


Student: \_\_\_\_\_

 Emerging

Developing

Proficient ✓

Extending 

Holistic Writing Score:

**/6**

- Organization
  - An essay must have a clear, defensible thesis statement in the introductory paragraph, but avoid placing it in the very first sentence.
  - Essays need a brief, properly blended but complete introductory paragraph; fully structured BPs; & a thorough concluding paragraph.
  - BP topics and examples should not overlap with other BPs, and should be organized logically (chronologically, by importance, or, in a complex response, with anti-thesis examples before pro-thesis examples). They also need introductory and concluding sentences.
- Explanation
  - Explanations should be clear and specific, without being wordy. Are the topics & examples in one BP distinct from the other BPs?
  - Do you need more BP detail & concrete examples? Do your best BP arguments go last (BAL)? Have you avoided factual errors?
  - Is your vocabulary sophisticated & appropriate? Avoid awkward or vague phrasing, clichés, euphemisms & colloquial language.
- Sentences
  - Avoid sentence fragments (you need a subject and a predicate), run-ons, and comma splices, but do vary your sentence lengths.
  - Ensure subjects and verbs agree (e.g. each = is ~~are~~) and avoid pronoun confusion (e.g. Who is they? It? He? She?).
  - Don't use "being" to replace active verbs (e.g. "is" and "are") or subordinating conjunctions (e.g. "since" and "because").
  - Avoid starting with "With", "Having", or "Being", and repair improper parallel structure (e.g. I went running, hiking and ~~to~~ golf(ing)).
  - Avoid "you" and "your" in a formal essay; they create vague examples. If general statements are needed, use "we" & "us" **or** "one".
- Introductory Transitions
  - Use effective transitions without repeating & overusing them, or using two in one sentence. Use a transition to start CSs, BPs, & CPs.
- Spelling and Usage
  - Are there any consistently misspelled or misused words? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Watch out for the basics: their/there/they're || to/too/two || a lot, never alot || woman vs. women || then vs. than || "who" for people, not "that" || amount vs. number || your vs. you're || business || beginning || pluralize "y" words with "ies", not "ys"
- Tense Shifts
  - Keep your tense consistent! (When writing about literature, scholars prefer present tense.)
- Punctuation and Capitalization
  - Do not use apostrophes for pluralized words. Use apostrophes for possession or contraction. Watch out for **its** (possessive) vs. **it's**.
  - Colons are used for lists and answers, while semicolons are used sparingly to replace a period rather than a comma.
  - Use a comma after a sub. clause or introductory phrase but avoid one between the subject & the verb or between two examples.
  - Use a comma before and after an appositive phrase: Bella, *Bob's six year-old beagle*, likes to chew on cardboard.
  - Capitalize the pronoun "I", specifically named (proper) nouns, and first words, but not common or so-called "important" nouns.
- Details
  - Avoid most abbreviations in formal writing, including *etc.* and *&*. Write 1 to 10 as words (i.e. one, two... ten).
  - Titles: Books & plays are underlined **or** *italicized*, whereas poems, short stories, essays, & articles are placed in "quotations marks".
  - Are your quotations appropriate & effectively blended? Did you indent and include a title & name? Use 1.5 spacing for typed work.