

STUDENT SCORING GUIDE 2003-2004

WRITING, BENCHMARK 2

| IDEAS AND CONTENT -- Explaining my topic or message -- | |
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| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 6 </div> <p>The writing is very clear, focused and interesting. It holds the reader’s attention all the way through.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer has excellent control of the topic and has carefully selected details that clearly explain main ideas. • The main idea(s) and supporting details stand out. • The writer has selected content and details that are well suited to purpose and audience. • The writer makes connections and shares new understandings. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 5 </div> <p>The writing is clear, focused and interesting. It holds the reader’s attention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer is in control of the topic and has carefully chosen details that clearly explain the main ideas. • The reader can easily identify the main ideas and supporting details. • The writer has matched the way he/she presents the topic with the purpose and audience. • The writer makes connections and shares new understandings. |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 4 </div> <p>The writing is clear and sticks to the topic. It holds the reader’s attention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer shows knowledge of the topic and has chosen details that help explain the main idea. • The reader can identify the main ideas and supporting details. • The reader can tell that the writer is aware of purpose and audience. • The writer makes some connections, and new understandings may be present. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 3 </div> <p>The reader can understand what the writer is trying to say, but the paper may not hold the reader’s attention all the way through.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer has some control of the topic; some ideas may be clear, while others may not seem to fit or are not clear. • The writing may not have enough details; details are somewhat general or are not related to the ideas. • The reader sees some ways that the writing matches purpose and audience, but it is not always clear. • The writer makes obvious or predictable connections. |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 2 </div> <p>The writing is somewhat unclear and has few appropriate details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer has little control of the topic; ideas are not clear. • The writing may have limited details, details that are repeated and/or details that are not related to the ideas. • The reader is not sure of the purpose and main idea(s) in the writing but can make some assumptions. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 1 </div> <p>The writing is unclear and seems to have no purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer’s ideas are very limited or may go off in several directions. • It is hard to tell what the writer really wanted to say. |

ORGANIZATION

-- Planning and using clear connections from beginning to end --

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| <p>6 The writing shows careful and effective planning. The order of ideas moves the reader easily through the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The writing has a strong and inviting beginning and a satisfying ending.• The writing is easy to follow.• Ideas, paragraphs and sentences are smoothly and effectively tied together.• Details are thoughtfully placed to strengthen the message. | <p>5 The writing shows careful planning. The order of ideas helps the reader follow and understand the paper from beginning to end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The writing has an inviting beginning and a satisfying ending.• The writing is easy to follow.• Ideas, paragraphs, and sentences are smoothly tied together.• Details fit and build on each other. Placement of details strengthens the message. |
| <p>4 Ideas and details are presented in a way that makes sense. The paper is easy to follow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The writing has a clear beginning and ending.• The reader can follow the order of the writing.• Ideas, paragraphs, and sentences are tied together.• Details fit where they are placed. Placement of details helps the reader understand the message. | <p>3 The writer has tried to present ideas and details in a way that makes sense, but the paper may sometimes be hard to follow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The beginning and ending are there, but one or both may be too short or too long.• The reader has difficulty following the order of the writing.• Ideas, paragraphs, and sentences need to be tied together using connecting words, phrases or ordering.• Some details don't fit where they are placed. The reader would better understand the message if placement of details were different. |
| <p>2 The writing lacks a clear structure which makes it difficult to follow. Rereading may help, but sometimes the piece is too short to show an orderly development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The beginning and ending are either missing or poorly developed.• The reader frequently has difficulty following the order of the writing.• Ideas, paragraphs and sentences are either not tied together effectively or connecting words and phrases are overused.• The reader is confused by details that don't fit where they are placed. | <p>1 The writing is difficult to follow. The reader has to reread often and may still be confused.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no clear sense of a beginning or ending.• Ideas and details are not tied together. They often seem out of order or as if they do not fit. |

VOICE

-- Sounding like a real person coming through the writing --

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| 6 | <p>The writer shows deep involvement with the topic. The writer skillfully matches the way the message sounds with the purpose and audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer has an exceptional ability to speak to the reader. • The writer communicates effectively according to purpose and audience (writing is either close or distant, as appropriate). • The writing shows originality, liveliness, honesty, humor, suspense and/or use of outside resources, as appropriate.. | 5 | <p>The writer shows strong involvement with the topic. The reader can picture the writer behind the words. The writer effectively matches the way the message sounds with the purpose and audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is clear the writer is speaking directly to the reader. • The writing effectively matches the role of the writer; depending on the purpose and audience, the writing is either close or distant. • The paper shows originality, liveliness, honesty, humor, suspense and/or use of outside resources, as appropriate. |
| 4 | <p>The writer is involved with the topic. The reader can tell who the writer is behind the words. The message sounds like it matches the purpose and the audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer speaks to the reader in ways that connect the writer with the reader. • The writing sounds like the role the writer is playing; it matches the purpose and audience. • The paper shows some characteristics such as originality, liveliness, honesty, humor, suspense and/or use of outside resources, but their use may not be appropriate | 3 | <p>The writer is not always very involved with the topic. The reader gets hints of who the writer is behind the words. The writer begins to match the way the message sounds with the purpose and the audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reader often feels out of touch with the topic and the writer. • The writer’s connection between how the message sounds and the purpose or audience is unclear (voice is too close or too distant to be effective). • The writer gets the message across, but only in a routine sort of way. |
| 2 | <p>The writer shows little involvement with the topic, purpose or audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing lacks a purpose and an interaction between writer and reader. • The writing is likely to be overly informal and personal. • The writing is largely flat, lifeless and uninteresting. | 1 | <p>The writer seems to make no effort to deal with the topic, purpose or audience in an interesting way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer does not seem to be writing to anyone in particular or to care whether the words or ideas will make sense to anyone else. Perhaps the writer misunderstood the assignment or may not have cared about saying anything serious, important or interesting. • The writing is flat, lifeless and uninteresting. |

WORD CHOICE

-- Choosing words carefully to create a picture in the reader's mind --

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| 6 The writer thoughtfully chooses words that make the message unusually clear and interesting. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Words are accurate, strong, specific and powerful; they create clear pictures in the reader's mind.• Vocabulary is striking and varied but natural and not overdone.• Both original expressions and everyday words are used successfully and in unusual ways. | 5 The writer shows strong involvement with The writer thoughtfully chooses words that make the message clear and interesting. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Words are accurate and specific; they are used in places that help create a picture in the reader's mind.• The writer uses a wide variety of words effectively (seems natural and not overdone).• Experiments with challenging words are successful, or everyday words may be used in a new, interesting way. |
| 4 The writer chooses words that help make the message clear. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The words communicate the main idea, but may not paint a picture in the reader's mind.• The writer uses a variety of words that seem to fit.• The writing shows some experimentation with new words or everyday words being used in new ways. | 3 The writer uses words that get the message across, but only in an ordinary way. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The words communicate the main idea, but it seems that the writer settles for just any word or phrase rather than what might work best. Some words and/or expressions may be overused.• The writer may attempt to use a variety of words, but some do not fit.• The writing shows little experimentation with new words or everyday words being used in new ways. |
| 2 The writer uses words that take away from the meaning and impact of the writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The writer repeats words.• Use of worn expressions begin to detract from the message.• Words are not specific or colorful and do not create clear pictures for the reader. | 1 The writer has a difficult time finding the right words. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The writer may repeat words or phrases over and over again.• No new words seem to be attempted.• Words do not fit or seem confusing to the reader.• Pictures are not clear in the reader's mind. |

SENTENCE FLUENCY

--Creating sentences which make sense and sound like they fit together when read aloud--

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| 6 | <p>Sentences are carefully crafted; they flow smoothly and effectively with a natural rhythm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing is natural and easy to read aloud. • Sentences have an extensive variety of lengths, beginnings, and patterns. They fit together effectively and add interest to the text. • The writer uses both simple and complex sentences effectively and creatively. • Fragments, if used at all, work well. Dialogue, if used, sounds natural and strengthens the writing. | 5 | <p>Sentences are carefully crafted and flow smoothly with a natural rhythm from one to the next. The writing is easy to read aloud and understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing sounds natural, is easy to read aloud and is well paced (it's long when it should be long or short and concise when it needs to be). • Sentences have a variety of lengths, beginnings, and patterns which fit effectively together. • The writer uses simple and complex sentences effectively and creatively. • Fragments, if used, work well. Dialogue, if used, sounds natural and strengthens the writing. |
| 4 | <p>Sentences make sense and flow from one to the other. The writing is easy to read aloud.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing sounds natural and is easy to read aloud. • Sentences have a variety of lengths, beginnings, and patterns. • The writer uses both simple and complex sentences with stronger control of simple sentences. • Fragments, if used, work. Dialogue, if used, sounds natural most of the time. | 3 | <p>Most sentences are understandable but not very smooth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reader may have to reread sometimes to follow the meaning. Some sentences drag on or are too choppy. • Although some variety is found, the writer may start several sentences the same way, or several sentences may be the same length or pattern. • Simple sentences work well, but the writer may have trouble with more complicated sentences. • Fragments, if used, do not work well. Dialogue, if used, may not sound natural. |
| 2 | <p>The sentences that are often choppy or rambling make much of the writing difficult to follow or read aloud.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of the writing is difficult to follow or read aloud. • Sentence patterns are the same and monotonous. • The writing contains a significant number of awkward, choppy or rambling sentences. | 1 | <p>Sentences that are incomplete, rambling or awkward make the writing hard to read and understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer does not seem to understand how words and sentences fit together. Sentences are often confusing. • Writing does not follow sentence patterns people use when they talk. It is hard to read aloud. • The writer may use mostly short, choppy sentences or long, rambling sentences. |

CONVENTIONS

-- Using correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing and rules of English language --

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| 6 | <p>Spelling, capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing and usage are effective and make the writing easy to read and understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling is accurate even on more difficult words. • Capitalization is consistently correct. • Strong effective use of punctuation makes the writing easy to read. • Paragraphs are placed effectively and contribute to the organization of the paper. • Proper use of the rules of English contribute to clarity and style. • The writing shows strong skills in a wide range of conventions making editing largely unnecessary. | 5 | <p>Spelling, capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing and usage are correct and make the writing easy to read and understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling is accurate even on some difficult words. • Capitals are used to begin all sentences, for proper names and titles. • Punctuation is correct and helps the reader understand each sentence. • Paragraphs are placed correctly and effectively. • Subjects and verbs go together and the writing shows several examples of proper use of the rules of English. • The writer shows strong and correct use of a variety of conventions with little need for editing. |
| 4 | <p>Spelling, capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing and usage are mostly correct. If there are a few errors, they don't make the paper difficult to read and understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling is accurate in almost all cases. • Capitals are used to begin all sentences and for almost all proper names and titles. • Ending punctuation is correct. Other punctuation helps the reader understand each sentence. • Paragraphs are placed correctly. • Subjects and verbs go together. • The writer uses a variety of conventions correctly, but some editing is needed. | 3 | <p>Spelling, capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing and usage show some minor problems. The reader can follow what is being said; however, there are enough mistakes that the reader really notices them and may have some difficulty following what the writer is saying.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling errors cause the reader to stop and reread to figure out what is meant. • Capitalization errors begin to be noticeable throughout the writing. • Punctuation errors sometimes make the paper difficult to read. • The writer use paragraphs, but they may not be placed correctly each time. • Subjects and verbs go together most of the time. • The writer shows basic control of conventions, yet the variety is limited. There is significant need for editing. |
| 2 | <p>There are frequent, significant errors that make it difficult to read the paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling errors frequently cause the reader to stop and reread to figure out what is meant. • Capitalization is not consistent or is often incorrect. • Punctuation errors are frequent and make the paper difficult to read. • Paragraphs often run together or are not placed correctly. • Subjects and verbs go together some of the time. • The writing shows little control of conventions, and there is extensive need for revisions and editing. | 1 | <p>There are so many errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation and usage that the reader has a very hard time getting through the paper. Some parts may be impossible to follow or understand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer shows little understanding of how or when to use capital letters or punctuation marks. • There are many spelling errors and it may be hard to guess what words are meant. • Subjects and verbs do not go together. • Paragraphs are not used correctly if at all. |