

STUDENT NAME:

Essay Rubric

Category	Above Standards	Meets Standards	Approaching Standards	Below Standards	Failing	Score
Prose Clarity: Sentences	21	18	15	12	9	
Structural Clarity: Paragraphs & Essay	20	18	16	13	11	
Accuracy of your Interpretation	19	17	15	13	11	
Persuasiveness of your Arguments	19	17	15	13	11	
Interest of your Essay	19	17	15	13	11	
					TOTAL:	

Prose Clarity: Sentences Do all sentences in your essay make sense? Are they easy to understand, and free of extraneous words? Do they suffer from vagueness, spelling errors, typos, grammatical errors, mistakes in word choice, or awkward phrases? **Notice that the numerical values in this row drop further and more quickly than in other rows. This means lower scores in this category damage your overall grade more than lower scores in any other category.**

Structural Clarity: Paragraphs & Essay Can your reader easily understand, for any given sentence (and paragraph) in your paper, why that sentence (or paragraph) follows its predecessor, and precedes its successor? Does the essay stake out a clear thesis? Are there clear transitions between paragraphs and sections? Does the essay as a whole hang together? **Notice that the numerical values in this row drop further and more quickly than in any other row except Prose Clarity.**

Accuracy of your Interpretation Virtually all good philosophy papers involve characterizing others' views somewhere along the line. Are your characterizations accurate? Do you document your interpretive claims?

(E.g., “Descartes holds that everything he clearly and distinctly conceives is true (Descartes, p. 53).”) Are your interpretations charitable—in other words, is it really plausible to think that the people you discuss actually hold the views you ascribe to them?

Persuasiveness of your Arguments Every decent philosophy paper defends some central thesis. Are the arguments you use to defend your thesis logically sound? Are all controversial premises themselves well supported? Do you attempt to answer potential objections to your position?

Interest of your Essay Are you defending a thesis that nobody would quarrel with? That will not make for a good paper. Instead, defend a thesis that is likely to hold some interest to an informed reader. Does the argument you use to defend said thesis show ingenuity and originality? Also, remember that philosophy essays are just that—essays. Have you produced an essay that, overall, is likely to engage the informed reader's interest?