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| **GRADE** | **Intro Paragraph / Thesis** | **Body/Evidence** | **Literary Analysis** | **Mechanics** |
| **A**  **(exceeds expectations)** | Engaging opening introduces the essay’s general topic and inspires thinking about that topic;  thesis is an easily identifiable, well-phrased argument that addresses a specific idea to be examined and proven in the essay;  the thesis includes title/author and directly addresses specific elements of the text. | Each topic sentence clearly connects to the thesis and offers an identifiable, well-phrased idea to be proven in the paragraph;  Multiple, well-chosen quotes and specific evidence that support the thesis | Writer draws sophisticated, well-developed commentary based on evidence to support the connected ideas of the topic sentence and thesis;  analysis demonstrates writer’s ability to interpret the purpose of literary elements or build thematic concepts through cited evidence | Effective syntax and grammar demonstrate a mastery of writing conventions and serve the author’s purpose;  Complete adherence to MLA guidelines;  absence of misspellings, punctuation errors |
| **B**  **(good)** | Generally engaging opening;  thesis statement is phrased as an argument but may need to be strengthened through clarification of the main idea being offered  the thesis includes title/author but references to elements of the text may be vague. | Each topic sentence generally connects to the thesis but in one or more topic sentences the main idea may need to be clarified;  Multiple quotes and specific evidence that support the thesis | Writing generally reflects a critical, analytical understanding of the text but is unbalanced;  Inferences demonstrate interpretive ability of cited evidence but could be developed further | Syntax and grammar may be awkward in places (but not distracting);  a few misspellings (but not distracting);  consistent adherence to MLA guidelines; |
| **C**  **(satisfactory)** | Opening is functional but too simplistic;  thesis is too general, vague, but argument is still present  the thesis somewhat references title/author | Topic sentences are present but the main idea is not detectable; a fact about the text is summarized, or there is an unclear connection to thesis.  Specific Evidence is weak because of insufficient support to topic sentence. | Writing demonstrates basic comprehension of the text  writer restates the content of cited evidence rather than draws significant inferences about sub-textual meaning; | Awkward syntax and grammar confuse writer’s point and distract reader;  misspellings, contractions, fragments distract reader;  inconsistent adherence to MLA guidelines – few citations/incomplete citations |
| **D**  **(marginal)** | Opening is ineffective, poorly organized, and undeveloped  thesis may summarize plot point rather than present argument about text;  thesis may not address the prompt at all; | Topic sentences absent or consistently lack focused ideas, either offering general, irrelevant comments or stating facts about the text;  Specific evidence is absent or ineffective/ insufficient; | Writing demonstrates some awareness of text details but not a critical, analytical understanding of the text;  points made are vague and unproven;  essay lacks focus; no literary analysis present | Frequent syntax, grammar, misspelling errors that distract the reader;  lack of adherence to MLA guidelines – (missing citations, lack of proper format) |
| **F**  **(unacceptable)** | Fails to fulfill the requirements of the assignment, thesis not present. | Fails to fulfill the requirements of the assignment, specific evidence not present | Fails to fulfill the requirements of the assignment, No analysis | No adherence to MLA guidelines (missing citations, lack of proper format); No Work Cited page |