



May 25, 2012

Dear A _____,

The following *personalized feedback* on your portfolio will offer you important advice on how to develop further as an academic writer. We look forward to your next submissions and we hope you'll consider attending the fall open house for a brief conference with one of the readers below.

What's working well

The papers submitted thus far demonstrate you are capable of using proper vocabulary to convey a formal tone to your writing (Clarity, Language & Diction). Your papers also reflect an understanding of Mechanics and Usage, but refinement is needed. Careful proofreading, both visually and verbally (reading aloud) may resolve this issue.

Where to focus your energies

Based on the papers presented, it was difficult to ascertain the extent of your academic Research capabilities. We will need a better sense of your proficiency with the use and citation (APA or MLA format) of academic sources, such as academic search engines (e.g., EBSCO, Gale), etc. The other areas of focus required in order for you to become a more proficient writer are: Organization, Fluidity, Details and Elaboration, and Critical Thinking. In the area of Organization, most academic papers should contain an introduction (with thesis statement), body, and conclusion. However, in the "Response paper" the overall construction is weak. Though the thesis is stated, the paper wasn't organized in accordance with it. In other words, your thesis intended to argue that pluralism is ineffective because it: (1) prevents majority rule; (2) gets little done; and (3) "it [sic] unrepresentative of the majority." Yet, the paper fails to adequately address each point. After the introduction, the body of the essay should have started with the discussion of the first point in your thesis (prevents majority rule), followed by the second (gets little done), etc. The conclusion should serve as a reflection of all points discussed. Without proper Organization, the Fluidity of the paper (the flow of ideas) is affected. In the area of Details and Elaboration, you should SHOW the reader why a particular point is important instead of TELLING the reader it's important by using examples and then discussing them. Though you do this to a certain degree in the "Toy Evaluation" paper, it is not fully developed. The "Response paper" was ripe for providing Details and Elaboration, as well as Critical Thinking, which involves discussing the significance of the ideas presented. Instead you give an overabundance of facts instead of explaining and providing examples of the concepts you are using as evidence to validate your argument. For example, in the second paragraph of that paper, you throw out a bunch of ideological terms (e.g., constitutionalism, conservatism), but you don't flesh out how these terms relate to your thesis or even the main idea of the paragraph. When writing an argument paper such as the response paper (or any academic paper for that matter) each paragraph should have a basic construction: (1) present a theory, idea, or concept (either your own or from an outside source) and explain it (definition); (2) discuss how this definition relates to the main point of the paragraph; (3) present an outside source (expert) that can speak to the idea; (4) provide an example of this idea in order to validate your claim; and then (5) discuss the implications/conclusions of the idea as it relates to your thesis.

Key points for moving forward

- Develop your Critical Thinking by expanding *your* ideas and making stronger relationships between points and information.
- Show, through Details and Elaboration, why a particular point is important. Give the reader as much information as possible.
- Improve the Fluidity of your writing by creating an outline, which will also help with the Organization of the paper.

Respectfully,

Lisa M. Smith, first name last name

FIRST NAME, LAST NAME

This preliminary evaluation of your writing based on the works you submitted to your portfolio will help you understand the status of your writing ability as a USJ student. Note that the score below is not a final score. Your score on the final evaluation can change based on the work you'll submit during your junior year.

A "check" (✓) is Satisfactory. A "minus" (—) is Unsatisfactory. A "plus" (+) is Excellent.

Critical Thinking	—	Fluidity & Clarity	—
Researching	—	Details & Elaboration	—
Organization	—	Language & Diction	✓
Mechanics & Usage	✓		

Inc. = Incomplete, 1 = Poor, 2 = Unsatisfactory, 3 = Satisfactory, 4 = Very Good, 5 = Excellent

Preliminary Score: 2