

Senior Research Paper Rubric

MLA formatting requirements for the paper and the Works Cited page are not listed on this rubric because they are not qualitative in nature.

Last updated 5/31/2018

Element		Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
CONTENT	Opening/ Thesis Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging opening Compelling thesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulaic opening Formulaic thesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening is present Thesis is vague 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening is missing Thesis is not present or unclear
	Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong and clear topic sentences Skillful and logical organization Purposeful transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic sentences are present Organization is evident Useful transitions exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly consistent topic sentences Organization has detours Transitions attempted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak or no topic sentences used Little organization evident No transitions
	Supporting Details: Quality/ Quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong, rich supporting data and details to prove thesis Supporting details are from relevant and reliable sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient data and details to prove thesis Most supporting details are from relevant and reliable resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting details sporadically prove thesis Supporting details lack relevance and/or are from unreliable sources to the degree that the paper's strength is threatened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missing or weak data that does not support thesis Supporting details so often lack relevance and/or reliability that the strength of the paper is compromised
	Ideas: Quality/ Quantity/Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skillfully weaves original ideas, facts, and thesis Ideas clearly and thoroughly presented Commentary clearly and skillfully connects research to thesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently links ideas, facts, and thesis Clear progression of ideas Commentary included but still requires some reader inference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops some ties between ideas, facts, and thesis Some ideas unclear Ideas are chunked and lack connecting commentary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas may be present but not tied to factual data or thesis Repetitive ideas or list like Too many questions remain unanswered
	Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizes the significance of message Leaves reader interested and satisfied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compelling reference to thesis Leaves reader satisfied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference to thesis Sense of completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusion repeats opening or thesis Leaves reader hanging, unsatisfied, or confused Brings up new topics or ideas
STYLE	Readability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voice draws reader in and engages Consistently varies sentence structure and length Clear academic voice; third person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voice holds reader's attention Attempts originality and sentence variety Consistent third person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voice is reasonable and convincing Some sentence variety Mostly third person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voice inappropriately personal and not engaging; resembles "How to" Sentences lack variety or originality Inconsistent or no use of third person
	Mechanics, Grammar and Syntax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates excellence in mechanics Demonstrates excellence in grammar and syntax 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor errors in mechanics, but errors do not impede readability Minor errors in grammar and syntax, but errors do not impede readability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple errors in mechanics, but errors are minimally distracting Multiple errors in grammar and syntax, but errors are minimally distracting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errors in mechanics are severe enough to detract from the writer's message Errors in grammar and syntax are severe enough to detract from the writer's message
	Use of Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective and varied use of multiple sources throughout paragraphs and paper Incorporates paraphrases, summaries, and direct quotations with meaningful intent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective and varied use multiple throughout the paper Incorporates paraphrases, summaries, and direct quotations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective use of sources throughout the paper Incorporates only two of the three 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources only appear at the ends of paragraphs Incorporates only one of the three