

**ESL 400 Essay Grading Criteria (Revision by Musgrave, August 14, 2006)**

| <b>SKILLS</b>             | <b>An "A" Paper</b>   | <b>A "B" Paper</b>   | <b>A "C" Paper</b>  | <b>A "D-F" Paper</b>  |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| <b>COMPETENCE</b>         | demonstrates <b>clear competence</b> in writing   | demonstrates <b>competence</b> in writing  | Demonstrates that the writer has not mastered the fundamentals of essay writing   | demonstrates <b>incompetence</b> in writing                                   |
| <b>PROMPT</b>             | addresses the prompt <b>clearly and effectively</b>   | addresses the prompt <b>appropriately</b>  | may address the prompt <b>adequately</b>  | <b>may not</b> address the prompt <b>adequately</b>                           |
| <b>AUDIENCE</b>           | takes the needs of the reader into consideration  | takes the needs of the reader into consideration   | <b>May make the reader's task difficult</b>   | <b>may not</b> take the needs of the reader into consideration                |
| <b>CRITICAL THINKING</b>  | evidences good critical thinking, mature thought, and reflection  | evidences some reflection and mature thought   | evidences little reflection, a lack of deep thinking about the topic  | may be overly simplistic or incoherent  |
|                           |   |  | <b>*May reveal one or more of the following weaknesses:</b>   | <b>*Is seriously flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:</b>       |
| <b>ORGANIZATION</b>       | is well organized with a <b>good</b> intro., body, & conclusion   | is organized with an <b>adequate</b> intro., body & conclusion   | <b>*organizational weaknesses</b>   | <b>*lack of organization</b>  |
| <b>THESIS</b>             | has a <b>clear thesis</b> statement   | has an <b>appropriate thesis</b> statement, but the thesis may be formulaic                              | <b>* may have a simplistic thesis statement; thesis statement may be incomplete or may not reflect completely the essay content</b>                                 | <b>* a weak or no thesis</b> statement. Thesis may confuse the reader.        |
| <b>TOPIC SENTENCES</b>    | has <b>effective and original topic sentences</b>   | has <b>appropriate topic sentences, but may lack sophistication; may be formulaic</b>                    | <b>* may lack clear topic sentences; topic sentences may be simplistic or inappropriate for the paragraph; paragraphs may lose focus.</b>                           | <b>* lack of topic sentences; paragraphs lack a clear focus.</b>              |
| <b>DEVELOPMENT</b>        | is <b>well developed</b> with good major and minor details in body paragraphs; the main ideas are supported by <b>appropriate</b> examples and analysis | is <b>adequately</b> developed with major and minor details in the body paragraphs but may lack analysis | <b>* minimal development;</b> may have insufficient/ inappropriate details to support/illustrate generalizations; may be repetitive and/or general, lacking support | <b>*lack of development</b> of major and minor details in the body paragraphs |
| <b>FLUENCY</b>            | has consistently <b>good</b> language control & fluency   | Has <b>generally good</b> language control and fluency   | <b>*inconsistent</b> language control and fluency/ may be mechanical and wordy  | <b>*lack of</b> language control and fluency/ language is mechanical          |
| <b>SENTENCE VARIETY</b>   | includes <b>good</b> sentence variety and consistently appropriate word choice  | has <b>good</b> sentence variety and generally appropriate word choice                                   | <b>* little</b> sentence variety & noticeable inappropriate word choice   | <b>*lack of</b> sentence variety & frequent inappropriate word choice         |
| <b>ERROR FREQUENCY</b>    | has <b>no</b> global and only <b>occasional</b> local errors  | Has <b>few</b> global errors; has occasional local errors  | <b>* noticeable</b> global and/or local errors  | <b>* an accumulation of</b> global and/or local errors                        |
| <b>SUMMARY PARAPHRASE</b> | reflects the writer's <b>clear</b> ability to summarize, paraphrase, and  | reflects the writer's ability with only slight deviations to   | <b>*reflects the writer's adequate</b> ability to quote, paraphrase,  | <b>*reflects the writer's inability</b> to summarize, paraphrase, and         |

|       |  |   |  |  |
|-------|--|---|--|--|
| QUOTE | quote and cite correctly if the assignment requests it | summarize, quote, paraphrase and cite correctly if the assignment requests it | summarize, and cite correctly if the assignment requests it; may contain a few errors in citation format | quote and cite correctly if the assignment requests it |
|-------|--|---|--|--|

Global errors= those that interfere with the reader's ability to understand a passage; local errors= those that affect only part of a sentence and distract but do not interfere with the reader's ability to understand the passage