



## Sample Rubric for Informative/Explanatory Papers (with a research component)

*Professor Name and Class Title:* This helps ensure the assignment sheet doesn't get lost in the shuffle.

*Title of the Assignment:* This helps students associate the name of this type of writing with the format described below.

*Rough Draft Due:*

Some instructors include these due dates so that students have all of the assignment information in one spot.

*Final Draft Due:*

Depending upon their students' habits, instructors often include the time as well as the date (e.g. Friday, March 10, 2006 at 5 p.m.).

*Paper Length:*

Providing length guidelines helps students focus their ideas and structure their writing.

*Assignment Description:*

Provide a brief overview of the assignment and the skills students should demonstrate in their papers.

**Example:** Incorporating at least three outside sources (at least one of which must be a scholarly source), write an explanatory synthesis about a topic interesting to you. Keep in mind that an explanatory synthesis should *inform*, not argue. You will turn in all of your sources or photocopies of the appropriate pages with your final draft.

*Requirements:*

List clearly the requirements to fulfill the assignment. Instructors can do this by breaking the paper into a set of skills (e.g. formulating a clear thesis statement, providing smooth transitions, etc.) students must demonstrate. This reinforces the idea that there are standard, "objective" criteria for evaluating informative/explanatory writing—as opposed to students' common perception that their papers are graded "subjectively" according to the instructor's whims—and, once graded, provides them with specific information about how well they demonstrate each skill.

There are several ways to do this. One commonly-used method is presented on the following page:

<i>Skill Demonstrated</i>	<i>Exceeds expectations for college writing</i>	<i>Meets expectations for college writing</i>	<i>Does not meet expectations for college writing</i>
Introduction: provides essential information about the article(s) and author(s); includes a thesis; lays out main points to be covered later in the paper; indicates why readers should care about the topic	(8-6 pts.)	(5-3 pts.)	(2-0 pts.)
Thesis: is clear and focused; indicates writer's synthesis of sources' information on the topic	(5-4 pts.)	(3-2 pts.)	(1-0 pts.)
Body: explains clearly and thoroughly each of the main ideas	(14-10 pts.)	(9-5 pts.)	(4-0 pts.)
Organization: follows an appropriate organizational scheme (e.g. chronological, pro vs. con, least important to most important, etc.)	(14-10 pts.)	(9-5 pts.)	(4-0 pts.)
Supporting information: contains quotes, paraphrases, and examples from appropriate sources	(14-10 pts.)	(9-5 pts.)	(4-0 pts.)
Quotes: incorporates quotes by introducing them smoothly and explaining/demonstrating their relevance	(8-6 pts.)	(5-3 pts.)	(2-0 pts.)
Paragraphs: start with a topic or transitional sentence; contain only information relevant to the paragraph's main idea	(8-6 pts.)	(5-3 pts.)	(2-0 pts.)
Transitions: move the reader smoothly from one idea to the next	(6-4 pts.)	(3-2 pts.)	(1-0 pt.)
Conclusion: presents final thoughts on the topic; answers, "so what?" (in other words, why is this information important for the reader to know?)	(11-8 pts.)	(7-4 pts.)	(3-0 pts.)
Citation: cites in correct MLA style, both in-text and in the works cited page*	(11-8 pts.)	(7-4 pts.)	(3-0 pts.)
Revising: shows significant improvement from the rough draft to the final draft**	(8-6 pts.)	(5-3 pts.)	(2-0 pts.)
Editing & Proofreading: demonstrates careful reading and correcting of awkward sentences as well as grammar and punctuation errors	(5-4 pts.)	(3-2 pts.)	(1-0 pt.)

\*Papers that do not contain citations will automatically receive an F.

\*\*If you attach a signed form from the Writing Center indicating you worked with a writing tutor, you may be eligible for additional points in this category.

**Total points available: 112**

**Your points: \_\_\_\_\_ / 112 = \_\_\_\_\_ % = \_\_\_\_\_ letter grade**