**An 8-9 essay** responds to the prompt clearly, directly, and fully. This paper approaches

the text analytically, supports a coherent thesis with evidence from the text(s), and explains

how the evidence illustrates and reinforces its thesis. The essay is specific, well organized, uses effective vocabulary, and is free of mechanical and grammatical errors. The writer’s style is fluent, richly detailed, and stylistically resourceful. Descriptors include: mastery, sophisticated, complex, specific, consistent, and well-supported. **9 = 30 points. 8 = 28.5 points.**

**A 6-7 essay** responds to the assignment clearly and directly but with less development

than an 8-9 paper. It demonstrates a good understanding of the text(s) and supports its thesis

with appropriate textual evidence. While its approach is analytical, the analysis is less

precise than in the 8-9 essay, and its use of the text is competent but not as precise or complex. The writing in this paper is forceful and clear with few if any grammatical and mechanical

errors. There are no significant misreadings of the text(s). Descriptors include: demonstrates a clear understanding but is less well-developed, less maturely written, less precise, less well-supported. A 6 essay is more simplistic than a 7, and is less mature, contains less analysis, and has a more simplistic writing style. **7 = 25.5 points. 6 = 24 points.**

**A 5 essay** addresses the assigned topic accurately but does not answer it fully and

specifically. It is characterized by a good but general grasp of the text(s) using the text(s) to

frame an apt response to the prompt. It may employ textual evidence sparingly, is almost exclusively summary, or offers evidence that is not specific to the thesis The essay is clear and organized but may be somewhat mechanical. The paper may also be marred by grammatical and mechanical errors. Descriptors include: accurate but simplistic, superficial, vague, mechanical.

**5 = 22.5 points.**

**A 3-4 essay** fails in some important way to fulfill the demands of the prompt. It may not

address part of the assignment, fail to provide minimal textual support for its thesis, or

base its analysis on a misreading of some part of the text. This essay may present one or

more incisive insights among others of less value. The writing may be similarly uneven

in development with lapses in organization, clarity, grammar, and mechanics. Descriptors include: insufficient evidence, misunderstanding of the prompt or text(s), doesn’t answer the prompt, oversimplified, irrelevant, incomplete. **4 = 21 points. 3 = 19.5 points.**

**A 1-2 essay** commonly combines two or more serious failures. It may not address the

actual assignment; it may indicate a serious misreading of the text; it may not offer

textual evidence or may use it in a way that suggests a failure to understand the text; it

may be unclear, badly written, or unacceptably brief. The style of this paper is usually

marked by egregious errors. Occasionally a paper in this range is smoothly written but

devoid of content. **2 = 18 points. 1 = 15 points.**