



Criteria	Excellent (5 points)	Proficient (3 points)	Needs Improvement (1 points)	Score
<b>Supporting Evidence</b>	Essay includes strong, well-researched, and specific evidence that clearly supports the main points.	Evidence is present but may lack specificity, thoroughness, or direct relevance.	Evidence is weak, unclear, or absent, making the argument difficult to follow.	
<b>Topic Development</b>	The essay demonstrates deep understanding of the topic, remains focused, and explores ideas thoroughly.	The essay addresses the topic adequately but could use more depth or focus.	The essay strays off-topic, lacks depth, or has unclear or underdeveloped ideas.	
<b>Originality</b>	The essay is highly creative, presenting unique perspectives or ideas that stand out.	Essay is solid but somewhat conventional, with limited originality or creativity.	Essay is generic, predictable, or lacks any unique insights.	
<b>Grammar, Spelling, &amp; Mechanics</b>	Writing is polished, with no or very few errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	Writing has occasional errors but is still clear and readable overall.	Frequent errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation make the essay difficult to follow.	
<b>Overall Organization</b>	Essay is well-structured, with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion that flow logically.	Essay has a general structure but may lack clear transitions or cohesion.	Essay is disorganized, with ideas presented in a confusing or scattered manner.	

**Total Score: \_\_\_ / 25**

**Notes for Judges:**

- **Supporting Evidence:** Look for relevant facts, examples, or anecdotes that effectively back up the essay's argument or main points.
- **Topic Development:** Evaluate the writer's ability to thoroughly explore and analyze the topic within the essay's scope.
- **Originality:** Reward essays that show a fresh perspective or creative approach, avoiding clichés or overly common ideas.
- **Grammar/Spelling/Mechanics:** Consider whether errors distract from the readability, but do not penalize minor issues if the overall writing is strong.
- **Overall Organization:** Assess how well the essay flows, including its logical progression and clarity.