

A Range (A-, A)

“A-” and “A” papers have all the elements of papers in the “B” range and have these additional elements as well.

Thesis/Argument/Reasoning

“A-” and “A” papers demonstrate strong critical thinking. The student is able to respond to the readings and to the assignment with originality and authority. Specifically:

- The paper presents an original and compelling argument that addresses the prompt fully and avoids absolute claims
- The argument is aware of its underlying assumptions and acknowledges its limits
- The argument is stated with such authority that the order of its statements and the linkages between them seem inevitable

Evidence/Quotation/Support

“A-” and “A” papers reflect the student’s depth of critical reading. Rather than being subject to the texts and their authors, the student begins to assume more and more authority in relation to these texts, both through insightful analysis and through deft use of quotation in support of the argument. Specifically:

- The paper works closely with quotation in multiple ways; it connects quotations from different essays within a paragraph in unique and fluid ways and/or returns to the language of a quotation in the analysis of another quotation or reading
- Quotations are introduced, discussed, clearly related to the argument, and properly cited
- Quotations are incorporated seamlessly into grammatically correct sentences (that is, the sentence that includes a quotation works grammatically even with the quotation marks removed)
- The paper considers and responds to possible counter-arguments
- When research is required, the sources used are strongly fitting in relation to the assignment and the paper’s purpose. Their use in the paper displays depth of thought, including a diversity of perspectives about the topic, which may include counter arguments as appropriate. The sources are seamlessly incorporated, adding nuance to the paper without distracting from the paper’s unique argument.

Organization

- Paragraphs contain well-developed subtopics; they have enough information to stand alone but also relate to each other in that they all support the argument
- Transitions between paragraphs are not forced or confusing. The next paragraph always seems like the next logical step to take to support the argument
- Conclusion draws from the main ideas of the essay and opens up new ideas for further research/development

Audience

- The paper inspires confidence in the audience, addresses significant issues, and leaves the reader with the sense of having learned something
- The paper anticipates the audience's questions and needs for contextual information

Grammar/Language/Presentation

- The paper is virtually free of grammatical and typographical errors
- The paper adheres to MLA style