

Academic Writing, Essay Grading Rubric

Criteria	(5) Exemplary	(4) Proficient	(3) Adequate	(2) Limited	(1) Novice
Task	All aspects of question addressed, and key points relevant and complete. Academic tone sustained throughout. Very successful at paraphrasing throughout. Uses holistic rather sentence-level paraphrasing.	Question mostly answered appropriately but one or two key points missing or misunderstood. Academic tone largely evident throughout. Successfully paraphrases throughout. Some evidence of holistic paraphrasing.	Essay largely addresses question but some key points missing or misunderstood. Some ability in use of academic tone. Mostly paraphrases at sentence level. Some copied sentences but these do not affect min. word count. Above min. word count.	Response addresses the question <u>very minimally</u> and/or key points are difficult to decipher. Tone too informal for academic context. Even with original writing, the essay is below the minimum word count. Large chunks are copied and bring word count under the minimum of 400 words¹.	Response does not address the question, and largely incomprehensible. No attempt at academic tone. Essay almost entirely copied from texts*. Below min word count.
Organisation	Coherent response meaning information can be followed effortlessly. Key points are well supported and developed throughout. Uses a wide range of accurate cohesive devices to link ideas throughout the essay**.	Coherent response followed with minimum effort. Key points are mostly supported and developed throughout. Uses a range of cohesive devices to link ideas and sentences throughout although these may be limited or inaccurate at times**.	Coherent response although some effort is required in places. Key points are generally supported and developed, but with lapses. A limited number of cohesive devices are used to link ideas, and these may be inconsistent or inaccurate as a result**. Some lapses in paragraphing may occur.	Incoherent in places and difficult to follow. Key points minimally supported and developed. Minimal and simplistic or inaccurate use of cohesive devices to link ideas**. Paragraphing may be inadequate or missing.	Incoherent, extremely difficult to follow. Ideas lack support and development throughout. Lacks cohesive devices or inaccurate use of devices throughout the essay**. No evidence or minimal use of paragraphing.
Vocabulary	Precise and varied choice of vocabulary sustained over long stretches. Very few inaccuracies in word form and spelling. Some idiomatic expressions used.	Demonstrates an ability to use a wide range and accurate use of vocab. Word forms and spelling usually accurate.	Mostly accurate word choice but range is restricted. Inaccuracies in word form & spelling occur but these do not put a strain on the reader.	Basic word choice – frequently used inaccurately. Word forms & spelling inaccurate but recognisable with effort.	Errors in even basic word choice predominate. Range very restricted. Except where text is copied, word form and spelling often indecipherable.
Grammar	Sound grammar in both simple and complex structures, although minor lapses may occur. Uses a range of appropriate sentence structures. Punctuation is mostly all correct.	Sound grammar in basic structures, some complex structures are correct. Uses a range of appropriate sentence structures with few mistakes in use. Very few mistakes in punctuation.	Good grasp of basic sentence level grammar. Attempts complex structures but these are frequently inaccurate. Meaning is mostly clear. Use of punctuation almost accurate but a few errors occur.	Simple structures predominate. Most of these contain errors but meaning is usually detectable with some effort. Many errors in use of punctuation throughout essay.	Number and extent of errors put a severe strain on the reader.
Citations	Use: Appropriate throughout. Format: No errors.	Use: Generally appropriate - very little over/under or misuse. Format: Some minor errors.	Use: Appropriate though with some over/under or misuse. Format: Some major and/or minor errors.	Use: Generally inappropriate with a lot of over/under/misuse. Format: Many <u>major</u> (and minor) errors.	Use: Inappropriate throughout. No citations = 0 Format: Major (and minor) errors throughout.

Notes:

- Essays where copying from sources takes the word count below 400 are marked as two or **below** for all the criteria, not only Task Fulfilment.
- Cohesive devices refer to the range of discourse features that make a text cohesive e.g., reference words, ellipsis, substitution, parallelism, linking/transition markers, grammatical chains, lexical chains. Assessment should be on a script's overall cohesiveness not solely on the overuse/underuse of one or more particular feature of cohesion.
- First markers should give an indication to justify their scores for each script (e.g., there should be notes on the margins of the script or in final comments).
- Instructors have a marking flexibility of 2 points to modify/adjust the first marker grades. If there is a larger point discrepancy, lead teachers should oversee its arbitration.