

SIX-TRAIT ANALYTICAL WRITING ASSESSMENT MODEL

Scoring Guide (Rubric)

-  **Ideas and Content**
-  **Organization**
-  **Voice**
-  **Word Choice**
-  **Sentence Fluency**
-  **Conventions**
-  **Content, Style, and Organization**
-  **Mechanics Scoring Guide**

IDEAS AND CONTENT:

DEVELOPMENT

5

This paper is clear and focused. *It* holds the readers attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme or story line.

- Ideas are fresh and original.
- The writer seems *to be* writing from knowledge or experience and shows insight; an understanding of life and a knack for picking out what is significant.
- Relevant, telling, quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable.
- The writer develops the topic in an enlightening, purposeful way that makes a point or tells a story.
- Every piece adds something to the whole.

3

The writer is beginning to define the topic, even though development is still basic or general.

- It *is* pretty easy to see where the writer is headed, though more information is needed *to* fill in the blanks.
- The writer seems to be drawing on knowledge or experience, but has difficulty going from general observations to specifics.
- Ideas are reasonably clear, though they may not be detailed, personalized, or expanded enough *to* show *in-depth* understanding or a strong sense of purpose.
- Support is attempted, but *doesn't* go far enough yet in fleshing *out* the main point or story *line*.
- Details often blend the original with the predictable.

1

As yet, the paper has no clear sense *of* purpose or central theme. *To* extract meaning *from* the text, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy details. The writing reflects more than one *of* these problems:

- The writer is still in search of a topic, or has not begun to define the topic in a meaningful, personal way.
- Information *is* very limited or unclear.
- The text may be repetitious, or may read like a collection of disconnected, random thoughts.
- Everything seems as important as everything else; the reader has a hard time sifting out what *s* critical.

ORGANIZATION

5

The organization enhances and showcases the central idea or storyline. The order, structure or presentation of information is compelling and moves the reader through the text.

- Details seem to fit where they are placed; sequencing is logical and effective.
- An inviting introduction draws the reader in; a satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of resolution.
- Pacing is well controlled; the writer knows when to slow down and elaborate, and when to pick up the pace and move on.
- Thoughtful transitions clearly show how ideas connect.
- Organization flows so smoothly the reader hardly thinks about it.

3

The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without undue confusion.

- The paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The introduction may not create a strong sense of anticipation; the conclusion may not tie up all loose ends.
- Sequencing is usually logical, but may sometimes be so predictable that the structure takes attention away from the content.
- Pacing is fairly well controlled, though the writer sometimes spurts ahead too quickly or spends too much time on details that do not matter.
- Transitions often work well; at other times, connections between ideas are fuzzy.
- The organization sometimes supports the main point or story line; at other times, the reader feels an urge to slip in a transition or move things around.

1

The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details or events seem strung together in a loose or random fashion; or else there is not identifiable internal structure. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:

- Sequencing needs work.
- Pacing feels awkward; the writer slows to a crawl when the reader wants to get on with it, and vice versa.
- Connections between ideas are confusing or missing.
- Problems with organizations make it hard for the reader to get a grip on the main point or story line.

VOICE

5

The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individualistic, expressive and engaging. Clearly, the writer is involved in the text, is sensitive to the needs of the audience, and is writing to be read.

- The reader feels a strong interaction with the writer, sensing the person behind the words.
- The tone and voice give flavor to the message and seem appropriate for the purpose and audience.
- Narrative writing seems honest, appealing, and written from the heart.
- Expository or persuasive writing reflects a strong commitment to the topic, and an effort to bring the topic to life by anticipating the readers questions, and showing why the reader should care or want to know more.

3

The writer seems sincere, but not fully engaged or involved. The result *is* pleasant *or* even *personable*, *but* not compelling.

- The writing communicates in an earnest, pleasing manner. Moments here and there surprise, amuse or move the reader.
- Voice may emerge strongly on occasion, then retreat behind general, dispassionate language.
- The writing hides as much of the writer as it reveals.
- The writer seems aware of an audience, but often to weigh words carefully or discard personal insights in favor of safe generalities.

1

The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved or distanced from the topic *and/or* the audience. **As** a result, the writing is lifeless or mechanical; depending on the topic, it may be overly technical or *jargonistic*. The paper reflects more than one of the following problems:

- It **is** hard to sense the writer behind the words. The writer does not seem to reach out to an audience, or to anticipate their interests and questions.
- The writer speaks in a kind of monotone that flattens all potential highs or lows of the message.
- The writing may communicate **on** a functional level, **but** it does not move or involve the reader.
- The writer does not seem sufficiently at home with the topic to take risks, share personal insights or make the topic/story personal and real for the reader.

WORD CHOICE

5

Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting and natural way.

- Words are specific and accurate; it is easy to understand just what the writer means,
- The language is natural and never overdone; phrasing is highly individual.
-
- Lively verbs energize the writing. Precise nouns and modifiers create pictures in the readers mind.
- Striking words and phrases often catch the readers eye-and linger in the readers mind.
- Clichés and jargon are used sparingly; only for effect.

3

The language is functional, even if it lacks punch; it is easy to figure out the writers meaning on a general level.

- Words are almost always correct and adequate: they simply lack flair.
- Familiar words and phrases communicate, but rarely capture the readers imagination. Still, the paper may have one or two fine moments.
- **Attempts** at colorful language come close to the mark, but sometimes seem overdone.
- Energetic verbs or picturesque phrases liven things up now and then: the reader longs for more.

1

The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary, searching for words to convey meaning. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:

- Language is **so** vague (e.g., It was a fun time, She was neat, It was nice, We did lots of stuff) that only the most general message comes through.
- Persistent redundancy distracts the reader.
- Jargon or clichés serve as a crutch.
- Words are used incorrectly, sometimes making the message hard to decipher.
- Problems with language leave the reader wondering what the writer is trying to say.

SENTENCE FLUENCY

5

The writing has an easy flow and *rhythm* when read aloud. Sentences are well built, with strong and varied structure that invites expressive oral reading.

- Sentences are constructed in a way that helps make meaning clear.
- Purposeful sentence beginnings show how each sentence relates to and builds upon the one before it.
- The writing has cadence, as if the writer has thought about the sound of the words as well as the meaning.
- Sentences vary in length as well as structure.
- Fragments, if used, add style.
- Dialogue, if used, sounds natural.

3

The *text* hums along with a steady beat, but tends to be more pleasant or businesslike than musical, more mechanical than *fluid*.

- Sentences may not seem artfully crafted or musical, but they are usually grammatical. They hang together. They get the job done.
- There is at least some variation in sentence length and structure. Sentence beginnings are NOT all alike.
- The reader sometimes has to hunt for clues (e.g., connecting words and phrases like however, therefore, naturally, after a while, on the other hand, to be specific for example, next, first of all, later, but as it turned out, although, etc.) that show how sentences interrelate.
- Parts of the text invite expressive **oral** reading; others may be stiff, awkward, choppy or gangly. Overall, though it is pretty easy to read the paper aloud with a little practice.

1

The reader has to practice quite a bit in order to give this paper a fair interpretive reading. The writing reflects more than one of the following problems:

- Sentences are choppy, incomplete, rambling or awkward; they need work.
- Phrasing does not sound natural, the way someone might speak. The reader must sometimes pause or read over to get the meaning.
- Many sentences begin the same way, and may follow the same patterns (e.g. subject -verb-object) in a monotonous pattern.
- Endless connectives (and, and **so**, but then, because, and then, etc.) create a massive jumble of language in which clear sentence beginnings and endings get swallowed up.
- The text does not invite expressive oral reading.

CONVENTIONS

5

The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (*e.g.*, grammar, *capitalization, punctuation*, usage, spelling, paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be **so** few and minor that the reader can easily overlook them unless hunting for them specifically.

- Paragraphing tends to be sound and to reinforce the organizational structure.
- Grammar and usage are correct and contribute to clarity and style.
- Punctuation is accurate and guides the reader through the text.
- Spelling is generally correct, even on more difficult words.
- The writer may manipulate conventions, especially grammar and spelling, for stylistic effect.
- **GRADES 7 AND UP ONLY:** The writing is sufficiently long and complex to allow the writer to show skill in using a wide range of conventions.
- Only light editing would be required to polish the text for publication.

3

The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Conventions are sometimes handled well and enhance readability; at other times, errors are distracting and impair readability.

- Paragraphing is attempted. Paragraphs sometimes run together or begin in the wrong places.
- Problems with grammar or usage are not serious enough to distort meaning.
- Terminal (end-of-sentence) punctuation is usually correct; internal punctuation (commas, apostrophes, semicolons, dashes, colons, parentheses) is sometimes missing or wrong.
- Spelling is usually correct or reasonably phonetic on common words.
- Moderate editing would be required to polish the text for publication.

1

Errors in spelling, punctuation, usage and grammar, capitalization, *and/or* paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. The writing reflects more than one *of* these problems:

- Paragraphing is missing, irregular, or **so** frequent (*e.g.*, every sentence) that it has no relationship to ~~the~~ organizational structure of the text.
- Errors in grammar or usage are very noticeable, and may affect meaning.
- Punctuation (including terminal punctuation) is often missing **or** incorrect.
- Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words.
- The reader must read once to decode, then again for meaning.
- Extensive editing would be required to polish the text for publication.

WRITING

GENERAL SCORING CRITERIA FOR CONCEPT AND DESIGN:

 **4 points:**

Maintains consistent focus on the topic and has ample supporting details; clearly addresses the purpose (mode); has a logical organizational pattern and conveys a sense of completeness and wholeness; provides transitions which clearly serve to connect ideas.

 **3 points:**

Maintains adequate focus on the topic and has adequate supporting details; generally addresses the purpose (mode); has a logical organizational pattern and conveys a sense of completeness and wholeness, although some lapses occur; provides adequate transitions which clearly serve to connect ideas.

 **2 points:**

Demonstrates an awareness of the topic and includes some (or few) supporting details but may include some extraneous or loosely related material; demonstrates an attempt to address the purpose (mode); shows an attempt at organizational pattern, but exhibits little sense of wholeness and completeness; provides transitions that are weak or inconsistent.

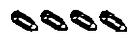
 **1 point:**

Presents information or ideas that are inconsistent and interfere with the meaning of the text, and offers few supporting details; shows little attempt to address the purpose (mode); has little evidence *of* an organizational pattern or any sense of wholeness and completeness; provides transitions that are poorly utilized, or fails to provide transitions.

0 points:

If the response indicates no understanding of the concept or activity; if the prompt is simply recopied; or if the response is I don't know or a question mark (?).

GENERAL SCORING CRITERIA FOR STYLE:

 4 points:

Uses language effectively by exhibiting word choices that are appropriate for intended audiences and purpose; includes sentences of varied length and structure; allows the reader to sense the person behind the words.

 3 points:

Includes word choices that, at times, can be effective for intended audience and purpose; includes sentences that are somewhat varied in length and structure; provides the reader with some sense of the person behind the words.

 2 points:

Has limited, predictable vocabulary that may not be appropriate for the intended audience or purpose; shows limited variety in sentence length and structure; attempts somewhat to give the reader a sense of the person behind the words.

 1 point:

Has limited, or inappropriate vocabulary for the intended audience or purpose; shows little or no variety in sentence length and structure; provides the reader little or no sense of the person behind the words.

0 points:

If the response indicates no understanding of the concept or activity; if the prompt is simply recopied; or if the response is "I don't know" or a question mark (?).

GENERAL SCORING CRITERIA FOR CONVENTIONS:

4 points:

Exhibits the use of complete and fluent sentences except where purposeful phrases or clauses are used for effect; demonstrates correct usage, punctuation, and capitalization, and correctly spells commonly used words; indicates paragraphs consistently.

3 points:

Exhibits adequate use of complete sentences except where purposeful phrases or clauses are used for effect, and while some errors in sentence structure may occur, they do not impede communication; generally follows conventions of usage, punctuation, and capitalization, and usually spells commonly used words correctly, while any errors that occur do not impede communication; indicates paragraphs for the most part.

2 points:

Exhibits limited command of sentence structure that may limit readability; demonstrates some knowledge of usage, punctuation, and capitalization, and indicates some difficulty spelling commonly used words and errors begin to impede communication; indicates paragraphs to a limited degree.

1 point:

Exhibits errors in sentence structure that impede communication; demonstrates little knowledge of usage, punctuation, and capitalization, and indicates difficulty spelling commonly used words and errors impede communication; fails to indicate paragraphs.

0 points:

If the response indicates no understanding of the concept or activity; if the prompt is simply recopied; or if the response is I don't know or a question mark (?).

CONTENT, STYLE, AND ORGANIZATION

SCORING GUIDE

A 4-point response:

- Maintains consistent focus on the topic and has ample supporting details.
- ◇ Clearly addresses the purpose (mode).
- Has a logical organizational pattern and conveys a sense of completeness and wholeness.
- ◇ Provides transitions which clearly serve to connect ideas.
- Uses language effectively by exhibiting word choices that are appropriate for intended audience and purpose.
- ◇ Includes sentences of varied length and structure.
- ◇ Allows the reader to sense the person behind the words.

A 3-point response:

- ◇ Maintains adequate focus on the topic and has adequate supporting details.
- ◇ Generally addresses the purpose (mode).
- ◇ Has a logical organizational pattern and conveys a sense of wholeness and completeness, although some lapses occur.
- ◇ Provides adequate transitions in an attempt to connect ideas.
- Includes word choices which at times can be effective for intended audience and purpose.
- ◇ Includes sentences that are somewhat varied in length and structure.
- ◇ Provides the reader with some sense of the person behind the words.

A 2-point response:

- Demonstrates an awareness of the **topic** and includes some (or few) supporting details, but may include extraneous or loosely related material.
- ◇ Demonstrates an attempt to address the purpose (mode).
- ◇ Shows an attempt at an organizational pattern, but exhibits little sense of wholeness and completeness.
- ◇ Provides transitions which are weak or inconsistent.
- Has a limited and predictable vocabulary which may not be appropriate for the intended audience and purpose.
- Shows limited variety in sentence length and structure.
- ◇ Attempts somewhat to give the reader a sense of the person behind the words.

A 1-point response:

- ◇ Presents information or ideas which are inconsistent and interfere with the meaning of the text, and offers few supporting details.
- ◇ Shows little attempt to address the purpose (mode).
- Has little evidence of an organizational pattern or any sense of wholeness and completeness.
- ◇ Provides transitions which are poorly utilized, or fails to provide transitions.
- Has a limited or inappropriate vocabulary for the intended audience and purpose.
- Has little or no variety in sentence length and structure.
- Provides the reader with little or no sense of the person behind the words.

Teachers may choose to use these pages as evaluation sheets for their students' final drafts. They could highlight the statements that reflect students' work, discuss these points with students, and have students keep copies of these scoring criteria for future reference.

Mechanics Scoring Guide

A 2-point response

- Consistently follows the rules of standard written English for capitalization and punctuation.
- Includes word usage (e.g., subject/verb agreement, pronoun cases, etc.) that is correct with very few lapses, if any.
- ◇ Correctly spells commonly used words.

A 1-point response

- ◇ Generally follows the rules of standard written English for capitalization and punctuation.
- ◇ Includes word usage (e.g. subject/verb agreement, pronoun cases, etc.) that is correct except for occasional lapses.
- ◇ Usually spells commonly used words correctly.

A 0-point response

- ◇ Basically does **not** follow the rules of standard written English for capitalization and punctuation, though some elements may be correct.
- ◇ Includes word usage (e.g. subject/verb agreement, pronoun cases, etc.) that is occasionally, but not consistently, correct.
- ◇ Indicates difficulty spelling commonly used words correctly and errors impede communication.