

# 6+1 Trait® Writing Rubrics

## Grades K-2



KEY QUESTION

**Does the writing engage the reader with fresh information or perspective on a focused topic?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	<b>Does not communicate an idea through writing, drawing, or dictation</b>	<b>Attempts to share a vague idea but lacks support through writing or drawing, or support is not connected</b>	<b>Shares an idea in writing in a general way (e.g., word string, sentence), but support is lacking or very weak</b>	<b>Presents a simple, clear main idea (e.g., a story, information, or opinion) in writing, with some details</b>	<b>Conveys a clear, focused main idea in writing, using multiple sentences with supporting details</b>	<b>Conveys a rich, focused, and well-developed main idea in writing that is fresh or original</b>
<b>A. Main idea</b>	Uses scribbles or shapes that imitate letters and/or writes letters randomly; may dictate ideas or labels for pictures	Uses some recognizable letters or words that may include line forms imitating text; drawing, if present, may be labeled but may not relate to writing; may dictate ideas or labels for pictures	Shares a simple experience or information about an idea using words, but meaning is not entirely clear; drawing, if present, may relate to writing; may dictate ideas	Conveys a simple, clear main idea (e.g., through a story, information, or opinion); drawing, if present, is appropriate to the main idea	Conveys a clear, focused main idea; drawing, if present, supports main idea	Presents a rich, focused, and fresh or original idea; drawing, if present, enhances main idea
<b>B. Details and support</b>	Shares drawing or writing that is lacking details	Shares simple details in a drawing but does not support the main idea	Offers one or two details in writing but does not support the main idea (e.g., provides lists without additional explanation); drawing, if present, may add details that have limited connection	Uses multiple details and/or reasons that support the main idea in writing; drawing, if present, relates to main idea	Includes many specific details and/or reasons that develop the main idea in writing; drawing, if present, provides additional detail	Features specific, interesting, well-developed details and/or reasons that enrich the main idea in writing; drawing, if present, deepens meaning

KEY QUESTION

**Does the organizational structure enhance the ideas and make them easier to understand?**

		Not proficient			Proficient		
		1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
		<b>Has no obvious organization or structure</b>	<b>Attempts an organizational structure in writing or drawing, but it is incomplete or confusing</b>	<b>Begins developing a simple organizational structure in writing; may be confusing in places; uses limited transitions and/or random sequencing</b>	<b>Uses a basic organizational structure in writing that orders ideas using transitions and logical sequencing</b>	<b>Demonstrates an organizational structure in writing that connects ideas using varied transitions and sequencing that extends meaning</b>	<b>Provides an organizational structure in writing that enhances ideas using rich and varied transitions and sequencing that enriches meaning</b>
A. Beginning, middle, and end	Has no sense of beginning, middle, or end; drawings, if present, may appear random or disconnected	Has a beginning sense of organizational structure in writing and/or drawing, but text may be out of order or incomplete	Begins developing an organizational structure in writing though may be hard to follow; experiments with a beginning (e.g., "Once upon a time") and/or a middle, but includes no clear ending except possibly "The End"	Has a beginning, middle, and end though that may not be entirely clear or work together smoothly; includes a lead and/or a concluding sentence	Has a beginning, middle, and end that work together to communicate clearly; includes identifiable lead and concluding sentences	Includes an inviting beginning, a middle with appropriate details, and a developed ending that is effective, interesting, and/or thoughtful	
	Demonstrates no sense of order or grouping of words and/or drawings	Attempts to group like words and/or drawings; may attempt limited transitions	Includes limited transitions but relies primarily on simple words (e.g., so, and, then); drawing, if present, may attempt to link ideas	Uses often predictable transitions (e.g., linking and temporal words); drawing, if present, links ideas	Selects frequently varied transitions to connect main ideas and details; drawing, if present, builds connections	Connects ideas in interesting, workable ways using a variety of transitions; drawing, if present, elaborates connections	
B. Transitions							

KEY QUESTION

**Does the organizational structure enhance the ideas and make them easier to understand?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
C. Sequencing	Shows no sense of sequencing in writing and/or drawing	Has random sequencing in writing and/or drawing	Attempts sequencing in writing and/or drawing that may be confusing or out of order	Uses logical sequencing that organizes text; drawing, if present, also reflects logical sequencing or placement	Uses sound sequencing that clarifies meaning; drawing, if present, also clarifies meaning	Uses convincing sequencing to enhance or extend meaning; drawing, if present, also enhances or extends meaning
D. Title (optional)	Has no title	Has an unrelated or confusing title	Includes a basic title (e.g., "The Dog") or a title that does not directly link to the main idea	Creates a title that connects adequately to the main idea	Develops an interesting title that reflects the main idea	Creates an original, insightful, or clever title that reflects the main idea

## KEY QUESTION

**Does the reader hear the writer speaking in the text?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	<b>Shows indifference or distance</b>	<b>Makes ineffective attempts to connect with task and/or purpose and engage reader</b>	<b>Uses emerging voice that does not yet support task and/or purpose or engage audience</b>	<b>Employs voice that supports task and purpose and audience, engaging reader adequately</b>	<b>Strengthens writing with voice that fully addresses task, purpose, and audience</b>	<b>Uses voice uniquely, demonstrating powerful ownership of task, purpose, and audience</b>
<b>A. Feelings/mood</b>	Expresses little or no feeling	Offers hints of feelings through words, phrases, and/or drawing, but is not yet clear	Shares predictable feelings or personal opinions in writing and/or drawing, though may be weak and/or repetitive	Shares identifiable feelings or personal opinions in writing; drawing, if present, may support feelings	Features writing that has strong feelings and/or personal opinions; drawing, if present, highlights emotion	Creates writing intentionally to show a variety of feelings; drawing, if present, enhances emotional appeal
<b>B. Individual Expression</b>	Reveals nothing specific about writer in writing and/or drawing	Reveals little of writer's personality in writing and/or drawing	Offers glimpses of personality in writing and/or drawing but shows minimal risk-taking	Expresses personality; drawing, if present, conveys personality; may take risks in one or two places that surprise, delight, and/or move reader	Frequently interacts and engages with reader in an authentic, committed manner	Reveals highly unique personality that enriches text; drawing, if present, heightens personality; demonstrates risk-taking that makes it easy to "hear" writer
<b>C. Engagement/ audience awareness</b>	Has no connection with or awareness of reader in writing and/or drawing	Has little connection with or awareness of reader in writing and/or drawing	Shows limited connection with reader but is unsuccessful; may express a general awareness that writing and/or drawing will be seen by someone else	Connects with reader in some places; drawing, if present, supports connection	Connects with reader in several places, demonstrating awareness of audience; drawing, if present, strengthens connection and engages reader	Creates close connection with reader; shows clear sense of audience throughout; drawing, if present, engages reader

## KEY QUESTION

## Does the language convey precise and compelling meaning and/or create a vivid picture for the reader?

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	Uses no or very few printed words; uses drawings to represent words and/or copies some environmental print, making meaning unclear	Has some simple words that may be difficult to decode; may rely on environmental print	Uses words, word groups, and/or phrases with possible drawing; vocabulary is limited to general, known words and may be repetitious	Uses basic vocabulary correctly, including basic domain-specific vocabulary if appropriate; may attempt a few creative word choices	Uses precise, accurate, varied vocabulary, including domain-specific vocabulary if appropriate; may attempt creative word choice including figurative language	Uses precise, accurate, varied, and/or creative vocabulary, including domain-specific vocabulary if appropriate; may employ figurative language; vocabulary reflects understanding
A. Word meaning	Uses drawings to represent words and phrases; writes some letters and/or letter strings inconsistently, and meaning cannot be decoded	Uses some simple words and/or phrases that may be decodable to make meaning	Uses general or ordinary words and/or phrases, sometimes incorrectly, to make meaning; may attempt new or challenging words that may not fit meaning	Uses favorite and/or basic vocabulary correctly, including basic domain-specific vocabulary if appropriate; may attempt varied, sophisticated words with some success	Uses precise, accurate, varied vocabulary, including basic domain-specific vocabulary if appropriate; may experiment with more sophisticated words	Uses precise, accurate, varied, and creative vocabulary, including domain-specific vocabulary if appropriate
B. Word quality	Uses no descriptive words	Uses comfortable, high-frequency, and/or simple words and that may be repetitive (e.g., names, letters, high-frequency words)	Uses familiar and/or basic words; attempts descriptive words to create an image	Uses some descriptive vocabulary to provide details and/or create a vivid image	Frequently uses creative vocabulary to provide details and/or create a vivid image; may attempt more advanced and/or figurative language	Consistently chooses expressive vocabulary to create vivid, detailed images that linger in the reader's mind; may use metaphors, similes, or other figurative language

## KEY QUESTION

**Does the language convey precise and compelling meaning and/or create a vivid picture for the reader?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
C. Word usage	Uses no or very little print or drawings to represent words but does not make sense; may attempt to copy environmental print	Uses functional words and words copied from environmental print but may be incorrect and/or repetitious	Uses limited, simple words; may occasionally be incorrect or repetitious	Uses basic and appropriate vocabulary; may attempt creative word usage (e.g., synonyms, adjectives, adverbs) but may not be correct	Chooses varied, accurate vocabulary for specific purposes (e.g., synonyms, adjectives, adverbs) and to create a vivid picture for the reader	Consistently chooses rich, varied, accurate, creative vocabulary to enhance meaning and/or create a vivid picture for the reader

## KEY QUESTION

**Does the writer control sentences so the piece flows smoothly when read aloud?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	<b>Has no sentences; may make random, undecodable attempt to represent words</b>	<b>Includes part of a sentence that is decodable, but text contains no sense of rhythm</b>	<b>Has some decodable sentences, but they are choppy and lack rhythm</b>	<b>Uses simple sentences with limited transitional words; may have little variety and/or rhythm</b>	<b>Uses multiple sentences with transitional words, including a variety of sentence beginnings; has rhythm that is fluid and easy to read aloud</b>	<b>Uses a variety of sentences with varied transitional words, that flow smoothly and are easy to read aloud</b>
<b>A. Sentence structure</b>	Has no sentence structure but may use left-to-right progression in marks or letter strings across the page	Uses short, phrase-like wording as sentences, some of which are decodable	Correctly uses simple sentences that have no variation in sentence patterns	Correctly uses simple sentences with some variation in sentence patterns; may be mechanical	Effectively uses varied simple and more varied sentence patterns to create strong sentences	Employs varied, effective sentence structure throughout text; sentences are frequently creative
<b>B. Sentence variety</b>	Contains no sentences or sentence fragments	Uses short, repetitive word patterns; has no variety; may be incomplete in places	Uses sentences that begin the same way, with few exceptions; uses sentences that are about the same length, resulting in chopiness	Uses some varied sentence beginnings and lengths that help make the text flow	Uses a variety of sentence beginnings and lengths that make the text flow smoothly	Purposefully uses a variety of sentence beginnings and lengths that enhance flow
<b>C. Connecting sentence</b>	Has no transition words	Uses a few simple transitions among clusters of words that are not yet sentences	Includes a few simple transitions; may be repetitive	Uses transitions to connect words and/or phrases with minimal errors	Uses transitions to connect words and/or phrases correctly; creates readability	Uses varied transitions smoothly and effectively to enhance readability

**KEY QUESTION**

**Does the writer control sentences so the piece flows smoothly when read aloud?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
D. Sentence rhythms	Has no or limited words; has no rhythm	Has limited text and very little rhythm when read aloud	Lacks rhythm due to uneven sentence structure and/or repetition; text is difficult to read aloud	Has some rhythm but may be somewhat mechanical in parts; is easily read aloud	Has frequent rhythm and flow; sounds natural when read aloud	Uses natural rhythm and cadence to create a flow that is easy and enjoyable to read aloud

KEY QUESTION

**How well does the text illustrate the writer’s proficiency with grade-appropriate conventions?**

(Note: For the trait of conventions, grade level matters. Expectations should be based on grade level and include only skills that have been taught.)

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	<b>Demonstrates little or no understanding of grade-level conventions</b>	<b>Has many types of convention errors scattered throughout text</b>	<b>Handles conventions well at times but makes errors that impair readability</b>	<b>Applies standard grade-level conventions accurately on most occasions</b>	<b>Has few errors with only minor editing needed to publish; may attempt more complex conventions</b>	<b>Uses conventions effortlessly without significant errors; may use conventions to creatively enhance message</b>
<b>A. Spelling</b>	Uses letter strings indicating gaps in knowing letter/sound relationships; has emerging print sense	Attempts phonetic spelling (e.g., MTR, KLOSD, UM, KD) that is mostly decodable; may include some simple words spelled correctly  Attempts some random punctuation	Has inconsistent spelling of grade-level, high-frequency words; uses some phonetic spelling	Uses generally correct grade-level, high-frequency words correctly; uses phonetic spelling for less frequent words	Spells grade-level, high-frequency words with minimal errors; attempts more difficult words logically	Spells nearly all words correctly, including grade-level, high-frequency, and more difficult words
<b>B. Punctuation</b>	Has no punctuation	Attempts some random punctuation	Experiments with end punctuation	Has end punctuation that is mostly correct	Uses end punctuation that is usually correct; attempts other punctuation with some correctness	Uses end punctuation correctly; often correctly uses advanced punctuation with few errors; may use punctuation for style and/or effect

KEY QUESTION

**How well does the text illustrate the writer’s proficiency with grade-appropriate conventions?**

*(Note: For the trait of conventions, grade level matters. Expectations should be based on grade level and include only skills that have been taught.)*

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
<b>C. Capitalization</b>	Has no or little capitalization	Uses upper and/or lower-case letters inconsistently	Has inconsistent capitalization but shows signs of appropriate use	Has mostly correct capitalization at the beginnings of sentences and for names and/or titles	Uses correct capitalization at the beginnings of sentences and for names, titles, and usually for proper nouns; may attempt creative capitalization for effect	Uses consistently correct capitalization for sentence beginnings, names, titles, and/or proper nouns; may use creative capitalization for emphasis
<b>D. Grammar/usage</b>	Demonstrates no understanding of basic grammar and/or usage in text	Demonstrates limited understanding of grammar and/or usage in text	Attempts basic grammar and usage, but is mostly uneven, overly simplistic, or incorrect	Has mostly correct noun/pronoun agreement, verb tenses, and subject/verb agreement in simple constructions	Uses correct grammar nearly all the time	Shows consistent and correct use of grammar at grade-level expectations and frequently beyond

## KEY QUESTION

**Is the finished piece easy to read, polished in presentation, and pleasing to the eye?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	<b>Strings letters or words together with no sense of spacing; may use drawings randomly</b>	<b>Begins to make letters but may be randomly placed; drawings lack connection to text</b>	<b>Has some discrepancies in letter shape; has mostly correct spacing of letters and words; drawings connect to text</b>	<b>Has most letters, words, and sentences properly spaced; drawings/graphics, if present, include pictures, charts, tables, and/or graphs that logically connect to text</b>	<b>Produces an easily readable text, with appropriate spacing; drawings/graphics, if present, logically connect to and support text</b>	<b>Creates a text that is polished with proper spacing and effective use of white space; drawings/graphics, if present, purposefully enrich the text</b>
<b>A. Handwriting</b>	Has no consistent shape to marks or letters; alphabetic understanding may	Shapes some letters properly, but others are difficult to recognize or inaccurate	Shows inconsistencies in letter shape, but many letters are identifiable	Has consistent letter shape that makes most letters and words readable	Uses letters that are well formed and easy to read	Features handwriting that can be read easily, is attractive, and shows style
<b>B. Spacing</b>	Strings letters and words together randomly without spacing or margins	Shows random attempts to use spacing between letters and words and/or use margins on page	Has some letters and words that are readable; uses mostly correct spacing	Uses proper spacing for most letters, words, and sentences; may attempt to indent first line(s) of paragraph(s)	Has words and sentences that are correctly spaced; uses proper margins; indents first line of paragraph(s)	Features words and sentences that are consistently and evenly spaced throughout; uses margins that frame text; consistently indents or blocks paragraphs, if used
<b>C. Drawings and graphics (optional)</b>	Places drawings randomly on the page; does not support print if present	Places drawings randomly within text, making it distracting	Places drawings or graphics to support text	Positions drawings or graphics logically	Incorporates text features that help to integrate ideas, articulate meaning, and support reading	Uses text features to extend meaning and/or develop more complete understanding



Model of Instruction & Assessment

Education Northwest developed the 6+1 Trait® Writing Model of Instruction & Assessment to help educators provide clear, consistent, and evidence-based feedback on student writing. As more schools and districts emphasize students' writing skills across the curriculum, it's essential that all staff members use a common terminology and shared strategies to provide feedback. We offer a broad range of training, technical assistance, and resources, including free starter materials such as rubrics and Common Core crosswalks.

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