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| **Criteria** | **Below Standard** | **Approaching Standard** | **Meeting Standard** | **Exceeding Standard** |
| **Focus & Structure** | Essay does not maintain a clear and logical organization. | Essay maintains a mostly clear and logical organization. | Essay maintains a clear, relevant, and logical organization. | Essay maintains a clear, relevant, and logical organization. Evidence works together to build upon and form an argument. |
| **Introduction** | Introductory section contains some context and an unclear thesis statement. | Introductory section provides an opening, context and a thesis statement. | Introductory section provides a strong opening, adequate context and a clear thesis statement. | Introductory section provides a strong opening, context and a thesis statement. The thesis includes details that preview the rest of the essay. |
| **Evidence** | Student supports their thesis  statement with few  clear and relevant examples and no quotes. Does not provide adequate counterclaim. | Student supports their thesis statement with some  clear and relevant examples  from credible sources using  quotes. Evidence attempts to  acknowledge and refute alternate or opposing points of view but does so unclearly. | Student supports their  thesis statement with multiple clear and relevant examples from credible sources using quotes.  Evidence acknowledges and  Refutes alternate or opposing points of view. | Student supports their thesis statement with multiple clear and relevant examples from credible sources using quotes. Evidence acknowledges  and refutes alternate or opposing points of view  using quotes. |
| **Conclusion** | Essay provides mostly a summary and offers no  explanation of main ideas. | Essay provides mostly summary but offers some explanation of main ideas. | Essay provides a concluding statement that summarizes the major points, and explains their significance in a somewhat logical manner. | Essay provides a concluding statement that summarizes the major points, and explains their significance in a logical manner. |
| **Language Choice & Conventions** | Rarely uses strong  words, transitional phrases and complex sentences.  Grammatical conventions are  rarely followed | Sometimes uses  strong words, transitional phrases and complex sentences. Grammatical  conventions are sometimes  followed. | Frequently uses strong  words, transitional phrases and complex sentences. Grammatical conventions are  usually followed. | Uses strong words,  transitional phrases and complex sentences throughout. Grammatical  conventions are followed  successfully. |