between your writing and cited material

**GRAMMAR (GR)**

- 25 Sentence structure (run-ons & fragments)
- 26 Verb tense
- 27 Use of adjectives, adverbs
- 28 Punctuation

- 29 Subject-predicate (Noun-verb) agreement
- 30 Introductory phrases, misplaced modifiers
- 31 Prepositions and preposition phrases

**SUPPORT (SUP)**

- 32 Needs convincing evidence for thesis and topic sentences
- 33 Needs relevant information to thesis
- 34 Needs current sources (when appropriate)
- 35 Credibility of Internet source uncertain
- 36 Needs effective balance of paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting
- 37 Needs at least two citations per body paragraph
- 38 Context provided for all borrowed material, always mentioning the author by name in your text (not only in parenthetical citations)
- 39 Needs authority of every author/source established with first reference
- 40 Subsequent references to author/source should be last name only
- 41 Needs thorough comment on the relevance of every citation—relevance to your argument in the paragraph and to your overall thesis

**DOCUMENTATION OF SOURCES (DOC)**

- 42 Documentation of all paraphrases, summaries, and quotations needed (anytime you use someone else’s words, ideas, or information)  
\*\*\*plagiarism will result in a “zero” for the paper\*\*\*
- 43 Needs correct MLA or APA parenthetical-citation format
- 44 Needs correct use of quotation marks
- 45 Needs correct use of block quotations

**BIBLIOGRAPHY & STYLE GUIDES (BIB)**

- 46 Needs entries in alphabetical order
- 47 Needs correct format(s) for resource(s)
- 48 Needs “Works Cited” at top of page for MLA
- 49 Needs “References” at top of page for APA
- 50 Needs quotation marks where needed
- 51 Needs underlining or italics where needed
- 52 Needs hanging indent for all entries with 2 or more lines
- 53 Needs double-spacing of all entries

**EDITING (ED)**

- 54 Spelling
- 55 Wordiness
- 56 Avoid clichés and/or slang
- 57 Avoid use of “you”/ “your”
- 58 Vague language
- 59 Awkward wording
- 60 Capitalization
- 61 Key terms not defined