

Grades 6-12 Fiction/Non-Fiction Rubric

Category: _____		Grade Level: _____		Title: _____
Ideas and Content	Not Yet- 1	Developing- 3	Strong- 5	
	<p><i>As yet, the paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme. To extract meaning, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy or missing details.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓐ The writer is still in search of a topic or has not yet decided what the main idea of the piece will be.Ⓑ Information is limited or unclear, or the length is not adequate for development.Ⓒ The idea is a simple restatement of the assigned topic or an answer to the question with little or no attention to detail.Ⓓ The writer has not begun to define the topic in meaningful, personal way.Ⓔ Everything seems as important as everything else; the reader has a hard time sifting out what is important.Ⓕ The text may be repetitious, or may read like a collection of disconnected, random thoughts with no discernible point.	<p><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">Ⓐ The topic is fairly broad; however, you can see where the writer is headed.Ⓑ Support is attempted, but doesn't go far enough in fleshing out the key issues or story line.Ⓒ Ideas are reasonably clear, though they may not be detailed, personalized, accurate or expanded enough to show in-depth understanding or a strong sense of purpose.Ⓓ The writer seems to be drawing on knowledge or experience, but has difficulty going from general observations to specifics.Ⓔ The reader is left with questions. More information is needed to "fill in the blanks."Ⓕ The writer generally stays on the topic but does not develop a clear theme.Ⓖ The writer has not yet focused the topic beyond the obvious.	<p><i>The paper is clear and focused. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant uncles and details enrich the central theme.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓐ The topic is narrow and manageable.Ⓑ Relevant quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable.Ⓒ Reasonably accurate details are present to support the main idea.Ⓓ The writer seems to be writing from knowledge or experience; the ideas are fresh and original.Ⓔ The reader's questions are anticipated and answered.Ⓕ Insight—an understanding of life and a knack for picking out what is significant—is an indicator of high-level performance though not required.	
Organization	<p><i>Writing lacks a clear sense of direction, ideas, details, or events seem strung together in a loose or random fashion; there is no identifiable internal structure.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓐ There is no real lead to set up what follows; no real conclusion to wrap things up.Ⓑ Connections between ideas are confusing or not even present.Ⓒ Sequencing reads lots and lots of work.Ⓓ Pacing feels awkward; the writer slows to a crawl when the reader wants to get on with it, and vice versa.Ⓔ No title is present or, if present, doesn't match well with the content.Ⓕ Problems with organization make it hard for the reader to get a grip on the main point or story line.	<p><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">Ⓐ The paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The introduction may not create a strong sense of anticipation; the conclusion may not wrap up all loose ends.Ⓑ Transitions usually work well; at other times, connections between ideas are fuzzy.Ⓒ Sequencing shows some logic, but is not under enough control to consistently support the ideas. Sometimes, in fact, it is so predictable and rehearsed that the structure distracts from the content.Ⓓ Pacing is fairly well controlled, though the writer sometimes lunges ahead too quickly or spends too much time on details that do not matter.Ⓔ A title is present, although it may be uninspired or a restatement of the prompt or topic.	<p><i>The organization enhances and showcases the central idea or theme. The order, structure, or presentation of information is compelling and moves the reader through the text.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓐ An inviting introduction draws the reader in. A satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of closure and resolution.Ⓑ Thoughtful transitions clearly show how ideas connect.Ⓒ Details seem to fit where they're placed; sequencing is logical and effective.Ⓓ Pacing is well controlled; the writer knows when to slow down and elaborate, and when to pick up the pace and move on.Ⓔ The title is original and captures the central theme of the piece.Ⓕ Organization flows so smoothly the reader hardly thinks about it; the choice of structure matches the purpose and audience.	
Score: _____				

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	Not Yet - 1	Developing - 3	Strong - 5
Voice	<p><i>The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or audience.</i></p>	<p><i>The writer seems sincere but not fully engaged or involved. The result is pleasant, or even personable, but not compelling.</i></p>	<p><i>The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individual, compelling and engaging. The writer crafts the piece with an awareness of and respect for the audience and the writing's purpose.</i></p>
Score: ____	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓐ The writer is not concerned with the audience. The writer's style is a complete mismatch for the intended reader, or the writing is so brief that little is accomplished beyond introducing the topic.Ⓑ The writer speaks in a kind of monotone that flattens all potential highs or lows in the message.Ⓒ The writing is hum-drum and "risk-free."Ⓓ The writing is lifeless or mechanical; depending on the topic, it may be overly technical or filled with jargon.Ⓔ The development of the topic is so limited that no point of view is present—zip, zero, zilch, nada.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓐ The writer seems aware of an audience but discards personal insights in favor of obvious generalities.Ⓑ The writing communicates in an earnest, pleasing, yet safe manner. Only one or two moments here and there intrigue, delight, or move the reader. These places may emerge strongly for a line or two, but quickly fade away.Ⓒ Expository or persuasive writing lacks consistent engagement with the topic to build credibility.Ⓓ Narrative writing is reasonably sincere but doesn't reflect unique or individual perspective on the topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓐ The tone of the writing adds interest to the message and is appropriate for the purpose and audience.Ⓑ The reader feels a strong interaction with the writer, sensing the person behind the words.Ⓒ The writer takes a risk by revealing who he or she is consistently throughout the piece.Ⓓ Expository or persuasive writing reflects a strong commitment to the topic by showing why the reader needs to know this and why he or she should care.Ⓔ Narrative writing is honest, personal and engaging and makes the reader think about and react to the author's ideas and point of view.
Word Choice	<p><i>The writer demonstrates a limited vocabulary or has not searched for words to convey specific meaning.</i></p>	<p><i>The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy. It is easy to figure out the writer's meaning on a general level.</i></p>	<p><i>Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way. The words are powerful and engaging.</i></p>
Score: ____	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓐ Words are so nonspecific and distracting that only a very limited meaning comes through.Ⓑ Problems with language leave the reader wondering. Many of the words just don't work in this piece.Ⓒ Audience has not been considered. Language is used incorrectly, making the message secondary to the misfires with the words.Ⓓ Limited vocabulary and/or misused parts of speech seriously impair understanding.Ⓔ Words and phrases are so unimaginative and lifeless that they detract from the meaning.Ⓕ Jargon or clichés distract or mislead. Redundancy may distract the reader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓐ Words are adequate and correct in a general sense, and they support the meaning by not getting in the way.Ⓑ Familiar words and phrases communicate but rarely capture the reader's imagination.Ⓒ Attempts at colorful language show a willingness to stretch and grow, but sometimes reach beyond the audience (thesaurus overload).Ⓓ Despite a few successes, the writing is marked by passive verbs, everyday nouns, and mundane modifiers.Ⓔ The words and phrases are functional with only one or two fine moments.Ⓕ The words may be refined in a couple of places, but the language looks more like the first thing that popped into the writer's mind.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓐ Words are specific and accurate. It is easy to understand what the writer means.Ⓑ Striking words and phrases often catch the reader's eye and linger in the reader's mind.Ⓒ Language and phrasing is natural, effective, and appropriate for the audience.Ⓓ Lively verbs add energy while specific nouns and modifiers add depth.Ⓔ Choices in language enhance the meaning and clarify understanding.Ⓕ Precision is obvious. The writer has taken care to put just the right word or phrase in just the right spot.
Sentence Fluency	<p><i>The reader has to practice quite a bit to give this paper a fair interpretive reading.</i></p>	<p><i>The text hums along with a steady beat, but tends to be more pleasant or businesslike than musical, more mechanical than fluid.</i></p>	<p><i>The writing has an easy flow, rhythm, and cadence. Sentences are well built, with strong and varied structure that invites expressive oral reading.</i></p>
Score: ____	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓐ Sentences are choppy, incomplete, rambling or awkward; they need work. Phrasing does not sound natural. The patterns may create a singsong rhythm, or a chop-chop cadence that lulls the reader to sleep.Ⓑ There is little to no "sentence sense" present. Even if this piece were flawlessly edited, the sentences would not hang together.Ⓒ Many sentences begin the same way and may follow the same patterns (e.g., subject-verb-object) in a monotonous pattern.Ⓓ Endless connectives (and, so, but then, because, and then, etc.) or a complete lack of connectives create a massive jumble of language.Ⓔ The text does not invite expressive oral reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓐ Although sentences may not seem artfully crafted or musical, they get the job done in a routine fashion.Ⓑ Sentences are usually constructed correctly. They hang together; they are sound.Ⓒ Sentence beginnings are not ALL alike; some varieties are attempted.Ⓓ The reader has to hunt for clues that show how sentences interrelate through connecting words and phrases.Ⓔ Parts of the text invite expressive oral reading; others may be stiff, awkward, choppy or gangly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ⓐ Sentences are constructed in a way that underscores and enhances the meaning.Ⓑ Sentences vary in length as well as structure. Fragments, if used, add style. Dialogue, if present, sounds natural.Ⓒ Purposeful and varied sentence beginnings add originality and energy.Ⓓ The use of creative and appropriate connectives between sentences and thoughts shows how each relates to and builds upon, the one before it.Ⓔ The writer has thought about the sound of the words as well as the meaning. The first time you read it aloud is a breeze.

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Conventions	<i>Errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar and usage, and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read.</i>	<i>The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Conventions are sometimes handled well and enhance readability; at other times, errors are distracting and impair readability.</i>	<i>The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar and usage, and paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few that just minor touch-ups would get this piece ready to publish.</i>
Score: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words. Ⓑ Punctuation (including terminal punctuation) is often missing or incorrect. Ⓒ Capitalization is random, and only the easiest instances show awareness of correct use. Ⓓ Errors in grammar or usage are quite noticeable, frequent, and affect meaning. Ⓔ Paragraphing is missing, irregular, or so frequent (every sentence) that it has no relationship to the organizational structure of the text. Ⓕ The reader must read once to decode, then again for meaning. Extensive editing (virtually every line) would be required to polish the text for publication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ Spelling is usually correct or reasonably phonetic on common words, but more difficult words are problematic. Ⓑ End punctuation is usually correct; internal punctuation is sometimes missing or wrong. Ⓒ Most words are capitalized correctly; control over more sophisticated capitalization skills may be spotty. Ⓓ Problems with grammar or usage are not serious enough to distort meaning but may not be correct or accurately applied all of the time. Ⓔ Paragraphing is attempted but may run together or begin in the wrong places. Ⓕ Moderate editing (a little of this, a little of that) would be required to polish the text for publication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ Spelling is generally correct, even on more difficult words. Ⓑ The punctuation is accurate, even creative, and guides the reader through the text. Ⓒ A thorough understanding and consistent application of capitalization skills are present. Ⓓ Grammar and usage are correct and contribute to clarity and style. Ⓔ Paragraphing tends to be sound and reinforces the organizational structure. Ⓕ The writer may manipulate conventions for stylistic effect—and it works! The piece is very close to being ready to publish.
Presentation	<i>The reader receives a garbled message due to problems relating to the presentation of the text.</i>	<i>The writer's message is understandable in this format.</i>	<i>The form and presentation of the text enhances the ability for the reader to understand and connect with the message. It is pleasing to the eye.</i>
Score: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ The writer has gone wild with multiple fonts and font sizes. It is a major distraction to the reader. Ⓑ The spacing is random and confusing to the reader. There may be little or no white space on the page. Ⓒ Lack of markers leaves the reader wondering how one section connects to another and why the text is organized in this manner on the page. Ⓓ The visuals do not support or further illustrate key ideas presented in the text. They may be misleading, indecipherable or too complex to understand or not present. Ⓔ The cover illustration or design is not present, or is a mismatch to the text, or lacks appeal to the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ Experimentation with fonts and font sizes is successful in some places, but begins to get fussy and cluttered in others. The effect is not consistent throughout the text. Ⓑ While margins may be present some text may crowd the edges. Consistent spacing is applied, although a different choice may make text more accessible. Ⓒ Although some markers are present (titles, numbering, bullets), they are not used to their fullest potential as a guide for the reader to access the greatest meaning from the text. Ⓓ An attempt is made to integrate features and text, although the connections may be limited. Ⓔ The cover illustration or design attempts to connect, but may not be eye-catching or inviting to the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ The use of white space on the page allows the intended audience to focus on the text and message without distractions. The formatting suits the purpose for writing. Ⓑ The use of a title, page numbering, bullets and evidence of correct use of a style sheet makes it easy for the reader to access the desired information and text. Ⓒ There is effective integration of text and illustrations, charts, graphs, maps and tables. There is clear alignment between the text and visuals. Ⓓ The cover illustration or design connects with the theme; it is eye-catching.