*Mini-Essay Scoring Guide*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Thesis/claim | Complete with a topic, a strong opinion and a clear, debatable so what/why/becausePolished, sophisticated, and uses precise language | Complete with a topic, an opinion, and a so what/why/because, but could be more debatableSo what/why/because could be more fully exploredContains good ideas but is awkwardly wordedNeeds more precise language | Missing one of the parts: topic, opinion, so what/ why/ becauseDoes not make a clear argument | Does not address the assigned questionDoes not include a thesis statement |
| Topic sentences  | Specific, distinct and convincing sentences that support the thesisFocus on an idea rather than characterClearly express precisely worded contentions- not summary statements or quotations | Sentences support the thesis but arguments could be more convincingExpress contentions- not summary statements of quotation—but could be clearer or more concise  | Need to be more specific or distinctNeed to be clearerMay focus on character rather than idea | Do not support the thesisSome sentences are missing |
| Textual Evidence: Selection  | Quotations fully support the argumentTwo pieces of textual evidence per body paragraphAppropriate length--not too long or shortDrawn from various parts of the text and demonstrates a strong understanding of the text | Some textual evidence could be stronger to better support the argumentOne piece of textual evidence per body paragraphDrawn from various parts of the text and demonstrates a general understanding of the text  | Does not have enough evidence from the text—one paragraph may be missing evidenceSeveral quotations do not support the argumentDrawn from a limited part of the text and demonstrates a vague understanding of the text  | Textual evidence is missing |
| Textual Evidence: Integration  | Concise (specific, brief, and to the point) context (naming who is speaking to whom and when) to introduce each quotationSmooth transition from context to evidence; makes use of a strong & precise signal phraseCorrect citation format | Some context to introduce the quotation such as speaker and setting, but may need to add more informationTransitions from context to evidence; signal phrase needs to be more preciseMinor citation errors |  Inappropriate or irrelevant context—may include too much information and/or may not include the speaker or settingAwkward or incomplete transition; unclear signal phrase Incorrect citation format | Missing context or simply lists the sourceLacks transition; signal phrase is missingMissing citations |
| Analysis | Focused, in-depth analysis to support the thesis; demonstrates a deep understanding of the larger ideasClearly and logically explains how the evidence proves the claimMaintains strong focus on the thesis throughout  | Decent analysis to support the thesis, demonstrates some understanding of the broader ideas, but could be more developed Partially explains how the evidence proves the claimFocused throughout most of the essay, but may stray at times | Demonstrates some understanding of the larger ideas, but needs more depthDoes not logically explain how the evidence proves the claimMay summarize more than argue | Little or no analysisIdeas need to be developed |
| Mechanics | Minimal mechanical errors and they do not distract (grammar, spelling, usage, punctuation, etc.) |  Few distracting mechanical errors (grammar, spelling, usage, punctuation, etc.) | Several mechanical errors (grammar, spelling, usage, punctuation, etc.) that begin to distract from the meaning  | Many mechanical errors (grammar, spelling, usage, punctuation, etc.) that distract from the meaning |