

A-Grade Essay Criteria

Students, I will share with you what we look out for when we are marking and determining what grade an essay receives. When you know what top quality looks like, it's much easier to improve because you know what to work towards! To illuminate this further, I have also attached a model essay which you can reference to see how these points look like 😊

- **Concise introduction** that sparks my interest for the essay and also gives an inkling of what central issues will be dealt with in the following body paragraphs. It should also have a thoughtful interpretation of the question and directly addresses the argument posed
- **Thesis statement** that evokes strong personal voice and gives a clear stand that is well-supported with reasons
- There should be at least **4 main body paragraphs** found with a balanced response that deals with both sides (yet the essay does not appear contradictory)
- Each paragraph has a **decent length because it offers depth**. The points raised by the essay are not merely stated or described but rather analysed and supported. There is much insight to be gleaned from the essay, i.e. it has an interesting perspective to offer
- Reading the **topic sentences alone provide a keen understanding** of the essay's main points. Topic sentences are also easily identifiable.
- **Examples provide are not only salient but also significant**. They are substantial, i.e. issues that are worth discussing. Overall, examples have both breadth and depth
- **Examples are well-explained** to show how they relate to the student's arguments and how they directly address the question.
- **Arguments are elaborated upon** and not simply stated. There is a logical flow presented in arguments that the reader can follow. In other words, there are little or no logical flaws present.
- There is **clear link to demonstrate the purpose** of each paragraph
- The **essay is highly persuasive**. It does not state its arguments, rather it seeks to convince and the reader feels compelled to accept the student's perspective
- There is **strong personal voice** consistently incorporated into the essay. Words used are thought-provoking and apt. (This has a lot to do with how you masterfully use vocabulary in your writing)
- **Expressions should also be varied**, with different sentence structures present to add interest to the essay