

COMPOSITION EXAMINATION GRADING RUBRIC

6--Applies to papers that are clearly superior; both style and content are especially effective. A 6 paper may not be absolutely flawless, but it demonstrates all the following:

- ✓ thoughtful, logical, thorough development of the topic (based on excellent understanding/use of the primary source) with specific, well organized support that demonstrates superlative engagement with the rhetorical situation;
- ✓ almost always uses words with sophistication and precision;
- ✓ clear, varied sentences, demonstrating sophistication in writing;
- ✓ mastery of grammar and usage.

5--Applies to papers that are clear passes. A 5 paper has most of the virtues of a 6 paper, but the style may be less fluent, the overall structure less complex, and the treatment of content less sophisticated. A 5 paper demonstrates most or all of the following:

- ✓ responds logically and intelligently to the topic (based on a solid understanding/use of the primary text), organizing appropriate details in several coherent paragraphs and providing a sense of orderly progress between ideas;
- ✓ frequently uses words with sophistication and precision;
- ✓ varies sentence structure enough to read smoothly;
- ✓ uses competently the conventions of written English, containing few, if any, errors in sentence structure, usage, or punctuation.

4--Applies to papers that are weak passes because, although they communicate clearly, they lack the solid development or stylistic command demonstrated by 5 papers. A 4 paper should be clear and readable, if not exceptional. A 4 paper usually:

- ✓ responds adequately to the topic, showing a clear sense of organization, but also some weaknesses in transitions and in paragraph structure and development;
- ✓ demonstrates an understanding/use of the primary text;
- ✓ does not commit serious or numerous logical fallacies;
- ✓ occasionally uses words with sophistication and precision but more often employs basic though accurate vocabulary;
- ✓ varies sentence structure enough to avoid monotony;
- ✓ contains some minor errors in mechanics and usage, and perhaps one or two distracting errors in sentence structure (an agreement error, a clearly unintentional fragment, an obviously dangling modifier).

3--Applies to unsatisfactory papers. These papers usually lack the coherence and development of 4 papers and exhibit more serious weaknesses in their writers' ability to handle written English. A typical 3 paper often exhibits several of the following:

- ✓ responds less effectively to the topic. Although a major idea may be clearly stated, the paper usually has inadequately developed or illogically sequenced paragraphs (or clearly illogical ideas), which lack clear transitions between ideas;
- ✓ organizes in a formulaic way (e.g. the three-point, 5-paragraph essay);
- ✓ consists simply of summary and thus lacking analysis or explanation or analyzes the primary text, but does not elaborate with its own examples;
- ✓ often uses vocabulary that is acceptable but lacks sophistication and accuracy;
- ✓ seldom varies sentence structure;
- ✓ makes enough errors in usage and in sentence structure—errors in agreement, pronoun reference, punctuation, and modifier placement—to cause a reader serious, if occasional, distraction.

COMPOSITION EXAMINATION GRADING RUBRIC

2--Applies to papers that are clear failures. These papers present some content but compound the weaknesses of a 3 paper. A typical 2 paper:

- ✓ may distort the topic or the primary text, and usually lacks coherent organization and development;
- ✓ often employs very basic vocabulary and/or misuses many words;
- ✓ usually makes no attempt to vary sentences;
- ✓ contains many distracting errors in usage or sentence structure.

1--Applies to papers that demonstrate severe difficulties with reading and writing standard English.

Paragraph sense or sentence sense or both will be lacking; communication will be virtually non-existent.

A 1 paper:

- ✓ may clearly misunderstand the topic or the primary text;
- ✓ may be brief;
- ✓ misuses words frequently in ways that impede the reader's understanding of the content;
- ✓ usually is markedly incoherent, with no attempt to provide links between sentences and with much faulty predication within them;
- ✓ usually contains many distracting usage or sentence structure errors.