

Concept of Place Essay – Rubric

An “A” Paper – Brilliant/Excellent (90-100 points)

Demonstrates true thoughtfulness. Interesting and unexpectedly delightful

The concept is unique and interesting and its limits are thoughtfully outlined

The author does a great job of “thinking with” the metaphor, either mentioning it throughout, exploring its potential in different ways or exploring it all at once at a strategic moment in the essay

Opening is unexpected or otherwise intriguing

The essay is thoughtfully organized to keep the reader’s interest, with fluid pacing and excellent paragraph structure

The author uses vivid examples/stories to engage the reader and to define the concept in ways that are unexpected. The “moment in time” or scene is engaging.

The author smoothly embeds quotes and references sources, using them to launch their own ideas

The writer’s voice comes through, making the piece feel lively and engaging. The author uses a variety of sentence structures strategically for the sake of “flow” or to emphasize certain points

A “B” Paper – Good/Above Average (80-89 points)

Wrestles with the topic but may be a tad predictable

The concept is present but feels a bit predictable, or its limits are outlined in a way that feels perfunctory rather than illuminating

The author “thinks with” the metaphor but left some obvious potential on the table.

Opening interests the reader

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

Examples/stories are engaging but perhaps a bit vague. The “scene” or “moment in time” could be better

The author uses quotes correctly but not smoothly. The quote may substitute for their own thinking or they don’t analyze it enough.

The writer’s voice comes through but can feel a bit flat at times, or there might be a grammar error

A “C” Paper – Okay/Average (70-79 points)

Doesn’t demonstrate thought beyond cliché or generality (EX: “New York is very diverse.”)

The concept’s limits are not outlined or it is a bit unclear.

The author uses a metaphor but doesn’t “think with” it.

Opening is a general statement or cliché (EX: “New York is a chaotic place.”)

Organization is confusing and pacing a bit off. May repeat itself in places or follow a “five paragraph” rather than organic structure

Examples/stories feel cliché, and/or fail to engage the reader. May be lacking a distinct scene or “moment in time”

The author uses quotes, but does a “dump and dash,” includes unnecessary repetition, or only uses part of the quote—not all of it.

The writer’s voice is flat, too formal, or wordy, and/or there may be more than one punctuation or grammar error

A “D” Paper – Demonstrates Problems/Below Average (60-69 points)

Relies completely on cliché

The concept’s limits are not outlined, and the concept is left undefined as a result. Or the concept is a cliché

Opening is confusing or is a cliché

Author may have failed to use a metaphor or the metaphor is unclear.

Organization is confusing or illogical, paragraph structure is lacking, and/or there is a lot of repetition

Examples don’t do enough to make the “concept” convincing and/or lacks a distinct scene or “moment in time”

The author uses sources improperly or does not use at least two sources

Problems with sentence structure obscure meaning