
Analytic Trait Rubric

ONLINE
8.5



Ideas and Content

5 The paper is clear, focused, and interesting. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme or story line.

- The writer seems to be writing from experience and shows insight and a good sense of how events unfold and of how people respond to life and to each other.
- Supporting, relevant details give the reader important information that he or she would not personally bring to the text.
- The writing has balance; main ideas stand out.
- The writer seems in control and envelops the topic in an enlightening, entertaining way.
- The writer works with and shapes ideas, making connections and sharing insights.

3 The paper is clear and focused, even though the overall result may not be captivating. Support is attempted, but it may be limited, insubstantial, too general, or out of balance with main ideas.

- The writer may or may not be writing from experience, but either way, he or she has difficulty going from general observations to specifics.
- The reader can often second-guess the plot or main points of the text.
- Ideas, though reasonably clear, often tend toward the mundane; the reader is not sorry to see the paper end.
- Conclusions or main points seem to echo observations heard elsewhere; only on occasion do they seem to be the writer's own thinking.
- Supporting details tend to be skimpy, general, or predictable.
- The writer is beginning to define the topic but isn't there yet.

1 The paper lacks a central idea or purpose or forces the reader to make inferences based on very sketchy details.

- Information is very limited or simply unclear.
- Details do not ring true; they evolve from clichés, platitudes, or stereotypes.
- Attempts at development may be minimal or clutter up the text with random thoughts from which no central theme emerges.
- The writer has not begun to define the topic in any meaningful or personal way.

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Organization

5 The organization enhances and showcases the central idea or theme. The order, structure, or presentation is compelling and moves the reader through the text.

- Details seem to fit where they are placed; sequencing is logical and effective.
- An inviting introduction draws the reader in and a satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of resolution.
- Organization flows so smoothly that the reader hardly thinks about it.

3 The reader can readily follow what's being said, but the overall organization may sometimes be ineffective or too obvious.

- The introduction and conclusion are recognizable, though not so well crafted as the reader might wish.
- Placement or relevance of some details leaves the reader occasionally confused.
- The paper sometimes moves along at a good pace, but at other times it bogs down in trivia or glosses over important ideas.
- Transitions sometimes work well; at other times, connections between ideas seem unclear.
- Despite problems, the organization does not seriously get in the way of the main point or story line.

1 Organization is haphazard and disjointed. The writing lacks direction, with ideas, details, or events strung together helter-skelter.

- There is no clearly identifiable introduction or conclusion.
 - Transitions are very weak, leaving connections between ideas fuzzy, incomplete, or bewildering.
 - Noticeable gaps in information confuse and confound the reader.
 - Pacing is consistently awkward, so that the reader feels either mired down in trivia or rushed along at a breathless pace.
 - Lack of organization ultimately obscures or distorts the main point.
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Voice

5 The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individualistic, expressive, and engaging. Clearly the writer is involved in the text and is writing to be read.

- The paper is honest and written from the heart. It has the ring of conviction.
- The language is natural yet provocative; it brings the topic to life.
- The reader feels a strong sense of interaction with the writer and senses the person behind the words.
- The projected tone and voice clarify and give flavor to the writer's message.

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3 The writer seems sincere but not fully involved in the topic. The result is pleasant, acceptable, sometimes even personable, but not compelling.

- The writer seems to weigh words carefully, to keep a safe distance between writer and reader to avoid risk, and to write what he or she thinks the reader wants.
- The writing tends to hide rather than reveal the writer.
- The writing communicates in an earnest but fairly routine manner and only occasionally amuses, surprises, delights, or moves the reader.
- Voice may emerge strongly on one occasion, only to shift or disappear a line or two later behind a facade of general, vague, or abstract language.

1 The writer seems wholly indifferent, uninvolved, or dispassionate. As a result, the writing is flat, lifeless, stiff, or mechanical. It may be (depending on the topic) overly technical or jargonistic.

- The reader has no sense of the writer behind the words and no sense of a real desire on the part of the writer to communicate.
 - The writer seems to speak in a kind of monotone that flattens all potential highs or lows of the message.
 - The writing communicates on a functional level at best, without moving or involving the reader at all.
 - Delivery is so consistently flat that the reader may find it hard to focus on the message even when the wording seems reasonably clear and correct.
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Word Choice

5 Words convey the intended message in an interesting, precise, and natural way. The writing is full and rich, yet concise.

- Words are specific and accurate; they seem just right.
- Imagery is strong.
- Powerful verbs give the writing energy.
- Vocabulary may be striking, but it's natural and never overdone.
- Expression is fresh and appealing; slang is used sparingly.

3 The language is quite ordinary, but it does convey the message. It's functional even if it lacks punch. Often the writer settles for what's easy or handy, producing a sort of "generic" paper stuffed with familiar words and phrases.

- The language communicates but rarely captures the reader's imagination.
- The writer rarely experiments with language; however, the paper may have some fine moments.

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- Attempts at colorful language often seem overdone, calculated to impress.
- Images lack detail and precision.
- Clichés, redundancies, and hackneyed phrases are common.
- A few key verbs may liven things up, but equally often verbs are general or predictable.

1 The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary, groping for words to convey meaning. Often the language is so vague and abstract or so redundant and devoid of detail that only the broadest, most general sort of message comes through.

- Words are consistently dull, colorless, or abstract.
 - Monotonous repetition or overwhelming reliance on worn, threadbare expressions repeatedly cloud or smother the language.
 - Often words simply do not fit the text. They seem imprecise, inadequate, or just plain wrong.
 - Imagery is very fuzzy or absent altogether; the text is “peopled” only with generalities.
 - Verbs are weak and few in number. Forms of *to be* and *to have* predominate.
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Sentence Structure

5 The writing has an easy flow and rhythm when read aloud. Sentences are well built, with consistently strong and varied structure that makes expressive oral reading easy and enjoyable.

- Sentence structure reflects logic and sense, helping to show how ideas relate.
- The writing sounds natural and fluent; it glides along with one sentence flowing effortlessly into the next.
- Sentences display an effective combination of power and grace.
- Variation in sentence structure and length adds interest to the text.
- Fragments, if used at all, work well.
- Dialogue, if used, sounds natural.

3 Sentences tend to be mechanical rather than fluid. The text hums along efficiently for the most part, though it may lack a certain rhythm or grace, tending to be more pleasant than musical. Occasional awkward constructions force the reader to slow down or reread.

- Connections between phrases or sentences may be less fluid than desired.
- The writer shows good control over simple sentence structure but variable control over more complex structures.

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- Sentences sometimes vary in length or structure, but for the most part, the writer falls into a pattern and sticks with it.
 - Fragments, if used, sometimes seem the result of oversight.
 - Dialogue, if used, sometimes rings true, but sometimes sounds forced or contrived.
 - Sentences, though functional, often lack energy.
 - Some parts of the text invite expressive oral reading; others may be a bit stiff.
- 1 The paper is difficult to follow or read aloud. Sentences tend to be choppy, incomplete, rambling, irregular, or just very awkward.
- Nonstandard English syntax is common. Word patterns are often jarring and irregular and far removed from the way people usually write or speak.
 - Sentence structure does not generally enhance meaning; in fact, it may obscure meaning.
 - Many sentences seem disjointed, awkward, confused, or nonsensical.
 - Word patterns may be monotonous, as in repetitive subject-verb or subject-verb-object patterns.
 - The text does not invite and may not even permit expressive oral reading.
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Writing Conventions

5 The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling) and uses them effectively to enhance meaning. Errors tend to be so few and so minor that the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them.

- Paragraphing tends to be sound and to reinforce the organizational structure.
- Grammar and usage are correct and contribute to clarity and style.
- Punctuation is smooth and guides the reader through the text.
- Spelling is generally correct, even on more difficult words.
- The writer may manipulate conventions—particularly grammar—for stylistic effect.
- The writing is sufficiently long and complex to allow the writer to show skill in using a wide range of conventions.
- Only light editing would be required to polish the text.

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3 Errors in writing conventions, while not overwhelming, begin to impair readability. While errors do not block meaning, they tend to be distracting.

- Punctuation may be incorrect or missing altogether.
- Spelling is usually correct or reasonably phonetic on common words.
- Problems with usage are not severe enough to distort meaning, but usage does not offer as much precision in meaning as it could.
- The writer may show reasonable control over a very limited range of conventions, but the text may be too simple or too short to reflect real mastery of conventions.

1 Numerous errors in usage, sentence structure, spelling, or punctuation repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. In fact, the severity and the frequency of errors tend to be so overwhelming that the reader finds it very difficult to focus on the message and must reread for meaning.

- The writer shows very limited skill in using conventions.
 - Basic punctuation (including terminal punctuation) tends to be omitted, haphazard, or incorrect.
 - Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words.
 - Extensive editing would be required to polish the text.
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