MVCC ESSAY SCORING RUBRIC FOR THE COOKE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Adapted from internet post by Patrick Rael, prael@polar.Bowdoin.edu, "Re: what to say to students," [H-teach@msu.net], April 2, 1996.

	Failing	Needs Help	Borderline	Good	Superior
Thesis:	• Shows obvious minimal lack of effort or comprehension of the assignment • Has no identifiable thesis, or utterly incompetent thesis	• Difficult to identify; may be a bland restatement of the obvious	• May be unclear; may contain many vague terms, appear unoriginal, or offer relatively little that is new; provides little around which to structure the essay	• Promising, but may be slightly unclear, or lacking in insight or originality	• Easily identifiable, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, crystal clear
Structure:	• Very difficult to understand due to major problems with mechanics, structure and analysis	• Unclear, often because thesis is weak or nonexistent • Transitions confusing and/or unclear; few topic sentences	• Generally unclear, often wanders or jumps around • Few or weak transitions, many paragraphs without topic sentences	• Generally clear and appropriate, though may wander occasionally • May have a few unclear transitions, or a few paragraphs without strong topic sentences	• Evident, understandable, appropriate for thesis • Excellent transitions from point to point; paragraphs support solid topic sentences
Use of evidence:		• Very few or weak examples • General failure to support statements, or evidence seems to support no statement • Quotes not integrated into sentences; may be "plopped in" improperly	• Examples used to support some points • Points often lack supporting evidence, or evidence used where inappropriate (often because there may be no clear point) • Quotes may be poorly integrated into sentences	• Examples are used to support most points • Some evidence does not support the point, or may appear where inappropriate • Quotes well integrated into sentences.	• Primary source information used to buttress every point with at least one example • Examples support mini-thesis and fit within paragraph • Excellent integration of quoted material into sentences

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Analysis:		• Very little or very weak attempt to relate evidence to argument; may be no identifiable argument, or no evidence to relate it to	• Quotes appear often without analysis relating them to mini-thesis (or there is a weak mini-thesis to support), or analysis offers nothing beyond the quote	• Evidence often related to min-thesis, though links perhaps not very clear	• Clearly relates evidence to mini-thesis provided in topic sentence • Analysis is fresh and exciting, posing new ways to think of the material
Logic and argumentation:		• Ideas do not flow at all (usually because there is no argument to support) • Simplistic view of topic; no effort to grasp possible alternative views	• Logic may often fail, or argument may often be unclear • May not address counter-arguments or make any outside connections	• Argument is clear, usually flows logically and makes sense • Some evidence that counter-arguments acknowledged, through perhaps not addressed • Occasional insightful connections to outside material	• All ideas flow logically; the argument is identifiable, reasonable and sound • Anticipates and successfully defuses counter arguments • Makes novel connections to outside material which illuminates thesis
Mechanics:		• Big problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction; frequent major errors in citation style, punctuation, and spelling; may have many run-on sentences and/or comma splices	• Some problems in sentence structure, grammar and diction; some errors in citation style, punctuation, and spelling; may have some run-on sentences and/or comma splices	• Sentence structure, grammar and diction strong despite occasional lapses; citation style, punctuation, and spelling often used correctly; may have a few run-on sentences and/or comma splices	• Sentence structure, grammar and diction excellent; citation style, punctuation, and spelling used correctly; no run-on sentences and/or comma splices

Some characteristics we identified or things to consider or include:
- Organized
- Prepared
- Structured
- Well-thought-out essays
- Dependable
- Logical
- Consistent
- Coherent
- Uses common sense
- Competent
- Work experience
- Ambitious
- Motivated
- Determination to succeed
- Realistic
- Learns from experience
- Analyzes experiences
- Uses references
- Mature
- Responsible
- Conscientious
- Forward-thinking
- Future-oriented
- Knowledgeable