

# GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

## SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The following is a narrative description of what different levels of student writing might look like.

**"A" paper:** Perhaps the principal characteristic of the "A" paper is its rich content. The information delivered is such that the reader feels significantly taught by the author, sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph. The "A" paper is also marked by stylistic finesse; the title and opening paragraph are engaging, the transitions are artful, the phrasing is light, fresh, and highly specific, the sentence structure is varied, and the tone enhances the purpose of the paper. Finally, because of its careful organization and development, the "A" paper imparts a feeling of wholeness and unusual clarity.

**"B" paper:** The "B" paper is significantly more than competent. Besides being almost free of mechanical errors, the "B" paper delivers substantial information. Its points are logically ordered, well developed, and unified around a clear organizing principle that is apparent early in the paper. The opening paragraph draws the reader in; the closing paragraph is both conclusive and thematically related to the opening. The transitions between paragraphs are for the most part smooth. The sentence structure is pleasingly varied. The diction in the "B" paper is typically much more concise and precise than that found in the "C" paper. Occasionally it even shows distinctiveness. On the whole a "B" paper makes the reading experience a pleasurable one, for it offers substantial information with few distractions.

**"C" paper:** The "C" paper meets the assignment, has few mechanical errors, and is reasonably well organized and developed. The actual information it delivers, however, seems thin and commonplace. One reason for that impression is that the ideas are typically cast in the form of vague generalities. Stylistically, the "C" paper has other shortcomings as well; the opening paragraph does little to draw the reader in, the final paragraph offers only a perfunctory wrap-up; the transitions between paragraphs are often bumpy, the sentences seem to follow a predictable subject-verb-object order, and the diction is occasionally marred by unconscious repetitions, redundancy, and imprecision. The "C" paper, then, gets the job done but lacks both imagination and intellectual rigor.

**"D" paper:** In the "D" paper, the treatment and development of the subject are rudimentary. While organization is present, it is neither clear nor effective. Sentences are frequently awkward, ambiguous, and marred by serious mechanical errors. Evidence of careful proofreading, if any, is scanty. The whole piece, in fact, often gives the impression of having been conceived and written in haste.

**"F" paper:** Its treatment of the subject is superficial, its theme lacks discernible organization, its prose is garbled or stylistically primitive, and mechanical errors are frequent. In short, the ideas, organization, and style fall far below what is acceptable for college writing.