

Student Term Paper Rubric

1) Identifies and summarizes the perspectives presented.

Poorly developed

- Does not identify and summarize the perspectives, is confused or represents the perspectives inaccurately.

Moderately developed

- Includes some discussion of the perspectives but addresses but does not peer deeper into complexities or nuances.
- Lacks a thesis statement or introduction.

Substantially developed

- Demonstrates understanding of the assignment and foundational article.
- Addresses not only the authors' perspective but also identifies complexities and nuances associated with the perspective, identifying them clearly, distinguishing them from one another, and stating their relationships to each other and to the main question.
- Has a clear, focused 'thesis statement'
- Has a well-organized 'introduction' to the essay that clearly presents the point(s) to be made in the discussion

2) Provides specific supporting evidence (including citation) to back up the points presented.

Poorly developed

- Provides little or no supporting evidence for statements made, or evidence presented does not support the argument being made.
- Does not cite the supporting evidence that is presented.

Moderately developed

- Relies on a single article or project for analysis.
- Does not clearly establish how the evidence ties into the broader perspective.
- Neglects to give full citation details.

Substantially developed

- Correctly and thoroughly includes all relevant information from the case studies to substantiate all point(s) being made in the discussion.
- Pulls together material from multiple sources to arrive at a rich, yet coherent answer to the question(s) posed.
- Clearly shows how all supporting evidence ties into the question being addressed (makes relevance clear).
- Supporting evidence is presented in a logical sequence that is easy to follow.
- All supporting evidence is cited in the text (usually 'author, year') with full bibliographic listing at the end of the essay (for example, MLA format).

3) Skillfully analyzes the supporting evidence.

Poorly developed

- Merely lists projects (for example: riparian management, invasive species, etc.), without tying them in to the point(s) being made or discussing their relevance in supporting argument(s) being made.

Moderately developed

- Refers to the supporting evidence but takes it at face value rather than digging deeper for insights.
- Mentions the other perspective but does not address it in any systematic manner.
- Touches on the issue of bias but uncritically.

Substantially developed

- Makes reference to the current state of knowledge for the supporting materials presented.
- Recognizes, identifies, and addresses the possible multiple perspectives there may be on the issue--including the evidence for (and arguments against) these other perspectives.
- Recognizes and discusses the assumptions and/or biases that may be present in the sources cited, and in the student's own argument.

4) Clearly distinguishes between 'facts' stated in the literature and students own opinion.

Poorly developed

- It is unclear which ideas presented are the student's own and which are those presented by others from the articles
- Merely states personal opinion without tying it into the discussion.

Moderately developed

- Expresses own opinion/perspective in a clear, unambiguous manner.
- Attempts to relate own perspective to the supporting evidence and to the foundational articles.

Substantially developed

- Expresses own opinion/perspective.
- Distinguishes clearly between fact and opinion (whether your opinion or that of the author you are relying on).
- Clearly identifies the source of all ideas presented.*

**Remember that whenever we make a statement, we are expressing a position. The way you pull the different materials together and how you interpret them is your own perspective- even if unstated. It is important to be clear on which ideas are your own syntheses of material, compared to ideas put forth by the sources you are using.*

5) Discusses the broader implications of the arguments made.

Poorly developed

- Merely repeats information provided.
- Fails to provide a conclusion or does so with few insights.

Moderately developed

- Discusses the case study unreflexively.
- Has a few insights, but they could be developed further.
- Conclusion is adequate but not decisive.

Substantially developed

- Identifies what the case study tells us overall with respect to the topic. (What can we conclude?)
- Explains how this conclusion might apply to new or different situations (what insights were gained, can we use them elsewhere, etc.).
- These ideas are encapsulated within a strong, well organized 'Conclusion' section that includes a brief summary of the question

posed, the points made and their implications, plus brings a sense of closure.

- Conclusion reflects the points laid out in the introduction and contained in the discussion.

6) Is well written.

Poorly developed

- Fails to present the discussion in an organized manner (argument cannot be followed); discussion branches off into topics that are not clearly related to the central question; errors of punctuation, grammar, spelling, etc. inhibit the reader's understanding.

Moderately developed

- Presents ideas and supporting evidence in paragraphs that build upon each other.
- Presentation has some mechanical problems but they do not detract from the overall flow of the paper.

Substantially developed

- The ideas and relevant supporting evidence are presented in a clear and easy to follow sequence.
- There is no unnecessary duplication of ideas or information.
- The presentation does not contain errors of punctuation, grammar, spelling, etc.

Adapted from: Faculty Adaptations to the Critical Thinking Rubric (Crops and Soils adaptation) <http://wsuctproject.wsu.edu/fa-4.htm>