

What Grade Will I Get on My Essay?

Does my essay answer the assignment guidelines?

No.

Zero / F

Yes.

See chart below.

Developmental Level

Substantive Level

Copy Level

Proof Level

Description

Writing at this level is near the brainstorming stage; the author is working through foundational ideas, reasoning, and supporting material.

The draft may not be answering the assignment at all. If on topic, developmental drafts may be incomplete; main ideas may be unclear; text may be very repetitive or wordy without actually developing ideas; sources may be missing or inadequately documented.

Formative Feedback

Drafts at this stage will receive big-picture feedback. If the draft is significantly off-topic from the assigned prompt, the author will be guided to reread the prompt and ask questions for clarification on expectations. If on topic, feedback will tend to focus on questions to help focus main ideas and/or to develop ideas with clear support.

Grade Range

ALL writing should go through a developmental stage! However, a “final” draft submitted at the developmental level will receive a D or an F.

Description

Writing at this level is working to address the assigned prompt, and mostly shows a clear thesis and supporting ideas.

The draft may be disorganized, lack adequate support (including effective use of sources and documentation), or fail to address key features of the rhetorical situation (e.g., appeals to reason, emotion, and/or ethics). Minimal sources have been met, but not necessarily effectively.

Formative Feedback

Drafts at this stage will receive feedback on organization, rhetorical approach, use of sources and documentation. Style issues (e.g., grammar and voice) will only be addressed if necessary to addressing substantive issues.

Grade Range

A “final” draft submitted in this range will receive a grade between C- and B-.
*Many class essays end in this state.

Description

Writing at this level has successfully progressed through the earlier stages and usually multiple drafts. The essay as a whole holds together: the ideas are strong; the organization is clear; all claims have adequate support, including effective use/documentation of sources.

Grammar and voice may be awkward, with sentences that are confusing or unclear.

Formative Feedback

Drafts at this stage will receive feedback on grammar and style, including voice, syntax, and punctuation.

Grade Range

A “final” draft submitted in this range will generally receive a grade of B. Students who are working at this level should (a) be proud of their work! and (b) seriously consider allowing for another proof draft.

Description

Writing at this level has successfully progressed through the earlier stages and usually multiple drafts. The essay as a whole holds together: the ideas are strong; the organization is clear; all claims have adequate support, including effective use/documentation of sources; and the grammar/style is elegant. Minor type corrections likely persist.

Formative Feedback

Drafts at this stage will receive proofreading for final correction.

Grade Range

A “final” draft submitted in this range will generally receive a grade of A- to A+.

FORMATIVE (WRITTEN/VERBAL) V. SUMMATIVE FEEDBACK: Your graded/returned drafts throughout the semester typically contain descriptive notes toward revision, in keeping with the “formative feedback” descriptions above, assuming most students will choose to revise their work. Marginal/in-line notes will be minimal. If you would like more in-text feedback, please read the descriptive notes first and consider how they apply to your text, but then feel free to set up in-person meetings with me or a Writing Center tutor to work through more specifics. Final essays will receive “summative feedback”—that is, comments focused more on evaluation of final work rather than looking toward revision.

REVISION/REGRAIDING: You should be working through multiple drafts on EVERY major assignment in this class.

So long as you submit originals by their due dates, you can revise and resubmit major assignments for grading throughout the semester, up until 5 p.m. EST on May 5. Revisions will only be graded during one-on-one appointments with your professor; be sure to schedule appointments well in advance to ensure that your revisions are graded. Weights associated with regrades vary by assignment; consult your assignment sheets for details.

© Heidi Nobles
Spring 2021