

6-Point 3-12 Writer's Rubric

6-POINT WRITER'S RUBRIC

| IDEAS | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| Not proficient | | | Proficient | | | | |
| 1 Beginning | 2 Emerging | 3 Developing | 4 Capable | 5 Experienced | 6 Exceptional | | |
| | No main idea, purpose, or central theme exists; reader must infer this based on sketchy or missing details | Main idea is still missing, though possible topic/theme is emerging | Main idea is present; may be broad or simplistic | Topic or theme is identified as main idea; development remains basic or general | Main idea is well-marked by detail but could benefit from additional information | Main idea is clear, supported, and enriched by relevant anecdotes and details | |
| A | No topic emerges | Several topics emerge; any might become central theme or main idea | Topic becomes clear, though still too broad, lacking focus; reader must infer message | Topic is fairly broad, yet author's direction is clear | Topic is focused yet still needs additional narrowing | Topic is narrow, manageable, and focused | |
| B | Support for topic is not evident | Support for topic is limited, unclear; length is not adequate for development | Support for topic is incidental or confusing, not focused | Support for topic is starting to work; still does not quite flesh out key issues | Support for topic is clear and relevant except for a moment or two | Support is strong and credible, and uses resources that are relevant and accurate | |
| C | There are no details | Few details are present; piece simply restates topic and main idea or merely answers a question | Additional details are present but lack specificity; main idea or topic emerges but remains weak | Some details begin to define main idea or topic, yet are limited in number or clarity | Accurate, precise details support one main idea | Details are relevant, telling; quality details go beyond obvious and are not predictable | |
| D | Author is not writing from own knowledge/experience; ideas are not author's | Author generalizes about topic without personal knowledge/experience | Author "tells" based on others' experiences rather than "showing" by own experience | Author uses few examples to "show" own experience, yet still relies on generic experiences of others | Author presents new ways of thinking about topic based on personal knowledge/experience | Author writes from own knowledge/experience; ideas are fresh, original, and uniquely the author's | |
| E | No reader's questions have been answered | Reader has many questions due to lack of specifics; it is hard to "fill in the blanks" | Reader begins to recognize focus with specifics, though questions remain | Reader generally understands content and has only a few questions | Reader's questions are usually anticipated and answered by author | Reader's questions are all answered | |
| F | Author doesn't help reader make any connections | Author does not yet connect topic with reader in any way although attempts are made | Author provides glimmers into topic; casual connections are made by reader | Author stays on topic and begins to connect reader through self, text, world, or other resources | Author connects reader to top with a few anecdotes, text, or other resources | Author helps reader make many connections by sharing significant insights into life | |
| Key question: Does the writer stay focused and share original and fresh information or perspective on the topic? | | | | | | | |

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| ORGANIZATION | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
| 1 Beginning | 2 Emerging | 3 Developing | 4 Capable | 5 Experienced | 6 Exceptional |
| Organization can't be identified; writing lacks sense of direction; content is strung together in loose, random fashion | Organization is mostly ineffective; only moments here and there direct reader | Organization is still problematic though structure begins to emerge; ability to follow text is slowed | Organization moves reader through text without too much confusion | Organization is smooth; only a few small bumps here and there exist | Organization enhances and showcases central idea; order of information is compelling, moving reader through text |
| A There is no lead to set up what follows, no conclusion to wrap things up | The lead and/or conclusion are ineffective or do not work | Either lead or conclusion or both may be present but are clichés or leave reader wanting more | A recognizable lead and conclusion are present; lead may not create a strong sense of anticipation; conclusion may not tie up all loose ends | While lead and/or conclusion go beyond obvious, either could go even further | An inviting lead draws reader in; satisfying conclusion leaves reader with sense of closure and resolution |
| B Transitions between paragraphs are confusing or nonexistent | Weak transitions emerge yet offer little help to get from one paragraph to next and not often enough to eliminate confusion | Some transitions are used but they repeat or mislead resulting in weak chunking of paragraphs | Transitions often work yet are predictable and formulaic; paragraphs are coming together with topic sentence and support | Transitions are logical, though may lack originality; ideas are chunked in proper paragraphs and topic sentences are properly used | Thoughtful transitions clearly show how ideas (paragraphs) connect throughout entire piece, helping to showcase content of each paragraph |
| C Sequencing doesn't work | Little useful sequencing is present; it's hard to see how piece fits together as a whole | Sequencing has taken over so completely, it dominates ideas; is painfully obvious and formulaic | Sequencing shows some logic, but is not controlled enough to consistently showcase ideas | Sequencing makes sense and moves a bit beyond obvious, helping move reader through piece | Sequencing is logical and effective; moves reader through piece with ease from start to finish |
| D Pacing is not evident | Pacing is awkward; it slows to a crawl when reader wants to get on with it, and vice versa | Pacing is dominated by one part of piece and is not controlled in remainder | Pacing is fairly well controlled; sometimes lunges ahead too quickly or hangs up on details that do not matter | Pacing is controlled; there are still places author needs to highlight or move through more effectively | Pacing is well controlled; author knows when to slow down to elaborate, and when to move on |
| E Title (if required) is absent | Title (if required) doesn't match content | Title (if required) hints at weak connection to content; is unclear | Uninspired title (if required) only restates prompt or topic | Title (if required) settles for minor idea about content rather than capturing deeper theme | Title (if required) is original, reflecting content and capturing central theme |
| F Lack of structure makes it almost impossible for reader to understand purpose | Structure fails to fit purpose of writing, leaving reader struggling to discover purpose | Structure begins to clarify purpose | Structure sometimes supports purpose, at other times reader wants to rearrange pieces | Structure generally works well for purpose and for reader | Structure flows so smoothly reader hardly thinks about it; choice of structure matches and highlights purpose |
| Key question: Does the organizational structure enhance the ideas and make the piece easier to understand? | | | | | |

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| VOICE | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
| 1 Beginning | 2 Emerging | 3 Developing | 4 Capable | 5 Experienced | 6 Exceptional |
| Author seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from topic, purpose, and/or audience | Author relies on reader's good faith to hear or feel any voice in phrases such as "I like it" or "It was fun" | Author's voice is hard to recognize, even if reader is trying desperately to "hear" it | Author seems sincere, yet not fully engaged or involved; result is pleasant or even personable, though topic and purpose are still not compelling | Author attempts to address topic, purpose, and audience in sincere and engaging way; piece still skips a beat here and there | Author speaks directly to reader in individual, compelling, and engaging way that delivers purpose and topic; although passionate, author is respectful of audience and purpose |
| A Author does not interact with reader in any fashion; writing is flat resulting in a disengaged reader | Author uses only clichés, resulting in continued lack of interaction with reader | Author seems aware of reader yet discards personal insights in favor of safe generalities | Author attempts to reach audience and has some moments of successful interaction | Author communicates with reader in earnest, pleasing, authentic manner | Author interacts with and engages reader in ways that are personally revealing |
| B Author takes no risks, reveals nothing, lulls reader to sleep | Author reveals little yet doesn't risk enough to engage reader | Author surprises reader with random "aha" and minimal risk-taking | Author surprises, delights, or moves reader in more than one or two places | Author's moments of insight and risk-taking enliven piece | Author risks revealing self and shows individual thinking |
| C Tone is not evident | Tone does not support writing | Tone is flat; author does not commit to own writing | Tone begins to support and enrich writing | Tone leans in right direction most of the time | Tone gives flavor and texture to message and is appropriate |
| D Commitment to topic is missing; writing is lifeless or mechanical; it may be overly technical, formulaic, or jargonistic | Commitment to topic "might" be present; author does not help reader feel anything | Commitment to topic begins to emerge; reader wonders if author cares about topic | Commitment to topic is present; author's own point of view may emerge in a place or two but is obscured behind vague generalities | Commitment to topic is clear and focused; author's enthusiasm starts to catch on | Commitment to topic is strong; author's passion about topic is clear, compelling, and energizing; reader wants to know more |
| E Voice is inappropriate for purpose/mode | Voice does not support purpose/mode; narrative is only an outline; expository or persuasive writing lacks conviction or authority to set it apart from mere list of facts | Voice is starting to support purpose/mode though remains weak in many places | Voice lacks spark for purpose/mode; narrative is sincere, if not passionate; expository or persuasive lacks consistent engagement with topic to build credibility | Voice supports author's purpose/mode; narrative entertains, engages reader; expository or persuasive reveals why author chose ideas | Voice is appropriate for purpose/mode; voice is engaging, passionate, and enthusiastic |
| Key question: Would you keep reading this piece if it was longer? | | | | | |

6-Point 3-12 Writer's Rubric

| WORD CHOICE | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| Not proficient | | | Proficient | | | |
| 1 Beginning | 2 Emerging | 3 Developing | 4 Capable | 5 Experienced | 6 Exceptional | |
| Vocabulary is limited; author searches for words to convey meaning; no mental imagery exists | Vocabulary is flawed, resulting in impaired meaning; wrong words are used; and reader can't picture message or content | Vocabulary is understandable yet lacks energy; some interpretation is needed to understand parts of piece | Vocabulary is functional yet still lacks energy; author's meaning is easy to understand in general | Vocabulary is more precise and appropriate; mental imagery emerges | Vocabulary is powerful and engaging, creating mental imagery; words convey intended message in precise, interesting, and natural way | |
| A Words are overly broad and/or so generic no message is evident | Words are so vague and mundane that message is limited and unclear | Words are adequate and correct in a general sense; message starts to emerge | Words work and begin to shape unique, individual piece; message is easy to identify | In most cases words are "just right" and clearly communicate message | Words are precise and accurate; author's message is easy to understand | |
| B Vocabulary confuses reader and is contradictory; words create no mental imagery, no lingering memory | Vocabulary has no variety or spice; even simple words are used incorrectly; no mental images exist | Vocabulary is very basic; simple words rule; variety starts to "show" rather than "tell"; mental images are still missing | Vocabulary includes familiar words and phrases that communicate, yet rarely capture reader's imagination; perhaps a moment or two of sparkle or imagery emerges | Vocabulary is strong; it's easy to "see" what author says because of figurative language—similes, metaphors, and poetic devices; mental imagery lingers | Vocabulary is striking, powerful, and engaging; it catches reader's eye and lingers in mind; recall of handful of phrases or mental images is easy and automatic | |
| C Words are incorrectly used, making message secondary to word misfires | Words are either so plain as to put reader to sleep or so over the top they make no sense | Original, natural word choices start to emerge so piece sounds authentic | Attempts at colorful word choice show willingness to stretch and grow, yet sometimes go too far | New words and phrases are usually correct | Word choice is natural yet original and never overdone; both words and phrases are unique and effective | |
| D Misuse of parts of speech litters piece, confusing reader; no message emerges | Redundant parts of speech and/or jargon or clichés distract from message | Rote parts of speech reflect a lack of craftsmanship; passive verbs, overused nouns, and lack of modifiers and variety create fuzzy message | Accurate and occasionally refined parts of speech are functional and start to shape message | Correct and varied parts of speech are chosen carefully to communicate message, and clarify and enrich writing | Parts of speech are crafted to best convey message; lively verbs energize, precise nouns/modifiers add depth, color, and specificity | |
| Key question: Do the words and phrases create vivid pictures and linger in your mind? | | | | | | |

6-Point 3-12 Writer's Rubric

| SENTENCE FLUENCY | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| Not proficient | | | Proficient | | | |
| 1 Beginning | 2 Emerging | 3 Developing | 4 Capable | 5 Experienced | 6 Exceptional | |
| Sentences are incorrectly structured; reader has to practice to give paper a fair interpretive reading; it's nearly impossible to read aloud | Sentences vary little; even easy sentence structures cause reader to stop and decide what is being said and how; it's challenging to read aloud | Sentences are technically correct but not varied, creating sing-song pattern or lulling reader to sleep; it sounds mechanical when read aloud | Sentences are varied and hum along, tending to be pleasant or businesslike though may still be more mechanical than musical or fluid; it's easy to read aloud | Some sentences are rhythmic and flowing; a variety of sentence types are structured correctly; it flows well when read aloud | Sentences have flow, rhythm, and cadence; are well built with strong, varied structure that invites expressive oral reading | |
| A Sentence structure is choppy, incomplete, run-on, rambling, or awkward | Sentence structure works but has phrasing that sounds unnatural | Sentence structure is usually correct, yet sentences do not flow | Sentence structure is correct and begins to flow but is not artfully crafted or musical | Sentence structure flows well and moves reader fluidly through piece | Sentence structure is strong, underscoring and enhancing meaning while engaging and moving reader from beginning to end in fluid fashion | |
| B No sentence sense—type, beginning, connective, rhythm—is evident; determining where sentences begin and end is nearly impossible | There is little evidence of sentence sense; to make sentences flow correctly, most have to be totally reconstructed | Sentence sense starts to emerge; reader can read through problems and see where sentences begin and end; sentences vary little | Sentence sense is moderate; sentences are constructed correctly with some variety, hang together, and are sound | Sentence sense is strong; correct construction and variety is used; few examples of dialogue or fragments are used | Sentence sense is strong and contributes to meaning; dialogue, if present, sounds natural; fragments, if used, add style; sentences are nicely balanced in type, beginnings, connectives, and rhythm | |
| C Incomplete sentences make it hard to judge quality of beginnings or identify type of sentence | Many sentences begin in same way and are simple (subject-verb-object) and monotonous | Simple and compound sentence types and varied beginnings help strengthen piece | Sentence beginnings vary yet are routine, generic; types include simple, compound, and perhaps even complex | Sentence beginnings are varied and unique; four sentence types (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex) create balance and variety | Varied sentence beginnings add interest and energy; four sentence types are balanced | |
| D Weak or no connectives create massive jumble of language; disconnected sentences leave piece chaotic | "Blah" connectives (and, so, but, then, and because) lead reader nowhere | Few simple connectives lead reader from sentence to sentence though piece remains weak | Connectives are original and hold piece together but are not always refined | Thoughtful and varied connectives move reader easily through piece | Creative and appropriate connectives show how each sentence relates to previous one and pulls piece together | |
| E Rhythm is chaotic, not fluid; piece cannot be read aloud without author's help, even with practice | Rhythm is random and may still be chaotic; writing does not invite expressive oral reading | Rhythm emerges; reader can read aloud after a few tries | Rhythm is inconsistent; some sentences invite oral reading, others remain stiff, awkward, or choppy | Rhythm works; reader can read aloud quite easily | Rhythm flows; writing has cadence; first reading aloud is expressive, pleasurable, and fun | |
| Key question: Can you feel the words and phrases flow together as you read it aloud? | | | | | | |

6-Point 3-12 Writer's Rubric

| CONVENTIONS | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| Not proficient | | | Proficient | | | |
| 1 Beginning | 2 Emerging | 3 Developing | 4 Capable | 5 Experienced | 6 Exceptional | |
| | Errors in conventions are the norm and repeatedly distract reader, making text unreadable | Many errors of various types of conventions are scattered throughout text | Author continues to stumble in conventions even on simple tasks and almost always on anything trickier | Author has reasonable control over standard conventions for grade level; conventions are sometimes handled well; at other times, errors distract and impair readability | Author stretches, trying more complex tasks in conventions; several mistakes still exist; for secondary students, all basic conventions have been mastered | Author uses standard writing conventions effectively to enhance readability; errors are few and only minor editing is needed to publish |
| A | Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words | Spelling is phonetic with many errors | Spelling on simple words is incorrect, although reader can understand | Spelling is usually correct or reasonably phonetic on common grade-level words, but not on more difficult words | Spelling on common grade-level words is correct but sometimes incorrect on more difficult words | Spelling is usually correct, even on more difficult words |
| B | Punctuation is often missing or incorrect | Simple end (. ? !) punctuation is correct; internal (, ' ; -- : ...) punctuation is usually wrong or missing | Punctuation is inconsistent | End punctuation is usually correct; internal punctuation is sometimes correct; for secondary students, all punctuation is usually correct | Punctuation is correct and enhances readability in all but few places | Punctuation is correct, creative, and guides reader through entire piece |
| C | Capitalization is random, inconsistent, and sometimes nonexistent | Only the easiest capitalization rules are correctly applied | Capitalization is applied inconsistently except for proper nouns and sentence beginnings | Capitalization is mostly correct | Capitalization is correct; more sophisticated capitalization is used | Capitalization is thoroughly understood and consistently correct |
| D | Errors in grammar/usage are frequent and noticeable, making writing incomprehensible | Serious grammar/usage problems of every kind make comprehension difficult | Inappropriate grammar/usage results from heavy reliance on conversational oral language; meaning is confusing | Proper grammar/usage remains inconsistent and inaccurate though problems are not serious enough to distort meaning | Grammar/usage is usually correct; there are few grammar mistakes yet meaning is clear | Grammar/usage is correct and contributes to clarity and style; meaning is more than clear; piece is engaging and inviting to read |
| E | Extensive editing (on virtually every line) is required to polish text for publication; reader must read once to decode, then again for meaning | There's still a lot of editing required for publication; meaning is uncertain | Too much editing is still needed to publish although piece begins to communicate meaning | Moderate editing (a little of this, a little of that) is required to publish; meaning is clear | Several things still need editing before publishing; conventions are more correct than not; meaning is easily communicated | Hardly any editing is needed to publish; author may successfully manipulate conventions for stylistic effect; meaning is crystal clear |
| <p>Key question: How much editing would have to be done to be ready to share with an outside source? (Note: For the trait of conventions, grade level matters. Expectations should be based on grade level and include only skills that have been taught. Expectations for secondary students are obviously much higher than those of the elementary grade levels.)</p> | | | | | | |

6-Point 3-12 Writer's Rubric

| PRESENTATION | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| Not proficient | | | Proficient | | | | |
| 1 Beginning | 2 Emerging | 3 Developing | 4 Capable | 5 Experienced | 6 Exceptional | | |
| | Presentation/formatting of piece confuses message | Presentation/formatting delivers a message clear in places and confusing in others | Presentation/formatting of piece delivers clear message, yet lacks a finished, polished appearance | Presentation/formatting of piece works in standard, predictable fashion, delivering a clear message that appears finished | Presentation/formatting enhances understanding of message; piece appears finished and is pleasing to eye | Presentation/formatting exceeds best of finished pieces; formatting extends understanding of message; finished appearance is of superior quality | |
| A | Handwritten letters are irregular, formed inconsistently or incorrectly; spacing is unbalanced or absent; reader can't identify letters | Handwritten letters and words are readable with limited problems in letter shape and form; spacing is inconsistent | Handwriting creates little or no stumbling in readability; spacing is consistent | Handwriting is correct and readable; spacing is consistent and neat | Handwriting is neat, readable, and consistent; spacing is uniform between letters and words; text is easy to read | Handwriting borders on calligraphy; is easy to read and uniformly spaced; pride of author is clear | |
| B | Many fonts/sizes make piece nearly unreadable | Few fonts/sizes make piece hard to read or understand | Fonts/sizes are limited in number; piece starts to come together visually | Fonts/sizes are consistent and appropriate; piece is easy to understand | Fonts/sizes invite reader into text; understanding is a breeze | Fonts/sizes enhance readability and enrich overall appearance; understanding is crystal clear | |
| C | No thought is given to white space—it is random and confusing; identifying beginning and ending of text is difficult | Understanding of white space begins to emerge though piece seems “plopped” on paper without margins or boundaries | White space begins to frame and balance piece; margins may be present though some text may crowd edges; usage is inconsistent; paragraphs begin to emerge | White space frames text by creating margins; usage is still inconsistent on the whole; some paragraphs are indented, some are blocked | White space helps reader focus on text; margins frame piece, other white space frames markers and graphics; usage is consistent and purposeful; most paragraphs are either indented or blocked | White space is used to optimally frame and balance text with markers and graphics; all paragraphs are either indented or blocked | |
| D | Visuals/graphics/charts are nonexistent, incomprehensible, and/or unrelated to text | Visuals/graphics/charts “might” be related to text | Visuals/graphics/charts match and integrate with text at times | Visuals/graphics/charts support and consistently clarify text | Visuals/graphics/charts enrich meaning of text and add layer of understanding | Visuals/graphics/charts help enrich and extend meaning by focusing reader's attention upon message | |
| E | No markers (title, bullets, page numbers, subheads, etc.) are present | Perhaps one marker (a title, a single bullet or page number) is used | Markers are used but do not organize or clarify piece | Markers are used to organize, clarify, and present whole piece | Markers serve to integrate graphics and articulate meaning of piece | Markers help reader comprehend message and extend or enrich piece | |
| Key question: Is the finished piece easy to read, polished in presentation, and pleasing to the eye? | | | | | | | |