

Six Trait Writing – Student Rubric

Ideas: The heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme, with details that enrich and develop that theme.	Organization: The internal structure, the thread of central meaning, the logical and sometimes intriguing pattern of ideas.	Conventions: The mechanical correctness of the piece; spelling, grammar, and usage, paragraphing, use of capitals and punctuation.
<p>5-6 <i>My paper is clear, focused, and specific. The writing is packed with details that keep the reader’s attention and show what is really important about the topic.</i></p> <p>A. My topic is small enough to handle. B. I know a lot about this topic; my ideas are fresh and original. C. I made sure to show what was happening (“The wildly spiraling tornado aimed straight for our barn.”) instead of telling what happened (“It was scary.”) D. Every point is clear. E. I could easily answer the question, “What is the point of this story/paper?”</p>	<p>5-6 <i>My paper has a clear and compelling direction, which makes reading a breeze. I’ve chosen an order that works well and makes the reader want to find out what coming next.</i></p> <p>A. My beginning gets the reader’s attention and gives clues about what is coming. B. I have thoughtful transitions. C. Every detail adds a little more to the main idea or story. D. All my details are in the right place; everything fits like a puzzle. E. My paper ends at just the right spot and didn’t drag on too long. I left my reader with something to think about.</p>	<p>5-6 <i>My paper is mostly correct. It would be a snap getting this ready to publish.</i></p> <p>A. I have used capitals correctly. B. Periods, commas, exclamation marks, and quotation marks are in the right place. C. My spelling is accurate. D. Every paragraph is intended to show where a new idea begins. E. My grammar/usage is consistent and shows control.</p>
<p>3-4 <i>My paper has some really good parts, some intriguing moments, but it could use some details.</i></p> <p>A. My topic might be too big, and I got bogged down trying to tell a little about a lot instead of a lot about a little. B. I know just enough to write. C. Some of my details are too general, like “Her hat was nice.” or “It was a sunny day.” D. Sometimes I was very clear about what I meant, but at other times, it was still fuzzy. E. Generally, I stayed on the topic.</p>	<p>3-4 <i>The order of my story/paper makes sense most of the time. You can follow it pretty well.</i></p> <p>A. I have a beginning, but it really doesn’t grab you or give you clues about what is coming. B. My transitions work most of the time. C. Sometimes it is not clear how the details I have used connect to the main idea or story. D. Most details fit where I put them. E. I wrote too much in some places, and not enough in others. F. I have a conclusion. It just isn’t the way I want it yet.</p>	<p>3-4 <i>My paper shows some mistakes that need to be cleaned up before I am ready to publish.</i></p> <p>A. Most sentences and proper nouns begin with capitals, but a few have been overlooked. B. A few problems with grammar and punctuation might make a reader stumble or pause now and again. C. Spelling is correct on simple words. It may not always be right on the harder words. D. Paragraphs are present, but not all begin in the right place. E. My paper reads like a first draft; I was more concerned with getting my ideas down than making sure all the editing was taken care of.</p>
<p>1-2 <i>My paper sounds like I am just beginning to figure out what I want to say. When someone else reads my paper, it will be hard for him or her to understand what I mean or what my paper is all about.</i></p> <p>A. I haven’t shared much information. B. I don’t know enough about the topic. C. My details are so vague that it is hard to picture anything. D. I have repeated many details, or my details don’t fit together.</p>	<p>1-2 <i>My paper is jumbled and confused. It has no clear sense of direction.</i></p> <p>A. There isn’t really a beginning to my paper. It just “takes off.” B. I am confused about how the details fit with the main idea. C. My ideas seem confusing, jumbled, and disconnected – even to me. D. My paper doesn’t really have an ending. It just stops.</p>	<p>1-2 <i>My paper needs one reading to decode, and then a second reading to get the meaning of my paper.</i></p> <p>A. I have forgotten some capitals; others aren’t even needed. B. My paper has errors in punctuation and grammar that send the reader back to the beginning of a sentence to sort things out. C. Spelling errors are common, even on simple words. D. I haven’t got the hang of paragraphs yet. E. The truth is, I haven’t spent much time editing this paper.</p>
<p>Key Question: Did I stay focused and share original and fresh information or perspectives about my topic?</p>	<p>Key Question: Does the organizational structure enhance my ideas and make it easier to understand?</p>	<p>Key Question: How much editing would have to be done to be ready to share with an outside reader?</p>

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<p>Word Choice: The use of rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the readers.</p>	<p>Sentence Fluency: The rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear, not just to the eye.</p>	<p>Voice: The heart and soul, magic, wit, feeling and conviction of the writer coming out.</p>
<p>5-6 <i>The words in my paper are extremely clear, visual, and accurate. I picked just the right words for the right places.</i></p> <p>A. All the words in my paper fit. Each one seems exactly right. B. My words are colorful, snappy, vital, brisk, and fresh. Nothing is overdone, vague, or flowery. C. My verbs are energetic. D. Some of my words and phrases are so vivid that the reader won't be able to forget them.</p>	<p>5-6 <i>My sentences are clear and natural and delightful to read aloud.</i></p> <p>A. Some sentences are long and stretchy, while some are short and snappy. B. The sentence beginnings vary; they show how ideas connect. C. You can tell that I have good sentence sense because my paper just flows. D. All the excess sentences have been cut.</p>	<p>5-6 <i>My paper is really individual and powerful. My writing has lots of personality. It sounds different from the way everyone else writes.</i></p> <p>A. My paper has my personality; it's really me. B. Readers can tell I am talking right to them. C. I write sincerely and with confidence. D. My paper is full of feeling and my readers will feel what I feel. E. I'm not afraid to say what I really think. F. You can tell I wrote this. No one else sounds like me.</p>
<p>3-4 <i>The words in my paper get the message across but don't capture anyone's imagination or attention.</i></p> <p>A. Most of the time the reader will figure out what I mean even if a few words don't exactly fit the meaning. B. I used everyday words well, but I didn't stretch for a new or better way to say things. C. I might have overused the thesaurus. D. There are as many tired out clichés (e.g. bright and early) as there are new, fresh, and original phrases. E. My words aren't really specific. Instead of saying, "The sun went down" I should have said, "The sun sagged into the treetops. I need better details.</p>	<p>3-4 <i>My sentences are clear and readable.</i></p> <p>A. Some sentences are choppy or awkward, but most are clear. B. Sentence beginnings are more alike than different. C. I need to add linking words (e.g. therefore, later, for this reason) to show how sentences connect. D. Some sentences could be joined together; others need to be cut in two. E. I have used more words than necessary. I still need to cut out the unnecessary words or sentences.</p>	<p>3-4 <i>My paper shows some of my personality. But it fades in and out. What I truly think and feel only shows up sometimes.</i></p> <p>A. Although readers will understand what I mean, my writing won't make them feel like laughing, crying, or pounding on the table. B. My writing is right on the edge of sounding like my voice. C. My personality pokes through here and there, but then gets covered up again. D. My writing is pleasant but a little cautious. E. I've done a lot of telling and not enough showing.</p>
<p>1-2 <i>The words in my paper may cause the reader to ask, "What did you mean by this?"</i></p> <p>A. A lot of my words and phrases are vague, such as: "We liked to do things," "We were friends and stuff." B. Some of my words are misused. C. My words don't make pictures yet. I wrote things like, "Something neat happened," "It was awesome." D. Over and over I used the same words, over and over, and then over and over again. Some of my phrases were redundant.</p>	<p>1-2 <i>My sentences need work. It is a challenge to read aloud.</i></p> <p>A. As I read my paper, I have to go back, stop, and read over, just to figure out the sentences." B. I'm having a hard time telling where one sentence stops and another begins. C. The sentence patterns in my paper are so repetitive they might put the reader to sleep. D. I have to do quite a bit of oral editing (leaving some words out, putting some words in) just to help the listener get the meaning.</p>	<p>1-2 <i>My paper doesn't show the real me. I'm not comfortable sharing what I truly think and feel.</i></p> <p>A. It could be hard to tell who wrote this; you can't hear my voice. B. I hid my true feelings. C. I held myself back by using general statements like: "It was fun," and "I liked it a lot." D. My paper is all telling and no showing at all.</p>
<p>Key Question: Do my words and phrases create vivid pictures and linger in the reader's mind?</p>	<p>Key Question: Can you feel the words and phrases flow together as you read?</p>	<p>Key Question: Would I keep reading this paper if it were longer? MUCH longer?</p>