

English 110

Sourced Research Essay

Grading Calibration

The English Department of Monmouth College agrees that a sourced research paper presents an arguable thesis based on a culture/climate of controversy. Essays should examine a specific issue which is debatable; provide ample background so the reader can understand the writer's discussion; support the writer's reasons with clear evidence and analysis; include logical reasons which support the writer's position; anticipate and refute or accommodate counterarguments at appropriate times in the essay; and carefully, correctly document outside sources. The purpose of the paper is not to research a topic individually, but to manage/integrate a number of sources provided by the instructor into an arguable paper since the process of research is examined in other courses across the curriculum.

Sample Essays

Essay #1: "College Mascots" (F)

The "College Mascots" essay provides the reader with reasonable content and a clear attempt to tie paragraphs/points to the thesis, although there is no clear thesis. The essay is mainly expository with no sources documented and no evidence of having mastered the concept of source integration or argument. The paper includes major grammatical flows, redundant summaries, and poor clarity. The writer attempts to create an evaluative thesis, but there are no clear criteria included. Therefore, the department justifies the grade as an F since most grades were F's with one D-.

Essay #2: "What Should the Drinking Age Be?" (A-/B+)

The "What Should the Drinking Age Be?" essay has clearly articulated reasons, clear topic sentences, integrated research, and a clear structure. Despite overusing the Olson source and having some awkward phrasing, the use of rebuttal creates a convincing, persuasive argument. The introduction could be shortened, though, and the claim is not warranted well, leading to some vague explanations. The use of signal phrases, counterargument, rebuttal, and qualification are well done. Therefore, the department justifies the grade as approximately an A-/B+ since most grades were A-'s and ranged from an A- down to a B-.

Essay #3: "It Is Up To the Users" (D)

The "It Is Up To the Users" essay has some evidence, an engagement with the topic, and an attempt to meet the requirements of the prompt. Despite major grammatical errors, the response addresses a controversial issue and attempts to take a position. The sources are not incorporated into the paper, there is no clear structure, and there is poor logic displayed throughout the body of the paper. Additionally, there are cause/effect problems, redundancies of information, and two possible arguments leading to an unclear position. Therefore, the department justifies the grade as a D since most grades were C-/D's and ranged from C- down to an F.