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Thesis Statement and Introduction; Conclusion	Thesis statement answers the question completely and clearly. Introduction presents clear and complete summary of evidence to be used in support of thesis statement. Organization of the introduction is logical. Conclusion extends the argument and explains its significance.	Thesis statement answers the question completely and clearly. Introduction gives summary of evidence to be used in support of thesis statement. Organization of the introduction may be somewhat weak. Conclusion re-states the thesis statement, but may not extend or explain the argument's significance.	Thesis statement does not answer the question completely, and/or is weak or confusing. Summary of evidence to be used in support of thesis statement may be lacking. Organization of introduction may be weak. Conclusion may not clearly re-state the thesis statement.	Thesis statement does not answer the question and/or does not make an argument. Introduction does not give summary of evidence to be used in support of thesis statement. Conclusion fails to re-state the thesis, or is entirely absent.
Examples, Evidence, Content	Evidence in support of thesis is accurate, specific, relevant, and sufficient. Essay clearly and effectively explains <i>how</i> particular examples support thesis statement.	Evidence in support of thesis is accurate, specific, relevant, and sufficient. Essay may not always clearly explain <i>how</i> particular examples support thesis statement.	Evidence in support of thesis is not entirely accurate, or may be insufficient or irrelevant. Explanations of how examples support thesis may be weak or absent.	Evidence in support of thesis is inaccurate, insufficient, or irrelevant.
Organization and Structure	The essay is well-organized. The purpose of each paragraph is clear, with strong topic sentences linked to the thesis. The content of each paragraph is consistent and appropriate. The paragraphs are logically sequenced.	The essay is well organized. The purpose of each paragraph is clear, but there may be weak topic sentences. Some content may be inconsistent or irrelevant, and there may be minor problems of logic and paragraph sequence.	The essay is not especially well organized. The purpose of some paragraphs is unclear, and some have weak topic sentences. Some content may be inconsistent or irrelevant, and there may be problems of logic and paragraph sequence.	The essay is poorly organized. The purpose of some paragraphs is unclear, and many have weak topic sentences. Content is inconsistent and/or irrelevant, and there are significant problems of logic and paragraph sequence.
Writing Mechanics and Style	Language is clear and powerful, there are no significant errors of spelling, grammar, or usage. The essay may show a distinctive and elegant writing style.	The essay contains only occasional errors of spelling, grammar, and usage. The language is clear, but the writing may not be especially powerful or elegant.	The essay suffers from errors of spelling, grammar, and/or usage. The language is occasionally unclear.	The essay suffers from significant errors of spelling, grammar, and usage. The language is unclear, and poor writing makes it difficult to ascertain the author's meaning.