

Rubric – Research Papers

Chapnick, A., & Stone, C. (2009). *Academic writing for military personnel*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.

	A	B	C	F
Argument				
Organization	Paper proceeds logically from start to finish and is coherent throughout.	Paper includes some minor logical inconsistencies, but they hardly detract from the overall coherence of the argument.	Significant logical inconsistencies in parts of the paper make the overall credibility of the argument somewhat dubious.	The paper is illogical, incoherent, and as a result completely unconvincing.
Thesis Quality	Thesis, whether implicit or explicit, is absolutely clear and highly original.	Thesis, whether implicit or explicit, is clear and deliberate.	Thesis is identifiable in some form, with effort.	Paper does not contain – either implicitly or explicitly – a thesis.
Objectivity	Paper demonstrates a masterful grasp of all sides of the issue.	Paper effectively recognizes a variety of points of view.	Paper is clearly, albeit unintentionally, partial. It either fails to deal with contrary points of view out of ignorance or deals with them unfairly.	Paper is deliberately not impartial. The author has used the paper as a pulpit instead of as a framework for rigorous critical analysis.
Analysis	Analytical abilities on display are clearly superior and reflect an originality of thinking.	Analytical abilities on display demonstrate an ability to separate ideas into their component parts.	Analytical abilities on display are inconsistent. Some ideas are clear and fully understood; others are not.	Paper reproduces arguments from other sources without any evidence of understanding.
Evidence				
Depth	Paper draws from sources that represent the best primary (if applicable) and most comprehensive secondary information on the subject. Quantity of sources exceeds expectations.	Paper draws from a legitimate variety of primary (if applicable) and relatively comprehensive secondary information. Quantity of sources meets or exceeds expectations.	While the paper might draw from a significant number of sources, the information obtained from those sources is largely surface level (for example, encyclopaedia entries and/or newspaper articles)	Paper is drawn largely, if not exclusively, from inappropriate material.
Breadth	Paper draws from an impressive variety of sources and perspectives.	Paper draws from an acceptable variety of sources and perspectives.	Sources either come largely from a single perspective or are quantifiably insufficient to met the demands of the assignment.	Sources are both excessively limited in quantity and represent an excessively limited point of view.
Synthesis	Presentation of the evidence demonstrates a masterful understanding of its themes, both specific and general.	Presentation of the evidence demonstrates a clear understanding of its themes, both specific and general.	Presentation of the evidence demonstrates a flawed understanding of either its specific or general themes.	Presentation of the evidence demonstrates a flawed understanding of both its specific and general themes.
Relevance	Evidence is directly applicable to the analysis	Evidence is largely applicable to the analysis throughout.	Some of the evidence is clearly tangential and detracts	Evidence does not contribute to a fulfillment of the goals of

	A	B	C	F
	throughout.		from the credibility of the argument.	the assignment.
Writing				
Overall	Grammar, punctuation, spelling are virtually flawless. Language and word choice are appropriate throughout.	Limited flaws in grammar, punctuation, and/or spelling do not detract from the overall message of the paper. Some minor problems with language and word choice are noted but not overly problematic.	Significant flaws in some of grammar, punctuation, spelling, language and/or word choice.	Paper is incoherent because of flaws in grammar, punctuation, spelling, language, and/or word choice.
Format				
Overall	Paper follows CFC scholarly conventions including proper citation methods virtually flawlessly.	Only minor flaws in terms of CFC scholarly conventions including citation methods.	Significant flaws in terms of CFC scholarly conventions (likely including problems with citation methods).	Paper displays a blatant disregard for CFC scholarly conventions.

A guide to differentiating between the letter grades

- A+ level work is truly exceptional. It is objectively superior to what could have been fairly expected and has caused the reader to think, or see an issue – at least temporarily – in a new way.
- A and A- level work is clearly superior. If an assessor has difficulty determining whether a paper deserves an A- or a B+, then the paper should be awarded a B+. There should not be any hesitancy when it comes to grades of A- and above.
- B+ and C+ level work represent optimal achievement under reduced expectations. In other words, a B+ is the best B there can be.
- The grade B- is reserved for papers that, on the whole, clearly exceed the criteria for a C. At the same time, however, specific aspects of these papers deserve no more than C-range grades.
- The grade C- is reserved for papers whose redeeming features only barely allow them to avoid failure.
- F-level work objectively does not fulfill the requirements or the goals of the assignment. There should be absolutely no hesitancy when it comes to the grade F. If there is, the paper should be awarded a D.