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|  | 4 exemplary | 3 proficient | 2 developing | 1 emerging |
| Focused research question  (CCLS Writing 7) | Essential question is original and conveys higher order thinking; demonstrates understanding of subject under investigation | Focused essential question that demonstrates understanding of subject under investigation | Question demonstrates understanding of subject but is a fact-based supporting question rather than essential question | Question is fact based and does not convey understanding of subject under investigation |
| Utilizes a variety of credible  sources (complex informational texts)  (CCLS Writing 8,  Reading 1) | Student cites more than two reputable sources (including at least one library database) | Cites at least two reputable sources, no databases cited | Cites at least two sources, one of which is reputable, no databases cited | One or more references however information may not be relevant |
| Substantiates argument with relevant textual evidence  (CCLS Writing 9,  Reading 1) | Provides four or more relevant references to the text | Provides three or more relevant references to the text | Provides at least one relevant reference to the text | Relies only on personal opinion and experience; lacks textual evidence |
| Citations accurate  (CCLS Writing 8) | Uses proper MLA format | Attempts MLA format | Source information included, incorrect format | No citations |