

## The American Heritage Rubric *Simplified*

<p><b>OUTSTANDING:</b> Addresses the prompt in an impressive, outstanding manner; responds fully to all aspects of the task; is strongly &amp; consistently organized around central purpose; provides substantial &amp; specific evidence, via research, to support major assertions. <b>The essay is absolutely scholarship worthy.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains logic throughout, is “lawyerly,” offers a more formal argument, takes a definitive stand</li> <li>• Grapples with the fundamental issues of the prompt revealing a deep understanding of the issues</li> <li>• Reads very well, flows, uses quotations effectively, and provides a completed argument with a strong finish consistent with the stated central purpose or stance of the essay</li> <li>• Addresses opposition’s likely arguments without losing sight of the stated position</li> </ul> <p><b>Language-Style-Conventions:</b> demonstrates outstanding, sophisticated control of sentence structure &amp; command of vocabulary with precise, impressive word choice; is <i>almost</i> entirely free of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.</p>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>EFFECTIVE:</b> Addresses the prompt in an effective manner; responds to all aspects of the task; is organized consistently based on a central purpose; provides convincing evidence to support major positions. <b>This essay may be scholarship worthy: you may want a judge to read it.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains logic throughout and may be somewhat “lawyerly,” but not necessarily consistently; offers a formal argument – clearly takes a stand on the issues of the prompt</li> <li>• Grapples with the some of the fundamental issues of the prompt; reader may be aware of additions or deletions that would strengthen the argument</li> <li>• Reads well, errors do not significantly impact the flow, uses quotations well almost always, and provides a complete argument with a finish consistent with the stated central purpose or stance</li> <li>• Partially addresses opposition’s likely arguments with minimal interference with the author’s stance</li> </ul> <p><b>Language-Style-Conventions:</b> demonstrates control of sentence structure &amp; precise word choice, perhaps an occasionally awkward try at a sophisticated term; is <i>basically</i> error free w/ grammar, usage, mechanics.</p>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>ADEQUATE:</b> Addresses the prompt adequately; responds to several aspects of the task; is organized based on a central purpose; provides appropriate evidence to support positions. <b>The essay, in its present form, is not really scholarship worthy.</b> While strong, may not provide obvious points in favor of the position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May provide some frivolous information/arguments compared to the fundamental issues</li> <li>• May really lose the flow of the argument once/twice; the essay may lack consistent strength</li> </ul> <p><b>Language-Style-Conventions:</b> demonstrates effective but not sophisticated control of sentence structure and appropriate word choice; is generally free of errors in grammar, usage and mechanics. The reader is not impeded and may be <i>occasionally</i> impressed and likewise disappointed with writing ability.</p>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>NOT REALLY ADEQUATE:</b> Addresses the prompt somewhat but not convincingly: focuses on a minor aspect of the task; may be dependent on a restatement of the prompt using terms and phrases verbatim; provides some predictable evidence to support positions. Reads like a homework assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If logical, is a “surface” analysis of the issue and may be based more on emotion than logic</li> <li>• Relies heavily on quoted text (prompt and references) with little or illogical analysis</li> <li>• Might not address some critically fundamental issues embedded in the prompt</li> </ul> <p><b>Language-Style-Conventions:</b> demonstrates occasional control of sentence structure and some precision in word choice but is inconsistent; contains confusing errors in grammar, usage and mechanics. The reader may be occasionally impeded, but can get the gist, but is not particularly impressed with writing skills.</p>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>BASIC &amp; BELOW OR OFF TOPIC:</b> Addresses prompt in very basic, limited way <u>or</u> is off topic; may be confusing; may provide a little, superficial evidence, perhaps not clearly linked to position, is unconvincing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May not clearly take a stance on the issue or veers off topic or is off topic throughout</li> <li>• Is confusing at times due to faulty logic – the reader has to work at following the argument(s)</li> <li>• Reads like a very rough draft and may be too short (underdeveloped) or too long ( rambles)</li> </ul> <p><b>Language-Style-Conventions:</b> demonstrates <b>lack</b> of control of sentence structure; limited in word choice with simple and repetitive word choices; minimal control of grammar, usage and mechanics. There are so many errors, the reader is impeded to the point of irritation.</p>	<b>1</b>