STUDENT SCORING GUIDE 2003-2004
WRITING, BENCHMARK 3

IDEAS AND CONTENT

-- Communicating knowledge of the topic, including relevant examples, facts, anecdotes and details --

6 **The writing is exceptionally clear, focused and interesting. It holds the reader's attention. Main ideas stand out and are developed by strong support and rich details that fit the audience and purpose. The writing has**

- a clear focus and control.
- main idea(s) that stand out.
- details that are on topic and carefully selected; when needed, use of resources provides strong, accurate, believable support.
- an appropriate amount of detail (not too much or too little) to support an in-depth explanation or exploration of the topic; the writing makes connections and shares insights.
- main ideas and selected details that fit the purpose and hold the reader's attention from beginning to end.

5 **The writing is clear, focused and interesting. It holds the reader's attention. Main ideas stand out and are developed by supporting details that fit the audience and purpose. The writing has**

- a clear focus and control.
- main idea(s) that stand out.
- details that are on topic and carefully selected; when needed, use of resources provides strong, accurate, believable support.
- an appropriate amount of detail (not too much or too little) to support a thorough explanation or exploration of the topic; the writing makes connections and shares insights.
- main ideas and selected details that fit the purpose and hold the reader's attention from beginning to end.

4 **The writing is clear and focused. The reader can easily understand the main ideas. Support is present, but may be limited or somewhat general. The writing has**

- a clear purpose.
- clear main ideas.
- details that are on topic, but may be too general or limited; when needed, resources are used to provide accurate support.
- details that may sometimes be too many or too few for a thorough explanation or exploration of the topic; some connections and insights may be present.
- main ideas and selected details that fit the purpose and hold the reader's attention most of the time from beginning to end.

3 **The writing has main idea(s), but they may be too broad or simplistic. Supporting detail is often too limited, overly general, or sometimes off the topic. The writing has**

- a purpose that is easy to find.
- main idea(s) that are easy to find but overly obvious or predictable; main points or conclusions repeat ideas often heard.
- support of main ideas, but there aren't enough supporting details, or they are too general, predictable, or somewhat off topic.
- details that may not be based on reliable resources; may be based on clichés, stereotypes, or sources of information that are biased, uninformed, or unreliable.

2 **The writing has main idea(s), but they are undeveloped, and the purpose is somewhat unclear. The writing has**

- an unclear purpose that requires the reader to guess the main ideas.
- minimal development, lacking details.
- details, when included, are not well connected to the main ideas and clutter the paper.
- details that are frequently repeated.

1 **The writing lacks main idea(s) or purpose. The writing has**

- ideas that are very limited or simply unclear.
- few or no attempts to develop ideas; the paper is too short to demonstrate the development of an idea.

ORGANIZATION

-- Structuring information in logical sequence, making connections and transitions among ideas, sentences and paragraphs --

6 The organization makes the central idea(s) and supporting details clear. The order and structure are strong and move the reader easily through the writing. The writing has

- effective (and sometimes creative) ideas, details, and examples in an order that is easy to follow.
- a strong and inviting introduction that draws the reader in and a strong conclusion that leaves the reader satisfied.
- smooth, effective transitions that tie together ideas, sentences and paragraphs; the reader can move easily from one part to the next.
- details placed where they work well and make the most sense.

5 The organization helps clarify the central idea(s) and supporting details. The order and structure are strong and move the reader through the writing. The writing has

- ideas, details, and examples in an order that makes sense and is easy to follow.
- an inviting introduction that draws the reader in and a conclusion that leaves the reader satisfied.
- smooth transitions that tie together ideas, sentences, and paragraphs; the reader can move easily from one part to the next.
- details placed where they work well and make the most sense.

4 The organization is clear and functional. Order and structure are present, but may seem like a formula. The writing has

- clear sequencing.
- an organization that may be predictable.
- an introduction that is recognizable but may not be especially inviting; a developed conclusion that is functional but may seem repetitive and ordinary.
- transitions that work but they may be awkward or common.
- a body that is easy to follow with details that fit where placed.
- an organization which helps the reader, despite some weaknesses

3 An attempt to organize the writing has been made, but it doesn't work well in places or is too obvious. The writing has

- attempts to put ideas in order, but the order is sometimes unclear.
- a beginning and an ending, but they are either too short or too obvious (e.g., "My topic is..."; "These are all the reasons that...")
- a limited number of transitional words that are used too many times (e.g., "and," "then," "but," "so," "or," "for," "yet," numbering)
- a structure that is too obvious, almost like a formula.
- details that seem out of order and confuse the reader.
- an organization that helps the reader in some places but breaks down in others.

2 The writing lacks a clear organizational structure. An occasional attempt at organizing is made, but the writing is difficult to follow and the reader has to reread large sections. The writing may seem incomplete. The writing has

- some attempts to organize ideas, but the order does not make the meaning clear.
- a missing or extremely undeveloped introduction, body, or conclusion.
- few or no transitions; when present they are ineffective or overused.
- details are randomly placed; the reader is frequently confused.

1 The writing doesn't hold together; the writing seems haphazard and disjointed. Even after rereading, the reader is still confused. The writing has

- ideas that are not in a clear or logical order.
- no recognizable beginning or ending.
- few or no transitions.
- arrangement and pace of ideas that either drag or feel rushed.

VOICE

--Expressing ideas in an engaging and credible way for audience and purpose --

6 **The writer has chosen an appropriate voice for the topic, purpose and audience and shows a deep sense of involvement with the topic. The writing is interesting and sincere. The writing has**

- an effective level of closeness to the audience or distance from it (e.g., a narrative should have a strong personal voice, while a research paper may require a more objective voice; both should be lively or interesting).
- an exceptionally strong sense of purpose and audience.
- a sense that the topic has come to life; when appropriate, shows use of originality, liveliness, honesty, conviction, excitement, humor, suspense and/or use of outside resources.

5 **The writer has chosen an appropriate voice for the topic, purpose and audience and shows involvement with the topic. The writing is interesting and seems sincere. The writing has**

- an appropriate level of closeness to the audience or distance from it (e.g., a narrative should have a strong personal voice, while a researched report may require a more objective voice; both could be lively or interesting.)
- a strong sense of purpose and audience.
- a sense that the topic has come to life; when appropriate, the writing shows originality, liveliness, honesty, conviction, excitement, humor, suspense and/or use of outside resources.

4 **A voice is present, and there is a sense of involvement with the topic. In places, the writing is interesting and seems sincere. The writing has**

- a questionable or inconsistent level of closeness or distance from the audience.
- a sense of purpose and audience but may not use a consistently appropriate voice.
- originality, liveliness, humor and/or use of outside resources, when appropriate; however, at times voice may be too casual or formal.

3 **The writer doesn't seem particularly involved with the topic or may seem either too personal or too impersonal. The writing has**

- a voice that doesn't seem to match the topic, purpose, and audience.
- a limited sense that the paper was written for a particular audience.
- a sense in places of the writer behind the words; however, this may shift or disappear a line or two later.
- limited ability to shift from a casual, informal voice to one that is more objective when that is necessary.

2 **The writing provides little sense of involvement or evidence of a suitable voice. The writing has**

- little or no sense that the writer cares about the topic; the writing is largely flat, lifeless, stiff, or mechanical.
- little or no awareness of matching the topic, purpose and audience.
- little or no sense of the writer behind the words; there are only a few places where the reader and writer can feel a connection.
- a voice that is likely to be overly formal or overly personal.

1 **The writing lacks a sense of involvement and a suitable voice. The writing has**

- no sense that the writer cares about the topic; the writing is flat, lifeless, stiff, or mechanical.
- no sense that the piece was written for an audience.
- no hint of the writer behind the words; there are few if any places where the reader feels connected to the writer. The writing doesn't get the reader involved.

WORD CHOICE

Selecting functional, precise and descriptive words appropriate for audience and purpose

6 **Words communicate the intended message in an exceptionally interesting, accurate and natural way. The writer uses a rich, broad range of words that have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed. The writing has**

- accurate, powerful and specific words; word choices make the writing interesting and lively.
- fresh, original expression; if slang is used, it is for a reason and works very well.
- vocabulary that has variety and gets noticed but is also natural and doesn't seem to be trying to impress the reader.
- ordinary words used in an unusual way.
- words that create strong pictures in the reader's mind; metaphors and similes may be used.

5 **Words communicate the intended message in an interesting, accurate, and natural way. The writer uses a broad range of words that have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed. The writing has**

- accurate, specific words; word choices make the writing more interesting and lively.
- fresh, clear expression; if slang is used, it is for a reason and works well.
- vocabulary that may have variety and get noticed but is also natural and doesn't seem to be trying to impress the reader.
- ordinary words used in an unusual way.
- words that create clear pictures in the reader's mind; metaphors and similes may be used.

4 **Words communicate the intended message. The writer uses a variety of words that work and are appropriate for the topic, audience and purpose. The writing has**

- words that work but do not necessarily make the writing more interesting and lively.
- expression that works; however, slang, if used, does not always seem to match the purpose or seem effective.
- some attempts at colorful language; however, they may occasionally seem overdone.
- rare experiments with language; however, the writing may have some especially good moments, and it generally avoids clichés.

3 **Language is ordinary. The writer does not use a variety of words, producing a sort of "generic" paper with commonly used words and phrases. Words may be too technical or loaded with jargon. The writing has**

- words that work, but that are rarely interesting.
- expression that seems ordinary and general; any slang is used for a reason and is effective.
- words that are accurate for the most part, although misused words may sometimes appear.
- attempts at colorful language that do not fit or seem natural; they seem forced or trying to impress.
- too many clichés and overused expressions.
- overuse or ineffective use of technical jargon.

2 **The language is monotonous and/or misused, taking away from the meaning and impact. The writing has**

- words that are flat or not specific enough.
- words or expressions that are either so common or used so often that they detract from the message.
- images that don't work because they are not clear or are absent altogether.

1 **The writing shows a limited vocabulary, or is so filled with words not used correctly that the meaning is unclear. Only the most general idea comes through because the language is not specific enough. The writing has**

- general, vague words that do not make the point.
- a small set of words used over and over.
- words that simply do not work; they seem too general or just plain wrong.

SENTENCE FLUENCY

--Developing flow and rhythm of sentences--

6 The writing has an effective flow that is smooth and natural. The sentences are put together so they are consistently varied and interesting. The sentences make the piece easy and interesting to read. The writing has

- a natural, fluent sound; it glides along with one sentence flowing effortlessly into the next.
- extensive variation in sentence lengths, patterns, and beginnings that make the writing interesting.
- a sentence structure that helps the reader understand the text by highlighting key ideas and relationships.
- strong control over sentence structure; if fragments are used at all, they work well.
- natural-sounding dialogue, if dialogue is used at all.

5 The writing has a smooth, natural flow. Sentences are put together so they are varied and interesting. The sentences make the piece easy and interesting to read aloud. The writing has

- a natural, fluent sound; it glides along with one sentence flowing into the next.
- a variety of sentence lengths, patterns, and beginnings that make the writing interesting.
- sentence structure that helps the reader understand the meaning.
- control over sentence structure; if fragments are used at all, they work well.
- natural-sounding dialogue, if dialogue is used at all.

4 The writing flows; however, connections between phrases or sentences may be less than fluid. Sentences are somewhat varied, making oral reading easy. The writing has

- a natural sound; the reader can move easily through the piece, although it may lack a sense of rhythm.
- some repeated sentence lengths, patterns and beginnings that detract somewhat from overall impact.
- strong control over simple sentences; less control over more complex sentences. If fragments are used at all, they are usually effective.
- dialogue, if used at all, that usually sounds natural but can sound artificial.

3 The writing tends to be choppy rather than smooth. Sometimes awkward constructions force the reader to slow down or reread. The writing has

- some passages that are easy to read aloud and some that are choppy.
- some variety in sentence lengths, patterns, and beginnings, although a few are used repeatedly.
- simple sentence used correctly, but more complex sentences may have problems; if fragments are used, they may not be effective.
- sentences that are correct, but are not very interesting or appealing .
- dialogue that may not sound unnatural or not true-to-life, if it is used .

2 The writing tends to be choppy or rambling. Awkward construction often forces the reader to slow down and reread. The writing has

- large portions of the text that are difficult to follow or read aloud.
- sentence patterns that are monotonous (e.g., subject-verb or subject-verb-object).
- a large number of awkward, choppy, or rambling sentence structures.

1 The writing is difficult to follow or to read aloud. Sentences tend to be choppy, incomplete, rambling, or just very awkward. The writing has

- sentences that may be hard to real aloud easily.
- confusing word order that often makes the meaning hard to follow.
- sentence patterns that frequently make meaning unclear.
- sentences that are fragmented, confusing, choppy, or rambling on and on.

CONVENTIONS

Demonstrating knowledge of spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, usage, paragraphing

6 The writing demonstrates mastery of a variety of standard conventions, even in complex and less common situations. Errors, if any, are not obvious or significant. The writing has

- correct use of punctuation, including commas, semi-colons, apostrophes and colons, in a variety of situations to add meaning.
- correct spelling, even of difficult words.
- paragraphing that strengthens the impact and organization.
- correct capitalization.
- correct grammar and usage that contribute to clarity and style.
- skill in using a wide range of conventions in a sufficiently long and complex piece.
- little or no need for editing.

5 The writing demonstrates strong control of standard conventions which effectively contribute to the message Errors are so few and so minor that they do not distract the reader. The writing has

- correct grammar and usage.
- sound paragraphing.
- effective use of punctuation.
- correct spelling, even of difficult words.
- few capitalization errors.
- skill in using a wide range of conventions in a sufficiently long and complex piece.
- little need for editing.

4 The writing demonstrates competent handling of standard conventions. Minor errors are distracting but not confusing. The writing has

- correct end-of-sentence punctuation; minor and very few or no instances of confusion with commas, semi-colons, apostrophes or colons.
- common or key words spelled correctly.
- paragraph breaks that are logically placed.
- correct capitalization; errors, if any, are in uncommon cases.
- occasionally incorrect grammar and usage; problems do not confuse or change the meaning.
- a need for some minor editing.

3 The writing show a limited control of standard conventions. Errors begin to interfere with readability. The writing has

- errors in grammar, usage, and capitalization that do not block meaning but do distract the reader.
- paragraphs that sometimes run together or begin at ineffective points.
- end-of-sentence punctuation that is usually correct, but internal punctuation contains frequent errors.
- spelling errors that distract the reader; misspelling of common words sometimes occurs.
- some control over basic conventions, but the text is too simple or too short to show mastery.
- a significant need for editing.

2 The writing shows little understanding of standard conventions. Errors often distract and confuse the reader, requiring the reader to reread passages. The writing has

- many places where punctuation is left out or incorrect.
- frequent spelling errors, even of common words.
- random paragraph indentations or none at all.
- many capitalization errors, including sentence beginnings and names.
- errors in grammar and usage that confuse the reader or change the meaning or are inappropriate for audience and purpose.
- a need for major revisions and corrections.

1 Numerous errors in conventions repeatedly distract the reader and make the writing difficult to read. The writing has

- very limited skill in using conventions.
- punctuation (including ends of sentences) that tends to be omitted, haphazard, or incorrect.
- frequent spelling errors that significantly interfere with readability.
- paragraphing that may be irregular or absent.
- capitalization that appears to be random.
- a need for extensive editing.

CITING SOURCES (Use only on classroom assignments requiring research)

Indicating the sources of information presented, including all ideas, statements, quotes and statistics that are taken from sources and that are not common knowledge

6
The writing demonstrates exceptionally strong commitment to the quality and significance of research and the accuracy of the written document. Documentation is used to avoid plagiarism and to enable the reader to judge how believable or important a piece of information is by checking the source. The writer has

- acknowledged borrowed material by introducing the quotation or paraphrase with the name of the authority.
- punctuated all quoted materials; errors, if any, are minor.
- paraphrased material by rewriting it using writer's style and language.
- provided specific in-text documentation for each borrowed item.
- provided a bibliography page listing every source cited in the paper; omitted sources that were consulted but not used.

5
The writing demonstrates a strong commitment to the quality and significance of research and the accuracy of the written document. Documentation is used to avoid plagiarism and to enable the reader to judge how believable or important a piece of information is by checking the source. Errors are so few and so minor that the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them. The writer has

- acknowledged borrowed material by introducing the quotation or paraphrase with the name of the authority; key phrases are directly quoted so as to give full credit where credit is due.
- punctuated all quoted materials; errors are minor.
- paraphrased material by rewriting using writer's style and language.
- provided specific in-text documentation for borrowed material.
- provided a bibliography page listing every source cited in the paper; omitted sources that were consulted but not used.

4
The writing demonstrates a commitment to the quality and significance of research and the accuracy of the written document. Documentation is used to avoid plagiarism and to enable the reader to judge how believable or important a piece of information is by checking the source. Minor errors, while perhaps noticeable, do not blatantly violate the rules of documentation. The writer has

- acknowledged borrowed material by sometimes introducing the quotation or paraphrase with the name of the authority.
- punctuated all quoted materials; errors, while noticeable, do not impede understanding.
- paraphrased material by rewriting using writer's style and language.
- provided in-text documentation for most borrowed material.
- provided a bibliography page listing every source cited in the paper; included sources that were consulted but not used.

Chart continued on next page...

3
The writing demonstrates a limited commitment to the quality and significance of research and the accuracy of the written document. Documentation is sometimes used to avoid plagiarism and to enable the reader to judge how believable or important a piece of information is by checking the source. Errors begin to violate the rules of documentation. The writer has

- enclosed quoted materials within quotation marks; however, incorrectly used commas, colons, semicolons, question marks or exclamation marks that are part of the quoted material.
- included paraphrased material that is not properly documented.
- paraphrased material by simply rearranging sentence patterns.

2	The writing demonstrates little commitment to the quality and significance of research and the accuracy of the written document. Frequent errors in documentation result in instances of plagiarism and often do not enable the reader to check the source. The writer has	**1**	The writing demonstrates disregard for the conventions of research writing. Lack of proper documentation result in plagiarism and do not enable the reader to check the source. The writer has
	• enclosed quoted materials within quotation marks; however, incorrectly used commas, colons, semicolons, question marks or exclamation marks that are part of the quoted material.		• borrowed abundantly from an original source, even to the point of retaining the essential wording.
	• attempted paraphrasing but included words that should be enclosed by quotation marks or rephrased into the writer's language and style.		• no citations that credit source material.
	• altered the essential ideas of the source.		• included words or ideas from a source without providing quotation marks.
	• included citations that incorrectly identify reference sources.		• included no bibliography page listing sources that were used.