

Criteria	Exemplary	Acceptable	Borderline	Unacceptable
Thesis Statement	Thesis is thought provoking and engaging. The writer's thesis is readily apparent to the reader and is in the form of 1-2 sentences.	Thesis summarized in 1-2 sentences, but could be made more succinct/clear.	Thesis is not clear, stated in a long-winded fashion or else lacking important components.	Thesis is unclear, incomplete and/or unfocused or entirely absent.
Introduction Section	Thought provoking, discusses the main topic of the paper and previews the structure of the paper.	States the main topic and previews the structure of the paper.	States the main topic but does not adequately preview the structure of the paper.	No clear introduction to the paper and structure of paper is missing.
Body of Paper & Argument Development	Each paragraph presents a thoughtful analysis structured around an "idea" and develops the thesis statement with specific examples using the primary references.	Each paragraph has sufficient supporting detail sentences that support/refute the thesis.	Many paragraphs are weak and lack supporting detail sentences. Paragraphs focus on a single reference at a time.	Each paragraph fails to develop the main idea. Body consists of a chain of summaries of each reference's findings.
Conclusions Section	Engaging, connected to the body of the paper and restates the thesis, ties together conceptual elements across the paper.	Clearly restates the thesis.	Weak or muddled restatement of the thesis.	Incomplete and/or unfocused.
Summary	Concise and clear synopsis of the paper's thesis, supporting arguments and conclusion.	Summary missing one of its three key elements.	Summary missing more than 1 of its three key elements.	No summary or incomprehensible summary.
Organization	Well-organized, subheadings used as necessary, flows clearly from idea to idea with good use of transitions in language.	Overall good organization but paragraph development present but lacks flow in areas, lacks transitions, some weak paragraphs present.	Organization is weakly present, difficult to follow writer's logic.	No organization, no subheadings, no logical flow or order to the entire paper, incomprehensible.

Sentence Structure	Uses a mix of short and longer sentences to give paper a level of sophistication and formality.	Adequate use of language, but lacking a level of sophistication called for in college level writing.	Sentences are short and choppy; some are incomplete and difficult to understand.	Paper is littered with incomplete sentences, significant problems with sentence structure and confused meaning.
Grammar, Punctuation Mechanics, etc.	Extremely few to no grammatical errors, no errors in italicization, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, etc.	Sparse grammatical/punctuation mistakes, some errors in punctuation, subject-verb agreement, italicization, etc.	Common grammatical/punctuation mistakes, some errors in punctuation, subject-verb agreement, italicization, etc.	Rampant grammatical/punctuation mistakes, some errors in punctuation, subject-verb agreement, italicization, etc.
Use and quality of references	Successfully uses at least 8 primary literature references in body of paper. Uses several review papers in the introduction to orient the reader to the field of investigation.	Uses 8 primary literature references with mixed success, most are useful, 1 or 2 are not suitable.	8 primary literature references used to build the body of the paper with less than half of the references directly used in the body of the paper.	Less than 8 primary literature references used in the body of the paper.
Format of Citations	In text citation and bibliography style are error-free and conform to the style of "Evolution".	In text citation and bibliography have very few errors and conform to the style of "Evolution"	Numerous errors in in-text citations and in bibliography; style is only somewhat reminiscent of format of "Evolution".	Rampant error in citation across the paper, no consistent style in citation format.