
Research Essay Guidelines & Rubrics

Guidelines

For this essay you may write on any of the assigned novels, short stories, or poems by Atwood. Essays require critical analysis of your selected text(s) in connection to one or more of the thematic elements explored in this class and must develop a persuasive arguable thesis. **Undergraduate papers** should be a minimum of 1,500-1,8000 words, incorporate at least five secondary sources of literary criticism and/or critical theory, and at least one non-fiction source or essay by Atwood, as it pertains to your selected text(s). **Graduate papers** should be a minimum of 2,000-2,500 words, incorporate at least seven secondary sources of literary criticism and/or critical theory, and at least two non-fiction sources or essays by Atwood, as they pertain to your selected text(s). All essays should follow the most recent MLA Style guidelines and sources must be scholarly and reliable. You are free to revise and develop any of your critical responses into your research essay. You are encouraged to review the student sample essay in Pilot; this was an A paper by a student in a similar 4000-level course that I've taught at Wright State. Essays must be submitted to the Pilot dropbox **by 11:59 pm Saturday 4/30**, the last day of exam week—**late submissions will not be accepted.**

Rubric:

A: 18-20	B: 16-17	C: 14-15	D: 12-13	F: 0-11
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1. Depth of Subject: ____/20

Provides a clear subject/thesis and develops an argument with adequate support and evidence by examples. Demonstrates understanding of major concepts of text(s) and/or significant issues/contexts. Avoids lengthy explications or synopses of plot (if writing a literary analysis). Expresses originality of thought and sustains objective level of critical analysis.

2. Organization: ____/20

Analysis is precise, pertinent, and well supported. Provides a logical conceptual approach. Clearly links interpretive points to subject and/or argument. Avoids repetition, reductive arguments, or any tangential material that detracts from central focus. Provides clear transitions between and within sections of paper. Paragraphs and sentences are clearly structured and coherently and adequately develop their main topic.

3. Completeness & Accuracy: ____/20

Remains focused on exploring all elements of the stated thesis as fully as possible. Interpretation is appropriate and grounded within the text(s) and/or evidence from secondary sources. The paper adheres to and fulfills the requirements of the assignment, including the minimum word count and secondary sources.

4. Clarity of Expression: ____/20

Sentences are clear, concise, varied, and logical. Vocabulary and terminology are appropriate to the subject, purpose, and audience, and adhere to the standards of academic style. Subjects agree with verbs. Elements are parallel. References and word order are clear. Spelling, grammar, punctuation, mechanics, etc., are correct. Manuscript has been proofread and is free of typographical errors.

5. Style & Documentation: ____/20

Paper is formatted according to style guidelines. Does not heavily rely on quotations from secondary sources; paraphrases and summaries are in own words; phrasing and original wording is correctly quoted; documentation is provided for all quotations, summaries and paraphrases; makes effective use of signal phrases when quoting. Language, tone and verb tense correctly follow MLA guidelines. All references to primary and secondary sources are cited correctly and consistently according to style guidelines, including punctuation. Works Cited Page is correctly and consistently formatted. All in-text citations are included in Works Cited and vice versa.

Total Points: ____/100 x 3 = ____/300 (30% of Final Grade) **Letter Grade:** _____
