

Qualities of a Good Essay

1. GENERAL SATISFACTION
 - 1.1. Assignment requirements and instructions are applied in the essay.
 - 1.2. Global and local content in the essay is substantial. The reader feels rewarded for reading the essay.
 - 1.3. Space and words are not wasted on information that is already known by the assigned audience.
 - 1.4. The essay has no avoidable mistakes.
 - 1.5. The essay's appearance prejudices the reader in favor of the writer. (Follow formatting guidelines "Standard Formatting in the ELP" at E>G, Composition).
 - 1.6. Beginner's local cohesion devices (*and, but, so*) are not over-used.
2. CLARITY
 - 2.1. Title, Introductory Paragraph, Closing Paragraph
 - 2.1.1. Title: The title is short, catchy, and hints at the thesis.
 - 2.1.2. Introductory Paragraph: Leads the reader to the thesis in a way that makes the reader want to keep on reading and provides easy understanding of the thesis. (See "The Introductory Paragraph," workbook 3, page 171; workbook 4, p. 163)
 - 2.1.3. Concluding Paragraph: Reminds the reader of the main point and major supporting points, and leaves the reader with a good impression of the essay. Style: Uses the *Paragraph Practice* format (See "The Concluding Paragraph," workbook 3, page 177; workbook 4, p. 164)
 - 2.2. Definition and explanation are provided for the reader's full understanding.
 - 2.3. Every general statement/claim is either a) self-explanatory, or b) already generally understood by the audience, or c) explained sufficiently for the particular audience.
 - 2.4. Ideas at all levels are presented in an order that makes a logical and easy-to-follow line of thought. The point precedes explanation of the point.
 - 2.5. Because every idea is relevant to the point that it is intended to explain, focus is clear and it is easy for the reader to follow the line of thought.
 - 2.6. Clarity tags help the reader follow the line of thought. (See "Coherence and Content Schema," "Clarity Tags," E>G–Writing.)
 - 2.7. Global and local cohesion devices are used skillfully to help the reader see the relationships between ideas, to follow the line of thought. (See "Cohesion Devices Local and Global," E>G–Writing.)
 - 2.8. Reference: Pronouns and other lexicals that refer to something are used clearly and don't make the reader guess what is being referred to.
 - 2.9. Expression is clear because it is concise (verbosity is avoided).
 - 2.10. Language
 - 2.10.1. Lexical choice: Lexicals are well-chosen for expressing intended meaning. (See "Lexical Choice and Usage," E>G–Writing.)
 - 2.10.2. Grammar: Lexical and sentence grammar are helpful in expressing intended meaning. (See "Lexical Choice and Usage" for lexical grammar. Try MS Word's "Spelling and Grammar Check" for sentence grammar.)
 - 2.10.3. Punctuation is accurate and effective.
 - 2.11. The Thesis
 - 2.11.1. meets all of the requirements of the assignment. (Review the instructions for this essay.)
 - 2.11.2. is presented clearly in a thesis statement that also presents the major points of development, in a way that the reader can easily see the relationship among the thesis' elements and can see the structure of the essay. (See *You're in Charge*, page 56, and workbook 3, page 161 ff; workbook 4, p. 166.
 - 2.12. Structure
 - 2.12.1. Essay-level: The essay employs a structure that effectively develops this particular thesis.
 - 2.12.2. Paragraph-level: The elements (helpful topic sentence, discussion sentences, closing sentence) and structure of body paragraphs follow the conventions of academic writing, and the elements are employed effectively. Paragraphs employ the most effective structure for this particular type of essay.
 - 2.12.3. Coherence: It is easy to follow the line of reasoning because
 - 2.12.3.1. language (word choice, word usage, pronouns, verb forms, sentence structure, etc.) is clear (See "Language" below; read "Misplaced Modifiers" E>G).
 - 2.12.3.2. local and global cohesion devices are effective ("Cohesion Devices Local and Global" E>G, "Cohesion Hooks" workbook 4, p. 171).
 - 2.12.3.3. the point is presented before its explanation.
 - 2.12.3.4. ideas are presented in a logical order.
 - 2.12.3.5. the reader doesn't have to stop and guess, because enough information is presented ("Coherence and Content Schema," "Clarity Tags").
 - 2.12.3.6. the reader doesn't have to stop and think, because the relevance of even small details is clear.

2.12.3.7. Closure provides logical resolution in discussion of a point. (See “Closure” E>G, Writing.)

3. SUPPORT

- 3.1. Relevance: Every idea in the essay is clearly relevant to the point that it is intended to support.
 - 3.2. Definition and explanation are used effectively for support. (See “Even When the Reader Knows,” “Clarity Tags,” “Maturity in Writing,” “Examples of Support,” and “Figures for Supporting Your Point,” E>G–Writing.)
 - 3.3. Every general claim is either a) self-explanatory, or b) already generally accepted or considered “reasonable” by the audience, or c) explained sufficiently for the particular audience.
 - 3.4. Concrete examples are provided when helpful to understanding, and they effectively illustrate their intended point.
 - 3.5. Supporting details provide credibility.
 - 3.6. Supporting details and ideas themselves are credible; they do not contradict reality, nor do they contradict other details or ideas in the essay.
 - 3.7. Closure provides logical resolution in discussion of a point. (See “Closure” E>G, Writing.)
 - 3.8. Every element (major and minor ideas) speaks to the assigned audience.
4. TECHNICAL FEATURES: Technical features (spelling, format, etc.) help the reader follow your line of thought and prejudice the reader in favor of the essay. They also give a good impression of the writer. The essay’s format adheres to announced requirements.