

Six-part evaluation scale for critical comparative essay

1. **First three paragraphs** (clear, meaningful, concise overviews of the books' theses *and* of the essay's direction)

A	B	C	D	F	_____
15-14	13-12	11	10-9	8-0	

2. **Well-reasoned** critiques of the books (all questions sufficiently answered; essay touches on both the "what" and "why" of the authors' positions; response draws equally from both authors, comparing and contrasting their arguments; response demonstrates familiarity with the *complete* books; avoids mere summary of contents; fair, logical, accurate, and persuasive assessments; key terms defined; defensible claims; sticks with the *authors'* points of view; focuses on the most significant components of the authors' arguments)

A	B	C	D	F	_____
20-18	17-16	15-14	13-12	11-0	

3. **Well-organized** response (reasonable framework for analyzing the books; a framework you *announce* and *preview* for the reader; logical sequence of points in your argument)

A	B	C	D	F	_____
17-16	15-14	13-12	11	10-0	

4. **Concluding assessment** of the books (clear point of view; well-defended position; significant issues addressed)

A	B	C	D	F	_____
17-16	15-14	13-12	11	10-0	

5. **Well-substantiated** response (all claims backed up by evidence—i.e., by proper citations)

A	B	C	D	F	_____
15-14	13-12	11	10-9	8-0	

6. **Mechanics** of the paper (spelling; punctuation; sentence and paragraph construction)

A	B	C	D	F	_____
15-14	13-12	11	10-9	8-0	

					TOTAL + 1 _____
A	B	C	D	F	
100-90	89-80	79-70	69-60	59-0	

Remember that your paper will lose points for problems such as:

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|----------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| -contradictory arguments | -poor organization | -failing to define key terms and concepts |
| -belaboring the obvious | -excessive quotation | -passing off another's ideas as your own |
| -unfair or irrelevant criticisms | -lack of citations | -poor grammar, spelling, and punctuation |
| | | -summarizing (rather than analyzing) the books |