Research Writing Holistic Rubric:

An A-range research paper is exceptional. It has a strong, precise, argumentative thesis. It identifies thoughtful, even intriguing points of analysis that can be well supported by information from sources. Claims and observations advance the thesis. It is written fluently and with appropriate formality. Any proofreading errors are minor. Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence that identifies the main point and how that point relates to the thesis. The order of the paragraphs enhances the argument of the paper, and the paper coheres from beginning to end. Quotations and paraphrases are interpreted accurately and used effectively to support all claims. Sources are clearly identified, with careful separation of source’s ideas from the writer’s own. The paper uses documentation style correctly, both in-text and on the works cited pages.

A B-range research paper is good. It has an argumentative thesis, though it may be imprecise on some points, and it identifies points of analysis that can be supported by information from sources. It is written clearly, with appropriate formality, and contains only occasional errors that do not interfere with reading comprehension. Most paragraphs have a topic sentence that identifies the main point and how it relates to the thesis. Paragraphs are arranged in a logical order, and the paper mostly coheres throughout. Although slight digressions exist, the overarching focus of the paper comes through clearly from beginning to end. Quotations and paraphrases are interpreted accurately and used effectively to support most claims. Source ideas are usually identified and distinguished from the writer’s own. Understanding of appropriate documentation format is evident, though details may be inconsistently applied.

A C-range paper is satisfactory. It has an argumentative thesis, though it may be vague and imprecise. It identifies some points of analysis that can be supported by information from sources. Discussion gestures at the thesis but does not always make thorough connections. Some sentence level errors are present, such as fragments and run-ons, etc., but these generally do not interfere with reading comprehension. It may demonstrate difficulty maintaining consistent formality. Some paragraphs have topic sentences that may not identify the main point correctly and/or may not connect to the thesis. Quotations and paraphrases from at least one source are interpreted accurately, and at least one source is used to support some claims. One source may be relied on more heavily than others, or each source may be appropriately used just once. Ideas from the sources may sometimes be mixed together with writer’s own. Documentation is in some other format, or hybrid.

A D-range paper is unsatisfactory. It has a descriptive thesis and/or identifies only one or two points of analysis that are partially supported by information from the sources. Claims and observations are only partially connected to the thesis. Sentence level errors interfere with reading comprehension or the paper struggles to establish a formal register. Few paragraphs have topic sentences and/or many paragraphs seem out of order. Some interpretations of quotations and paraphrases are inaccurate and/or sources may be only loosely connected to the claims. Ideas from the sources are not clearly identified, though there may be general acknowledgements of the sources. Documentation is inadequate.

An F-range paper is incomplete. It may not have a thesis and/or does not identify points of analysis. It may make unrelated claims and observations. Many sentence level errors may make reading comprehension difficult and/or the paper is written in an informal register not appropriate to the assignment. Paragraphs lack topic sentences and/or there is no obviously discernable order or structure. Most interpretations of quotations and paraphrases are inaccurate and/or little to no support is provided for the claims made. Source ideas are not distinguished from the writer’s in any way. Little or no discernable documentation is present.