Score	Superior - 4	Competent - 3	Developing - 2	Substandard - 1	Unsatisfactory - 0
Content					
Focus on Topic	Topic is clear and well-focused; the writer stays on topic and supports the main idea with detailed information.	Topic is obvious, but writer may drift or stray from main point once, or may provide information at times that is too general or perhaps somewhat unclear.	Topic is somewhat clear, but the main idea occasionally becomes lost due to the need for further clarification or more support.	Topic is not entirely clear; two or more main ideas may have been attempted, with little supporting information.	No or several topics may have been attempted, with no resulting main idea. There is a seemingly random collection of information, resulting in no real information at all.
Support for Topic	Relevant, telling, quality details give reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but one key issue may be unsupported or more predictable than others.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but one or more key issues are unsupported or fairly predictable.	Supporting details and information are somewhat relevant, but several key issues are unsupported or are all fairly predictable.	Supporting details and information are typically unclear, not related to the topic, or simply not present.
Critical Thinking	Writer demonstrates abundant evidence of evaluation and assessment of information and application of that information in drawing logical conclusions.	Writer demonstrates ample evidence of evaluation and synthesis of information in order to reach logical conclusions.	Writer demonstrates some evidence of evaluation and synthesis of information in order to reach logical conclusions.	Writer demonstrates very limited ability to understand the importance of information and to draw logical conclusions.	Writer demonstrates no evidence of the ability to understand the importance of information and to draw logical conclusions.
Structure and Organization					
Introduction	The introduction successfully fulfills these requirements, and perhaps others: clearly states the main topic, previews the structure of the paper, and engages/invites the reader.	The introduction fulfills these requirements to a moderate degree: states the main topic, previews the structure of the paper, and engages the reader.	The introduction attempts to state the main topic, preview the structure of the paper, and/or engage the reader, but fails in one or more areas.	The introduction attempts, but is unable to, state the main topic, preview the structure of the paper, or engage the reader.	The introduction fails to state the main topic, preview the structure of the paper, or engage the reader in any way.
Organization and Development	Support or details are placed in a logical order, and the way they are presented effectively keeps the interest of the reader.	Support or details are placed in a logical order, but the way they are presented/introduced sometimes makes the writing less interesting.	Some support and details are in a logical/expected order, but others are not, providing little incentive for the reader.	The details are either not in a logical/expected order, or they are presented in a tedious manner.	No details are not present, or they are not in a logical or expected order; the writer demonstrates no organization or forethought.
Transitions	A variety of transitions (especially between paragraphs but also between sentences) are clearly and thoughtfully used to show how ideas are connected.	Transitions, especially between paragraphs, clearly show how ideas are connected, but more variety may be needed.	Some transitions are in use and work well, but other connections between paragraphs and sentences are weak.	Few transitions exists or work well, making most or nearly all connections between paragraphs, and even some sentences, fuzzy or unclear.	No transitions between paragraphs or sentences appear to exist; ideas are loosely strung together or have no connection at all.
Conclusion	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader with a feeling that s/he understands what the writer is conveying.	The conclusion is recognizable and has effective closure.	The conclusion is recognizable, but it lacks effective closure.	There appears to be an attempt at a conclusion, but it does nothing to bring the topic to a close.	There is no conclusion; the paper ends abruptly.

Score	Superior - 4	Competent - 3	Developing - 2	Substandard - 1	Unsatisfactory - 0
Conventions					
Sentence Structure and Variety	All sentences are well-constructed, vary in length and structure, sound natural, and have a clear and obvious emphasis.	Most sentences are well-constructed, vary in length and structure, sound natural, and have a fairly clear and obvious emphasis.	While most sentences are fairly well-constructed, they may be similar in nature, and the emphasis may not always be clear. Perhaps a few run-ons, fragments, or comma splices are present.	Some sentences are well-constructed, but others may be repetitive in structure, unclear, or awkward. Perhaps several run-ons, fragments, or comma splices are present.	Sentences lack proper structure and appear incomplete, unclear, or rambling. Numerous run-ons, fragments, and comma splices may be present.
Grammar and Usage	Writer makes no errors in grammar or usage that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes a few very minor errors in grammar or usage that may distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes several minor errors in grammar or usage that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes several significant errors in grammar or usage that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes excessive errors in grammar or usage that mar the content of the paper and greatly distract the reader.
Spelling, Capitalization, Punctuation, etc.	Writer makes no errors in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation; thus the paper is exceptionally easy to read.	Writer makes a few minor errors in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation, but the paper is still easy to read.	Writer makes several errors in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation that interrupt the reader and disrupt the flow.	Writer makes several significant errors in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation that interrupt the reader and greatly disrupt the flow.	Writer makes numerous significant errors in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation, marring the content of the paper and greatly distracting the reader.
Style					
Voice and Personality	The writer successfully uses several reasons/appeals to show why the reader should care or want to know more about the topic; s/he seems to write from knowledge or experience, demonstrating ownership of the topic.	The writer successfully uses one or two reasons/appeals to show why the reader should care or want to know more about the topic and also seems to draw on knowledge or experience, but s/he somewhat lacks direct ownership of the topic.	The writer attempts to use reasons/appeals to show why the reader should care or want to know more about the topic. S/he seems to draw on knowledge or experience but lacks direct ownership of the topic.	The writer does little to make the reader care about the topic; very little of the writer's knowledge or experience is related, and it adds nothing to the discussion of the topic.	The writer makes no attempt to make the reader care about the topic and has not tried to transform the information in a personal way. The ideas and the way they are expressed seem to belong to someone else.
Word Choice	Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, and the choice and placement of the words seem accurate, natural, and not forced.	Writer uses vivid words and phrases that create pictures in the reader's mind, but occasionally the words may be inaccurate or overdone.	Writer uses words that communicate adequately, but occasionally the words may be inaccurate, overdone, or lack variety.	Writer uses a limited vocabulary that does not communicate strongly or capture the reader's interest. Jargon or clichés may be present and detract from the meaning.	Writer uses numerous words incorrectly and lacks variety in word choice, thereby failing to capture attention or communicate a message.
Audience	Writer demonstrates a clear understanding of the potential reader and uses appropriate vocabulary and arguments. S/he anticipates reader's questions and provides thorough answers appropriate for that audience.	The writer demonstrates a general understanding of the potential reader and uses vocabulary and arguments appropriate for that audience.	The writer demonstrates some understanding of the potential reader and uses arguments appropriate for that audience.	The writer demonstrates little understanding of the potential reader and uses arguments inappropriate for that audience.	Writer appears to have no understanding for whom s/he is writing.
Resources					
Resources	All sources used as supporting information (quotes, statistics, and facts, etc.) are credible and cited correctly, exhibiting quality and breadth.	All sources used as supporting information (quotes, statistics, and facts, etc.) are credible and cited correctly but variety of sources could be greater.	Most sources used as supporting information (quotes, statistics, facts, etc.) are credible and cited correctly some of the time but lack quality and breadth.	Some sources used as supporting information (quotes, statistics, facts, etc.) are credible but may not be cited correctly and/or may lack quality and breadth.	No sources are used; or all/most are not credible, not cited properly, or not varied.