

Expanded Writing Traits Rubric

IDEAS

Does my writing offer thoughtful, engaging insight on a clearly focused topic?

Category	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Overall	I can communicate a clear main idea, though it may be underdeveloped or lack depth.	I can develop a clear and focused main idea with relevant support.	I can present a clear, focused, and well-supported main idea that demonstrates thoughtful reasoning.	I can establish a clear, compelling, and insightful main idea that shows depth, originality, and strong reasoning.
A. Main Idea	I can suggest my main idea, but my direction may be confusing.	I can present a clear and focused main idea.	I can develop a clear, focused main idea that shows some complexity or originality.	I can develop a clear, focused, complex, and original main idea that drives my entire piece.
B. Details, Evidence, & Support	I can include some details, but they may be vague, inaccurate, or loosely connected. In arguments, I can mention a counterclaim but not explain it well.	I can use details that are mostly accurate, specific, and relevant. In arguments, I can explain a counterclaim adequately.	I can support my ideas with specific, credible, and relevant details. In arguments, I can clearly develop and address a counterclaim.	I can support my ideas with highly specific, credible details that go beyond the obvious. In arguments, I can address counterclaims in original and thoughtful ways.
C. Reasoning / Thinking	I can attempt to connect my ideas, but my reasoning may be unclear or illogical.	I can explain my thinking so the reader understands my perspective and how my ideas connect.	I can use strong reasoning and higher-level thinking to clearly connect and explain my ideas.	I can use original, insightful reasoning to deepen understanding and clarify my ideas in new ways.
D. Awareness / Engagement of Reader	I can try to engage the reader, but I may miss important questions or concerns.	I can engage the reader and address most of their questions or concerns.	I can effectively engage the reader and address what they need to know.	I can engage the reader on multiple levels and thoughtfully address their questions, knowledge, and possible biases.
E. Textual Evidence from Sources	I can include evidence, but it may be weak or poorly connected and may not acknowledge sources clearly.	I can include evidence that connects to my ideas and acknowledge sources.	I can integrate evidence smoothly and acknowledge sources properly.	I can integrate evidence seamlessly to strengthen meaning and consistently acknowledge sources correctly.

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ORGANIZATION

Is my writing organized in a way that helps my reader easily follow and understand my ideas?

Category	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Overall	I can organize my writing, but it may be hard to follow at times.	I can organize my writing logically, so it mostly makes sense.	I can organize my writing smoothly, so my ideas are easy to follow.	I can organize my writing seamlessly to highlight relationships between my ideas.
A. Lead & Conclusion	I can include a lead and a conclusion, but they may not clearly set purpose or provide closure.	I can write a lead and conclusion that work, though they may feel predictable.	I can write an engaging lead and a clear conclusion that ties ideas together.	I can write an inviting lead and a thoughtful conclusion that feel meaningful and complete.
B. Transitions	I can use transitions, but they may be repetitive or weak, and my paragraphs may be unclear.	I can use transitions to connect ideas, and my paragraphs are mostly clear.	I can use varied transitions and paragraphing to strengthen understanding.	I can use smooth, intentional transitions and paragraphing to enhance meaning.
C. Sequencing	I can order ideas, but the sequence may feel repetitive or unclear.	I can order ideas logically.	I can order ideas to build connections and create a unified piece.	I can order ideas strategically to deepen understanding and impact.
D. Pacing	I can control pacing in some places, but not consistently.	I can maintain steady pacing in most of my writing.	I can control pacing effectively throughout my piece.	I can use pacing intentionally to engage the reader and increase impact.
E. Purpose / Text Structure	I can structure my writing, but inconsistently, which may make my purpose unclear.	I can structure my writing to show purpose and guide the reader.	I can structure my writing consistently to support purpose.	I can structure my writing smoothly and intentionally to enhance understanding.
F. Title	I can choose a title, but it may be generic or weakly connected to my main idea.	I can choose a title that connects to my main idea.	I can choose an interesting title that reflects my main idea.	I can choose an original, meaningful title that captures deeper meaning.

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VOICE

Is my voice intentional and appropriate for the task, purpose, and audience?

Category	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Overall	I can write about the topic, but my word choices and sentence style do not yet show confidence or clear awareness of the audience.	I can write in a way that mostly fits the task and audience. My writing shows some confidence, though it may feel uneven.	I can write with a clear sense of purpose and audience. My word choices and sentence style show confidence and engage the reader.	I can write with a strong, confident, and distinctive voice. My choices show ownership of ideas and intentionally engage the reader throughout.
A. Tone	I can sometimes choose a tone that fits my topic, but it may not match my purpose or audience yet. I may use language that is too casual, too formal, or unclear for the situation.	I can maintain a consistent tone throughout my writing that usually fits my purpose. I can use the correct level of formality in most situations.	I can use and maintain a tone that clearly supports my purpose and audience. My tone helps readers understand how they are meant to think or feel about the topic.	I can intentionally shape and sustain a tone that strengthens my message and engages my audience. I can shift tone strategically when needed for emphasis, contrast, or effect.
B. Engagement with Reader	I can show limited awareness of the reader.	I can show awareness of the reader and engage them at times.	I can frequently engage the reader in an authentic way.	I can consistently engage the reader through original and intentional choices.
C. Commitment	I can show some interest in my topic.	I can show commitment to my topic, though not always clearly.	I can clearly show commitment to my topic.	I can show strong ownership and investment in my topic.
D. Individual Expression	I can show small glimpses of personality.	I can show personality and take some risks.	I can show personality and take risks that strengthen my writing.	I can reveal a unique voice that enriches my writing and makes it memorable.

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WORD CHOICE

Does my language communicate precise and compelling meaning and, where appropriate, create vivid imagery?

Category	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Overall	I can choose words that communicate my meaning, but my vocabulary may sometimes be repetitive, vague, or imprecise.	I can choose words that are clear and appropriate for my purpose and audience, and I may use imagery or figurative language when it fits my message.	I can consistently choose precise and purposeful language that strengthens my ideas and, when appropriate, use imagery or figurative language to enhance meaning.	I can intentionally select vivid, nuanced, and powerful language that deepens impact and skillfully uses imagery or figurative language to enrich meaning where appropriate.
A. Word Meaning	I can usually use words correctly, though I may rely on limited vocabulary.	I can mostly use accurate and clear vocabulary.	I can use precise vocabulary that clearly communicates meaning.	I can consistently use precise, creative, and powerful vocabulary.
B. Word Play	I can use basic language; imagery may be weak or unclear.	I can attempt imagery or figurative language.	I can use imagery or figurative language effectively.	I can use striking imagery or figurative language to enhance meaning.
C. Word Choices	I can rely too much on simple or overused words.	I can choose appropriate vocabulary with some creativity.	I can use creative or unique vocabulary appropriately.	I can use creative vocabulary in original and effective ways.
D. Grammar (Parts of Speech)	I can usually use grammar correctly, though I may rely on basic verbs or repetitive language that weakens my meaning.	I can use grammar accurately, including active verbs and specific wording that supports my meaning.	I can intentionally use varied and precise grammar, including strong verbs and specific modifiers, to clearly shape and strengthen my ideas.	I can skillfully use powerful and expressive grammar, choosing strong verbs and precise wording to convey exact meaning and enhance impact.

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SENTENCE FLUENCY

Do my sentences sound smooth and natural when read out loud?

Category	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Overall	I can write sentences that are mostly correct, though they may sound mechanical, awkward, or lack variety.	I can write varied sentences that are usually clear and flow smoothly.	I can write well-developed, varied sentences that create a clear and natural rhythm.	I can craft strong, purposeful sentences with varied structure and compelling rhythm that enhance the impact of my writing.
A. Sentence Structure	I can write sentences that are correct but awkward or overcomplicated.	I can write smooth and correct sentences, though my structure may sometimes feel mechanical.	I can use well-developed sentence structure.	I can control sentence structure for maximum impact.
B. Sentence Sense & Rhythm	I can write sentences that are usually understandable, though the rhythm may sometimes feel uneven or awkward when read aloud.	I can write sentences that sound smooth and natural when read aloud.	I can create a clear and consistent rhythm in my writing that enhances flow and readability.	I can craft writing with strong, purposeful rhythm that makes my ideas expressive and compelling when read aloud.
C. Sentence Variety	I can vary sentence beginnings a little.	I can vary sentence beginnings more consistently.	I can use a variety of sentence types and beginnings.	I can use sentence variety intentionally to create energy and flow.
D. Connecting Sentences	I can use few or repetitive transitions.	I can use varied transitions.	I can use thoughtful transitions to connect ideas smoothly.	I can use creative transitions that highlight relationships.

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CONVENTIONS

Does my writing demonstrate proficiency with grade-appropriate spelling, punctuation, grammar, and usage?

Category	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Overall	I can use basic conventions, but errors may distract the reader.	I can use most conventions correctly, with some errors.	I can use conventions consistently and correctly.	I can use conventions accurately to enhance clarity.
A. Spelling	I can spell most words correctly and incorrect spelling does not affect understanding.	I can spell most grade-level words correctly.	I can spell common and difficult words correctly.	I can spell accurately throughout.
B. Punctuation	I can use basic punctuation, but with some errors that don't affect understanding.	I can use most punctuation correctly.	I can use punctuation correctly and consistently.	I can use punctuation accurately and sometimes creatively.
C. Capitalization	I can usually capitalize words correctly.	I can mostly capitalize words correctly.	I can use correct capitalization.	I can use capitalization consistently and effectively.
D. Grammar / Usage	I can use grammar correctly in many places, though some errors may distract the reader or affect clarity.	I can use grammar correctly in most of my writing, and errors do not usually interfere with understanding.	I can use grammar correctly and clearly.	I can use grammar to enhance clarity and style.
E. Bibliography	I can include citations, but they may be incomplete or inconsistent.	I can include citations that are mostly correct.	I can include citations correctly, with few errors.	I can include accurate and polished citations.

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PRESENTATION

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

Category	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Overall	I can present my work in a way that is readable, though formatting may sometimes be uneven or distract from understanding.	I can format my work clearly so that it supports understanding and shows a finished appearance.	I can create polished work with formatting that makes my ideas easy to read and understand.	I can design my work intentionally, using formatting choices that enhance clarity, emphasize key ideas, and create a professional appearance.
A. Font Style / Size	I can use fonts that are mostly readable, though they may sometimes be inconsistent or distracting.	I can use consistent and appropriate font style and size so my work is easy to read.	I can choose fonts intentionally to support readability and highlight key sections when appropriate.	I can choose fonts purposefully to enhance clarity, emphasize important ideas, and strengthen overall presentation.
B. White Space	I can use spacing and margins so my work is readable, though the layout may sometimes feel crowded or uneven.	I can use margins and paragraph spacing consistently so my writing is clearly organized and easy to follow.	I can use white space intentionally to frame my writing and help the reader focus on key sections.	I can design my layout thoughtfully, using white space strategically to balance the page, highlight important ideas, and enhance clarity.
C. Text Features	I can include basic text features (titles, headings, or formatted quotations), though they may not always clearly support organization or follow MLA conventions.	I can use text features (titles, headings, block quotations, and MLA formatting) to organize and clarify my ideas.	I can intentionally use text features and MLA formatting to guide the reader, structure my ideas clearly, and support understanding.	I can strategically use text features and MLA formatting to highlight relationships between ideas, deepen meaning, and enhance overall clarity and professionalism.
D. Visuals & Graphics	I can include visuals that sometimes support my writing.	I can include visuals that support my writing.	I can include visuals that clarify meaning.	I can include visuals that enrich and extend meaning.
E. Handwriting	I can write by hand, but readability may not always be clear.	I can write neatly enough to be readable.	I can write neatly and consistently.	I can write neatly with polished presentation.