Reading Response Rubric

TL;DR: submissions that earn a "Pass" will demonstrate a serious effort to engage with the assigned prompt; submissions that earn "Half-credit" will show signs of having been written at the last minute and/or fall short of the standard outlined by this rubric; and submissions that earn a "Fail" will imply a complete lack of effort.

	PASS	HALF-CREDIT	FAIL
CONTENT	• The reading response satisfies the 500–700 word requirement and demonstrates full engagement with the prompt. For example, if the prompt asks more than one question, it shows an attempt to answer all of them. • It exhibits a grasp of the relevant philosophical concepts, and the ideas that it expresses are sufficiently detailed and well-developed. • The student is appropriately charitable and accurate in interpreting, analyzing, and/or presenting the readings or media. It is noticeable that the student examined the readings or media carefully before crafting his or her response.	• An otherwise "Pass" reading response was submitted a day late. • It falls short of the 500–700 word requirement or does not demonstrate full engagement with the prompt. For example, if the prompt asks more than one question, it is difficult to detect an answer to at least one of those questions. • It exhibits only a partial grasp of the relevant philosophical concepts, and the ideas that it expresses are not detailed or sufficiently developed. • The student is not appropriately charitable or accurate in interpreting, analyzing, and/or presenting the readings or media. Instead, the reading response shows signs of having been written at the last minute.	• The reading response was submitted more than two days late, or an otherwise "Half-credit" reading response was submitted a day late. • It does not meet the 500–700 word requirement at all or demonstrates almost no engagement with the prompt. • It does not exhibit any grasp of the relevant philosophical concepts, and the ideas that it expresses come across as confused or muddled. • The student does not attempt to interpret, analyze, or present the readings or media with any accuracy.
CRITICAL THINKING	• The reading response successfully breaks the argument, issue, or problem into relevant parts and clearly indicates the connections between those parts. • It provides vivid and interesting examples to illustrate its points or support its conclusions. • It demonstrates at least some awareness of the kind of reasoning that it is employing or expositing, and when appropriate, it utilizes effective argumentative strategies, such as arguing by analogy, inferring to the best explanation, or providing counterexamples to opposing positions.	• The reading response does not clearly break the argument, issue, or problem into relevant parts or indicate the connections between those parts. • It provides examples to illustrate its points or support its conclusions, but they are unclear or irrelevant. • It does not show any awareness of the kind of reasoning that it is employing or expositing, and it does not utilize effective argumentative strategies.	• The reading response does not break the argument, issue, or problem into relevant parts at all. • It provides little to no examples to illustrate its points or support its conclusions. • It does not clearly reason through the argument, issue, or problem at all.
CLARITY	• The reading response is well thought out and easy to follow. Overall, it is focused; its sentences are logical and fully explicated; and its paragraphs are cohesive and fit into a coherent structure. • It contains a clear statement of the conclusion/position it is meant to explore, clearly lays out the premises that are meant to support that conclusion/position, and explains how those premises are supposed to support that conclusion/position.	• The reading response is not well thought out and is hard to follow. Overall, it is not focused and prone to irrelevant digressions; its sentences are illogical and/or not fully explicated; and its paragraphs are lacking in cohesion or do not fit into a coherent structure. • It does not contain a clear statement of the conclusion/position it is meant to explore, or otherwise fails to clearly identify the premises that are meant to support that conclusion/position and/or explain how those premises are supposed to support that conclusion/position.	• The reading response is incoherent and confusing. • It does not contain any statement of the conclusion/position or premises and/or does not attempt to explain how the premises are meant to support the conclusion/position.
STYLE	• The writing style is concise and clear. • Sentences are complete and grammatical. • The student uses words precisely and makes the meanings of technical terms clear. • Paragraph breaks are appropriate and serve a purpose within the overall structure of the reading response. • The student expresses the ideas from any assigned sources in his or her own words and employs quotations only when it is absolutely necessary. • If the student decided to take the unnecessary step to confer with any sources other than those mentioned in the prompt, they are appropriately cited in the reading response in a clear and logical manner.	• The writing style is neither concise nor clear, but instead comes off as "purple prose" or as a series of unconnected bullet points that do not flow well together. • Some sentences are incomplete, awkward, and/or ungrammatical. • The student does not use words precisely and fails to make the meanings of technical terms clear. • Paragraphs tend to drag on or do not flow well together. • The student expresses the ideas from any assigned sources in his or her own words, but relies too heavily on quotations. • If the student decided to take the unnecessary step to confer with any sources other than those mentioned in the prompt, they are cited in the reading response but not in a clear and logical manner.	• The reading response shows signs of having been put together at the very last minute. • Typos and ungrammatical/awkward sentences are abundant. • Paragraph breaks are nonexistent or completely illogical. • The student copies from the assigned sources without indicating that he or she is quoting from those sources, or shows signs of having plagiarized outside sources. This is a possible ground for reporting the student to the Office of the Dean of Students.