(excerpted from “What is an A Paper?” on the University of California LA website)

Define the "C" Paper

Students often assume that if they do everything that you ask them to do, even in a minimal way, they should get an "A." To prevent this misunderstanding, it is sometimes useful to start out by defining the "C" grade, the minimum standard to pass, and then define the "B" and "A" grades as involving more effort and more skill...In this framework the "C" paper responds to the assignment in a focused, organized way. All the basic parts of the essay are there, but it may be lacking in development or support, the style is basic, and there may be grammatical errors and some syntactic problems, as long as they don't cause confusion. The "B" paper has these same basic parts, but the introduction and conclusion are more effective, the argument is stronger and better supported, and there are fewer errors. The "A" paper is stronger in every way, but the main difference is that the writer has a voice, a style and a purpose.

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Cooke's suggestions for grading:

1. Skim - you'll understand context and avoid asking questions which are later clarified.
2. Don't edit - Mark one paragraph (or page or two pages) for spelling grammar etc. - note that the rest needs it - Students tend to think this is all I need to do.
3. Make certain that the most important points <u>don't</u> get lost.
4. Strengths and weaknesses
5. Ask questions - Show why <u>you</u> as a reader are confused

Cooke, Virginia. <u>Writing Across the Curriculum: A Faculty Handbook</u> . Victoria. Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development, 1991.