

Grading Rubric for Illustration Essays

Use this template to understand instructor priorities and self-assess your work before submission.

Criteria & Weighting

Category	Exemplary (A Range)	Proficient (B Range)	Developing (C Range)	Needs Work (D/F Range)	Your Self-Score
THESIS & FOCUS (20%) Clarity, specificity, and argument strength	18-20 pts: Thesis is clear, specific, and arguable. Perfectly previews the essay's direction. Entire essay remains tightly focused on proving this claim.	16-17 pts: Thesis is clear and arguable but could be more precise. Essay generally stays on topic.	14-15 pts: Thesis is vague, overly broad, or somewhat obvious. Essay may drift from the central claim at times.	≤13 pts: Thesis is missing, confusing, or purely factual. Essay lacks a clear central point.	____ _ / 20
USE OF ILLUSTRATION (30%) Quality, relevance, and explanation of examples	27-30 pts: Examples are vivid, specific, and perfectly chosen to prove the thesis. They are varied (e.g., personal, historical, data). Each is thoroughly explained and connected to the thesis with	24-26 pts: Examples are relevant and clear. Analysis explains the connection to the thesis, though it may lack depth in places. May rely heavily on one type of example.	21-23 pts: Examples are generic, vague, or only loosely connected to the thesis. Analysis is minimal, simply restating the example without showing <i>how</i> it proves the point.	≤20 pts: Examples are missing, irrelevant, or inaccurate. No meaningful analysis is present.	____ _ / 30

	insightful analysis.				
ORGANIZATION & FLOW (20%) Structure, paragraphing, and transitions	18-20 pts: Logical, easy-to-follow structure. Each body paragraph begins with a strong topic sentence. Transitions between ideas are seamless. Introduction sets up, and conclusion effectively synthesizes.	16-17 pts: Clear structure. Paragraphs are mostly focused. Transitions are present but may be routine. Introduction and conclusion are adequate.	14-15 pts: Structure is unclear or formulaic. Paragraphs may lack focus or contain multiple ideas. Transitions are weak or missing. Intro/conclusion are underdeveloped.	≤13 pts: Disorganized or confusing structure. Paragraphing is arbitrary. No effective intro or conclusion.	____ / 20
STYLE & CLARITY (15%) Word choice, sentence variety, and tone	14-15 pts: Writing is engaging, precise, and appropriate for the audience. Sentences are varied and fluent. Tone is confident and consistent.	12-13 pts: Writing is clear and functional. Sentences are mostly correct but may lack variety. Tone is appropriate.	10-11 pts: Writing is vague, repetitive, or simplistic. Word choice is imprecise. Tone may be inconsistent or inappropriate.	≤9 pts: Writing is confusing, overly informal, or filled with jargon. Hard to follow.	____ / 15
MECHANICS (15%) Grammar, punctuation, spelling, formatting	14-15 pts: Essentially error-free. Adheres to all formatting guidelines (MLA/APA/etc.). Demonstrates excellent command of conventions.	12-13 pts: Occasional minor errors that do not obscure meaning. Formatting is mostly correct.	10-11 pts: Noticeable errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation that occasionally distract the reader. Formatting issues present.	≤9 pts: Pervasive errors that significantly interfere with readability. Does not follow formatting guidelines.	____ / 15

Total Score: _____ / 100

Grade Equivalent:

- **90-100: A Range** – Exceptional, publishable work. Exceeds all core requirements.
- **80-89: B Range** – Solid, proficient work. Meets all requirements effectively.
- **70-79: C Range** – Adequate work. Meets basic requirements but lacks development or polish.
- **60-69: D Range** – Underdeveloped work. Fails to meet several key requirements.
- **≤59: F Range** – Incomplete or does not fulfill the assignment.

Instructor's Overall Comments:

Strengths:

Areas for Improvement / Revision Notes:

Student Self-Assessment & Revision Plan

(Complete this section after using the rubric)

1. **Based on my self-score, my essay's greatest strength is**
in: _____
2. **The category where I can most improve is:** _____
3. **Before submitting, I will make these 2-3 specific changes:**
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

(Save this rubric as a checklist. Use it to evaluate your draft during the revision process, not just before submission.)