

ASSIGNMENT SHEET AND GRADING RUBRIC: OPINION EDITORIAL

Task: Write a 3–5 page (double-spaced) opinion editorial for the *Daily Universe* on a topic of your choice. As you write, think of this piece as one that might be featured on the editorial page as an especially cogent statement on an important issue of particular interest to your readers. Your letter should make ethical, emotional, and logical appeals as appropriate to your purpose and audience.

____ The “A” Editorial (90–100 points)

An “A” editorial demonstrates the writer’s awareness of his/her rhetorical situation by clearly defining a timely issue relevant to the editorial’s audience (*kairos*). The writer’s position and purpose are clear, and he/she fully supports claims with sound reasons and evidence, making effective and appropriate use of ethical, emotional, and logical appeals. The writer also anticipates and effectively responds to potential counterarguments (*procatalepsis*).

An “A” editorial is exceptionally well written, in addition to being well argued. The title cleverly indicates the subject of the editorial, and the introduction effectively introduces the topic and catches the reader’s attention. The editorial is unified, meaning that its content is oriented around and develops a single controlling idea, and is also coherent—i.e., transitions are used to create a logical and smooth flow from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, and idea to idea. The writer engages the reader by creating a voice appropriate to the editorial’s subject matter, its audience and purpose. The writer further engages the reader by varying sentence length and structure, creating an easy, flowing rhythm, and avoids vague, wordy, or obscure sentences. Diction and syntax are clear, concise, and precise, and punctuation, grammar, spelling, and usage adhere to the highest standards of edited American English. The editorial follows MLA formatting conventions.

____ The “B” Editorial (80–89 points)

A “B” editorial demonstrates the writer’s awareness of the rhetorical situation, and his/her position and purpose are generally clear. Claims are well supported, though there may be minor gaps in the argument, and ethical, emotional, and logical appeals are effectively utilized with a few exceptions. Counterarguments are anticipated, though the responses may not be sufficient.

The “B” editorial is well written, including a serviceable title and introduction, though may lack the flair of the title and introduction of an “A” editorial. The editorial is generally unified and coherent, with slight lapses in transitions; the writing is also engaging, though the voice may lack the distinctiveness of the “A” editorial, and the syntax and diction may not be quite as polished. Sentences are generally clearly constructed. A few errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, usage, and MLA formatting appear randomly throughout the editorial, but such errors do not distract from the reader’s understanding of the argument.

____ The “C” Editorial (70–79 points)

The “C” editorial demonstrates an awareness of the rhetorical situation, though the writer might misread his/her audience or the circumstances surrounding the issue; the writer may not establish the timeliness of the argument. The writer’s position and purpose are evident but could be more clearly articulated. Claims are unevenly supported, and while the writer makes use of ethical, emotional, and logical appeals, such attempts do not always achieve their intended aim. Counterarguments are generally ignored or not responded to in convincing ways.

The "C" editorial is readable but requires some effort on the part of the reader. The title and introduction may be uninteresting or may fall a little short in clearly announcing the focus of the editorial, though a focus becomes apparent as the editorial unfolds. The editorial lacks unity by occasionally introducing information that does not relate to the editorial's main idea, and the transitions from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, or idea to idea might be weak. The writer's voice does not do much to engage the reader, and syntax and diction lack sophistication and may be difficult to follow in places. Some errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, and usage appear frequently, though the reader is generally able to understand the argument. Errors in MLA formatting likewise appear with some frequency.

____ **The "D" Editorial (60–69 points)**

The "D" editorial demonstrates little awareness of the rhetorical situation, and the writer's position and purpose are not clearly defined. Claims go unsupported, and the writer's attempts at ethical, emotional, and logical appeals are superficial, at best, or are unpersuasive. Counterarguments are wholly ignored.

The "D" editorial is laborious for the reader. The title is rudimentary and may not indicate the focus of the editorial, and the introduction is similarly boring and/or fails to announce the focus of the editorial. The editorial lacks unity by bifurcating into tangents, and the flow from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, and idea to idea is rough and unclear throughout much of the editorial. Voice is either nonexistent or completely inappropriate, and syntax and diction are likewise muddled throughout. The editorial is riddled with errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, usage, and MLA formatting.

____ **The "E" Editorial (0–59 points)**

An "E" is generally only given to an editorial that falls well short of the minimum requirements of the assignment, is plagiarized, or violates a policy established by an individual instructor (e.g., a late-paper policy).