

An **“A” paper** responds to this assignment with fresh and persuasive insights.

- This essay argues for a particular interpretation of a medieval text, responding specifically to one recent scholarly treatment of that text
- It is consistently directed to an audience who has read the selected literary text but needs to be reminded of the particular contexts for the issues/episodes being discussed.
- It provides a succinct and clear summary of the scholarly article
- The entire paper is sequenced around a thesis that explains both the interpretation of the text and the response to the scholarly article
- Passages from the literary text or article that offer further evidence of the significance of the argument are analyzed and explained.
- The style is fluent throughout; sentences within paragraphs are logically sequenced, and transitions within and between paragraphs are smooth.
- There are no serious or distracting mechanical errors or flaws. The paper follows the designated MLA formatting (includes a “Works Cited” page).
- It is evident that the writer has observed and analyzed the texts carefully, and has presented ideas in an engaging way.

A **“B” paper**, like the “A” paper, is one that goes beyond a routine (summary) presentation of the scholarly article and literary text. The thesis is fresh and compelling, rather than fairly obvious. What keeps it from the “A” grade could be lack of adequate development or minor, but distracting stylistic elements.

A **“C” paper** is one that adequately fulfills this assignment’s objectives – it has all the pieces, but may develop them unevenly, giving the resulting essay a lopsided feel, reflect inadequate or underdeveloped insight about its subject.

- This essay may include an argument that gets overly detailed or is not well developed.
- The interpretation may lack enough evidence to become fully persuasive.
- The paper does not provide enough context for the significance of the textual evidence.
- The paper may lack focus, or the paragraphs may not transition into each other fluently.
- The lead and the wrap-up may be present, but are perhaps more perfunctory than memorable.
- This paper may contain some errors in grammar, punctuation and usage, but most of these mistakes do not seriously interfere with the reader’s understanding of the essay at large.

A **“D” paper** is one that responds to this assignment in an inadequate or general way.

- Its thesis may become obscured by serious mechanical/stylistic problems or it may be undeveloped to the point where the reader becomes disengaged.
- It may provide only a vague focus and be more intent on simply describing the texts.
- It may start out with a focus and lose it.
- It may base its interpretation solely on subjective opinion and fail to provide adequate evidence.
- It may, alternately, provide an overly detailed description and an underdeveloped interpretation.
- The content may be so derivative of a secondary source that the writer’s voice isn’t adequately established.

An **“F” paper** is one that fails to fulfill this assignment’s basic objectives.

- It may lack a clear thesis.
- It may be so poorly organized that readers cannot decipher the important ideas presented and cannot find the writer’s main points.
- It may contain so many spelling and grammatical errors that the reader has difficulty deciphering it.
- It may be that the writer has borrowed heavily, both in terms of wording and ideas, from secondary sources.