San Jose State University
WST Scoring Guidelines

The WST essay is scored by two readers, using a 0-6 point scale. The scores from both readers are combined to produce a total score (12 maximum). Scoring is based on the following rhetorical and syntactic guidelines:

- maturity of thought and expression
- understanding and response to the topic
- organization, support, and development
- fluency with language, syntactic variety
- grammar and sentence mechanics

6 = Superior competence in writing.
- addresses the topic with maturity of thought and expression; the paper moves beyond a narration
- understands the topic and its implications accurately and in some depth
- shows superior organization and is thoroughly developed
- demonstrates a high level of syntactic variety and range of vocabulary
- is nearly free of errors, shows masterful control of language

5 = Clear competence in writing, though it may have occasional minor errors.
- addresses the topic with more than adequate maturity of thought
- clearly understands most aspects of the topic
- shows good organization and supports ideas with specifics
- shows some syntactic variety and range of vocabulary
- demonstrates facility with language; may lack high-level diction, word choice, and sentence control

4 = Competence in writing.
- addresses the topic adequately, though perhaps not completely
- may contain a slight misreading of the topic
- uses some detail to support a thesis or illustrate ideas
- demonstrates adequate but not distinguished facility with language and syntax
- may contain a few simple errors that interfere with meaning

3 = Developing competence, but remains flawed in one or more areas.
- lacks maturity of thought and expression
- may not understand major points of the topic
- may not support generalizations with appropriate or sufficient detail
- may contain multiple errors in syntax and usage
- may contain a pattern of errors

2 = Limited competence; may be seriously flawed in one or more areas.
- does not reveal ideas beyond the most basic
- may seriously misread the topic or be off-focus
- fails to organize or develop ideas
- demonstrates serious problems with fluency and syntax
- contains serious and frequent errors

1 = Incompetence in writing.
- A “1” paper may reveal the writer’s inability to comprehend the question, may be incoherent, or impressively illogical.
- A paper that is severely underdeveloped falls into this category.

0 = Either rejects the assignment, is a non-response, or the score was cancelled.