

# Oak Harbor School District's Writing Rating Scale

## *Traits and Indicators for Rating Written Composition*

### 1. Central Idea

**Writer communicates a clear central idea and maintains focus.**

- 10 •States or implies a clear central idea.
- Provides a clear focus and narrows the topic effectively.
  - Maintains consistent focus on the topic.
- 5 •Provides recognizable central idea.
- Attempts to go from general observation to specific detail.
  - Maintains focus on the topic most of the time.
- 1 •Contains no central idea or has more than one undeveloped central idea.
- Chooses topic too broad or too narrow to develop.

### 2. Content

**Writer provides relevant information with enough details to support central idea.**

- 10 •Provides relevant supporting details that give the reader enough information.
- Defines terms the audience will need to know.
  - Provides examples to support and develop the central idea of the whole paper.
- 5 •Supplies some detail, but doesn't go far enough to support the main point.
- Usually chooses details that develop the central idea of the whole paper.
  - Generally supplies information relevant to the whole paper.
- 1 •Lacks enough detail.
- Uses inaccurate information and/or misleading information .
  - Chooses details and/or examples that are not relevant to the whole paper.
  - Chooses details that are too specific or too general.

### 3. Organization

**Writer organizes material to develop topic and enhance the central idea.**

- 10 •Arranges material in an order clear to the reader and suitable to the topic.
- Sequences material in a logical and effective manner.
  - Divides topic effectively into paragraphs.
  - Provides transitions which clearly connect ideas.
  - Provides an effective introduction and conclusion.
- 5 •Provides a recognizable organization.
- Attempts an understandable sequence.
  - Usually divides the topic effectively into paragraphs.
  - Provides some transitions in an attempt to connect ideas.
  - Provides a recognizable beginning and/or ending.
- 1 •Provides no recognizable organization.
- Uses confusing sequences.
  - Uses irregular or too frequent paragraphing or omits paragraphing.
  - Uses confusing transitions between ideas or omits transitions.
  - Provides no sense of beginning and ending.

## 4. Voice

**The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individually expressive, engaging, and appropriate. The reader feels a strong interaction with the writer, sensing the writer behind the words.**

- 5 •Communicates strong personal style.
  - Shows strong commitment to the topic.
  - Uses effective tone.
  
- 3 •Reveals some personal style but is not compelling.
  - Shows some commitment to topic.
  - Sometimes uses inappropriate or ineffective tone.
  
- 1 •Reveals indifferent, uninvolved style.
  - Remains distant from the topic (“you”).
  - Uses inappropriate or ineffective tone.

## 5. Word Choice

**Writer conveys the intended message using precise, engaging words appropriate to the audience and the purpose.**

- 5 •Effectively chooses words appropriate to audience and purpose.
  - Chooses a variety of specific and accurate words.
  - Incorporates lively verbs, precise nouns, and descriptive modifiers.
  
- 3 •Generally chooses language appropriate to the audience and the purpose.
  - Chooses words that are correct and adequate but lack flair.
  - Attempts to use a variety of words and descriptive language.
  - May use cliches or slang.
  
- 1 •Chooses inappropriate or vague language.
  - Demonstrates an inadequate vocabulary.
  - Repeats, omits, or uses words incorrectly.
  - Overuses jargon or cliches.

## 6. Sentence Fluency

**Writer constructs sentences which are complete, clear, and varied.**

- 10 •Writes complete sentences.
  - Uses sentences of varied length and structure.
  - Structures sentences clearly.
  - Writes sentences that flow smoothly.
  
- 5 •Sometimes writes run-on sentences or sentence fragments without interfering with meaning.
  - Uses some variation in sentence length and structure.
  - Usually structures sentences clearly.
  
- 1 •Writes run-on sentences and sentence fragments in ways that obscure meaning.
  - Shows limited variety in sentence length and structure.
  - Uses sentence structure that obscures meaning.
  - Overuses connectives (and, and so, but then, and then, because, etc.).

# Conventions

## 7a. Usage

**Writer employs conventional usage.**

- 5 • Uses appropriate subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement.  
• Uses consistent verb tense.  
• Correctly uses modifiers and homophones.  
• Uses other grammatical conventions correctly.
- 3 • Usually uses appropriate subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement.  
• Usually uses consistent verb tense.  
• Usually uses modifiers effectively.  
• Generally uses other grammatical conventions correctly.
- 1 • Makes frequent errors in subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement.  
• Makes frequent errors in verb tense.  
• Misuses modifiers frequently.  
• Uses other grammatical conventions incorrectly.

## 7b. Capitalization

**Writer applies basic rules for capitalization.**

- 5 • Appropriately observes capitalization rules.
- 3 • Usually observes capitalization rules.
- 1 • Frequently makes errors in capitalization.

## 7c. Punctuation

**Writer applies basic rules for punctuation.**

- 5 • Uses commas and end marks correctly.  
• Uses other punctuation marks correctly.
- 3 • Usually uses commas and end marks correctly.  
• Usually uses other punctuation marks correctly.
- 1 • Frequently uses incorrect and/or inappropriate punctuation marks.

## 7d. Spelling

**Writer spells common words correctly.**

- 5 • Spells all commonly used and grade level words correctly.
- 3 • Usually spells commonly used and grade level words correctly.
- 1 • Frequently misspells commonly used and grade level words.  
• Makes many spelling errors.

## 7e. Format / Legibility

**Writer produces a neat and legible final copy. For handwritten copy:**

- 5 • Arranges the paper neatly on the page.  
• Writes legibly.
- 3 • Produces a paper that shows an attempt at neatness.  
• Uses handwriting that does not interfere with readability.
- 1 • Produces a paper that is sloppy and difficult to read.  
• Writes illegibly.  
• Omits words or word parts.