

Rubric for the Historical Fiction Essay

Criteria	5	4	3	2	1	N
Ideas and Content	My paper brings the time & place my character lived alive; vividly describes her/his experiences and values; refers to relevant, historically accurate details.	My paper reveals the time and place my character lived; describes a day in her/his life; most or all details are historically accurate.	The time & place my character lived is clear, but his/her experiences are more like a list than a letter or diary entry; some details may be historically inaccurate.	I tell the reader when and where my story is set but make no attempt to include historically accurate facts or details.	The setting of my story is murky, and the characters' experiences and/or values are often historically inaccurate.	I didn't write enough to judge my own ideas and content.
Organization	My letter/diary has a strong lead, a developed middle, and a satisfying ending, all in an order that makes sense, flows, and hangs together.	I have either a strong lead, developed middle or satisfying ending but not all three.	I have a beginning, middle and end in logical order but without flair.	My organization is rough but workable. My writing may drag its feet then race ahead; my ending may stop suddenly.	My writing is aimless and disorganized; it is probably confusing to a reader.	I didn't write enough to judge.
Paragraphs	I indent the beginnings of all paragraphs & have one topic per paragraph. I wrote at least 5 paragraphs.	I indent the beginnings of all paragraphs, have one topic/paragraph, and I wrote 5 paragraphs.	Some of my paragraphs are too long, too short, or not indented. I wrote at least 5 paragraphs.	I have several problems with paragraphs and/or I wrote less than 5 paragraphs.	I use incorrect paragraph format and/or I wrote less than 5 paragraphs.	I didn't write enough to judge.

Voice and Tone	I use 1st person. My voice sounds like a real person. My paper has personality & shows how my character thinks and feels.	I sound like I care about the topic. My writing voice is engaging but may fade in and out.	My tone is OK but my paper could have been written by anyone. I need to reveal more about how I think and feel about the topic.	My writing is bland, mechanical or pretentious. It sounds like I have not found my own way to say things. I used 2nd or 3rd person.	My writing is too formal or inappropriately informal. There may be no hints of a real person in it. It may sound like I don't like the topic.	I didn't write enough to judge
Word choice	The words I use are striking but natural, e.g., "wondered" instead of "thought." I use powerful verbs & historically accurate words, phrases and slang from the period.	My paper has some fine word choices and generally good language. Some parts may be routine.	The words I use are acceptable but ordinary. I should try to use more expressive words.	My word choice is uninspired, colorless and dull, or sounds like I am trying too hard to impress. Some words may be used incorrectly.	The same words are repeated over and over and over and over. Some words may be confusing to a reader.	I had better get busy....
Sentence Fluency	My sentences are clear; they begin in different ways; some are longer than others; no fragments; my paper is a delight to read out loud.	My sentences are mostly well-constructed, some minor errors. My essay marches along but doesn't <i>dance</i> .	I have a few problems with fragments or awkward sentences that I should fix.	My sentences are often awkward or mechanical; little variety in length; may have many sentences that begin with the same word.	My paper is tough to read because almost all of my sentences are incomplete, run-ons, and/or awkward.	I didn't write enough to judge.
Conventions	I use the correct grammar, capitals, spelling, and punctuation.	I made some errors, perhaps by taking risks and using interesting words or sentences.	My spelling is correct on common words. Some errors in grammar and punctuation. I need to check it again.	Frequent errors are distracting but do not interfere with the meaning of my paper.	Many errors in grammar, capitalization, spelling & punctuation make my paper hard to read.	I didn't write enough to judge.