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| CATEGORY | **4 - Above Standards** | **3 - Meets Standards** | **2 - Approaching Standards** | **1 - Below Standards** |
| **Focus or Thesis Statement** | The thesis statement names the topic of the essay and outlines the main points to be discussed. | The thesis statement names the topic of the essay. | The thesis statement outlines some or all of the main points to be discussed but does not name the topic. | The thesis statement does not name the topic AND does not preview what will be discussed. |
| **Support for Position** | Includes 3 or more pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement. The writer anticipates the reader\'s concerns, biases or arguments and has provided at least 1 counter-argument. | Includes 3 or more pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement. | Includes 2 pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement. | Includes 1 or fewer pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences). |
| **Evidence and Examples** | All of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author\'s position. | Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author\'s position. | At least one of the pieces of evidence and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how that piece of evidence supports the author\'s position. | Evidence and examples are NOT relevant AND/OR are not explained. |
| **Sources** | All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly. | All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and most are cited correctly. | Most sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly. | Many sources are suspect (not credible) AND/OR are not cited correctly. |
| **Transitions** | A variety of thoughtful transitions are used. They clearly show how ideas are connected | Transitions show how ideas are connected, but there is little variety | Some transitions work well, but some connections between ideas are fuzzy. | The transitions between ideas are unclear OR nonexistent. |
| **Closing paragraph** | The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader solidly understanding the writer\'s position. Effective restatement of the position statement begins the closing paragraph. | The conclusion is recognizable. The author\'s position is restated within the first two sentences of the closing paragraph. | The author\'s position is restated within the closing paragraph, but not near the beginning. | There is no conclusion - the paper just ends. |
| **Grammar & Spelling** | Author makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. | Author makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. | Author makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. | Author makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. |
| **Sequencing** | Arguments and support are provided in a logical order that makes it easy and interesting to follow the author\'s train of thought. | Arguments and support are provided in a fairly logical order that makes it reasonably easy to follow the author\'s train of thought. | A few of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem a little confusing. | Many of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem very confusing. |
| **Requirements** | All of the requirements are met. | All but 1 of the requirements are met | 2-3 requirements are not met | 4 or more requirements are not met |
| **MLA Format** | MLA formatting including Works Cited has been done with no errors | MLA formatting including Works Cited has 1 error | MLA formatting including Works Cited has 2-3 errors | MLA formatting including Works Cited has 4 or more errors |