

Holistic Rubric for Essay Writing Assessment

Upper half papers are characterized by well-supported, original ideas, clear evidence of an organizational plan and general mastery of the conventions of standard English, although even the strongest papers may contain some developmentally appropriate errors in spelling or sentence structure.

The “6” paper contains original, sophisticated ideas, well supported by relevant details. Organization is clear and logical, with a strong lead and effective conclusion. Vivid and precise word choice, varied sentences and a clear, well-developed writer’s voice combine to create a coherent and original piece of writing. Any errors in conventions are usually the result of risk-taking.

The “5” paper contains original ideas with relevant and appropriate details. It is well organized and usually has a strong lead and adequate conclusion. Clear and descriptive word choice and a developing writer’s voice are evident. There may be some variation in sentence length and complexity. Minor errors in conventions do not interfere with the meaning of the piece.

The “4” paper is likely to have somewhat mundane, but adequate ideas that are somewhat supported by details. A hint of writer’s voice may be apparent. There is evidence of a good organizational plan with an adequate lead, though the conclusion may be weak. Word choice is generally appropriate, though lacking in precision and originality, and sentences may lack variety. Some errors in conventions are common.

Lower half papers lack originality or effective support for ideas. Vocabulary may be immature and control of conventions of standard English is inadequate.

The “3” paper is likely to contain unoriginal ideas with marginal support, or irrelevant details that do not support the main idea. The organization is limited, with a weak lead and/or missing conclusion. A writer’s voice may not be evident. Word choice may be correct, but lacking maturity and sentences tend to be simple in structure. Frequent errors in conventions are common, but the piece should be readable.

The “2” paper contains trivial ideas without supporting details. It is characterized by an inadequate organizational plan, immature vocabulary, short, simple sentences and frequent errors in conventions that may, at times, interfere with understanding of the piece.

The “1” piece is characterized by such inadequate mastery of conventions of standard English that the piece may be barely comprehensible. Ideas are incomplete or confusing, organization appears haphazard, and vocabulary choice is very limited.

*An asterisk code is used for papers that are blank or illegible.