

Grading Criteria

Essays will be marked holistically, with no specific percentage of marks for any one aspect. Instead, the marker will be making an overall judgement of the quality of the piece of work as a whole. Weaknesses in one area of the criteria may be compensated for by particular skill in another, and vice versa.

Good:

1. Work at the highest levels will assert an **argument**, through the use of a thesis statement which is argumentative (i.e. it could also be disputed), specific (it is not overly general or vague) and substantiated (there is some evidence to support it).
2. The argument is delivered through the use of a clear, logical essay **structure**. The student considers the flow of the argument from paragraph to paragraph and sustains the argument throughout. The various points made are all **relevant** to the topic and argument under consideration in the essay, and that relevance is made explicitly clear.
3. The essay engages in detailed textual **analysis**, considering the literary and dramatic strategies that can be discerned in the texts considered, and relating these strategies to the essay's overall argument. The essay demonstrates awareness of the **critical** and/or **historical** contexts to the texts under consideration, through use of a range of relevant secondary material.
4. The essay is written in formal English of a high standard, with no mistakes of **grammar** or **spelling**. It adopts an objective, but persuasive academic tone which reinforces the argument that the student is making.

Average:

1. Includes an **argument**, which is for the most part sustained throughout.
2. The essay adopts a clear **structure** and the points made are **relevant** to the topic under consideration throughout.
3. The essay engages in detailed **analysis**, and demonstrates knowledge of the **critical** or **historical** context, with some use of relevant secondary material.
4. The essay is written for the most part in correct English, with only very minor mistakes of **grammar** or **spelling**.

Poor:

1. The student's **argument** is excessively general or lacks substantiating evidence.
2. The **structure** lacks logic, and the points made are **occasionally irrelevant** to the topic and argument under consideration.
3. The essay engages in some **analysis**, but has a slight tendency to simply repeat details of plot. The essay demonstrates some knowledge of the **critical** or **historical** context, with only occasional use of secondary material.
4. There are errors in **grammar** and **spelling**, though these do not prevent understanding of the essay text.

Unacceptable:

1. The essay lacks an **argument**.
2. The **structure** is illogical and confusing. The points made lack **relevance**.
3. The essay lacks **analysis**, simply retelling the story of the plays under consideration. The essay makes little or no use of secondary material.
4. The essay is poorly written with numerous errors of **grammar** and **spelling**.