

Student-Friendly Scoring Guide: Ideas

The piece's content—its central message and details that support that message.

<p>6</p> <p>HIGH</p> <p>5</p>	<p>EXPERT</p>	<p>My topic is well developed and focused. My piece contains specific, interesting, and accurate details, and new thinking about this topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have a clear, central theme or a simple, original story line.• I've narrowed my theme or story line to create a focused piece that is a pleasure to read.• I've included original information to support my main idea.• I've included specific, interesting, and accurate details that will create pictures in the reader's mind.
<p>4</p> <p>MIDDLE</p> <p>3</p>	<p>ALMOST THERE</p>	<p>My piece includes many general observations about the topic, but lacks focus and clear, accurate details. I need to elaborate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I've stayed on the topic, but my theme or story line is too broad.• I haven't dug into the topic in a logical, focused way.• My unique perspective on this topic is not coming through as clearly as it could.• The reader may have questions after reading this piece because my details leave some questions unanswered.
<p>2</p> <p>LOW</p> <p>1</p>	<p>ON MY WAY</p>	<p>I'm still thinking about the theme or story line for this piece. So far, I've only explored possibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I've jotted down some ideas for topics, but it's a hodgepodge.• Nothing in particular stands out as important in my piece.• I have not written much. I may have only restated the assignment.• My details are thin and need to be checked for accuracy.
	<p>GETTING STARTED</p>	

Student-Friendly Scoring Guide: Organization

The internal structure of the piece—the thread of logic, the pattern of meaning.

6

EXPERT

My details unfold in a logical order. The structure makes reading my piece a breeze.

- My beginning grabs the reader's attention.
- I've used sequence and transition words to guide the reader.
- All of my details fit together logically and move along smoothly.
- My ending gives the reader a sense of closure and something to think about.

5

WELL DONE

4

ALMOST THERE

My piece's organization is pretty basic and predictable. I have the three essential ingredients, a beginning, middle, and end, but that's about it.

- My beginning is clear, but unoriginal. I've used a technique that writers use all too often.
- I've used simple sequence and transition words that stand out too much.
- Details need to be added or moved around to create a more logical flow of ideas.
- My ending needs work; it's pretty canned.

3

MAKING STRIDES

2

ON MY WAY

My piece doesn't make much sense because I haven't figured out a way to organize it. The details are jumbled together at this point.

- My beginning doesn't indicate where I'm going or why I'm going there.
- I have not grouped ideas or connected them using sequence and transition words.
- With no sense of order, it will be a challenge for the reader to sort out how the details relate.
- I haven't figured out how to end this piece.

1

GETTING STARTED

HIGH

MIDDLE

LOW

Student-Friendly Scoring Guide: Voice

The tone and tenor of the piece—the personal stamp of the writer, which is achieved through a strong understanding of purpose and audience.

6

EXPERT

I've come up with my own "take" on the topic. I had my audience and purpose clearly in mind as I wrote and presented my ideas in an original way.

- My piece is expressive, which shows how much I care about my topic.
- The purpose for this piece is clear, and I've used a tone and tenor that are appropriate for that purpose.
- There is no doubt in my mind that the reader will understand how I think and feel about my topic.
- I've expressed myself in some new, original ways.

5

WELL DONE

4

ALMOST THERE

My feelings about the topic come across as uninspired and predictable. The piece is not all that expressive, nor does it reveal a commitment to the topic.

- In a few places, my authentic voice comes through, but only in a few.
- My purpose for writing this piece is unclear to me, so the tone and tenor feel "off."
- I've made little effort to connect with the reader; I'm playing it safe.
- This piece sounds like lots of others on this topic. It's not very original.

3

MAKING STRIDES

2

ON MY WAY

I haven't thought at all about my purpose or audience for the piece and, therefore, my voice falls flat. I'm pretty indifferent to the topic and it shows.

- I've put no energy into this piece.
- My purpose for writing this piece is a mystery to me, so I'm casting about aimlessly.
- Since my topic isn't interesting to me, chances are my piece won't be interesting to the reader. I haven't thought about my audience.
- I have taken no risks. There is no evidence that I find this topic interesting or care about it at all.

1

GETTING STARTED

HIGH

MIDDLE

LOW

Student-Friendly Scoring Guide: Word Choice

The specific vocabulary the writer uses to convey meaning and enlighten the reader.

6

EXPERT

The words and phrases I've selected are accurate, specific, and natural sounding. My piece conveys precisely what I want to say because of my powerful vocabulary.

- My piece contains strong verbs that bring it alive.
- I stretched by using the perfect words and phrases to convey my ideas.
- I've used content words and phrases with accuracy and precision.
- I've picked the best words and phrases, not just the first ones that came to mind.

5

WELL DONE

4

ALMOST THERE

My words and phrases make sense but aren't very accurate, specific, or natural sounding. The reader won't have trouble understanding them. However, he or she may find them uninspiring.

- I've used passive voice. I should rethink passages that contain passive voice and add "action words."
- I haven't come up with extraordinary ways to say ordinary things.
- My content words and phrases are accurate but general. I might have overused jargon. I need to choose more precise words.
- I need to revise this piece by replacing its weak words and phrases with strong ones.

3

MAKING STRIDES

2

ON MY WAY

My words and phrases are so unclear the reader may wind up more confused than entertained, informed, or persuaded. I need to expand my vocabulary to improve this piece.

- My verbs are not strong. Passive voice permeates this piece.
- I've used bland words and phrases throughout—or the same words and phrases over and over.
- My content words are neither specific nor accurate enough to make the meaning clear.
- My words and phrases are not working; they distract the reader rather than guide him or her.

1

GETTING STARTED

HIGH

MIDDLE

LOW

Student-Friendly Scoring Guide: Sentence Fluency

The way words and phrases flow through the piece. It is the auditory trait because it's "read" with the ear as much as the eye.

6 ↑ HIGH	6 EXPERT
	<p>My piece is strong because I've written a variety of well-built sentences. I've woven those sentences together to create a smooth-sounding piece.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I've constructed and connected my sentences for maximum impact.• I've varied my sentence lengths and types—short and long, simple and complex.• When I read my piece aloud, it is pleasing to my ear.• I've broken grammar rules intentionally at points to create impact and interest.
5	5 WELL DONE
4 ↑ MIDDLE	4 ALMOST THERE
	<p>Although my sentences lack variety or creativity, most of them are grammatically correct. Some of them are smooth, while others are choppy and awkward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I've written solid shorter sentences. Now I need to try some longer ones.• I've created different kinds of sentences but the result is uneven.• When I read my piece aloud, I stumble in a few places.• Any sentences that break grammar rules are accidental and don't work well.
3	3 MAKING STRIDES
2 ↑ LOW	2 ON MY WAY
	<p>My sentences are choppy, incomplete, or rambling. I need to revise my piece extensively to make it more readable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many of my sentences don't work because they're poorly constructed.• I've used the same sentence lengths and types over and over again.• When I read my piece aloud, I stumble in many places.• If I've broken grammar rules, it's not for stylistic reasons. It's because I may not understand those rules.
1	1 GETTING STARTED

Student-Friendly Scoring Guide: Conventions

The mechanical correctness of the piece. Correct use of conventions (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing, and grammar and usage) guides the reader through text easily.

6

EXPERT

My piece proves I can use a range of conventions with skill and creativity. It is ready for its intended audience.

- My spelling is strong. I've spelled all or nearly all the words accurately.
- I've used punctuation creatively and correctly and begun new paragraphs in the right places.
- I've used capital letters correctly throughout my piece, even in tricky places.
- I've taken care to apply standard English grammar and usage.

5

WELL DONE

4

ALMOST THERE

My writing still needs editing to correct problems in one or more conventions. I've stuck to the basics and haven't tried challenging conventions.

- I've misspelled words that I use all the time, as well as complex words that I don't use as often.
- My punctuation is basically strong. I should review it one more time. I indented some of the paragraphs, but not all of them.
- I've correctly used capital letters in obvious places (such as the word *I*), but not in others.
- Even though my grammar and usage are not 100 percent correct, my audience should be able to read my piece.

3

MAKING STRIDES

2

ON MY WAY

The problems I'm having in conventions make this piece challenging to read, even for me! I've got lots of work to do before it's ready for its intended audience.

- Extensive spelling errors make my piece difficult to read and understand.
- I haven't punctuated or paragraphed the piece well, which is necessary to guide the reader.
- My use of capital letters is so inconsistent it's distracting.
- I need to clean up the piece considerably in terms of grammar and usage.

1

GETTING STARTED

HIGH

MIDDLE

LOW

Student-Friendly Scoring Guide: Presentation

The physical appearance of the piece. A visually appealing text provides a welcome mat. It invites the reader in.

6

EXPERT

My piece's appearance makes it easy to read and enjoy. I've taken care to ensure that it is pleasing to my reader's eye.

- I've written clearly and legibly. My letters, words, and the spaces between them are uniform.
- My choice of font style, size, and/or color makes my piece a breeze to read.
- My margins frame the text nicely. There are no tears, smudges, or cross-outs.
- Text features such as bulleted lists, charts, pictures, and headers are working well.

5

WELL DONE

4

ALMOST THERE

My piece still looks like a draft. Many visual elements should be cleaned up and handled with more care.

- My handwriting is readable, but my letters and words and the spaces between them should be treated more consistently.
- My choice of font style, size, and/or color seems "off"—inappropriate for my intended audience.
- My margins are uneven. There are some tears, smudges, or cross-outs.
- I've handled simple text features well but am struggling with the more complex ones.

3

MAKING STRIDES

2

ON MY WAY

My piece is almost unreadable because of its appearance. It's not ready for anyone but me to read.

- My handwriting is so hard to read it creates a visual barrier.
- The font styles, sizes, and/or colors I've chosen are dizzying. They're not working.
- My margins are uneven or nonexistent, making the piece difficult to read.
- I haven't used text features well, even simple ones.

1

GETTING STARTED

HIGH

MIDDLE

LOW