

The Six Traits of Writing Rubric*



California State Standards

1.0 Writing Strategies:

Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students' awareness of audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

	6 Exemplary (26–30 pts.)	5 Strong (21–25 pts.)	4 Proficient (16–20 pts.)	3 Developing (11–15 pts.)	2 Emerging (6–10 pts.)	1 Beginning (0–5 pts.)
Ideas & Content <i>⊗ main theme</i> <i>⊗ supporting details</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceptionally clear, focused, engaging with relevant, strong supporting detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear, focused, interesting ideas with appropriate detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evident main idea with some support which may be general or limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main idea may be cloudy because supporting detail is too general or even off-topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose and main idea may be unclear and cluttered by irrelevant detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks central idea; development is minimal or non-existent
Organization <i>⊗ structure</i> <i>⊗ introduction</i> <i>⊗ conclusion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively organized in logical and creative manner Creative and engaging intro and conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong order and structure Inviting intro and satisfying closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization is appropriate, but conventional Attempt at introduction and conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts at organization; may be a “list” of events Beginning and ending not developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of structure; disorganized and hard to follow Missing or weak intro and conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of coherence; confusing No identifiable introduction or conclusion
Voice <i>⊗ personality</i> <i>⊗ sense of audience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressive, engaging, sincere Strong sense of audience Shows emotion: humor, honesty, suspense, or passion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate to audience and purpose Writer behind the words comes through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evident commitment to topic Inconsistent or little personality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voice may be inappropriate or non-existent Writing may seem mechanical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing tends to be flat or stiff Little or no hint of writer behind words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing is lifeless No hint of the writer
Word Choice <i>⊗ precision</i> <i>⊗ effectiveness</i> <i>⊗ imagery</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precise, carefully chosen words Strong, fresh, vivid images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Descriptive, broad range of words Word choice energizes writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language is functional and appropriate Descriptions may be overdone at times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words may be correct but mundane No attempt at deliberate choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monotonous, often repetitious, sometimes inappropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited range of words Some vocabulary misused
Sentence Fluency <i>⊗ rhythm, flow</i> <i>⊗ variety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High degree of craftsmanship Effective variation in sentence patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy flow and rhythm Good variety in length and structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally in control Lacks variety in length and structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some awkward constructions Many similar patterns and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often choppy Monotonous sentence patterns Frequent run-on sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to follow or read aloud Disjointed, confusing, rambling
Conventions <i>⊗ age appropriate, spelling, caps, punctuation, grammar</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceptionally strong control of standard conventions of writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong control of conventions; errors are few and minor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control of most writing conventions; occasional errors with high-risk structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited control of conventions; frequent errors do not interfere with understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent significant errors may impede readability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous errors distract the reader and make the text difficult to read

*Adapted from Vicki Spandel, *Creating Writers*