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| Criteria  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| **Insight** **(25%)** | Offers nuanced insights into the complexity of the ethical issue; consistently pushes beyond the obvious in its exploration of the issue. | Offers some insight into the complexity of the ethical issue; contains some ideas that push beyond the obvious. | Offers insight that is incomplete or superficial; pushes beyond the obvious only rarely.  | Offers little or no insight on the ethical issue, beyond the obvious.  |
| **Originality and Purpose****(25%)** | Brings an unusually thoughtful perspective or a unique approach to the ethical issue; entire essay is guided by a clear and meaningful purpose.  | Brings a somewhat thoughtful perspective or a somewhat unique approach to the ethical issue; essay is mostly guided by a clear and/or meaningful purpose.  | Brings a perspective and approach that is occasionally thoughtful and unique but mostly conventional; essay appears to have a purpose. | Brings little or no originality to the ethical issue; essay does not appear to be guided by a purpose.  |
| **Authority**(25%) | Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the ethical issue through either a) skillfully incorporated, well-chosen references to relevant, credible sources or b) vividly described, relevant personal experience (or both). | Demonstrates a competent understanding of the ethical issue through either a) clear references to relevant sources or b) relevant personal experience (or both).  | Demonstrates a partial understanding of the ethical issue through either a) references to sources or b) references to personal experience.  | Demonstrates little to no understanding of the ethical issue; fails to appeal effectively to sources or personal experience.  |
| **Clarity and Eloquence (25%)** | Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity, intuitive organization, and fluency. Is free or nearly free from grammar, mechanics, and syntax errors. | Uses competent, comprehensible language and mostly clear organization; may contain a few grammar, mechanics, or syntax errors, but rarely do they impede meaning.  | Uses language and organization that is sometimes clear but sometimes poorly chosen or confusing; grammar, mechanics, and syntax errors are fairly frequent.  | Uses poorly chosen vocabulary and confusing organization; grammar, mechanics, and syntax errors are very frequent.  |