

Explorations



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Explorations

What it does for your kids!

1. Allows for kids to learn in all styles
2. 'REAL' world learning
3. Gives students choices in learning (high interest)
4. Encourages use of higher order thinking skills: questioning, seeking resources, creative problem solving, goal setting, organization, and time management
5. Utilizes hands-on approach and processes of learning—learning process is valued, not just product
6. Provides for in-depth understanding
7. Enhances communication skills
8. Students become self-directed
9. Students take ownership of learning (high motivation)
10. Learning is meaningful through use of academic skills, connection with students' lives and prior learning, and connect academic disciplines
11. Students learn to assess their progress
12. Explorations build self-esteem and confidence



Exploration Developmental Levels -



	K-2	3-4
Planning	<p>Exploration ideas come from teachers, parents, peers, kits, hobbies or fads. Student relies on past knowledge and experience. Student wants to change exploration topic frequently.</p>	<p>Exploration ideas begin to come from intellectual interests and natural talents. Teacher and parents facilitate ideas.</p>
Work	<p>Student is dependent, requires constant support and monitoring, cannot work in sequential steps, complains about working out of their intelligence or learning style, not sure what to do, unorganized, requires adult support in all clean up.</p>	<p>Student is more independent, needs assistance redirecting efforts, relies on adult enforcement, greater understanding and motivation to work in processes outside of their intelligence and learning style. Takes responsibility for cleaning personal space.</p>
Presentation	<p>Spontaneous show and tell presentation of project exploration. Little emphasis on expressing learning, dynamics of speaking, or impact on audience. Speaker reads from a script or has no notes.</p>	<p>Creative presentation to satisfy personal focus, includes limited visual support, is planned and rehearsed, audience reaction is incidental. Speaker works from notes.</p>

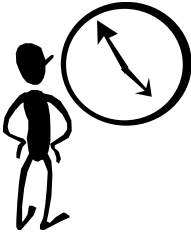
Cañon Exploratory School

5-6

Exploration ideas come from current issues, personal intellectual interests and curiosities. Little idea facilitation is required. Willingness to commit to project completion.



Independent, confident about working strategies, uses all work time productively, responsible for supplies and equipment used by themselves and others, conscious of conserving and protecting resources, respectful of other's work process.



Instructional and entertaining presentation, focus on audience learning and involvement, creative visual support, may include props or costume, effective and confident speaking skills, well rehearsed in advanced. Speaker works from memory or notes, demonstrates significant knowledge by ability to speak extemporaneously.

Write:
Be thoughtful about what
you want to share.

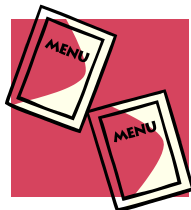
Writing Products:

Narrative
Letters
Outlines
Poem
Autobiography
Essay
Review
Editorial
Debate
Journal entries
Newspaper story
Diary/Memoirs
Travelogue



Specialized Form of Writing:

Brief
Proposal
Survey/Questionnaire
Movie script
Song/lyric
Blog
Oral History
Manual
Interview
Event plan
Create a menu



Revise:
Think ARMS!

Add:

Sentences
Words
Phrases



Remove:

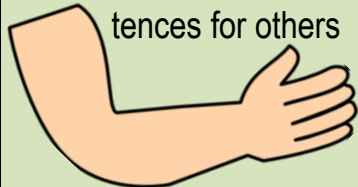
Unneeded words &
sentences
Did you know 'that' is
the most overused
word in our written
language and not
needed very of-
ten?

Move:

Change a sentence
Change a word place-
ment

Substitute:

Trade words or sen-
tences for others





Edit: Think CUPS!

Capitalization:

Names
Places
Months
Titles
I

Usage:

Match nouns and verbs correctly
Check to make sure your pronouns match

Punctuation:

Periods .
Quotes ""
Commas ,
Question Marks ?
Exclamation Points !

Spelling:

Check all words; use a dictionary if needed
Write out numbers if they are first in your sentence. (Ten students are ready. Instead of: ~~10 students are ready.~~)




Along with a written requirement (see previous page) students must present their Exploration orally and choose another culminating product (See other side). Once a product has been used/ selected it may not be used again that year.

Writing Products:

- Narrative
 - Letters
 - Outlines
 - Poem
 - Autobiography
 - Essay
- 
- Review
 - Editorial
 - Debate
 - Journal entries
 - Newspaper story
 - Diary/Memoirs
 - Travelogue


Performance:

- Slide show
 - Computer program
 - Audiotape
 - Videotape
 - Working Model System
- 
- Machine
 - Invention
 - Scientific instrument
 - Serve a meal
 - Demonstrate a skill/talent

Program or Event:

- Speaker
 - Panel discussion
 - Scavenger/Treasure Hunt
- 
- Discussion with entire class
 - Interview
 - Start a club
 - Teach a class

Graphics:

- Blueprint
 - Poster
 - Brochure
 - Pamphlet
 - Computer graphic
 - Map
- 
- Scrapbook
 - Photo album
 - Floor plan
 - Flow chart
 - Timeline
 - Exhibit your work

Artistic Performance:

- Play
- Musical piece
- Dramatic reenactment
- Dance
- Drawing
- Collage
- Painting



- Sculpture
- Quilt
- Fashion show
- Demonstrate a skill/talent
- Comic Strip (see Teacher for requirements)

Physical Models:

- A building
- A group of buildings
- A neighborhood
- A city
- A body
- A cell
- A landscape
- A river



- Consumer product
- Machine/Invention
- Museum exhibit
- Diorama
- Develop/create a board game
- Display a collection (i.e. rock, gems, bugs)

Public Speaking:

- Oral presentation w/or w/out PowerPoint
- Newscast

- Demonstrate a skill/talent



Technology Platforms:

- Powtoon
- Canva
- Prezi
- Kahoot
- Nearpod
- Quizzes



- Blooket
- Voki
- Padlet
- Google Slides
- Genially

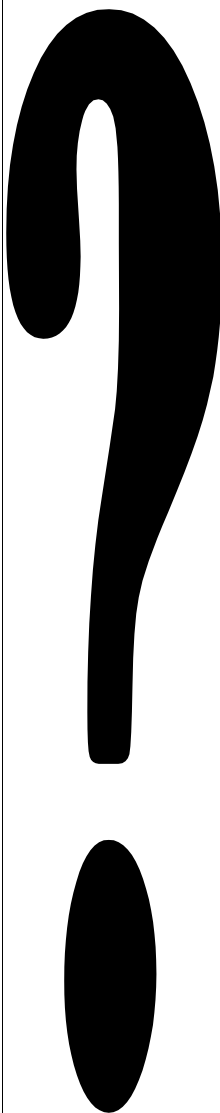
Specialized Form of Writing:

- Brief
- Proposal
- Survey/Questionnaire
- Movie script
- Song/lyric
- Blog



- Oral History
- Manual
- Interview
- Event plan
- Create a menu

Asking questions!



Helping with Explorations requires asking questions that require your child to think! Your child may get frustrated and want you to just give them the answer, but don't...use questions to guide them to answers. This is when they are using higher order thinking skills. Even if you like your ideas better, keep it to yourself and let your child pursue their own ideas.

Examples:

Why do you think you want to learn about__?

Who would know a lot about _____?

How could you make that more interesting (better, more exciting, etc)?

Why do you think that is important?

What do you think is causing that problem?

What are some solutions?

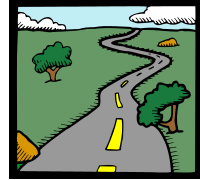
Do you think that is the BEST solution?

How can you add art (math, dance, music, science, etc) to make this more interesting?

The idea is to MENTOR your child, guide them, not do it for them. This is easier said than done, because we all want our children to present their best. Be realistic, sometimes kids just don't give their best. It is a PROCESS in learning to value quality work, not just a quality end product.

Driving Questions

Driving questions should be open-ended and challenge students to seek information and understanding about a subject that interests them.



Driving questions are from real-world dilemmas or issues that students find interesting.

Driving questions allow for inquiry from a variety of resources that allow students to use academic skills and knowledge.

Topics tend to be too broad and overwhelming for students. Questions help them narrow the focus to an answer or understanding. Topics: dogs, birds, cooking, bridges, race cars, etc.

Examples of driving questions:

Why should children be allowed to have credit cards?

Why did Cañon City decide to have a river walk?

Should dogs have to be on a leash in public?

Why do people make Origami and what is it?

What is the earth made of?

Why was the Royal Gorge Bridge built?

Where does chocolate come from?

How would you build a bridge across the Arkansas River, the Mississippi River?

Why is soccer the number one sport in the world?

How was Coors Field built?

Why did people hunt whales?

Why will people always remember Amelia Earhart?

How is soda made?

Why aren't more women judges?

How does a plane fly?

What happens when you go to court?

Trying to come up with a driving question can be quite a difficult and sometimes daunting task. If your child wants to learn about dolphins he/she will easily be able to come up with basic questions, such as:

1. How do dolphins swim?
2. What do dolphins eat?
3. How do dolphins make sound?

These questions are not elaborate enough to 'drive' or guide their entire Exploration and therefore need to be rewritten to form an actual 'driving question'. The chart on the next page is a helpful tool to use when trying to come up with a driving question.



When each column is combined together, a quality driving question can be formed. Rather than the questions previously posed, if you can guide your child using the chart, you would be able to form questions like these:

- How do animals survive in the wild?
- How can fracking help solve our natural resource shortage?
- How did WWII influence our religious tolerances?
- How do cats land on their feet every time they fall/jump?
- Why do dolphins communicate using sounds and whistles?
- What was Rosa Parks' role in the civil rights movement?

Notice the colors correspond with the columns guiding titles.

Driving Question Help Chart

Questioning Word (Framing Word)	Noun (Person, Place, Idea, Thing)	Action Verb (something you 'do')	Purpose (Real world, big idea)
How can...	I We	Build... Create... Make...	Real World Problem
How do/ did... How can...	We as, (Roles, Occupations, groups of people)	Design... Plan... Role (action)	Occurs in the Real World
Should...	Town City County	Solve...	
Could	State Nation	Write... (Communication)	
Why	Community Organization	Propose... Decide... Influence...	
Would	Animals (Only upon teacher's approval)	Survive...	

Process Skills and Expectations

These skills will be taught to your children through direct instruction and with ongoing facilitation during the Exploration process.

1. Generating ideas, formulating the driving question, planning
2. Time management: time-lines and goal setting
3. Finding resources: types of resources, how to cite resources, writing interview questions, note-taking
4. Collaboration: communication skills, listening, speaking, asking questions
5. Self assessment
6. Organizational skills
7. Problem solving
8. Creative thinking (outside the box): driving questions, visuals, presentation, resources
9. Performance skills: dress, voice, body language, staging, props

Each classroom has a general assessment rubric for Explorations that is developmentally appropriate. Each year the expectations for Explorations become more demanding as students develop the skills and capabilities. These rubrics are flexible and may show some changes each time as teachers select an area of focus for Explorations process development. Rubrics will be sent home the beginning of each Exploration so you can see *in advance* the skills your child will be working on. You and your child will know what the expectations and requirements are.



Exploration Proposal

Name _____ Date _____

Name _____ Date _____

What is your driving question? _____

Explain what you already know about this topic and why you would like to create an Exploration on this topic.

Write three good questions you have about this topic. These will be the focus of your paper.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

How are you going to use math with your Exploration? How are you going to demonstrate the math you used? _____

Visual Aid Ideas: Pick at least one and describe how you will use it. _____

Art-

Costume

Music

Guest Speakers

Media

Field Trip

Drama

Class Involvement

Parent Signature _____ Date

Exploration Rubric Kindergarten

😊 -True Explorer (4) 😊 -Quality (3) 😐 -Almost There (2) 😞 -Not Yet (1)

Presentation:

Spoke clearly	😊	😊	😊	😊
Made eye contact	😊	😊	😊	😊
Stood up straight	😊	😊	😊	😊
Presentation was creative	😊	😊	😊	😊
Presentation was practiced	😊	😊	😊	😊
Presentation stayed on topic	😊	😊	😊	😊
Knowledgeable on topic	😊	😊	😊	😊

Written Piece:

Kept research notes	😊	😊	😊	😊
Asked and answered questions	😊	😊	😊	😊
Had at least 2 different resources	😊	😊	😊	😊

Teaching Aide:

Best quality work



Used to help teach during presentation



Demonstrated knowledge of topic



Process:

Used project time wisely



Worked well with buddy



Stayed on task



Used the Process



**Exploration Rubric
1st/2nd Grade**

Student: _____ Exploration Title: _____ Date: _____

Oral Presentation

<p>Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voice loud enough for audience• Good eye contact• Refers to visual aid during presentation• Presentation is creative• Presentation was practiced	<p>Needs Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not speak loud or clear• No eye contact• Does not know subject• Visual aid does not relate to presentation
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Topic of emphasis for Oral Presentation:

Written Presentation

<p>Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses good sentence structure and spelling• 1 paragraph written in complete sentences, giving at least 8 facts• Title page• Includes a resource page with at least 3 resources (lists what books, experts, internet, magazines, etc were used)	<p>Needs Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facts provided but not in paragraph structure• Messy• No title page• No resource page
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Topic of emphasis for Written Presentation:

Culminating Product

<p>Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fact poster is neat, colorful, and well organized• Designed a visual that created interest in the subject (paper maché, models, art, craft, i.e. soap, candle, paper lizard, book, etc.)	<p>Needs Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No poster• No visual aide• Unorganized• Messy
--	---

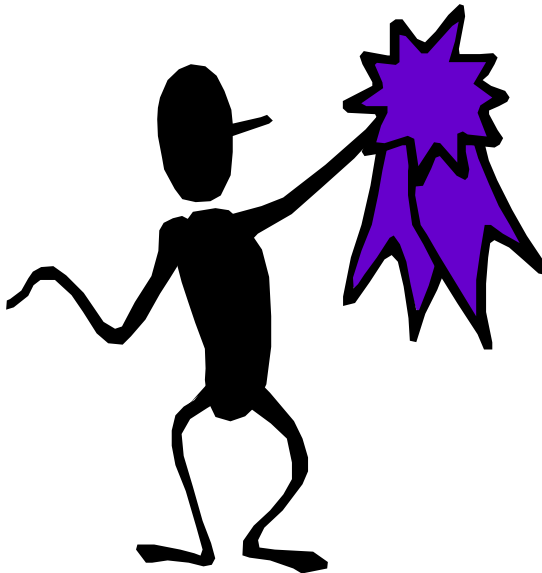
Topic of emphasis for Visual Aid:

Use Of Time

<p>Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student used project time wisely• Student managed time well with Exploration at home and school• Student worked well with others	<p>Needs Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student spent most of project time messing around and visiting• Student behavior interfered with others• Student did not work well with others
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Topic of emphasis for Use Of Time:

First Quarter Focus:



Student Exploration Performance Assessment 3rd and 4th Grade Rubric

Student: _____ **Exploration Title:** _____ **Date:** _____

Oral Presentation

Quality (3)	Proficient (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Spoke loud, clear, appropriate speed, and with expression ● Knew material well ● Presents information while only glancing at notes or slides ● Used visual aid to teach information ● Presentation was practiced and smooth ● Held paper below face ● Used good posture and eye contact ● Dressed professionally or in character ● Presentation was creative and full of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Missing one or two elements (loudness, clarity, speed, expression) ● Knew the material basics but did not seem to dig deep for understanding ● Presents information but relies heavily on notes or slides ● Briefly used visual aid ● Presentation lacked smoothness in parts ● Held paper below face for half of the reading ● Used good posture and eye contact part of the time ● Attempted to dress professionally or in character, but could have tried harder ● Presentation met the basic requirements but was not crea- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Spoke too fast or didn't speak loud, clear, or with expression ● Did not know material ● Presents information by reading report or does not have information to share ● Did not use visual aid ● Presentation was choppy and lost audience interest ● Held paper in front of face ● Did not use good posture eye contact ● Did not dress professionally or in character ● Presentation was missing creativity and some basic requirements

Quarter Emphasis for Oral Presentation:

Culminating Presentation

Quality (3)	Proficient (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visuals support topic and help teach information ● Visuals pass the distance test and were easy to see and read ● Visuals were displayed during entire presentation ● Overall look is professional, colorful, organized, and makes good use of the space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visuals relate to topic but don't teach information ● Most of the visuals pass the distance test and were easy to see and read ● Visuals displayed during half of the presentation ● Looks likes some effort was put into appearance but could be more colorful, organized, or us space better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visuals do not relate to the topic or teach information ● Visuals do not pass the distance test or are hard to read or understand ● Visuals were not displayed or are not present ● Does not look like much effort was put into appearance

Quarter Emphasis for Culminating Presentation:

Written Product

Quality (3)	Proficient (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun and audience grabbing introduction (4th grade) • Topic sentence(s) set up purpose • Used correct capitalization and mechanics • Facts are arranged in a logical sequence • Focused on important information • Information used good sentence structure and spelling • Information was in own words • Concluding paragraph or statement wraps up the paper and synthesizes learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction showed effort (4th grade) • Topic sentence(s) showed effort • Used correct capitalization and mechanics part/most of the time • Facts are mostly in a logical sequence • Had some irrelevant information • Information used good sentence structure and spelling most of the time • Most information was in own words • Attempts concluding paragraph or statement • Neatly handwritten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction was dull or not present (4th grade) • Does not have topic sentence(s) • Did not use correct capitalization and mechanic • Facts are not in a logical sequence • Had a lot of unimportant information • Numerous grammar, sentence structure and spelling errors • Information did not seem to be in own words • Does not have a conclusion • Messy or used rough draft

Quarter Emphasis for Written Product:

Use of Time and Problem solving

Quality (3)	Proficient (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student used project time productively • Student managed time well with Exploration at home and school (met all deadlines) • Student was excellent at solving problems as they arose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student used project time productively most/part of the time • Student did not always manage time well during Exploration time or working at home (met some deadlines) • Student did not always 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student spent most of project time messing around and visiting • Student was often not prepared to work and didn't manage time well (late on all deadlines) • Student was not able to solve problems as they

Student Comments

How do you think your Exportation went? What did you like about it? What could you have changed to make it better?

Teacher Comments...

Report Grade _____ **Presentation Grade** _____

Presentation is an average or oral presentation and visual aid.

Report grade in an average of written report and use of time and problem solving.

Student Exploration Performance Assessment
5th and 6th Grade Rubric

Student: _____ Exploration Title: _____ Date: _____

Oral Presentation		
Accomplished	Developing	Beginning
Speaks loud, clear and with expression.	Speaks loud, clear and with expression most of the time.	Spoke too fast or didn't speak loud, clear, or with expression.
Keeps eye contact with the audience; only glances at notes or slides.	Makes infrequent eye contact; reads notes or slides most of the time.	Does not look at the audience; reads notes, paper, slides, etc.
Wears clothing appropriate for the occasion.	Makes some attempt to dress appropriately.	Wears clothing inappropriate for the occasion.
Applies relevant, well-chosen descriptions, facts, details, and examples to support claims, findings, arguments, and an answer to their Driving Question.	Uses some descriptions, facts, details, and examples that support ideas, but there may not be enough, some are irrelevant and/or Driving Question is vaguely answered.	Uses too few or irrelevant descriptions, facts, details, examples to support ideas or Driving Question was not answered.
Presentation was organized.	Presentation lacked organization in parts.	Presentation was choppy and lost audience interest.
Answers audience questions clearly and completely with understanding of concepts. Seeks clarification, admits, "I don't know, or explains how the answer might be found when unable to answer a question.	Answers some of the audience questions, but not always clearly or completely.	Does not address the audience questions.

Multimedia Presentation

Accomplished	Developing	Beginning
Has multiple components within the presentation to share learning to the class.	Has few components to share the learning with the class.	Does not have enough components to make it multimedia and/or components do not show the presenter's learning to the class.
Engages the audience through the use of the multimedia by providing opportunities for interaction.	Makes some attempt to engage the audience through the use of multimedia by providing limited opportunities for interaction.	Does not engage the audience with the use of multimedia and/or provide opportunities for interaction.
Communicates information creatively while providing value, useful information, and enhancing the presentation.	Communicates information and is seen as useful and valuable to some extent.	Information is confusing, not useful to the intended audience.

Students are given the opportunity to peer evaluate each other's exploration presentations. They also peer conference after the presentation. If you would like more information on this process reach out to your child's teacher.



Student Exploration Performance Assessment
Middle School (7th & 8th) Rubric

Student: _____ Exploration Title: _____ Date: _____

Oral Presentation

<p>Quality (A)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoke loud and clear • Made good eye contact • Knew material well • Speech was well organized • Speaker used a “hook” to draw audience in • Presentation was practiced and smooth • Presenter talked to the audience—did not read or just regurgitate information • Held paper/notes below face • Used good posture • Speaker was an effective teacher • Speech was rich with information • You took Multiple Intelligences into consideration to effectively teach about your topic • Dressed Up 	<p>Needs Improvement (D or F)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not speak loud or clear • Did not use eye contact • Was not prepared • Held paper/notes in front of face • Presentation was not practiced—audience was not engaged • Speech was read or regurgitated • There was not enough information • You did not consider all of the Multiple Intelligences (for example, you just lectured) • Audience did not learn much if anything • Did not use good posture • Did not dress up
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Culminating Product/Visual Aid

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality (A) • Referred to visual aid • Fact poster was neat, colorful and well organized. • Visual Aid was creative and created interest in your subject(paper mache’, models, art, craft, i.e. soap, candle, paper lizard, book, ect) • It obviously took you time to make your product due to the detail • Your visual aid looked completed • Your visual aid helped the audience understand your topic better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs Improvement (D/F) • Did not refer to or did not have visual aid • No poster • No visual aid • Visual aid is not complete or relevant to topic • It is obvious that you did not take much time to create your visual aid • Messy
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Use of Time/Research

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quality (A) ● Used project time wisely ● Took copious notes while conducting research ● Organized notes and kept in project binder ● Managed time well with Exploration at home and school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Needs Improvement (D/F) ● Spent most of project time messing around and visiting or just looking at pictures on internet ● Did not keep good notes ● Did not keep notes organized and in binder ● Behavior interfered with others
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Written Report

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quality (A) ● Used good sentence structure and spelling, grammar ● Introductory paragraph included a thesis statement ● Writing flowed from one idea to the next ● 5 paragraphs were written in complete sentences ● Paragraphs 2-4 supported the thesis statement ● Concluding paragraph wrapped up the paper and synthesized the learning ● Resources were documented in a bibliography that is correctly formatted. ● Factual ● Student synthesized their learning in the paper ● Meets minimum sources requirement (see below*) ● Used new vocabulary ● Focused ● Very neat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proficient (B/C) ● Some mistakes in grammar spelling (not of high frequency words) ● Writing somewhat flowed from one idea to the next ● The thesis statement was weak or didn't guide the paper ● 4 paragraphs were written in complete sentences ● Paragraphs 2-4 somewhat supported the thesis statement ● Somewhat organized ● Introduction and purpose were fairly clear ● Most of the information is factual ● Student did not synthesize their learning ● Bibliography or resources were included, but not correctly formatted ● Did not quite meet minimum source requirements* ● Neat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Needs Improvement (D/F) ● Numerous mistakes in spelling and grammar ● 1 paragraph or less ● Unorganized ● Not factual ● Not written in student's voice (no evidence of synthesis) ● No introduction or conclusion ● No resources/bibliography ● Messy
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*one print source, one primary source,
2 reliable websites (.org, .gov, .edu)

Updated: April June 2022