



# College **BASE** ONLINE

Essays will be read by at least two professional evaluators familiar with college-level writing. *College BASE* essay readers are trained to evaluate the work as a whole. While the mechanics of composition (e.g., spelling, grammar, punctuation) certainly affect their reading, they understand the time constraints examinees are under. They will score each essay based on its overall success in satisfying the demand of the writing prompt and in meeting the standards described below. All essays are evaluated on the following 6-point scale, with 6 being the highest score possible.

## **SCORING RUBRIC**

**Score of 6** – Essays assigned a “6” will be at least excellent in nearly all respects and may occasionally be superb. The essay will likely present a sharply focused and clearly identifiable main idea or thesis. It will also employ topic sentences (clearly stated or implied) as part of its highly effective organizational strategy in addition to clearly developed paragraphs that display both unity and coherence. Assertions should be sufficiently developed and directed to engage the specified audience and should be supported through appropriate examples, details, and/or other fully integrated rhetorical techniques (e.g. analogy, narration). While the circumstances under which the essays were written allow for some minor imperfections, there should be very few, if any, distracting grammatical or mechanical errors.

**Score of 5** – Essays assigned a “5” will be at least very good in almost all respects, with some glimpses of excellence. Scorers will be looking for a thesis or main idea that is clearly discernible and well-developed. The essay will have a sound organizational structure. Within the body paragraphs, the essay should present sophisticated reasoning and/or support, which goes well beyond the information provided by the prompt. The specified audience will be clearly addressed, and the essay will engage the opposition in a thoughtful way. There should be few distracting grammatical or mechanical errors.

**Score of 4** – Essays assigned a “4” will be at least good in almost all respects and may be very good in some areas. The essay will present a thoughtful thesis, allowing the reader to identify the main idea. The essay will also utilize effective organization marked by clearly stated or implied topic sentences. The body paragraphs will contain effective support of the main idea in each body paragraph, with the topic sentence and supporting ideas working together in a unified way. Most present a main idea or support from beyond the prompt, may offer a complicated or abstract idea or support, and/or begin to use college-level vocabulary. There should be only a limited number of distracting grammatical or mechanical errors, although essays appreciably damaged by such errors should not be assigned a “4.”

**Score of 3** – Essays assigned a “3” will be at least satisfactory in almost all respects. The essay will be somewhat effective but will often contain an unengaging or poorly focused main idea, partially successful topic sentences, and/or inadequate development or support. The body paragraphs will contain at least some support of the main idea in each body paragraph, which usually contains an identifiable topic sentence. The essay might present clear and competent writing but only be conveying superficial ideas or ideas that fail to account for information provided in the prompt. The essay might offer some very insightful core ideas but struggle to present them in a clear and competent manner. There may be some distracting grammatical and mechanical errors.

**Score of 2** – Essays assigned a “2” will be weak because they are poorly written throughout, fail to support major points, or are exceedingly superficial. The essay may be heavily reliant on the prompt. The essay may be flawed by a lack of a discernable organizational pattern, or it may rely upon a clearly organized list with little or no development or simple development that presents personal examples as proof. The essay may offer a single central idea, with limited support, which is marred by a number of distracting grammatical and mechanical issues.

**Score of 1** – Essays assigned a “1” will be clearly unacceptable as college-level writing or will demonstrate only momentary engagement with the topic, including little more than repeating of the prompt, or a focus solely on some tangential topic or concern. The essay may be riddled with major grammatical and mechanical errors and/or will consist of a collection of random thoughts or undeveloped ideas. In short, essays that appear to have been written in careless haste or without effort will receive a “1.”

**Score of 0** – Essays that for any reason cannot be read should be assigned a score of “0.”