

NAME:

Research Paper Grading Rubric

GRADE _____ out of 300 SCALE: A ≥ 276, A- = 275 – 270, B+ = 269 – 264, B= 263 – 246, B- = 245 - 240, C+ = 239 – 234, C= 233 - 216, C- = 215 - 210, D+ = 211 – 204, D = 203 - 186, D- = 185 – 180, NC ≤ 179

Standards	5 - 4 Exemplary	3 - 2 Satisfactory	1-0 Needs Improvement	Weighting	Score
Question (25 points)	Research question is composed in a way that invites interest and shows awareness of the ways in which conversation about the question is discussed in different disciplines.	Has a concise and clear question that can be answered through a program of research appropriate to the time constraints of the project and invited inter-disciplinary analysis.	Has no clear question to address; question may be vague or too broad so that it is difficult to check whether research answers the question	x5	
Argumentation (50 points)	Argument (thesis) statement is original and thought provoking. Analysis and discussion decidedly strengthen and develop the main argument. Paper builds a convincing and insightful case. Argument makes advances in inter-disciplinary thinking.	Presents a clear argument statement early in the paper. Subsequent analysis and discussion explicitly relate to the main argument. Paper successfully builds a logical case. Reflects inter-disciplinary thinking.	Argument statement is absent or unclear. Development of the argument is ambiguous or opaque; fails to explicitly tie analysis and discussion to the main thesis. Does not build a logical case. Lacks inter-disciplinary thinking.	x10	
Significance (50 points)	Demonstrates sophisticated knowledge on which project is building; explains and elaborates on the geographic significance of the question; makes convincing case for significance of research	Frames the question in relevant literature; shows how the question is connected to existing discussion and/or debate; provides adequate support for significance of research	Explanation of the significance of the question lacks depth or is non-existent; fails to show connection of research question to existing discussion or debate; does not acknowledge/address significance of research	x10	
Methods and data (50 points)	Demonstrates full knowledge of methods and data; shows a mastery in using methods to analyze data; gives comprehensive appraisal of the strengths and limitations of the analysis	Chooses appropriate methods and sources of data; demonstrates proficiency in using the methods to analyze the data; shows and understanding of the strengths and limitations of methods and data	Chooses inappropriate methods and/or data; justification for using particular methods and data is poorly developed or lacking; applies methods incorrectly or superficially; shows little grasp of the strengths and limitations of the	x10	

			methods and data		
Results (75 points)	Uses inter-disciplinary thinking to provides a sophisticated and systematic discussion of how results answer the question; Gives in-depth appraisal of the extent to which results answer question; demonstrates analytical substance and depth	Gives adequate support for how results answer the research question; draws conclusions that logically follow from analysis; shows analytical proficiency; relates multiple disciplines to the interpretation	Is unclear how results address the question; conclusions are logically unsound and/or incongruent with the unit of analysis; reveals superficial or incorrect analysis; analysis is limited to a single theory or disciplinary foundation	x15	
Coherence (25 points)	In addition to satisfactory characteristics, author uses transition sentences well and eliminates spelling and grammar errors.	Author's writing shows well organized content and clear writing; it is evident that the author proofread their work	Author fails to meet one or more of the standards set out in the description of satisfactory performance.	x5	
Professionalism (25 points)	In addition to satisfactory characteristics, Author prepares original headings and sub headings that are clearly connected to their thesis statement	Author demonstrates professional writing by including the following: Page numbers Proper in-text citation of sources Complete references in list of works cited, list is organized alphabetically In-text references to tables, figures, maps, etc. Headings and sub headings to guide the reader through Captions for figures, tables, maps, etc.	Author fails to meet one or more of the standards set out in the description of satisfactory performance.	x5	
COMMENTS:					

Rough-draft grading (based on degree of completeness)

- 100 points if a submitted draft addresses at a satisfactory level all of the above standards in ~20 pages
- 85 points if a submitted draft addresses the first five standards (question – results) at a satisfactory level in ~ 20 pages
- 75 points if a submitted draft addresses all of the above standards, but two or more of the first five standards are addressed at a satisfactory level and two are addressed at a less than satisfactory level
- 65 points if a submitted draft addresses the first five standards, but three or more are addresses at a less than satisfactory level

- 50 points if a submitted draft addresses the first five standards in superficial ways and at a less than satisfactory level
- 25 points if a submitted draft fails to include one or more of the first five standards

Question refers to the specific line of inquiry that the project undertakes. Example: How does a light rail station influence property value in the surrounding community?

An argument is a contestable claim or thesis presented in response to the research question. **Argumentation** refers to the chain of logic used to develop and support this claim. The line of argumentation should be explicit so that readers understand how sub-sections of the paper link together in support of the main argument.

Researcher communicates the **significance** of their question by discussing how the inquiry connects with existing literature and why the inquiry is of interest to this literature and perhaps to debates in broader society. Example: the researcher should discuss existing literature on the effect light rail station as well as the variables that are used to measure this effect. Furthermore, the researcher should discuss for whom this research is of interest. In exemplary cases, the question may aim to fill a gap in existing literature and the author would want to discuss how impact of filling this gap pertains to the state of knowledge in the field.

Methods refer to the intentional process the researcher undertakes to answer the question. A part of this process includes the collection of data and a strategy to analyze it. **Data** include primary and secondary sources of information that are collected for reference and analysis. Example: The researcher selects light rail station stops in three neighborhoods: one poor, one middle income, and one affluent. The researcher then collects data on property location and value for all parcels within one mile of each of the stations. The researcher decides to analyze this data according a statistical method called hedonic regression to see how distance from the station affects the property value of a land parcel.

Results refer to the discussion in which the researcher demonstrates how the methods and data answer the original research question.