



6 Trait Scoring Guide Ideas

<p>6 The writing reflects in-depth knowledge and experience with the topic; key, balanced support and well chosen, intriguing details enrich the main idea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ A strong main idea stands out clearly; topic is narrowed and well managed⊗ Key support and quality, intriguing details enhance the ideas⊗ Experience and knowledge show surprising depth⊗ Development is generous, balanced and complete; reader questions are answered.⊗ The writing stays focused and holds the reader's attention	<p>5 The writing reflects a strong exploration of the topic; relevant support and accurate details add credibility to the main idea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Main idea is clear; topic is narrowed⊗ Accurate supporting evidence, and quality, interesting details⊗ Experience and knowledge are clearly demonstrated⊗ Development is fleshed out and complete⊗ The writing is focused and interesting	<p>4 The writer has defined the topic clearly, although development is basic or predictable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ The main idea is a clear, but a routine take on the subject; topic needs further narrowing⊗ Support is broad; some new information, details are present⊗ Experience and knowledge of the topic is evident⊗ Development has a few gaps leaving the reader with a question or two⊗ The writing stays generally focused
<p>3 The main idea is clear, but the theme and development are broad or simplistic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Main idea needs further narrowing⊗ Support in the form of lists of facts related to the topic- "filler"⊗ Due to shaky knowledge or experience with the topic, the writer relies upon common information⊗ Development is predictable, "best guesses"⊗ The writing is loosely focused	<p>2 Kernel ideas are present, but no one idea stands out clearly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ The writer has not yet decided on a main idea; nothing clearly stands out⊗ Support is minimal or inaccurate⊗ Reflects limited knowledge, experience with the topic⊗ Development relies on recycling the same point-many questions go unanswered⊗ The writing lacks focus, definition and purpose	<p>1 The writing lacks coherence and a sense of purpose. Readers must infer the message and intent of the writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Very little text is present beyond a restatement of the prompt⊗ Support, if present, only vaguely relates to an idea⊗ Very limited experience or knowledge of topic is evident⊗ Reader can find very little development for an idea⊗ Writer needs help "getting a grip" on the topic, thinking it out



6 Trait Scoring Guide Organization

<p>6 The organization carries the reader through the text effortlessly. The order, structure and sequencing of the information enhances the ideas and creates impact where needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Well-crafted structure guides the reader through the text without bumps or joltsStrong lead creates “great expectations”- conclusion follows naturally from previous informationSequencing shows logic, planning for greatest impactTransitions link ideas and paragraphs smoothly, effortlesslyPacing matches the purpose—speeds up or slows down as neededParagraphs act as building blocks—units of development for thesis or storyline	<p>5 The organization effectively prepares the reader for the information that follows and carries the reader through to the conclusion smoothly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Strong structure with a sense of directionInviting lead, and thoughtful, satisfying conclusionSequencing shows planning-nothing out of orderEffective transitions do their job without commanding too much attentionPacing works consistently with the information or storylineParagraphs effectively develop the theme	<p>4 The organization works well, although there are a few places where it “takes over” or needs smoothing out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The structure is predictable, but works to support the idea without overshadowing itFunctional lead and conclusionSequencing generally effectiveTransitions keep ideas, paragraphs linkedPacing works where it matters (to bring home the point or the punchline)Paragraphs are soundly constructed and adequately developed
<p>3 Formulaic organization overshadows the ideas, grace and flow of the writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Organization takes over with predictable, formulaic structureLead and conclusion are mechanical repetitions of each other, OR conclusion is rushed, abruptSequencing shows poor planning (“Oops, I forgot to say in the last paragraph...”)Transitions are present, but overdonePacing drags with repetitious information or irrelevant materialParagraphs are inconsistently structured, a few without a topic sentence or point to make	<p>2 A great deal of work is needed to make the organization work effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Loose structure fails to provide cohesion; does not help to clarify the ideaLead or conclusion missingSequencing needs work to make sense of the story or messageTransitions do not fit the type of writing attempted, or are missingPacing plods along at the same beat with no change, or skips via “cut and paste” without warningParagraphs are loose bits, or one long one	<p>1 Structure is missing, leaving the reader with no clear sense of direction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">No sense of direction drives the ideaStarts and stops without a warning (no lead or conclusion)Sequencing jumps all over the place both logically and chronologicallyTransitions confuse, rather than clarify-or are missingPacing does not help to emphasize what is importantParagraphs are missing or do not hang together-writer needs help planning



6 Trait Scoring Guide Voice

<p>6 The writer speaks directly to the audience in a way that is compelling, individual and engaging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✱ Individual stamp, deep conviction, strong commitment stand out✱ Speaks directly and confidently to an audience; holds listener captive when read aloud✱ Reflects a consistent personal viewpoint; sees viewpoint of others✱ Expresses infectious love or interest in the topic✱ Skilled in keeping reader engaged, “on the hook”	<p>5 The writer speaks sincerely and appropriately for the purpose and audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✱ Distinctive imprint of an individual✱ Marked audience awareness, invites oral reading✱ Personal viewpoint comes across- others' suggested or implied; easy to read aloud✱ Sincerely cares about the topic and wants reader to agree, understand✱ Keeps the voice consistent, appropriate, interesting	<p>4 The writer seems sincere, but not fully engaged or confident. The tone is pleasant, but not compelling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✱ Recognizable as the writing of an individual; sincere and pleasant✱ Speaks appropriately to the audience—a little stilted, tenuous✱ Reflects a personal viewpoint and hints at viewpoints of others; some read aloud moments✱ Seems engaged in the writing, but plays it “safe”✱ Consistent; sometimes takes a risk
<p>3 It is difficult to hear a unique moment in the writing, because the viewpoint expressed is generic, conventional.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✱ The person behind the words conveys little about himself/herself✱ May contain a few read aloud moments to spark the audience✱ Writer holds back personal viewpoint, in favor of generic responses✱ Reader senses uncertainty with topic; writer tries to cover up or rush through✱ Holds promise, but needs stronger knowledge/experience base to build confidence	<p>2 It is hard to find a word or phrase that expresses the writer's opinion, viewpoint or reaction to the subject; little audience awareness is present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✱ Reader is hard put to find a distinctive, personable moment✱ Not ready to read aloud—reads like a list, robotic sounding✱ Writer is either indifferent or “at sea” with the topic; adopts an unconvincing or inconsistent viewpoint✱ Reader is “left out” because writing addresses no one in particular✱ Voice is barely there	<p>1 The writer seems indifferent to the subject and audience, leaving the reader to wonder about the purpose of the writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✱ No sense of an individual writing this yet✱ Not written to be read aloud✱ Writer's struggle with understanding the topic generates faint viewpoint✱ Reader must infer what's going on, how reader feels about the topic✱ Writer needs to start with a topic he or she knows more about



6 Trait Scoring Guide

Word Choice

<p>6 Words convey the message with precision, accuracy and color. Memorable phrases and striking images reflect a writer who chooses words thoughtfully.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Word choice stands out; original, striking, precise• Strong vocabulary takes the place of many “little” words• Varied transitional words and phrases clarify and smoothly link paragraphs• Chooses verbs with power and adjectives that distinguish shades of meaning• Words create lasting images, impressions with noticeable style	<p>5 Many word choices reflect a writer striving to convey the message with specific, accurate and colorful words and phrases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses natural words in an unusual way-- accurate and well chosen• Knows key words, vocabulary that fits the subject• Manages links between ideas clearly with different transitional words and phrases• Strong verbs and adjectives earmark the piece• Words draw a clear picture and convey the message well; some memorable words and phrases are present	<p>4 The language is generic, with occasional sparks of energy conveyed through a few powerful words or attempts at imagery. The message is conveyed in functional language, easy to understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every day words convey the message, rarely capture reader's imagination• Stronger vocabulary would help reduce areas of wordiness• Uses predictable transitional words and phrases to link and clarify• Some strong verbs and adjectives help to add texture and sparkle• Words do their job—help reader understand the main message clearly
<p>3 In places, vague, overused, or trite words dominate, but do not obscure the message.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vague words, OR misused thesaurus words• Vocabulary needs work, although the message is understood—wordiness is a problem in places• Unvaried connecting words begin to confuse, rather than clarify relationship between ideas• A strong word or phrase shows that the writer <i>can</i> do it• Words convey the basic idea, but lack precision, color and accuracy	<p>2 The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary or uses the wrong words in key places. More specific word choice would help the reader grasp the ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repetition of vague, overused words predominate• Writer struggles with a limited vocabulary• Connecting words, transitions (<i>so, and, and so, then</i>) overwhelm the text• Dull words bog down the reader-- add little to the meaning• Reader must sort through confusing or misused words	<p>1 The reader struggles to understand the intent and meaning of the words used. Repetition of the same words and phrases lead the reader in a circle of confusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effort and struggle are evident in the few words on the page• Writer recycles the same word or words due to an extremely limited vocabulary• Missing or misused transitions, connecting words, keeps reader looking for direction• Has not yet acquired understanding of common words• The message is not coming through with the words chosen



6 Trait Scoring Guide

Sentence Fluency

<p>6 Well constructed sentences flow smoothly from one to the next, with a marked rhythm and cadence that invites oral reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Grammatically sound and varied sentences enhance rhythm and impact meaning⊗ Varied in length, structure and complexity⊗ Stylistic control, flexibility, established and consistent (uses fragments, dialogue correctly)⊗ Varied sentence beginnings (and endings) are crafted to make smooth connections⊗ Phrases, clauses and connectives smoothly clarify⊗ Reading aloud reveals a writer tuned to the rhythm and flow of language	<p>5 Correct structure with moments of strong fluency; varied patterns and lengths throughout.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Sound sentences, varied and fluid; key ideas enhanced by sentence structure⊗ Varied in length and structure⊗ Stylistic control is established and consistent (fragments and dialogue well done)⊗ Puts in effort to vary sentence beginnings⊗ Uses phrases, clauses, connectives well⊗ A pleasure to read aloud	<p>4 Although functional and generally well constructed, the sentences sometimes fall into a mechanical rhythm that would benefit from more variety in length and pattern.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Sentences generally constructed correctly, but may fall into a mechanical rhythm⊗ Some variation in length and structure is present⊗ Stylistic control is not yet consistent (fragments look like incomplete sentences)⊗ Sentence beginnings show reasonable variation⊗ Connecting words and transitions are sometimes missing, or tacked on awkwardly⊗ Parts of the writing invite oral reading
<p>3 Technically correct sentences may rely on the same, simple sentence pattern, creating a sing-song rhythm that is hard on the ear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Sentences are generally correct, but repetition creates a monotonous or choppy rhythm⊗ Variety is needed to break up the even, uniform beat⊗ Style is developing, not yet established⊗ Favors the same sentence beginnings with a little variation⊗ Sentences need stronger, more varied, inter-connections; overuse of <i>and</i>, <i>then</i>, <i>first</i>, <i>second</i>, etc.⊗ Reading aloud clearly points to revisions that will make the difference	<p>2 Even some of the easier sentences have structural problems that cause the reader to slow down and reconstruct in order to get through the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Sentences are poorly constructed, even when reader “mentally” supplies missing punctuation⊗ Reconstruction of basic patterns, as well as introduction to other patterns is needed⊗ Many sentences begin the same way⊗ Connectives may be overused, stringing sentences together in endless succession with “and”, for example⊗ Reader must reread to get meaning	<p>1 Sentences need reconstruction, probably with help, in order to derive their intended meaning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⊗ Reader has a hard time figuring out where sentences begin and end⊗ Many sentences need reconstruction, even simple ones⊗ Help is needed to get a sentence started⊗ Connectives are not yet present or appear everywhere⊗ Problems with sentences impair the message



6 Trait Scoring Guide Conventions

<p>6 Mastery of basic conventions plus stylistic, creative use of conventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✱ Spelling reflects mastery of common, technical, domain specific words✱ Punctuation reflects mastery of basic rules, plus stylistic applications✱ Capitalization reflects mastery of basic rules for sentence beginnings, proper nouns, etc.✱ Grammar and usage reflect strong control✱ Very little editing needed	<p>5 Mastery of basic conventions, some stylistic applications present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✱ Spelling reflects mastery of common, technical, domain specific words with a few errors✱ Punctuation reflects mastery of basic rules with a few exceptions✱ Capitalization reflects mastery of basic rules✱ Grammar and usage are usually accurate✱ A few things need editing for publication	<p>4 Errors are noticeable but do not impair readability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✱ Spelling reflects spotty errors in commonly misspelled, technical or domain specific words✱ Punctuation reflects consistency in basic rules, but not always for more difficult applications✱ Capitalization reflects consistency for basic rules with a few exceptions✱ A few problems in grammar and usage (agreement, tense, etc.)✱ Needs a general going over prior to publication
<p>3 Errors are numerous enough to slow the reader.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✱ Spelling is inconsistent, even on common words✱ Punctuation reflects some knowledge of rules, but contains errors that distract✱ Capitalization reflects some knowledge of basic rules, but application is not consistent✱ Noticeable errors in grammar and usage✱ A thorough going over is needed prior to publication	<p>2 Shaky control over basic conventions causes reader to reread.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✱ Spelling errors cause reader to stop and decode✱ Punctuation is missing or inaccurate in many places✱ Capitalization basic rules inconsistent✱ Grammar and usage errors distract the reader✱ Every line needs work prior to publication	<p>1 So many errors are present, the message is impaired.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✱ Spelling errors seriously impair the message (hard to decode)✱ Punctuation is random or missing✱ Capitalization random or not present✱ Basic control of grammar and usage not present✱ Editing assistance is required