

Student-Friendly Rubric for Ideas

Key Question: Does the writer grab the reader’s attention for a focused topic with fresh ideas or an interesting perspective?

	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	No main idea and or purpose. Off-topic details.	There seems to be a main idea, but who cares?	There’s a main idea stated but the rest of the paper needs some help.	The main idea is focused, front and center, with decent supporting details.	Whoa! This main idea is deep and the supporting details are outstanding.	Rock star main idea: clear, focused, and about a topic that actually means something, impressive supporting details.
A. Main Idea	What’s the main idea?	There’s a broad topic but no specific main idea.	There’s a main idea but where’s the author going with it?	The main idea is clear and focused for the length of the piece.	Wow! This main idea really has depth.	The main idea is crystal clear, laser focused.
B. Details and Support	Nope! Nothing happening here.	There are some details, but they are off-topic, hard to understand or repetitive.	These details are common knowledge.	The details in this piece fit the topic, are interesting, and develop the main idea.	Specific details elaborate on the main idea, give accurate information, super descriptive.	Solid details support main idea with descriptions, examples. Interesting details that definitely aren’t common knowledge.
C. Reasoning	What are you trying to say?	Makes statements that really don’t connect or make logical sense.	The details are basic and are starting to support the main idea. Some don’t seem to connect with the main idea.	The writer’s take on this topic or thinking is clear. The supporting details make sense.	The information is current and the supporting details explain complicated ideas that the author is communicating.	Convincing, logical reasoning. Supporting details are used to draw conclusions or make inferences. The ideas are deep. New ways to look at the topic.
D. Evidence and Citing	An obvious copy and paste. No evidence or incorrectly cited.	These examples hardly count as evidence and where did they come from? Some copy and paste.	The evidence or examples are still mostly common knowledge. Some credit given to sources but still might be a copy and paste.	The right amount of examples or evidence is given. It’s in writer’s own words and the reader knows where the information came from.	Wow! The topic and main idea(s) are supported by great details and evidence from sources. Sources cited.	Evidence supporting the author’s ideas seems really natural and there aren’t any questions left unanswered. Sources cited.
E. Awareness of Reader	This was not written for anyone in particular.	No real thought given to what the reader thinks or believes about the topic.	There is an attempt to connect with the reader. Reader is confused.	The reader is interested in the main idea. Basic reader’s questions are answered.	The writer has thought about what is common knowledge, questions, biases or reactions.	The writer really knows the audience. Important questions are answered. Objections are dealt with. This is really interesting.

Student-Friendly Rubric for Organization

Does the way the writing is organized showcase the ideas and make the ideas easier to keep track of?

	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	A bunch of thoughts randomly written down.	The organization pretty much doesn't exist, except for in a few places.	It's hard to follow the main ideas because the organization jumps around.	Reader can follow the ideas and understand the piece because there is a logical structure.	Reading this is like traveling through the text. It's a smooth ride with variety in the tools used for organization.	Organization highlights the ideas, draws the reader through the piece, and showcases the main ideas. Ideas flow beautifully.
A. Lead and Conclusion	Oops! Forgot the lead and the conclusion is missing.	There is a lead or a conclusion but they are confusing or useless.	Lead and conclusion are here! But, need to state the purpose. Need closure. Too many unanswered questions.	Lead and conclusion have the information needed to introduce the topic and bring closure. Nothing special. Actually, kind of like a lot of other people's writing.	Reader can't wait to read this piece. Satisfying ending leaves reader with enough information to tie up the loose ends.	The inviting beginning compels the reader to jump in and read the piece. The satisfying ending gives the reader plenty of closure.
B. Transitions	No transitions.	Random transitions that don't really fit. The reader feels confused about how the ideas connect.	Transitions are there but don't really connect the ideas well. They group kind of disconnected ideas together.	Transition words and ideas grouped into paragraphs.	There is a variety of transition words, phrases that help order details to explain the main ideas.	The transitions are phrases and ideas which logically move the reader through the flow of ideas. Paragraphs build the ideas into a complete message.
C. Sequencing	The ideas are jumbled together.	Ideas seem like pieces to a puzzle that don't really fit together.	It almost seems like lists of details. Or, the details don't support the main ideas very well.	The details are written in a logical order and help move the reader through the main ideas.	The main ideas connect with each other because of the way the details are written.	The ideas are in the right place at the right time, moving the reader through at a good speed.
D. Pacing	Too hard to read. No pacing.	Stop and go. Frustrating because it's either too slow or too fast.	Sometimes, it reads at the right speed. Sometimes, it doesn't.	Reader cruises through the piece at the right speed most of the time.	Reader feels great about the speed he/she moves through this text.	Slows down at just the right moment and speeds up. Reader feels, learns, reacts at just the right time because of pace.
E. Purpose / text structure	Why am I reading this? Who cares?	I kind of care about this.	Kind of care but feel distracted.	This needs more work on details.	I feel like it needs to be read.	This is written for me.

Student-Friendly Rubric for Voice

Key Question: Can the reader hear the writer speaking clearly in this piece?

	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	The author really doesn't care about this piece.	The author tries to express him/herself by using phrases like, "I like it" or "It was fun."	Anyone could have written this piece. The author isn't very committed to this topic.	The author sounds like he/she is interested in this topic but might be writing this because he/she has to.	This writer knows about this topic and wants to write about it. Written for a specific audience.	This was written for the reader. The ideas and details fit the purpose of the paper and speak to the reader. Tone and discussion respectful.
A. Engagement with reader	This is totally boring and not worth the time it takes to read it.	The ideas and structure are boring and there's nothing to catch the reader's interest.	The information seems to have been written for an audience but the details are shallow and typical.	The author is connecting with the reader at times during this piece.	This is written for the audience by someone who cares. An easy read because it is interesting.	The author is choosing just the right details and examples in order to speak directly to the intended audience.
B. Individual expression	Anyone could have written this piece. The author is invisible.	The author includes some original ideas but the piece is still could have been written by anyone.	The author is hiding behind generic, usual ideas and topics. There are a few interesting parts.	This piece is interesting and some of the details really pop out to the reader.	The author takes risks in choice of details, words, or organization. Some ideas are thought-provoking.	The thoughts communicated in this make the reader hear the author. The author's personality shows through.
C. Tone or feeling.	No tone or feeling.	There is a tone of voice but it is wrong for this paper.	The author doesn't care about this paper.	Author's feeling about this topic shows in the choice of words, sentences, details, structure.	The author's tone seems just right for the message and purpose of this writing.	The author's tone fits the purpose, message, makes the piece enjoyable to read, and helps the message.
D. Commitment	Who cares? The author certainly doesn't. Lifeless.	Someone wrote this so that they could go to recess. The reader reads this and still could care less about the topic.	The writer decides to write something decent but still might not care who reads it.	The author does care about this topic and wants to be heard. Sometimes it feels like the author got lazy and threw in some vague details.	It is obvious that the writer is enthusiastic about this piece of writing.	The author writes this piece with such commitment that the reader wishes there was another chapter.
E. Fit with audience and purpose	Who wrote this? It could have been anyone!	The voice in this piece is just wrong.	Voice fades in and out.	The voice is here but no ZING or spark.	We're connecting! I get your message.	I'm catching your passion. Write more!

Student-Friendly Rubric for Word Choice

Key Question: Does the author’s choice of words communicate with power and precision, and paint a picture for the reader?

	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	There aren’t any meaningful words in this piece.	The vocabulary either isn’t there or is used wrong. It’s hard to understand the ideas.	The words are decent but are weak and don’t communicate beyond the obvious. Some words are still a little vague.	The word choice gets the job done and improves the reader’s understanding with descriptions or imagery. Good match for purpose, audience, text type.	Words are precise and do a great job communicating the author’s message. The vocabulary showcases the ideas.	Powerful and interesting words communicate the ideas precisely. The author specifically chooses words and phrases to create just the right image or connection to an idea in the reader’s mind.
A. Word meaning	Vocabulary is too weak or misused that the message isn’t communicated.	Uses boring, overused words such as cool, nice, good, bad. Message is hard to figure out.	Vocabulary is correct and is starting to communicate the message. Kind of gets it right with some of the big words.	Author uses meaningful words that work for the topic and text type. Words are helping to communicate the message.	The vocabulary works great for this topic and text type and the ideas are explained or shown with deep words.	The words are placed in exactly the right place and on purpose. Vocabulary says exactly what the author wants to say. The words fit the purpose and give the right voice.
B. Word quality	No clear message because the vocabulary are too vague or meaningless.	There is no picture being painted. Words are used wrong or send the reader in the wrong direction.	Basic vocabulary and the words tell general ideas, with a few good places that describe the ideas.	Anyone could have written this. The message is there but the vocabulary isn’t powerful or precise.	The author shows and doesn’t tell. Ideas aren’t just stated but are unpacked using words that create pictures and explain.	Powerful words reach out and grab the reader’s imagination and attention. The images linger in the mind and are hooks that help the reader remember he/she read.
C. Word usage	Uses words incorrectly. This confuses the reader. There are too many errors, or uses texting or street language.	The words don’t fit the message. They are either too plain or they are exaggerated. Some of the words don’t work.	The words work for the piece but are shallow or limited. The basic message can be understood.	The writer obviously wants to write with words that are meaningful. The vocabulary used works great for the purpose, message, and audience.	The author’s message is clear and easy to understand because he/she uses just the right words at just the right time.	The meaningful words sound like the author uses them all of the time. They speak the message or ideas clearly and powerfully.
D. Grammar	The grammar is a mess. Who wants to read this?	Too much street language or too many clichés.	The action words are weak. Boring sentences.	The sentences have decent grammar.	Clearly written with variety.	Sentences designed to communicate just the right message.

Student-Friendly Rubric for Sentence Fluency

Key Question: Does the author use specific types of sentences so that the piece is smooth to read aloud?

	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	This piece is impossible to read straight through. Reader has to stop and reread to figure it out.	There isn't any variety in the sentences used. Simple sentences are sometimes incorrect. Hard to read aloud.	Sentences are technically correct but the same sentence types over and over again. Sounds like a robot.	Sentence types and lengths are varied and flow smoothly together. Easy to read aloud, with a few boring spots.	The sentences have rhythm and energy because of different lengths and types of sentences Easy read aloud.	Sentences carry the reader through smoothly. Author paces the reader's progress using types of sentences and lengths. Fun to read out loud!
A. Sentence structure	Sentences are all messed up and choppy. It's hard to even figure out where the sentences begin or end.	There seem to be sentences but they are too simple for this kind of writing.	Most of the sentences are complete sentences. But, the sentences aren't easy to read out loud.	Complete sentences that are smooth to read. The sentences seem to work together well, but some of the writing is monotonous.	The types of sentences work together to carry the reader through the piece smoothly.	The sentences are crafted to make the meaning pop out to the reader. It is easy to read through from beginning to end.
B. Sentence sense and rhythm	There aren't any clearly marked complete sentences. It's impossible to read aloud.	The reader has to figure out which pieces of text go together to make complete sentences.	Some sense of how to write sentences and where to begin and end the sentences. Takes practice to read it aloud.	The author can write sentences and the piece can be read with rhythm. Most of the piece can be read aloud fairly easily.	Sentences that are easy to read aloud, varied in lengths and grammar structure. Author uses fragments and dialogue on purpose AND it works!	The sentences emphasize parts of the writing that are important. Reading it aloud makes the reader happy. The dialogue and sentence fragments are used on purpose to add style and sound natural.
C. Sentence variety	Incomplete sentences. Where do they start and end? Who knows?	Simple sentences. i.e. subject-verb-finish the thought. Same beginnings are boring.	Some variety of sentence beginnings but too predictable. Simple and compound sentences.	A few complex sentences but mostly simple and compound. Variety in sentence beginnings but nothing special. A little bit predictable.	Balance and variety in sentence structure and length. Many complex sentences and unique sentence beginnings.	The author is choosing types of sentences and beginnings in order to make the meaning jump out and to give the writing flow. Sentence variety gives energy and makes the writing more interesting.
D. Connecting sentences	Weak transitions between sentences.	Basic transitions: and, if, but, because.	Simple transitions keep sentences flowing.	A variety of transitions.	Specific transition words and phrases.	Transitions tie the piece together and show how each idea connects.

Student-Friendly Rubric for Conventions

Key Question: How much editing needs to happen for this piece to be ready to publish?

	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	Contains errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar which distract the reader and make it too hard to read.	There are lots of types of conventions errors scattered throughout the text.	This paper is fairly clean from errors but there are mistakes that distract the reader and make it hard to read in some places.	Grade-level spelling, punctuation, and grammar are correct through most of the piece.	This is a clean paper with a few errors that need to be fixed before it goes to final copy.	Conventions are correct and there aren't any major errors. The author might be using conventions to highlight the message.
A. Spelling	Even the common words aren't spelled right.	Incorrect spelling make sense when you sound out the words.	Reader can understand the meaning. Easy words are often spelled wrong.	Common grade-level words are either spelled correctly or how they sound.	Most grade-level and harder words are spelled correctly.	Where there are errors, they don't take away from the overall quality of the paper. Difficult words are spelled right.
B. Punctuation	This author doesn't know how to use punctuation.	The author is trying to use punctuation but still gets most of them wrong.	Simple end punctuation is right. Missing mid-sentence punctuation.	Most of the punctuation is correct, with a few small mistakes.	The punctuation helps the reader read the piece and is placed in the right spots to help the reader's pace.	The punctuation helps the reader speed up and slow down at just the right times. The author might break the rules on purpose.
C. Capitalization	Capitalization is random and or there might not be any at all.	Only the beginning capitalization is there.	The capitalization is messy except for names and sentence beginnings.	Correct capitalization most of the time.	The capitalization is correct, with maybe a few errors.	Correct capitalization and the author uses capitals to create effect.
D. Grammar usage	The sentences are messed up and it's so bad it can't be read.	The sentences are messed up and the parts of the sentences don't make sense together..	The writing sounds like a conversation on the street, i.e., I eat fried chicken yesterday.	The grammar is just fine and isn't distracting to read. There are some minor errors.	The meaning is clear and there are just a couple of small mistakes.	The way the sentences are put together helps the reader understand the ideas better.
E. Editing needed	This piece needs so much work that the reader has to read it once to decode and a second time to understand.	To publish this piece would take way too much time. The meaning is often unclear.	It would take multiple redrafts to edit all of the errors out of this piece. But, the meaning is there if you look for it	It's easy to understand and needs some editing to bring to publish.	There aren't very many editing errors and the meaning is clear.	This piece is ready to publish. There may be a few errors that are on purpose to create an effect or mood.

Student-Friendly Rubric for Presentation

Key Question: Is the finished piece easy to read, professional, and looking great?

	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	All of the presentation and formatting make it hard to read the text and the reader feels confused.	Most of the presentation and formatting make it hard to read the text and the reader feels confused.	Some of the presentation and formatting make it hard to read the text and the reader feels confused. Looks thrown together.	Presentation or format supports a clear message. It looks like the author was careful to make it look nice.	Presentation or formatting is easy to look at and understand what the writing is all about. The piece looks great.	The presentation makes the message pop and helps the reader focus in on the main ideas. Author presents the writing in the best way.
A. Font style, size	So many font styles and sizes that the piece is unreadable.	Too many font styles and sizes! This writing is too hard to read or understand.	The font styles and sizes are bad choices and they get in the way of the reader.	Good choices on font styles and sizes. The piece is easy to understand and read.	Author uses consistent font styles that are right for the piece.	The font styles and sizes are chosen especially to match the purpose of the text.
B. White space	The use of the white space is random and it's hard to see where the text begins or ends.	Still chaotic use of white space, but some margins are emerging.	The white space frames the piece and it is beginning to look balanced. Some uneven margins and indenting.	The margins look like a border around the text and the indents or block paragraphs follow a pattern and look good.	The white space focuses the reader's attention onto the text and helps frame graphics and text features.	This is the best use of the white space. The text, graphics, and text features look balanced. The space is creatively used to bring attention to the important details.
C. Text features (optional)	No text features:	Author tries to put in text features but fails to make them useful.	Text features are there but most of the time they don't help.	Includes text features that usually help to point out important ideas or organize the information.	The text features help the reader connect to the information in the text and they help to explain the main ideas.	The text features help the reader get more out of the passage. The text features help the reader take his/her understanding of the topic to the next level.
D. Visuals and graphics (optional)	Uses visuals or graphics that don't have anything to do with the text or are blurry or hard to understand.	The visuals or graphics relate to the topic but help the reader understand the message.	If the reader puts some thought into it, he/she can see the reason why the visuals or graphics are being used.	Includes visuals and graphics that help explain the text or give information that helps the message.	The visuals and graphics are showcased and do a good job of helping to make the message clearer.	The author creates visuals or graphics that help the reader go deeper into the topic and better understand the ideas being written about.
E. Handwriting (optional)	Unreadable	Very messy.	Decent.	No floaters or sinkers. Neat.	Easy to read.	The handwriting is beautiful.