
Essay/Report: Holistic Rating Scale

Student Name: _____

Date or Time Period of Assessment: _____

Assignment to be Graded: _____

The essay being awarded a rating at a specific scale point will show **some** or **all** of the following qualities.

A. Papers at the top two scale points exhibit the following general qualities:

- **well-developed**
 - **a feeling of active involvement with the subject**
 - **focused and intentional writing**
 - **originality**
 - **reader can detect a feeling of `voice' in the writing**
 - **command of sentence structure and vocabulary**
 - **technical errors do not intrude on the reader's appreciation and pleasure.**
-

- 6** • likeable paper written with creativity, animation, and style
 - has strong sense of personal `voice'
 - is intentional and direct
 - moves smoothly from a convincing beginning through a progression of occurrences or concepts to a convincing end
 - particulars and illustrations used effectively to set mood, form character, or explain a controversy
 - writer takes chances; outcomes convincing
 - effortless skill in sentence structure evident; may involve suitable and accurate subordination, and effective use of parallel structures and fragments
 - vocabulary proper and well-suited; it may be refined
 - infrequent mechanical errors
 - 5** • proficient paper, well-developed
 - less skilful sense of personal `voice', strength, and creativity
 - is deliberate and centred
 - moves rationally from constructive opening through a sequence of circumstances or concepts to a finish
 - particulars and instances used effectively to set mood, unfold character traits, or detail an argument
 - writer takes some risks but effects are irregular
 - sentences regulated and diverse
 - subordination for the most part appropriate and accurate
 - vocabulary suitable and correct
 - few technical mistakes
-

B. Papers at the two mid-points of the scale exhibit the following general qualities:

- **proficiently written**
- **show concern for formalities of standard English**
- **contain few cases of innovation or distinctiveness**
- **give little evidence of polish in ideas or vocabulary**
- **have a core of ideas that is for the most part clear but development often unsophisticated or fragmentary**
- **indicate the writer shows some command of elemental sentence structures and vocabulary**
- **have technical mistakes that reduce the effectiveness.**

Continued

-
- 4** • centred and ordered
- few examples of creativity
 - substance of the paper exhibits lack of depth or insight
 - logical arrangement of ideas
 - introduction and conclusion but ideas not mature in nature
 - writer takes small risks but outcome weak
 - paragraphing, sentence structure, vocabulary elementary and accurate
 - technical mistakes present
- 3** • paper considers topic but development unsubstantial and many times immature - little creativity or distinctiveness or chance-taking
- introduction and conclusion included
 - order and connection between ideas/events indistinct or unreasonable
 - sentences predictable
 - difficulties found with pronouns, verb tense, and punctuation
 - vocabulary restricted, tedious, and often idiomatic
 - technical mistakes inhibit comprehension
-

C. Papers at the bottom two scale points have numerous deficiencies:

- **unsubstantial sense of intention, organization, and development**
 - **numerous difficulties with conventions of standard English**
 - **substance of theme or ideas insufficient and frequently hard to follow**
 - **no sense of 'voice'**
 - **sentences elementary and tedious**
 - **numerous mistakes evident in usage**
 - **vocabulary restricted**
 - **paper laborious to read and understand.**
-

- 2** • some effort to centre on topic or relate a story shown but little, if any, development of ideas
- may have an introduction and conclusion but not strong
 - some efforts at logical structuring of events evident
 - some efforts at paragraph development seen
 - the subject matter and the amount of material weak - may be restricted to a solitary example or happening
 - vocabulary narrow in range and at times inappropriately idiomatic
 - may have repetitive sentences in structure or content
 - mistakes in usage and sentence structure frustrate reader's flow of thought; however, writing is understandable
- 1** • little or no impression given of purpose, directedness, or organization
- if development exists, it is unreasonable and baffling
 - logical progression of ideas not observable
 - few linkages between concepts or ideas
 - no mastery or skill observed in structuring sentences
 - word choice inappropriate and random
 - vocabulary elemental and often used out of context
 - mistakes in verb tense, point-of-view, and idiom
 - technical errors extreme and large in number so that understanding of the meaning lost

Source: Saskatchewan Education (1991), *Student evaluation: A teacher handbook*. pp. 90-91.