

Did I Get the Grade I Deserved?

Why did I get a C and not an A on this paper? I worked hours on it; doesn't that count for anything?

Time is precious, so before writing a paper that results in an undesirable grade, take a look at these guidelines.

An "A" Paper

Content

- stated length
- easily flows
- thesis is clear and significant
- coherent organization
- vocabulary and word usage is superior
- thorough insight and analysis
- fully detailed and developed topic
- complex thought
- maintains theme
- introduction is cleverly and clearly stated
- conclusion restates topic and reinforces main points; it leaves the reader with a feeling of completeness
- information from sources cited

Style

- has own apparent style
- original and creative
- honest and from the heart

Mechanics

- no more than 2 grammatical errors
- few spelling mistakes
- sentences skillfully and logically constructed
- sentences vary in length

A "B" Paper

Content

- little under required length
- support for thesis is adequate
- some points could be expanded on
- vocabulary and word usage above average
- introduction and conclusion follow guidelines but is not catchy
- information from sources cited

Style

- less captivating

Mechanics

- 3 or 4 grammatical errors
- minor flaws that don't interrupt meaning
- few choppy sentences

A "C" Paper

Content

- one page shorter or longer than stated length
- thesis is too general with limited concrete details
- body not thorough in stressing important points
- paragraphs don't stay with theme
- fall into pattern of same sentence length
- average vocabulary and word usage
- conclusion doesn't restate theme and review main points
- an acceptable job
- information from sources have few citations

Style

- average
- doesn't display your own writing style throughout paper
- overuse of cliché language

Mechanics

- 5 or 6 grammatical errors
- sentence fragments; run-ons; incomplete thoughts

A "D" Paper

Content

- more than a page from stated length
- thesis is not evident
- body not connected to theme
- does not flow when read orally
- paragraphs are inconsistent
- topic not defined
- organization is haphazard and lack unity
- introduction and conclusion has few supporting details
- words and sources used but not cited

Style

- unoriginal
- sounds like someone else's work
- stereotypical in thought

Mechanics

- 7 or more grammatical errors
- may show major flaws in sentence structure; confusing
- incomplete sentences which obscure meaning

An "F" Paper

- no theme
- 10 or more grammatical errors
- incomplete ideas
- off-topic
- choppy sentences, very difficult to read
- plagiarism

This general guideline is compiled using criteria from a variety of professors. Our purpose is to give students a basis for writing a paper. If you want more specific criteria for the paper, ask the professor.

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