

## The Personal Essay Scoring Guide

A:

Shows invention, creativity, and lucidity. Demonstrates clarity and insight while responding to the intention of the prompt. The reflection is woven into the description of the experience instead of a separate section. Paper memorably presents fine details and is exceptionally thoughtful. Presents ideas in an original fashion, using imaginative language. The paper reveals deepening thought sometimes expressed as wonder. No mistakes. Mechanics are used for stylistic effect.

B:

Presents the experience through concrete details, sensory language, dialogue, and/or action. May recount a single experience or a web of experiences. The reader will be able to know something about student personality through student writing. Uses different sentence lengths and types. Recounts observations in an effective way as a way to keep the reflection connected to the experience. Organization is through natural progression of ideas. Uses precise language. Few, if any, errors.

C:

May be brief, or the occasion may be the entire essay. May take the form of something very general to be explained rather than explored. May be thoughtful but predictable, grounded in the experience rather than the reflection. Reflection establishes a connection between experience and ideas. Generally takes the form of reasons or supporting statements, and may be convincing but not exploratory. Shows intentional use of strategies to elaborate. Uses some details and sensory language. Ideas clearly arranged and connected. Uses predictable patterns, word choices, and details. An attempt to proofread. No spelling errors, but some small mechanical errors.

D papers:

May take the form of an autobiographical story. Reflection may be a simple statement. May be very general. Shows little elaboration. May have lapses in coherence. Stays on topic but may have some unrelated comments. Uses simple language. Poor proofreading, including spelling errors.

F papers:

Experience may be missing, vague, or presented only in the title. May be little or no reflection. May be in the form of a simple obvious statement. No attempt to describe, or may attempt to elaborate by repeating the initial statement. Ideas not clearly arranged or connected (coherence). Lack of structure. Simple language with no sentence variety. Obvious errors and a failure to proofread.