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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. |
| **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. |
| **Sequencing** | support is provided in a logical order that makes it easy and interesting to follow the author\'s train of thought. | support is 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 are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem a little confusing. | Many of the support details are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem very confusing. |
| **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 thesis 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. |
| **Requirements** | All of the assigned requirements are met | all but 1 of the requirements are met | 2-3 requirements are missing | 4 or more requirements are missing |
| **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 |
| **MLA format** | Author makes no errors in MLA format (works cited, in-text, or paper formatting) | Author makes 1-2 errors in MLA formatting (works cited, in-text, or paper formatting) | Author makes 3-4 errors in MLA formatting (works cited, in-text, or paper formatting) | Author makes more than 4 errors or MLA is not done in essay (works cited, in-text, or paper formatting) |