

Evaluation rubric for essay question

Category	Unacceptable		Average		Excellent
Theme and coherence (20%)	No theme is obvious. Each sentence is an isolated statement disconnected from other sentences.	A theme is present but it is not clearly developed. Many statements seem irrelevant or disconnected.	The essay centers on a theme. Most of the sentences contribute coherently to the development of the theme. A few phrases or sentences seem irrelevant or disconnected.	Most of the essay focuses on a coherent theme or themes. Almost every word, phrase, and sentence contributes to the development of the theme.	All of the essay focuses on a coherent theme or themes. Every word, phrase, and sentence contributes to the development of the theme.
Mathematical precision and accuracy (35%)	No statements are mathematically precise or accurate.	Some statements are mathematically accurate but many are not.	The majority of statements are mathematically accurate but some are inaccurate and need to be rewritten or qualified.	Most statements are mathematically accurate but a few need to be qualified.	All statements are mathematically precise and accurate.
Insight and originality (35%)	There is nothing insightful or original in the essay.	Most ideas are a poor reflection of the “standard” interpretation, say that of the textbook. Little independent thought is in evidence.	The essay reflects some independent thought. Some ideas are presented with new insight unique to the author. Other ideas are presented with the “standard” interpretation, say that of the textbook.	Most ideas are presented in an original way that goes beyond the “standard” interpretation, say that of the textbook.	The essay reflects careful independent thought. It is clear that the author had internalized the ideas and has her/his own perspective on the material.
Technical aspects (10%)	There are numerous grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. Mathematical expressions are not incorporated into the grammatical structure.	There are a few grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. Some mathematical expressions are incorporated into the mathematical structure but others are not.	There are almost no errors in grammatical structure, spelling, or punctuation. There are a few awkward grammatical constructions.	There are no errors in grammatical structure, spelling, or punctuation. Most of the writing flows smoothly but improvements could be made in a few places.	There are no errors in grammatical structure, spelling, or punctuation. All of the writing flows smoothly.