

GENERAL SCORING RUBRIC FOR SYNTHESIS ESSAYS

When grading the essay, it is important to remember the time limits under which students are working and to grade as for an in-class draft rather than an out-of-class assignment. Essays should be graded holistically; however, an essay that contains numerous grammatical or mechanical errors should not be scored higher than a 2. Essays on the Advanced Placement tests are scored on a system of 1 to 9, with 9 being the highest score possible.

- 9 These essays are exceptionally well written, meeting all the criteria of the essays earning a score of 8 as well as being especially sophisticated in argumentation and synthesis. They remain focused on all aspects of the topic and present a unique writer's voice.
- 8 These essays are very well written and effectively defend, challenge, or qualify the assertion presented in the prompt, synthesizing and citing at least three of the sources. They may have a few mechanical errors, but only very minor ones.
- 7-6 These essays adequately defend, challenge, or qualify the assertion presented in the prompt. They adequately synthesize and cite at least three of the sources in support of the writer's position. The distinction between a score of 7 and a score of 6 is that the essay earning a 7 presents more complete argumentation or demonstrates a more mature style and developed writer's voice. Thus, the essay earning a score of 7 would be characterized as effective while an essay earning a score of 6 is merely adequate. These essays may contain minor flaws in diction or syntax, but the prose is clear.
- 5 These essays are for the most part well written, and usually remain focused on the topic. They do synthesize and cite at least three sources, but the writer's argument may be somewhat limited or inconsistent or a bit superficial in nature. The supporting examples may be strained or undeveloped. While the prose is merely adequate, the writer's ideas are conveyed clearly.
- 4-3 These essays have some problems with organization and coherence, tend to wander from the topic in places, and deal only with one or two aspects of the topic, or with all aspects in only a superficial manner. The writer inadequately defends, challenges, or qualifies the assertion presented in the prompt, citing at least two sources but failing to explain or develop the link between the sources and a clear position. The writing demonstrates weak control of mechanics, and a writer's voice is lacking or inconsistent, especially so in the case of an essay earning a score of 3.
- 2 These essays demonstrate little success in defending, challenging, or qualifying the assertion presented in the prompt. They may simply refer to information in the sources without actually citing the sources, or they may summarize rather than analyze the information in the sources. The writer may fail to take a position or may demonstrate a misreading of the sources. The essay earning a score of 2 is characterized by errors in mechanics and grammar.
- 1 These essays demonstrate the same weaknesses of the essays earning a score of 2, but they are especially weak in their diction, syntax, and mechanics or fail to cite any sources.