

Notes on *Faerie Queene* essays

My general approach to grading:

1. A general, overall, holistic weighing of the quality of each essay for a grade. The major criteria for grading an essay are the following:
 - i. **Richness of observation:** How much did you see in the text?
 - ii. **Close, careful reading:** Are you paying close attention to the exact meaning of the words on the page?
 - iii. **Precise use of textual evidence:** Does the passage you quote in fact support the claim you're making? Is this the best passage for the job? Does your discussion of it reflect careful reading and consideration of its meaning?
 - iv. **Coherent arrangement of topics:** Are you following a clear plan in the order and development of your ideas? Or are you winging it, figuring out your answer as you write while sliding from topic to topic?
 - v. **Clarity of prose:** Have you presented your ideas in clean, straightforward, economical, unaffected prose? Have you edited out any chattiness, windiness, or academic stuffiness?
2. My marginal and end comments are not intended to "justify" the grade but to provide guidance for future work. I'm trying to coach your next performance.
3. If your essay violates some standard spelled out on this sheet, I may or may not have explicitly marked it, but you can safely assume I reacted to it.
4. I overlook a few scattered typos or grammatical problems, though if they get excessive they can bring down your grade.
5. If I mark an error in grammar or punctuation, it's because there may be a code you're not aware of. So if you see something marked and you don't understand why it's a problem, ask me and I'll coach you on it.
6. An underlined phrase means there's something wrong with it. Read the entire sentence, preferably aloud, and if you don't see or hear the problem, feel free to ask me.
7. A ✓ in the margin simply means I noticed a good point you made.

Titles of long works should always be underlined or in italics. *Beowulf* is a poem; Beowulf is a hero. The titles of short works, like lyric poems or essays, should be in quotation marks: "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love."

Quoting poetry. Preserve the capitalization of the original. This means that you will almost always capitalize the first word of any line. Be careful to do this after you use a / to show a line break.

Only indicate line breaks actually required by the poem. Don't put in a / toward the end of a line just because a computer or page arbitrarily broke a line. You will usually know a bogus line break because the end words won't rhyme with anything.

In literary criticism, always do plot summary in present tense: "The Red Crosse Knight **runs** his spear into the dragon, but it **bounces** off. The dragon, in a rage, **picks** up the Knight and his horse and **tries** to fly off with them. . . ."

“Una the faire” just means “pretty Una.” “Faire” means pretty, usually in a blue-eyed blond sort of way.

Some students did Parts I and II, the Summary and the Analysis, as two distinct parts; others worked them together into one text. I was thinking the former, but the latter worked just as well, so it was a wash.

Noting line numbers.

- The actual *line numbers* should *always* be Arabic numerals: 1, 2, 3 . . .
- The largest units of a text (Books in Spenser, Acts in Shakespeare) will generally be capital Roman numerals: I, II, III, IV , , ,
- Secondary units (Cantos in Spenser, Scenes in Shakespeare) can either be in lower case roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv) or Arabic (1, 2, 3).