

<p>Ideas: The heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme, with details that enrich and develop that theme.</p>	<p>Organization: The internal structure, the thread of central meaning, the logical and sometimes intriguing pattern of the ideas.</p>	<p>Voice: The unique perspective of the writer coming through honesty, conviction, and integrity and believability.</p>
<p>(5) <i>This paper is clear and focused. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The topic is narrow and manageable. B. Relevant, telling, quality details go beyond the obvious. C. Reasonably accurate details are present to support the main ideas. D. Writing from knowledge or experience; ideas are fresh and original. E. Reader's questions are anticipated and answered. F. Insight. 	<p>(5) <i>The organizational structure of this paper enhances and showcases the central idea or theme of the paper; includes a satisfying introduction and conclusion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. An inviting introduction draws the reader in; a satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of closure and resolution. B. Thoughtful transitions. C. Sequencing is logical and effective. D. Pacing is well controlled. E. The title, if desired, is original. F. Flows so smoothly, the reader hardly thinks about it. 	<p>(5) <i>The writer of this paper speaks directly to the reader in a manner that is individual, compelling, engaging, and respects purpose and audience for the writing.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The reader feels a strong interaction with the writer. B. The writer takes a risk. C. The tone and voice give flavor and texture to the message and are appropriate for the purpose and audience. D. Narrative writing seems honest, personal. Expository or persuasive writing reflects a strong commitment to this topic.
<p>(3) <i>The writer is beginning to define the topic, even though development is still basic or general.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The topic is fairly broad. B. Support is attempted. C. Ideas are reasonably clear. D. Writer has difficulty going from general observations to specifics. E. The reader is left with questions. F. The writer generally stays on topic. 	<p>(3) <i>The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion. B. Transitions often work well. C. Sequencing shows some logic, yet structure takes attention away from content. D. Pacing is fairly well controlled. E. Organization sometimes supports the main point or story line. A title (if desired) is present. 	<p>(3) <i>The writer seems sincere, but not fully engaged or involved. The result is pleasant or even personable, but not compelling.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The writing communicates in an earnest, pleasing manner. B. Only one or two moments here or there surprise, delight, or move the reader. C. Writer weighs ideas carefully and discards personal insights in favor of sage generalities. D. Narrative writing seems sincere; expository or persuasive writing lacks consistent engagement. E. Emerges strongly at some places, but is often obscured behind vague generalities.
<p>(1) <i>The paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme. The reader must make inferences based on sketchy or missing details.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The writer is still in search of a topic. B. Information is limited or unclear or the length is not adequate for development. C. The idea is a simple restatement or a simple answer to the question. D. The writer has not begun to define the topic. E. Everything seems as important as everything else. F. The text may be repetitious, disconnected, and contains too many random thoughts. 	<p>(1) <i>The writing lacks a clear sense of direction.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. No real lead. B. Connections between ideas are confusing. C. Sequencing needs work. D. Pacing feels awkward. E. No title is present (if requested). F. Problems with organization make it hard for the reader to get a grip on the main point or story line. 	<p>(1) <i>The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or the audience.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Writer speaks in a kind of monotone. B. Writing is humdrum and “risk-free.” C. Writer is not concerned with the audience; writer's style is a complete mismatch for the intended reader. D. Writing is lifeless or mechanical. E. No point of view is reflected.
<p>Key Question: <i>Did the writer stay focused and share original and fresh information or perspective about the topic?</i></p>	<p>Key Question: <i>Does the organizational structure enhance the ideas and make it easier to understand? Or does it overpower the ideas like too much perfume in a crowded elevator?</i></p>	<p>Key Question: <i>Would you keep reading this piece if it were longer? MUCH longer?</i></p>

Word Choice: The use of rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the reader.	Sentence Fluency: The rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear, not just to the eye.	Conventions: The mechanical correctness of the piece; spelling, grammar and usage, paragraphing, use of capitals, and punctuation.*
(5) <i>Words convey the intended message in a precise interesting, and natural way.</i> A. Words are specific and accurate. B. Words and phrases create pictures and linger in your mind. C. The language is natural and never overdone. D. Striking words and phrases often catch the reader’s eye. E. Precision is obvious.	(5) <i>The writing has an easy flow, rhythm and cadence. Sentences are well built.</i> A. Sentences enhance meaning. B. Sentences vary in length as well as structure. C. Purposeful and varied sentence beginnings. D. Creative and appropriate connectives. E. The writing has cadence.	(5) <i>The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, paragraphing)</i> A. Spelling is generally correct. B. Punctuation is accurate. C. Capitalization skills are present. D. Grammar and usage are correct. E. Paragraphing tends to be sound, F. The writer may manipulate conventions for stylistic effect; and it works!
(3) <i>The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy.</i> A. Words are adequate and correct in general sense. B. Familiar words and phrases communicate. C. Attempts at colorful language. D. Passive verbs, everyday nouns and adjectives, lack of interesting adverbs. E. The words are only occasionally refined. F. The words and phrases are functional with only a moment or two of sparkle.	(3) <i>The text hums along with a steady beat, but tends to be more pleasant or businesslike than musical.</i> A. Sentences get the job done in a routine fashion. B. Sentences are usually constructed correctly. C. Sentence beginnings are not ALL alike; some variety is attempted. D. The reader sometimes has to hunt for clues. E. Parts of the text invite expressive oral reading; others may be stiff, awkward, choppy, or gangly.	(3) <i>The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions.</i> A. Spelling is usually correct or reasonably phonetic on common words. B. End punctuation is usually correct. C. Most words are capitalized correctly. D. Problems with grammar and usage are not serious. E. Paragraphing is attempted. F. Moderate (a little of this, a little of that) editing.
(1) <i>The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary.</i> A. Language is vague. B. “Blah, blah, blah.” C. Words are used incorrectly. D. Limited vocabulary, misuse of parts of speech. E. Jargon or clichés, persistent redundancy. F. The words just don’t work in this piece.	(1) <i>The reader has to practice quite a bit in order to give this paper a fair interpretive reading.</i> A. Sentences are choppy, incomplete, rambling, or awkward. Phrasing does not sound natural. B. No “sentence sense” present. C. Sentences begin the same way. D. Endless connectives. E. Does not invite expressive oral reading.	(1) <i>Errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage, and grammar, and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make text difficult to read.</i> A. Spelling errors are frequent. B. Punctuation missing or incorrect. C. Capitalization is random. D. Errors in grammar or usage are very noticeable. E. Paragraphing is missing. F. The reader must read once to decode, then again for the meaning. <i>*Grades 7 and Up Only: The writing is sufficiently complex to allow the writer to show skill in using a wide range of conventions</i>
Key Question: <i>Do the words and phrases create vivid pictures and linger in your mind?</i>	Key Question: <i>Can you FEEL the words and phrases flow together as you read it aloud?</i>	Key Question: <i>How much editing would have to be done to be ready to share with an outside source?</i> • A whole lot? Score in the 1-2 range. • A moderate amount? Score in the 3 range. • Very little? Score in the 4-5 range.

This “one-pager” scoring guide was developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory to support teachers and students in assessing the Six Traits.