

# Very Short Papers

You will write up to five very short papers, starting with a one-sentence paper and potentially working your way up to a four-sentence paper. This series of assignments will use the *levels system*, which works as follows.

## The Levels System

There are four levels, where your level determines the length of your next paper submission. If you are at Level 1, you will submit a one-sentence paper. If you are at Level 2, you will submit a two-sentence paper. If you are at Level 3 you will submit a three-sentence paper. And, if you are at Level 4, you will submit a four-sentence paper. Each paper will receive a grade out of 10.

Everyone starts out at Level 1. Each time you submit a high-quality paper—which is to say, the paper gets a grade of 8/10 or higher—then you move up to the next level. If your paper receives a grade lower than an 8/10, you will stay at your current level (meaning that your next submission will be the same length as the previous one). You can submit up to five short papers.

Your final grade for the assignment will be a function of (a) your earned points and (b) your level. Specifically: [your total points] = [the sum of your best four grades] + [your level] × 5. You can earn up to 60 points, so the final grade is your total points divided by 60.

Here’s an example of how this works:

Submission Number	Length	Grade	What Happens
1	1 sentence	9	Advance to Level 2
2	2 sentences	6	Remain at Level 2
3	2 sentences	10	Advance to Level 3
4	3 sentences	7	Remain at Level 3
5	3 sentences	8	Advance to Level 4

Your total points would then be the sum of your best four grades ( $9 + 10 + 7 + 8 = 34$ ) plus your level (4) multiplied by five ( $4 \times 5 = 20$ ). Thus, you would get a 54/60 on this assignment.

## Topics for Very Short Papers

Each very short paper will critically discuss one of the assigned readings. You can choose which readings to discuss, but can only write one very short paper per assigned reading. (You can write an essay and a very short paper on the same reading).

For each reading, a one-sentence paper about that reading will present a major thesis from the reading and the author’s reason for endorsing that thesis. A two-sentence paper will add an objection to the thesis/reason. A three-sentence paper will add a potential reply to that objection. And a four-sentence paper will add a critical assessment of that reply. See the “Very Short Papers” handout for more details.