

Counternarrative – Rubric

Non-negotiables (All of the following must be present to fulfill the requirement)

The author describes the “master narrative” in the first paragraph and offers examples of how it affects society.

The author includes a reflexive statement that explains what gives them authority to offer their opinion (and/or what limits it.)

An “A” Paper – Brilliant/Excellent (38-42 points)

Demonstrates true thoughtfulness. Interesting and unexpectedly delightful

Title is clever and/or engaging

Opening is unexpected or otherwise intriguing

The essay is thoughtfully organized, with fluid pacing and excellent paragraph structure

The author uses vivid examples/stories to engage the reader

The author supports every one of their claims, using outside sources, personal experience, or a combination of the two

The author smoothly embeds quotes in their argument, using correct citation practices

A variety of sentence structures, used strategically to create flow and emphasis

Skillful use of transitions to create a unified, cohesive piece of writing

Vivid and specific detail

The writer’s voice comes through, making the piece feel lively and engaging

A “B” Paper – Good/Above Average (34-37 points)

Wrestles with the topic but may be a tad predictable

Title is appropriate to the topic, but lacks inspiration

Opening interests the reader

The essay is organized and pacing is mostly fluid, with a minor bump or two

Examples/stories are a bit vague or fail to engage the reader

The author supports their claims, but not perfectly. One of their sources or personal stories is not a great fit for their claim

The author uses quotes correctly but not smoothly

A variety of sentence structures

Correct use of transitions

Writer attempts to use “showing” details, even if the technique doesn’t always work

The writer’s voice comes through but can feel a bit flat at times

A “C” Paper – Okay/Average (30-36 points)

Doesn’t demonstrate thought beyond commonplace statements (EX: “Gender norms are bad,” “Education is important,” etc.)

Title is flat or predictable

Opening is a general statement (EX: “Society has a lot of rules.”)

Evidence of organization exists, but paragraphs are not always well organized

Organization is confusing and pacing a bit off

Examples/stories are vague or do not support the author’s point

The author supports some of their claims with sources, but not all of them, or sources are random/weak.

The author uses quotes, but does not embed them, or they use the word “quote” in their signal phrase

Limited sentence variety, or has occasional sentence structure problems

Limited use of transitions; at times, an inappropriate transition is used or is missing altogether

Needs to use more “showing” details

The writer’s voice is flat, too formal, or rigid

A “D” Paper – Demonstrates Problems/Below Average (25-29 points)

Relies completely on cliché

Title is just a restatement of the title of the work being discussed or just a label

Opening is confusing or is a cliché

Organization is confusing or illogical and paragraph structure is lacking

Lacks examples from sources/stories that support the author’s point

Uses sources improperly or not at all

Flat vocabulary and/or inappropriate diction

Flow is mostly choppy and erratic; little or no sentence variety. Problems with sentence structure obscure meaning

Little or no use of transitions

Writer does not use any “showing” details

No writer’s voice is present. The words are lifeless or robotic