

# 6+1 Trait<sup>®</sup> Writing Rubrics



KEY QUESTION

**Does the writer engage the reader with fresh information or perspective on a focused topic?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	<b>Does not reflect a main idea or topic</b>	<b>Has a main idea that begins to emerge, but direction is unclear</b>	<b>States or implies a main idea but is unclear, unfocused, inaccurate, and/or underdeveloped</b>	<b>Communicates a generally clear, focused, and accurate main idea with acceptable development</b>	<b>Presents a clear, focused, and substantive main idea with convincing development</b>	<b>Establishes a clear, focused, and significant main idea, with original insights, that is fully developed</b>
<b>A. Main idea</b>	Does not have a main idea or topic	Focuses on a general topic but does not suggest a main idea	Suggests a main idea, but the direction of the piece is still unclear	Presents an adequately clear, focused main idea	Develops a clear, focused, and somewhat complex and/or original main idea	Conveys a clear, focused, complex, and original main idea that drives the piece
<b>B. Details, evidence, and support</b>	Does not support a main idea  In arguments grade 7+, does not acknowledge a counterclaim	Attempts to support the main idea with some information and/or details, but these are unfocused, unclear, and/or unrelated  In arguments grade 7+, may acknowledge but does not attempt to develop counterclaim	Provides incidental support of the main idea with information and/or details that lacks specificity, relevance, and/or accuracy  In arguments grade 7+, may acknowledge but does not develop counterclaim adequately	Supports the main idea with generally accurate, specific, and relevant information and/or details  In arguments grade 7+, develops and addresses counterclaim adequately	Supports the main idea fully, with specific, credible, relevant, information and/or vivid details  In arguments grade 7+, fully develops and addresses counterclaim	Supports the main idea convincingly, with highly specific, credible information and/or striking details that go beyond the obvious  In arguments grade 7+, thoroughly develops and addresses counterclaim in an original way

KEY QUESTION

**Does the writer engage the reader with fresh information or perspective on a focused topic?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
<b>C. Reasoning/thinking</b>	Does not show writer's thinking in developing or connecting ideas	Generalizes about ideas without analyzing or connecting them logically	Attempts to communicate relationships among ideas, but lacks clarity or logical connection	Helps the reader understand the writer's reasoning or perspective Connects ideas	Presents fresh reasoning or perspective using higher-order thinking and connects Clarifies ideas	Conveys unique, useful insights using higher-order thinking and convincing reasoning Connects and enhances ideas in original ways
<b>D. Awareness/engagement of reader</b>	Does not appear to be written with reader in mind	Shares information without engaging reader in exploring ideas Does not address many important questions	Attempts to engage readers in exploring ideas Does not address important questions or concerns	Adequately engages readers in exploring ideas Adequately addresses reader's questions and/or concerns	Effectively engages readers in exploring ideas Fully addresses reader's knowledge, questions, and/or biases	Successfully engages readers in exploring ideas on multiple levels Fully addresses reader's knowledge, questions, and biases on multiple levels
<b>E. Textual evidence from sources (optional)</b>	Contains no textual evidence Lacks acknowledgment of sources and may include plagiarized support	Has very weakly integrated textual evidence Lacks acknowledgment of sources; may include some plagiarized support	Contains weakly integrated textual evidence Contains general acknowledgment of sources; may include some plagiarized support	Provides adequately integrated textual evidence Includes proper acknowledgment of sources	Includes well-integrated textual evidence Includes proper acknowledgment of sources	Incorporates very smoothly integrated textual evidence Includes proper acknowledgment of sources

KEY QUESTION

**Does the organizational structure enhance the ideas and make them easier to understand?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	<b>No identifiable organization; writing lacks a sense of direction or seems random</b>	<b>Uses mostly ineffective organization with only a few sections that direct reader</b>	<b>Has emerging organization that is uneven, hampering ability to follow text</b>	<b>Includes basic organization that moves the reader through the text logically with minimal confusion</b>	<b>Reflects smooth, cohesive organization and varied techniques that build to create a unified whole</b>	<b>Develops seamless organization that enhances and showcases central ideas and their relationships</b>
<b>A. Lead and conclusion</b>	Has no lead and no conclusion	Includes either a lead or a conclusion  If lead is present, fails to establish purpose; if conclusion is present, fails to provide closure	Includes both a lead and a conclusion  Lead fails to establish purpose, and/or conclusion fails to provide closure	Contains a lead that establishes purpose, though may be formulaic or obvious  Contains a conclusion that provides closure, though may be formulaic or obvious	Features a lead that creates anticipation and establishes clear purpose  Includes a conclusion that ties up loose ends, providing a satisfying sense of closure	Creates an inviting lead that establishes clear purpose, draws reader in, and creates a strong sense of anticipation  Develops a satisfying conclusion that conveys a powerful and thoughtful sense of closure
<b>B. Transitions</b>	Has no use of transitions  Does not use paragraphs	Rarely uses transitions  Uses paragraph breaks sporadically.	Uses transitions that are repetitive, inconsistent, and/or fail to connect ideas  Chunks ideas into paragraphs inconsistently	Includes transitions that connect ideas, though they may be formulaic or predictable  Consistently separates ideas into distinct paragraphs	Features logical, varied transitions that connect and develop ideas  Includes paragraphing that supports ideas	Features thoughtful, smooth, varied transitions that clearly connect ideas and enhance meaning  Uses paragraphing that enhances ideas
<b>C. Sequencing</b>	Has no sequencing of ideas	Has very limited sequencing that fails to show how ideas fit together	Uses sequencing that fails to showcase ideas or becomes formulaic	Provides logical sequencing of ideas	Employs sequencing that builds connections to create a unified whole	Utilizes highly effective sequencing, making best choices for progression and enrichment of reader's understanding

KEY QUESTION

**Does the organizational structure enhance the ideas and make them easier to understand?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
<b>D. Pacing</b>	Has no evident pacing	Has consistently uneven pacing, slowing down or speeding up inappropriately or awkwardly	Appropriately controls pacing in some sections but not in others	Evenly controls pacing in most places	Exhibits well-controlled pacing throughout	Skillfully uses pacing to compel the reader through the text and enhance its impact
<b>E. Purpose/text structure</b>	Has no discernible text structure or purpose	Has loose text structure that leaves reader unclear or confused about purpose	Uses text structure inconsistently, affecting the reader's ability to identify purpose	Uses text structure consistently to reflect purpose, moving the reader through the text logically, with minimal confusion	Employs text structure that supports and clarifies purpose throughout	Utilizes text structure that enhances understanding of purpose and flows very smoothly
<b>F. Title (optional)</b>	Has no title	Has a title that does not link to main idea or is misleading	Uses a title that is formulaic, nondescript, or fails to link directly to main idea	Includes a title that connects adequately to main idea	Selects a title that reflects main idea in an unusual or interesting way	Draws the reader in with an original title that reflects main idea and captures deeper meaning

## KEY QUESTION

**Is the voice appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	<b>Shows indifference or distance</b>	<b>Makes ineffective attempts to connect with task and/or purpose and engage reader</b>	<b>Uses emerging voice that does not yet support task and/or purpose or engage audience</b>	<b>Employs voice that supports task and purpose and audience, engaging reader adequately</b>	<b>Strengthens writing with voice that fully addresses task, purpose, and audience</b>	<b>Uses voice uniquely, demonstrating powerful ownership of task, purpose, and audience</b>
<b>A. Tone</b>	Has no evident tone _____ Uses inappropriate level of formality	Has a tone that does not support the purpose _____ Often uses inappropriate level of formality	Uses a flat, disinterested tone or one that does not always support the purpose _____ Sometimes uses inappropriate level of formality	Uses a tone that supports purpose and reflects audience  Nearly always uses _____ appropriate level of formality	Uses a tone that is frequently appropriate for purpose and audience _____ Consistently uses appropriate level of formality	Employs a tone that is consistently appropriate for purpose and audience, clarifying and validating the message  _____ Consistently uses appropriate level of formality
<b>B. Engagement with reader</b>	Makes no effort to engage or connect with reader	Uses a predictable or generic approach that fails to engage or connect with reader	Shows awareness of reader yet relies on safe generalities, failing to engage with reader	Interacts with reader successfully at times, sounding sincere, though not yet fully engaging with reader in a committed manner	Frequently interacts and engages with reader in an authentic, committed manner	Consistently interacts and engages with reader through original or unique choices that underscore commitment
<b>C. Commitment</b>	Demonstrates no commitment to topic	Shows minimal commitment to topic	Shows emerging commitment to topic	Shows commitment to topic, though may not be fully evident	Demonstrates clear commitment to topic	Establishes ownership of topic
<b>D. Individual expression (if appropriate)</b>	Reveals nothing specific about writer	Reveals little of the writer's personality	Offers glimpses of personality but shows minimal risk-taking	Expresses personality; may take risks in one or two places that surprise, delight, and/or move reader	Frequently demonstrates personality; takes multiple risks that strengthen the text and move reader	Reveals unique personality in a manner that enriches text; demonstrates risk-taking that makes it easy to "hear" writer

## KEY QUESTION

## Does the language convey precise and compelling meaning and/or create a vivid picture for the reader?

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	<b>Uses limited vocabulary</b>	<b>Has flawed or simplistic vocabulary, resulting in impaired meaning</b>	<b>Has vocabulary that is usually understandable yet lacks energy or imagination and may be repetitive</b>	<b>Uses vocabulary that is functional and achieves purpose; may use imagery and/or figurative language if appropriate</b>	<b>Incorporates precise and creative vocabulary; uses imagery and/or figurative language if appropriate</b>	<b>Uses precise, powerful, accurate, and engaging vocabulary, including vivid imagery and/or figurative language where appropriate</b>
<b>A. Word meaning</b>	Consistently uses vocabulary that is incorrect in meaning	Uses flawed and/or simplistic vocabulary that impairs understanding	Uses vocabulary that is sometimes incorrect or limited, or uses inaccurate domain-specific vocabulary	Uses mostly correct, clear vocabulary, including domain-specific vocabulary if appropriate	Frequently uses precise vocabulary, including accurate domain-specific vocabulary if appropriate; vocabulary may be creative	Consistently features precise, creative, and powerful vocabulary, including exact domain-specific vocabulary if appropriate
<b>B. Word quality</b>	Uses vague or limited vocabulary	Uses confusing or misleading vocabulary	Uses very basic, functional words that convey limited meaning  May include weak attempt at imagery or figurative language if appropriate	Chooses familiar vocabulary that communicates meaning  Uses limited imagery and/or figurative language if appropriate	Often employs strong vocabulary that clearly conveys meaning  Includes vivid imagery and/or figurative language if appropriate	Consistently employs striking, powerful vocabulary that enhances meaning and/or shows imagination  Includes striking imagery and/or figurative language if appropriate
<b>C. Word usage</b>	Uses repetitive words and/or unsuitable language (e.g., slang, texting)	Uses vocabulary incorrectly or inappropriately, and/or reuses words rather than synonyms	Uses limited functional vocabulary and/or overuses descriptive or complex vocabulary	Uses appropriate vocabulary with minimal overuse; may attempt creative use of vocabulary	Employs creative or unique vocabulary appropriately	Consistently uses creative or unique vocabulary in novel ways
<b>D. Grammar</b>	Misuses parts of speech frequently, clouding meaning	Has limited variety in parts of speech; may use jargon or clichés that detract from meaning	Uses passive or boring verbs and/or overuses nouns and/or modifiers that limit meaning; may sound mechanical	Uses accurate and functional parts of speech that start to shape meaning, including some active verbs and specific nouns and modifiers	Chooses precise and varied parts of speech (e.g., active verbs, specific nouns and modifiers) to effectively communicate meaning	Chooses powerful parts of speech, including expressive, active verbs and polished nouns/modifiers, to best convey exact meaning

KEY QUESTION

**Does the writer control sentences so the text flows smoothly when read aloud?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	<b>Structures sentences incorrectly; reader must reread text several times to read aloud</b>	<b>Structures many sentences incorrectly, causing reader to stumble; little variation in sentences</b>	<b>Has sentences that may be technically correct but not varied, sounding mechanical or creating sing-song pattern</b>	<b>Uses varied sentences that are usually technically correct and flow smoothly</b>	<b>Uses a variety of correctly structured sentences that are rhythmic and flowing</b>	<b>Uses well-built, strong, varied sentences that flow, with compelling rhythm and cadence</b>
<b>A. Sentence structure</b>	Has choppy sentence structure that is incomplete, run-on, or rambling	Uses sentence structure that is simplistic and/or rarely correct	Uses sentence structure that may be technically correct yet isn't smooth, or overuses excessively complicated sentences	Uses smooth, correct sentence structure that may be somewhat mechanical in places	Utilizes well-developed sentence structure throughout text	Controls strong sentence structure for maximum impact throughout text
<b>B. Sentence sense and rhythm</b>	Lacks sentence sense; choppy rhythm makes reading aloud without writer's help nearly impossible	Shows little evidence of sentence sense, requiring reader to reconstruct sentence flow to read text aloud	Uses inconsistent sentence sense, requiring reader to reread in order to read text aloud  Dialogue and fragments, if used, may be ineffective or interrupt flow	Evidences correct sentence sense with rhythm and flow; reading aloud is smooth  Dialogue and fragments, if used, are often effective	Conveys strong, rhythmic sentence sense, with enough variety to enhance flow; easy to read aloud  Dialogue and fragments, if used, are consistently effective	Exhibits powerful, rhythmic sentence sense with cadence that enables expressive reading aloud  If used, dialogue sounds natural and is effective, and fragments add style
<b>C. Sentence variety</b>	Lacks varied sentence beginnings or types	Uses simple, often monotonous sentences that repeat same beginnings and/or types	Uses some variety in sentence beginnings, yet some are routine or generic, and/or uses mostly simple and compound sentences	Varies sentence beginnings, yet some are routine or generic  Includes multiple sentence types	Employs varied and interesting sentence beginnings  Includes a variety of sentence types to create balance	Creates interest and energy with varied sentence beginnings  Includes a variety of sentence types chosen to enhance flow



KEY QUESTION

**Does the writer control sentences so the text flows smoothly when read aloud?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
D. Connecting sentences	Has weak or no transitional words or phrases and/or has choppy, disconnected language and/or run-on sentence	Uses basic transitions that do little to lead reader through text; transitional words or phrases may be missing or randomly applied	Leads reader from sentence to sentence with few transitional words or phrases; some transitional words or phrases may be overused	Holds text together with varied transitional words or phrases	Moves reader easily through text, with thoughtful and varied transitional words or phrases	Engages reader throughout text with creative and varied transitional words or phrases that highlight relationships between sentences

KEY QUESTION

## How well does the text illustrate the writer’s proficiency with grade-appropriate conventions?

(Note: For the trait of conventions, grade level matters. Expectations should be based on grade level and include only skills that have been taught.)

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	<b>Has numerous and/or varied errors that make text unreadable or distracting; requires extensive editing</b>	<b>Includes many errors that make text difficult to read; requires much editing</b>	<b>Shows inconsistency in use of correct conventions which impairs readability; requires moderate editing</b>	<b>Uses correct conventions with minor errors; requires minor editing</b>	<b>Demonstrates consistent use of correct conventions; requires very limited editing</b>	<b>Uses error-free, creative conventions; enhances readability; requires virtually no editing</b>
<b>A. Spelling</b>	Has frequent spelling errors, even with common words	Uses phonetic spelling, with many errors	Frequently spells simple words incorrectly, though reader can still understand the meaning	Uses correct spelling for most common grade-level words; may be inaccurate with more difficult words	Correctly spells common grade-level words and often more difficult words	Exhibits mostly correct spelling, including more difficult words
<b>B. Punctuation</b>	Does not use or misuses punctuation nearly all the time	Uses punctuation, but it is random and/or usually incorrect	Uses simple end punctuation that is usually correct, but internal punctuation (e.g., comma, apostrophe, semicolon) is often missing or incorrect	Uses correct end punctuation with only minor errors; uses most internal punctuation correctly	Correctly uses both end and internal punctuation	Employs correct end and internal punctuation; may use creative punctuation that enhances readability
<b>C. Capitalization</b>	Lacks capitalization, or uses it incorrectly	Uses capitalization randomly, with frequent errors	Has some correct capitalization, usually for sentence beginnings and proper nouns	Uses correct capitalization for most common grade-level text	Correctly uses capitalization	Employs consistently correct capitalization and possibly more sophisticated capitalization for effect
<b>D. Grammar/usage</b>	Has serious grammar/usage errors, making text incomprehensible	Has numerous grammar/usage errors, making comprehension difficult	Has grammar/usage errors that may distract reader; may use conversational or texting language inappropriate to style	Employs proper grammar/usage with few grade-level errors; minor problems do not distort meaning or distract reader	Employs correct grammar/usage	Exhibits correct grammar/usage that contributes to clarity and style

KEY QUESTION

**How well does the text illustrate the writer’s proficiency with grade-appropriate conventions?**

*(Note: For the trait of conventions, grade level matters. Expectations should be based on grade level and include only skills that have been taught.)*

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
<b>F. Bibliography (optional)</b>	Lacks citations or basic bibliographic information	Makes weak attempts to cite or include basic bibliographic information	Uses citations and/or basic bibliographic information inconsistently and/or incompletely	Uses citations and/or bibliographic information in correct format; may contain some errors	Uses citations and/or bibliographic information correctly, with few errors	Uses citations and/or bibliographic information without errors

## KEY QUESTION

**Is the finished piece easy to read, polished in presentation, and pleasing to the eye?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	<b>Uses presentation or formatting that makes text unreadable</b>	<b>Uses presentation or formatting that makes text confusing</b>	<b>Has uneven presentation or formatting that sometimes makes text difficult to read or understand; text lacks a finished appearance</b>	<b>Uses presentation or formatting that supports understanding; text is finished and polished</b>	<b>Creates presentation or formatting that makes text easy to read with a pleasing appearance that enhances understanding</b>	<b>Has professional–looking presentation or formatting; makes choices to enhance importance</b>
<b>A. Font style/size</b>	Includes many font styles/sizes that make piece unreadable	Uses multiple font styles/sizes that impair reading or understanding	Has font styles/sizes that are inconsistent and/or poorly chosen in places, impairing reading or understanding	Uses font styles/sizes consistently so text is easy to read and understand	Has font styles/sizes that are consistent and appropriately chosen, supporting understanding and readability; some font styles may vary to highlight sections of the text	Intentionally selects font styles/ sizes that enhance understanding and strengthen readability; some font styles may vary to highlight sections of the text
<b>B. White space</b>	Does not consider white space, or use is random and confusing, making it difficult to identify beginning and ending text	Shows emerging use of white space, but few intentional margins or boundaries; text placement may be arbitrary	Uses white space to frame and balance text but is inconsistent; may have margins, though some text may crowd edges  May use uneven indenting or blocking	Uses white space to frame text with acceptable margins  Consistently indents or blocks paragraphs	Features white space that helps reader focus on text; uses margins to frame piece and other white space to set off graphics and text features  Indents or blocks paragraphs	Uses white space to optimally frame and balance text with graphics and text features; may include creative use of space to highlight important details  Indents or blocks paragraphs
<b>C. Text features (optional)</b>	Has no text features (e.g., titles, bullets, page numbers, subheads)	Uses text features that lack purpose and are mostly inappropriate and/or ineffective	Uses text features that are frequently ineffective for organizing and/or clarifying text	Includes text features that adequately organize and clarify ideas	Incorporates text features that help to integrate ideas, articulate meaning, and support reading	Uses text features to extend meaning and/or develop more complete understanding

## KEY QUESTION

**Is the finished piece easy to read, polished in presentation, and pleasing to the eye?**

	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
D. Visuals and graphics (optional)	Uses visuals/graphics that are incomprehensible and/or unrelated to text	Chooses visuals/graphics that are only topically related to text and/or do not enhance understanding	Uses visuals/graphics that support text in some instances	Includes visuals/graphics that support text	Features visuals/graphics that support and clarify text	Creates visuals/graphics that help enrich and extend meaning and are integrated
E. Handwriting (optional)	Forms handwritten letters inconsistently and/or incorrectly, making piece unreadable  Lacks spacing of letters and words, or spacing is unbalanced	Uses irregular letter shape and/or form; letters and words are often unreadable  Includes spacing that is often inconsistent, impairing readability	Uses handwriting that occasionally impairs readability  Uses inconsistent spacing in places	Uses correct and readable handwriting  Uses generally uniform spacing and lettering	Uses neat and readable handwriting  Uses uniform spacing and lettering	Features handwriting that is pleasing to the eye  Uses uniform spacing and lettering

