Essay #1

A  **To earn an “A” on essay #1, a student must**
1. Adhere to all assignment requirements (MLA style and formatting, length, assigned topic) with few formatting errors, if any.
2. Provide a clear, specific, and insightful thesis.
3. Remain focused on the topic and thesis, often providing sound and compelling analysis.
4. Provide effective textual evidence to support said analysis.
5. Guide argument via strong topic sentences that assert the claim that will govern the paragraph(s) to follow.
6. Have very few grammatical errors, none of which interfere with coherence.

B  **To earn a “B” on essay #1, a student must**
1. Adhere to all assignment requirements, with only minor formatting errors.
2. Anchor essay via a clear thesis statement that posits a concrete claim about the assigned text(s) and topic(s), though it may need further specificity and/or development.
3. Provide concrete analysis that follows standard rules of paragraph construction (topic sentences, supporting evidence, explication).
4. Some paragraphs may be lacking (whether a topic sentence, transition, supporting evidence/analysis, etc.), but not enough to compromise overall clarity and development.
5. Have no distracting pattern of grammatical error.

C  **To earn a “C” on essay #1, a student must**
1. Respond to the constraints of the assignment:
   a. Paper should be formatted according to MLA style guidelines, with proper parenthetical citations and Works Cited page. Minor formatting errors should not prevent an essay from receiving a C.
   b. Paper should meet the minimum length requirement specified on the assignment sheet.
   c. Paper should respond to one of the topics assigned.
2. Post a **recognizable** thesis/argument:
   a. Thesis must center on a claim, though it may be broad or vague.
   b. Thesis should respond to the topic assigned.
   c. Essay should contain some analysis, though it may be scant and underdeveloped.
   d. Essay should indicate an understanding of the text in question.
3. Present an essay with some semblance of organization:
   a. Essay should contain an identifiable introduction and conclusion, though both may need more specificity or clarity.
   b. Body paragraphs should be of reasonable length with some supporting textual evidence and analysis, however weak.
4. Maintain a tone appropriate for the audience:
   a. Essay should avoid colloquialisms or excessively informal language.
   b. Essay should not rest primarily on personal opinion.
5. Be able to construct **generally** grammatically sound paragraphs; grammatical errors should not undermine basic sentence-level coherence.

D  **A “D” grade results from**
1. Failing to adhere to basic assignment requirements (length, assigned topic, or flagrant disregard for MLA style).
2. A lack of substantive analysis (i.e. an essay that rests primarily on observation or summary).
3. A pattern of major grammatical errors and/or basic sentence-level incoherence.

F  **An “F” grade results from**
1. Failure to adhere to basic assignment requirements.
2. Absence of any statements of assertion or claims; paragraphs consisting almost entirely of observation, opinion, or summary.
3. Obvious misunderstanding of the text and/or rhetorical task.
4. Pervasive pattern of grammatical errors and/or basic sentence-level incoherence.