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| **Argument**  **40 pts** | **Clarity** | **Focus** | **Ambition** | **Complexity** |
| Does the essay make arguments, whether explicit or not? Are these arguments coherent and clear? Note that this doesn’t mean you must have a “thesis statement,” but your ideas should come across clearly. | Does the essay have a focused and reasonable scope? Does the writer allow themselves enough time to spend looking at the specifics of an idea? Do they avoid trying to focus too widely? | Is the essay is trying to do something interesting, something significant, even something risky? Does the essay not settle for giving the same old answers in the same old way? | Is the essay making an argument, and not just an observation? Does it offer an in depth analysis? Does it explore complex connections between themes or ideas? |
| **Interpretation**  **40 pts** | **Literary Analysis** | **Introspection** | **Analysis Strength** | **Analysis Complexity** |
| Does the essay involve an element of literary interpretation? Does the writer take care to quote from their chosen text(s) and not just talk around them? | Does the essay involve an element of personal reflection? Does the writer explain not just *why* they think a certain way, but how they came to think that way, what it means for them to think that way? | Does the essay take care to not only *present* details and arguments, but to pick them apart and analyze them? Does the essay say *what* something is, but also *why* and *how* it is? | Does the analysis go in depth? Does the writer analyze the complexities of a text, a situation, an idea? Does the writer show us something we might not have noticed otherwise? |
| **Narrative**  **20 pts** | **Detail** | **Personal Narrative** | **Voice** | **Prose Style** |
| Does the essay include specific details that help establish the mood of the piece? Are the details well placed? Are they fresh/unique? Do they add to the story? | Does the essay include an element of personal narrative? Does it use techniques of storytelling to flesh out important scenes and conversations where appropriate? | Does the essay have a strong and unique voice that contributes to the meaning of the piece? Does the piece read as if there is a real, particular, and complex person writing it? Does the writing have “personality”? | Does the writer have a engaging and dynamic prose style? Does the piece have a nice flow? Is their evidence of creative choices made with regards to syntax and diction? |