

# **GRADING (CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS)**

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(EXAMPLES SHOWING DIFFERENT EMPHASES IN TWO LEVELS)

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## SUMMARY : KINDS OF PROBLEMS

1. Unmonitored assignments such as homework have heavy weights in relation to monitored assignments. [Examples: Grammar, Writing]
2. Assignments focusing on a specific point or a process have equal or more weight than a more comprehensive assignment or test. [Examples: Grammar, LS, Writing]
3. An insufficient number of grades does not adequately represent a student's abilities. [Examples: Grammar, Writing]
4. Separate skills are not differentiated. [Examples: LS, Writing]
5. Quantitative rather than qualitative grading can easily skew a grade. [Example: Writing]
6. Major tests or heavily weighted work does not reflect what the student was taught or practiced. [Example: Writing]

## 1A. GRAMMAR

Study the sample grades below for a student in a generic grammar class.

1. What can you infer from the grades?
2. Do you think the student will pass the class? (70% is passing)
3. Do you think the student should pass the class?

GRADE WEIGHTS:	20% <u>HOMEWORK</u>	20% <u>CLASSWORK</u>	20% <u>QUIZZES</u>	20% <u>MIDTERM</u>	20% <u>FINAL</u>
	95	85	85	75	60
	100	70	70		
	85	50	75		
	90	65	60		
	100	70	50		
	90		65		
	85		70		
	95				

Now look at the calculations for the grades:

GRADE WEIGHTS:	20% <u>HOMEWORK</u>	20% <u>CLASSWORK</u>	20% <u>QUIZZES</u>	20% <u>MIDTERM</u>	20% <u>FINAL</u>
GRADES:	95	85	85	75	60
	100	70	70		
	85	50	75		
	90	65	60		
	100	70	50		
	90		65		
	85		70		
	95				
Total:	<u>740</u>	<u>340</u>	<u>475</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>60</u>
divided by:	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Average:	92.5%	68%	67.9%	75%	60%

**Have any of your ideas changed?  
Can you make any additional inferences?**

[Look at the next page to see the calculations for the student's final grade.]

GRADE WEIGHTS:	20% <u>HOMEWORK</u>	20% <u>CLASSWORK</u>	20% <u>QUIZZES</u>	20% <u>MIDTERM</u>	20% <u>FINAL</u>	
Grades:	95 100 85 90 100 90 85 95	85 70 50 65 70	85 70 75 60 50 65 70	75	60	
Total:	<u>740</u>	<u>340</u>	<u>475</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>60</u>	
divided by:	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	
Average:	92.5%	68%	67.9%	75%	60%	
Weighted percentage:	x .2	x .2	x .2	x .2	x .2	
Weighted grades:	<u>18.5</u>	<u>13.6</u>	<u>13.6</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>12</u>	= <b>Final grade 72.7%</b>

**SURPRISE! THE STUDENT PASSED WITH A C!**

**AND HOW DID THAT HAPPEN??!!**

For a possible solution to this problem, look at the next page.

## 1B. GRAMMAR : PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

1. **PROBLEM:** All of the weights are equal: homework has the same weight as the midterm and final exams.  
**SOLUTION:** Reduce the weight on homework. Increase it for monitored activities, e.g. exams.
2. **PROBLEM:** The midterm exam and final exam are equal in weight. The midterm exam covers some review material (material learned in a previous class). The final exam covers all material, with emphasis on the latter half of the course, which consists primarily of new material.  
**SOLUTION:** Increase the weight on the final exam.
3. **PROBLEM:** A great deal of work (classwork and quizzes together total 40%) is weighted for specific grammar points. Each grade in these sections represents an activity or quiz focusing mainly on one, or possibly two grammar points. The final exam, which is comprehensive, is only 20%.  
**SOLUTION:** Increase the weight on the final exam, and decrease the weights in other areas.
4. **PROBLEM:** There are only five grades for classwork because of limited time available for graded in-class activities.  
**SOLUTION:** Consolidate quizzes and classwork, or reduce the classwork weight.

Below is a sample solution to the problems. Alterations are in ***bold italics***.

GRADE WEIGHTS:	<b><i>10%</i></b>	<b><i>15%</i></b>	20%	20%	<b><i>35%</i></b>	
	<b><i><u>HOMEWORK/ PARTICIPATION</u></i></b>	<b><i><u>CLASSWORK</u></i></b>	<b><i><u>QUIZZES</u></i></b>	<b><i><u>MIDTERM</u></i></b>	<b><i><u>FINAL</u></i></b>	
Grades:	95	85	85	75	60	
	100	70	70			
	85	50	75			
	90	65	60			
	100	70	50			
	90		65			
	85		70			
	95					
Total:	740	340	475	75	60	
divided by:	8	5	7	1	1	
Average:	92.5%	68%	67.9%	75%	60%	
Weighted percentage:	x .1	x .15	x .2	x .2	x .35	
Weighted grades:	9.3	+ 10.2	+ 13.6	+ 15	+ 21	= <b>Final grade 69.1%</b>

### SURPRISE AGAIN!

With just a little tweaking, the student got a D+, and didn't pass.

However, if you included participation (potentially extremely subjective and vaguely defined) in your syllabus, you have the option of advancing this student, who is only slightly below the passing mark, on to the next level, if you believe that the student is capable of doing the work.

## 2A. LISTENING/SPEAKING: Intermediate-Advanced

Course Activities:

Listening: Students listen to lectures and take notes. They then use their notes to answer questions on a quiz about the lecture.

Speaking: Students take part in small group problem-solving discussions. Additionally, each student delivers a speech in front of the class.

**What problems can you find with this grading system on a syllabus?  
How could you solve them?**

GRADE WEIGHTS:	50%		20%		30%		
	<u>NOTES &amp; QUIZZES/ DISCUSSIONS</u>		<u>SPEECH</u>		<u>FINAL EXAM</u>		
Grades:	60	Listening	80		60	Listening	
	60	"			80	Speaking	
	60	"					
	50	"					
	60	"					
	70	"					
	85	Discussions					
	75	"					
	80	"					
	85	"					
Total:	685		80		140		
divided by:	10		1		2		
Average:	68.5%		80%		70%		
Weighted percentage:	x .5		x.2		x.3		
Weighted grades:	34.3	+	16	+	21	=	<b>Final grade 71.3% (C-)</b>

## 2B. LISTENING/SPEAKING: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

- 1. PROBLEM:** There is no differentiation between listening skills and speaking skills. A student can pass the course even though he/she is very weak in one skill set.
- SOLUTION:** Separate listening and speaking on the syllabus. Add a statement on the syllabus similar to this: "You must pass both listening and speaking components in order to pass the course."
- 2. PROBLEM:** The speech is heavily weighted. A student who puts a great deal of effort into this component can do very well, but the result may not reflect his or her ability to converse or participate in small group discussions.
- SOLUTION:** Incorporate the speech into the speaking component, so that the speech has equal weight with group discussions. [Doing this has the added benefit of reducing stress for students, in my experience.]

GRADE WEIGHTS:	40% <u>LISTENING</u>		40% <u>SPEAKING</u>		20% <u>FINAL EXAMS</u>	
Grades:	60	Listening	80	Speech	60	Listening
	60	"	85	Discussions	80	Speaking
	60	"	75	"		
	50	"	80	"		
	60	"	85	"		
	70	"				
Total:	<u>360</u>		<u>405</u>		<u>140</u>	
divided by:	6		5		2	
Average:	<u>60%</u>		<u>81%</u>		<u>70%</u>	
Weighted percentage:	x .4		x.4		x.2	
Weighted grades:	<u>24</u>	+	<u>32.4</u>	+	<u>14</u>	=
						<b>Final grade</b> <b>70.4%</b> <b>(C-)</b>

**OOPS! THIS STUDENT STILL GOT A PASSING PERCENTAGE.**

**HOWEVER, IF YOU HAD ADDED A STATEMENT ON YOUR SYLLABUS TO THE EFFECT THAT A STUDENT MUST PASS BOTH COMPONENTS IN ORDER TO PASS THE COURSE, THIS STUDENT WOULD NEED TO REPEAT THE COURSE IN ORDER TO IMPROVE LISTENING SKILLS. MORE IMPROVEMENT NEEDED BEFORE GOING TO THE NEXT LEVEL SEEMS TO BE INDICATED BY *CONSISTENTLY* LOW LISTENING SCORES.**

### 3A. WRITING: (Upper) Intermediate

Course Overview:

Students review paragraph structure, and learn to write three types of essays.

**What problems can you find with this grading system on a syllabus?  
How could you solve them?**

NOTES:

--Journals are graded as either done (1) or not done (0).

--Four components for each essay are graded: brainstorming (bs), outline (ol), first draft (1d), and final draft (fd).

--All essays are written at home. Class time is spent working on revisions. The final exam is in class.

GRADE

WEIGHTS:	<u>10%</u> <u>JOURNALS</u>	<u>60%</u> <u>ESSAYS</u>	<u>30%</u> <u>FINAL EXAM</u>
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Grades:	0		<u>Essay bs</u>	<u>ol</u>	<u>1d</u>	<u>fd</u>	60%
	1						
	1	#1	90	70	90	95	
	1	#2	90	60	95	95	
	1	#3	100	75	90	95	
	0						
	1						
	1	subtotals	<u>280</u>	<u>+ 205</u>	<u>+ 275</u>	<u>+ 285</u>	= 1045
	1						

Total:	<u>8</u>		<u>1045</u>		<u>60</u>
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divided by:	10		12		1
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Average:	<u>80%</u>		<u>87.1%</u>		<u>60</u>
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Weighted percentage:	x .1		x .6		x .3
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Weighted grades:	<u>8</u>	+	<u>52.3</u>	+	<u>18</u>	=	<b>Final grade</b> <b>75.3%</b>
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### 3B. WRITING: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

- 1. PROBLEM:** The process (brainstorming and outlines) and the product (first and final drafts) are equally weighted.
- SOLUTIONS:** 1) Consolidate prewriting (brainstorming, outlines); AND/OR  
2) Use a “plus-check-minus” system of evaluating prewriting; AND/OR  
3) Don’t grade prewriting at all—it’s extremely difficult to do—but *do* give feedback to the student.
- 2. PROBLEM:** The journals (10% of the course) are graded quantitatively, rather than qualitatively. This can skew a student’s grade.
- SOLUTION:** Grade journals on a scale (e.g., 0 – 3, where 0 = not done [F], 1 = unsatisfactory [D], 2 = satisfactory but needs improvement [C-B], and 3 = completely satisfactory [A]).
- 3. PROBLEM:** The final exam reflected the content of the course, but not the process. All (or most) of the writing for the three essays was done at home. There is an enormous discrepancy between what the student produced at home and what the student produced on the final exam, under time constraints and monitored conditions.
- SOLUTIONS:** 1) Do all first drafts in class (piecemeal if necessary). Do revisions at home.  
2) Test the way you teach. If students are expected to write an essay under time constraints for the final exam, then they should have practice doing this beforehand. In this scenario, a “minitest” after each essay would give the students the kind of practice needed for the final exam.

Below are hypothetical grades for the same student, but in different circumstances, where the first drafts are written in class. First drafts done in class receive double the weight of final drafts.

WEIGHTS:	10%	60%	30%	
	<u>JOURNALS</u>	<u>ESSAYS</u>	<u>FINAL EXAM</u>	
Grades:	0	<u>Essay</u>	1d (x2)	fd test
	1			
	2	#1	60 60	95 60
	2			
	3	#2	70 70	95 70
	0			
	3	#3	65 65	95 65
	3			
	2			
	3			
Total:	19		870	60
divided by:	10		12	1
Average:	1.9 [C=75%]		72.5%	60%
Weighted percentage:	x .1		x .6	x .3
Wtd grades:	7.5	+	43.5	+ 18 = 69%

## HOPEFULLY HELPFUL HINTS (in no particular order)

### 1. PERSONAL NOTES ON PARTICIPATION.

I use participation as a “safety net” on a syllabus for most classes, but with certain self-imposed restrictions. I *never* use it to negatively impact a student’s grade, since I don’t quantify it. My reasoning is that if a student can do the work that I am assessing, it’s fine with me if he or she goes to sleep in the back of the classroom.

On the other hand, I do allow myself to use it, *on rare occasions*, to positively affect a student’s grade. In exceptional circumstances, if a student’s final grade is failing, but is within 2 percentage points of passing, I may “bump up” the grade to a pass. Exceptional circumstances may include a student’s being extremely ill during a major test, or having proven test anxiety. (Beware of self-proclaimed test anxiety, though, as a reason for doing poorly on tests. A student’s claims can sometimes be corroborated by interviewing him or her about the material tested.)

Before using the “participation” option, I also look mainly at two other factors, in addition to exceptional circumstances. One of these factors is consistency. Has the student done all of the required homework, thereby demonstrating a sincere effort? Is the student weak in only one or two elements, but is otherwise capable of doing the work fairly well? Did the student receive one or two zero grades because of absences or tardiness, but is otherwise capable? If the answer to these questions is “Yes,” then I may raise the grade with participation, so that a student who has the capability can move up to the next level.

The second factor, related to consistency, is my subjective judgment of the student’s ability to succeed in the next level. However, this only works if you are familiar with the curriculum for the next level, as well as the overall standards in the program (e.g., a student finishing the final level at a community college may not have the same ability as a student finishing the corresponding level at a university). You can get information about the curriculum from the department, but you will probably have to talk to other teachers in the program, get their feedback on your assessment tools, and ask to look at examples of their students’ work in order to get a “feel” for the general standards.

Finally, if a student asks at the beginning of the term how much participation counts, I just tell them that it *can* affect their grade, and don’t go into detail. Because participation is often subjective, lengthy discussions of it may open the door to problems. However, keep in mind that participation *can* be quantified.

Addendum: Although I personally don’t quantify participation due to its labor-intensive nature, except in listening and speaking classes, some teachers do. Some elements that may be quantified in most classes are 1) punctuality (both physical and homework assignment); 2) readiness/adequate preparation; and 3) appropriate oral participation (done with “vouchers”).

[And now, for your amusement, this is what I edited out: “Participation can be a real can of worms if you start splitting hairs,” which pretty much sums up my personal point of view on it.]

## 2. GRADING PARTICIPATION IN A SPEAKING CLASS.

Although the technique described below is quite labor-intensive and requires a great deal of concentration and some practice, it can be a real eye-opener for both you and the students you evaluate. I have only used it in small group discussions. During a discussion you are evaluating, you can either videotape it, or take notes “live.” Personally, I prefer to take notes “live” for two reasons: 1) students are often intimidated by videotaping, and 2) I don’t have to sit through a video of a discussion taking notes, thus taking double the time to evaluate a group. However, by taking notes “live,” you can only evaluate one group at a time, and students don’t have the advantage of being able to hear and see themselves—an extremely valuable source of feedback for other elements, such as pronunciation and grammar, in addition to participation. I also evaluate an *entire* discussion from start to finish, rather than segments, since a segment may not be representative of a student’s performance in the whole discussion.

To evaluate participation in a group discussion, I note three things: 1) each time a student “enters” the discussion (any utterance counts as an “entrance”), 2) the content and/or function of the utterance, and 3) the relative length of the utterance. For the content/function and relative length, I use my own symbols. For individual “entrances,” I use the student’s initials. Here’s what my notes might look like for a minute or two of a discussion:

P—desc. prob.—gd insight [pron.—l/r “probrem”—com. ok]

M—paraph. prob + detail, offer sol.

(H—agree)

T—disag., offer dif. sol.

P—agree M—adv., disadv. T sol. ?-->H

H—“I don’t know.”

Translated, this would read as follows: Peter described the problem with unusually good insight, but had a pronunciation problem with one word. However, it did not interfere with communication (com. ok). Mary paraphrased the problem, added some details, and offered a solution. Henry probably said something like “uhhuh.” Tom disagreed with Mary’s solution, and offered a different one. Peter agreed with Mary’s solution and noted its advantages; he also pointed out the disadvantages of Tom’s solution, and asked Henry what he thought.

In the discussion segment above, Peter and Henry had two entrances each, and Mary and Tom had one entrance each. Wally did not enter at all (but a minute later, he had a lot to say). On the face of it, a hard call. However, in a 20-30 minute discussion, the number of entrances can be very telling indeed. At the end of the discussion which is segmented above, these were the total entrances for each student: P=30, M=25, W=27, T=15, H=8. Clearly, Henry had a problem with participation, and appeared to be unprepared. Tom did not make as many entrances as Peter and Mary, but his participation was substantive.

In summary, I grade participation in group discussions both quantitatively, based on the number of entrances, and qualitatively, based on the substance of what the student said.

## 3. “THROWING OUT” A GRADE.

Depending on how many grades I have for classwork or quizzes, I often discard one lowest grade for each student. For example, if I have eight quiz grades for each student, I will discard the lowest quiz grade. However, if I have only four or five classwork grades, I won’t, since throwing out a grade won’t leave enough grades representative of the student’s work. By discarding a grade, a student is not penalized for being sick or having some other unavoidable emergency.

#### 4. GRADING MULTIPLE CHOICE AND SHORT-ANSWER WORK.

Using the technique below can 1) save you time and 2) ensure consistency in evaluating short-answer questions, even for a class with a small number of students. It can also keep your head from swimming if you have a large class. It uses the principle of an assembly line, but don't be put off by that. For both kinds of grading (multiple choice and short answer), follow these steps:

- 1) Memorize the first 3-5 answers.
- 2) Mark *all* of the students' papers for those questions.
- 3) Memorize the next 3-5 answers.
- 4) Again, mark *all* of the students' papers for those answers.

Continue until you're finished. You will have made several passes on each paper.

In addition to saving time, this technique can ensure consistency in short-answer questions. Here's an example: Let's say you're grading a reading quiz that requires short answers. Midway through the grading, you realize that some of the students are writing the same wrong answer. Woops! Maybe it's a correct answer after all, but you just didn't think of it when you made your answer key. If you had finished grading each student's paper separately, you might not have realized that.

Finally, this technique helps maintain objectivity. If you are looking at the *answers* and not the names on the papers, you will be less likely to award or subtract points based on your knowledge of a student's previous performance ("He always gets top grades—he *really* meant to say..." or "He usually doesn't do well—I need to look more carefully at these answers...").

#### 5. "CURVING" GRADES

After you've graded all of the papers for an assignment, take a look at how the whole class did on it. Did most students miss some questions? Did the students with the top grades miss the same questions? If so, then there may have been a problem with the questions themselves. In a case like this, I "curve" the grades by adding the same number of points to every student's grade (this is easier and faster than recalculating individual grades). For example, if the top grade in the class was 85%, I might add 10 percentage points to each student's grade, so that the top grade would then become a 95%. This is relatively unscientific and not analytical, but it works if you're in a rush and have a large number of papers.

If you have slightly more time, you can calculate the class average (mean), and see if the median is close, which it should be on a good test. You can then use this information to figure out a "curve." **HOWEVER, BE AWARE** that classes can differ wildly: you may have an unusually low class or an unusually high class. If you're uncertain, be sure to ask other teachers who have taught or are teaching the same level or group of students.

## 6. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN LOWER LEVEL READING.

After years of testing vocabulary and reading skills together (meaning learned vocabulary and new reading passages in the same quiz, although in separate sections), I decided to separate them into “knowledge quizzes” and “skills quizzes” in lower levels of reading (through intermediate). The knowledge quizzes test what the student has *studied* and *learned*: vocabulary, and information from the reading passages assigned for homework. The skills quizzes, however, are entirely new passages, and require the students to use the skills they have *practiced*, such as guessing vocabulary from context, identifying pronoun referents, identifying/writing main ideas, and so on. By differentiating between knowledge and skills, I find that I am better able to evaluate whether or not a student is ready for the next level. It also enables me to see with a glance at my grade book more specifically *why* a student is not passing, if that is the case. My students so far have received this differentiation very positively—they know what they need to spend more time on: memorizing and/or practicing. Another positive attribute is that students who have studied very hard, done all of the required reading, and memorized all of the required vocabulary are able to get good grades on the knowledge quizzes, even if their skills are not at a level which would enable them to pass to the next level. This gives them a sense of accomplishment while they continue to work on skills (perhaps by repeating the level).

## 7. TALK TO PEOPLE.

In the end, the most useful help you can get comes from talking to other teachers. Experienced teachers have developed their own systems of grading over the years, and by asking questions, you’ll get different points of view, some of which may or may not work for you. Also remember that every ESL program is different, so if you’re not sure whether your standards are too high or too low, ask other teachers who have been there a long time to look at your grading, and ask to look at some samples of theirs. And of course, be sure to ask where the students are coming from and where they will be going: the curriculum (and samples of student work, if possible) for the previous and subsequent levels of the class you are teaching.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me, even though you may not receive an immediate reply:

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### NOTES ON THE WRITING RUBRICS

1. The bands in each of the following rubrics (Entry Level and Level 2) are not “exploded” into different grade ranges, nor are the criteria within each band separated into specific components. You may wish to refine them further by doing so.
2. Please note the differences in weighting between Entry Level and Level 2, since these reflect priorities.
3. How I use these:

I grade holistically within each band. Except for “Style,” each paper starts with the maximum points. I then deduct points depending on the severity and frequency of errors and omissions. After deducting for any given band, I then refer to a “cheat sheet” (on the next page) that shows the points for each grade range, and compare the result of my initial assessment (via point deduction) with my impressions within that band. For example, after deducting points for vocabulary on an Entry Level paper, I ask myself, “In terms of vocabulary, is this A, B, C, D, or F paper?” If there is a match, I’ve done well. If there is a discrepancy between the points and my impression, I reread the paper and may revise the point allocation.

After each band is examined twice in this way, I add up the total points (all of the bands) and ask myself if the grade is a fair reflection of the writing. I use the “Style” band as the equivalent of extra credit, since it encourages students to take more risks.

When students receive their papers, in addition to specific feedback, they see the point allocation for each band, and can then refer to the rubrics, in conjunction with my feedback comments, to interpret their scores. Here is an example of what an Entry Level student might see written at the end of the paper:

M = 35  
V = 15  
O = 15  
C = 13  
S = 0

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The “Cheat Sheet” for Entry Level writing is on the next page.

4. Here is the "Cheat Sheet" I use for the Entry Level Writing rubrics that follow:

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>GRADE</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
Mechanics (45)	A	41-45
	B	36-40
	C	32-36
	D	27-31
	F	0-30
Vocabulary (20)	A	18-20
	B	16-17
	C	14-15
	D	12-13
	F	0-11
Organization (15) Cohesion/Unity (15)	A	14-15
	B	12-13
	C	11
	D	9-10
	F	0-8
Style (5)	A	3-5
	B	0-2

## ENTRY LEVEL WRITING

### PARAGRAPH GRADING CRITERIA

POINTS	DESCRIPTION
45	<b>MECHANICS:</b> Paragraph form and page layout are correct all of the time. Periods, question marks and commas are correct all of the time. Semicolons, colons, quotation marks and other punctuation are correct some of the time. Frequently used words are correctly spelled all of the time. Spelling of other words does not interfere with meaning. Grammar does not interfere with meaning. Grammar covered in Level E Grammar class is used correctly almost all of the time. Different sentence structures are used for variety.
20	<b>VOCABULARY:</b> A variety of vocabulary appropriate to Level E is used. The student avoids using the same words throughout by using synonyms and pronouns.
15	<b>ORGANIZATION:</b> Topic sentences and supporting details are clearly logical. Paragraphs use organizational principles taught in class, appropriate to the type of paragraph.
15	<b>COHESION AND UNITY:</b> Conjunctions, logical connectors, and pronouns are used to help the writing flow smoothly. There is an attempt at transitions between paragraphs when necessary. No irrelevant information is included.
5	<b>STYLE:</b> The student attempts vocabulary and grammatical structures beyond the level. The writing shows a commitment to the topic.

## **LEVEL 2 WRITING:**

### **PARAGRAPH/ESSAY GRADING CRITERIA**

#### **CONTENT (25%)**

The paragraph/essay fits the assignment, and is the type required. All paragraphs are well-developed, with enough supporting details. The paragraph/essay is well-balanced in content. There is no irrelevant information. Topic sentences are clear and contain the main idea. A variety of vocabulary is used.

#### **ORGANIZATION (15%)**

The organization is clear. It is suitable for the kind of paragraph or essay, and follows guidelines given in class.

#### **COHESION (20%)**

Logical connectors (signal words) and transition words help make the relationship of ideas clear. The writing flows smoothly, and there are no sudden changes in direction. Sentences are not short or choppy. Pronouns are used to tie ideas in sentences together.

#### **GRAMMAR/MECHANICS (30%)**

There are very few grammatical mistakes for the level of writing. Grammar covered in Grammar Class is used correctly almost all of the time. There are almost no punctuation or capitalization mistakes. There are no spelling mistakes in common words. Mistakes do not interfere with meaning. Vocabulary is correctly used almost all of the time. A variety of sentence structures is used.

#### **\*STYLE (10%)**

The writing shows an individual style. The writer attempts (perhaps not always successfully) more complex structures and vocabulary. The writer is willing to push the envelope of convention. The writing engages the audience completely.

*\*Note: The 10% in STYLE is the difference between good "safe" writing and good "wonderful!" writing.*