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| **Grade** | **Excellent (4): 95** | **Good (3): 85** | **Adequate (2): 75** | **Insufficient (1): 65 and below** |
| **Thesis:**  | Presents a clear, well-developed, complex thesis that presents an original interpretation of the text | Presents a clear, developed thesis that presents an original interpretation of the text | Presents a simple thesis with limited development that presents an original interpretation of the text | Presents a thesis that is confused, unoriginal or underdeveloped, or essay lacks a thesis |
| **Evidence**  | Supports thesis with substantial, relevant, and accurate textual evidence (direct quotes) | Supports thesis with relevant and helpful textual evidence (direct quotes) | Supports thesis with limited, but appropriate textual evidence (direct quotes)  | Provides minimal, irrelevant, or insufficient evidence |
| **Analysis/****Interpretation** | Provides an effective analysis that explores all relevant connections to the textual evidence and claim; Displays precise, rigorous close reading | Provides analysis but may not devote equal weight to all parts of the question; Displays attentive, precise close reading | Analysis is present but superficial; applies sufficient close reading | Little or no analysis; describes rather than analyzes; does not demonstrate close reading |
| **Organization & Presentation** | Paper has strong structure, logical flow, and obvious agreement between introduction and conclusion; Paper has precise topic sentences that connect to the claim; Conclusion leaves the reader with something meaningful to consider | Paper has a structure, logical flow, and loose agreement between introduction and conclusion; Paper has topic sentences that connect to the claim; Conclusion leaves the reader with something to consider | Paper has a weak but present structure, understandable flow, and some agreement between introduction and conclusion; Paper includes topic sentences that at times connect to the claim; Conclusion gestures towards the reader | Paper is wandering, incoherent, has mismatched introduction and conclusion, or lacks either; Paper does not include topic sentences or includes topic sentences that are unrelated to the claim; Conclusion does not leave the reader with something meaningful  |
| **Written** **Expression** | Writing presents no obstacles to understanding; high degree of skill and complexity; Writing includes correct MLA in-text citations and Works Cited; Writing integrates direct quotes with precision | Contains only minor errors that do not detract from the essay; writing is skillful; Writing includes predominately correct MLA in-text citations and Works Cited; Writing integrates direct quotes with clarity | Contains some errors that do not detract from overall essay/argument; writing is competent; Writing includes predominately correct MLA in-text citations and Works Cited; Writing integrates direct quotes with some exceptions | Contains major errors or numerous minor ones that detract from the essay/argument; illegible; Writing includes incorrect MLA citations and Works Cited, or does not include them; Writing does not integrate direct quotes |