

Undergraduate Thesis Assessment Rubric

Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia

Thesis Author: Jan Vála

Title: Nature, The Causes and Effects of the American Civil War

Length: 29

Text Length: 26

Assessment Criteria	Scale	Comments
1. Introduction is well written, brief, interesting, and compelling. It motivates the work and provides a clear statement of the examined issue. It presents and overview of the thesis.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	It would have been helpful to have a specific thesis here.
2. The thesis shows the author's appropriate knowledge of the subject matter through the background/review of literature. The author presents information from a variety of quality electronic and print sources. Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem. Primary sources are included (if appropriate).	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	The author learned much concerning the events that constitute the American Civil War but seems to have little critical perspective on these events.
3. The author carefully analyzed the information collected and drew appropriate and inventive conclusions supported by evidence. Ideas are richly supported with accurate details that develop the main point. The author's voice is evident.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
4. The thesis displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	The author shows a glimmer of critical analysis when discussing the political situation that lead up to the ACW but the diploma falls to mere summary once the war begins.
5. Conclusion effectively restates the argument. It summarizes the main findings and follows logically from the analysis presented.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	More of a summary than a conclusion.
6. The text is organized in a logical manner. It flows naturally and is easy to follow. Transitions, summaries and conclusions exist as appropriate. The author uses standard spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	There are many typos. The readers strains at the awkward syntax.

7. The language use is precise. The student makes proficient use of language in a way that is appropriate for the discipline and/or genre in which the student is writing.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
8. The thesis meets the general requirements (formatting, chapters, length, division into sections, etc.). References are cited properly within the text and a complete reference list is provided.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	The thesis has the bare minimum of sources need for a research project. Maybe one of the problems with the thesis is that most of the resources seem to be helper texts, rather than critically penetrating works.

Final Comments & Questions

This is a problematic thesis to say the least. There is very little critical perspective brought to the thesis despite the supervisor's continued emphasis on this point:

On June 9, the supervisor wrote to the author:

The small mistakes must be fixed. Close the spaces between paragraphs. You must run English language spell check on the document and get rid of any sentence fragments. Under Economics of North and South: "The essentials of battle." is not a sentence and this is the kind of writing that will get you blocked at the defenses. Much of the writing could be improved and I don't know if you can find someone to help you more than I can right now. I have already mentioned you need page numbers for your references. You need a clear thesis statement at the end of your introduction. Right now you are only telling the reader what he already knows, The Civil War was important. You will have to craft an argument that intertwines the relationship of economics to war in order to thematically unify the thesis. The battle section is still a list of events and to whatever extent possible you are going to have to bring economics as part of the conversation and make this part more argumentative. Can you send me the conclusion and references page soon.

I find that the author did greatly improve the micro elements of the work, but was ultimately unwilling or unable to crack the macro structure and improve the argumentative and critical requirements of the thesis. This is not to say there still aren't many problems in relation to syntax and style, but still it is worth noting improvement was made from the earlier draft. To some small extent improvement was made concerning the discussion of the economic and political elements leading up to the Civil War, but this was not extended to the actual events of the Civil War. Sadly, it would have been rather easy to have revised the introduction and conclusion to reflect these more argumentative elements and that would have greatly improved the readers impression of the thesis overall.

Suggested grade: 3

Supervisor/Reviewer: Brad Vice, Ph.D.

Date: 20.08.2015

Signature:

