



**Writing Curriculum Guide
2007**

**The Lake and Peninsula
School District**



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Introduction to the LPSD Writing Standards

Standards

The revised writing standards were organized according to the Six Traits of Writing: Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Fluency and Conventions, plus the Portfolio requirements for each level. Each of these strands runs through every writing level, developing the Six Traits progressively.

Assessment

Writing levels are assessed in three parts: performance, skills and analytical assessments. The performance assessment is the student's portfolio, consisting of the required writing samples for the level. The skills-based assessments were written in the summer of 2007 to cover all writing levels. They are based on the Conventions standards at each level. The analytical assessment is completed through the writing prompt.

Portfolio- required genres/writing samples

For each level, students should build a portfolio consisting of the work and writing they have done to meet the writing standards. This includes the required proficient writing samples for the level, in the required genres.

To allow more flexibility and ownership of the writing standards for both students and teachers, the new standards do not specify every genre required for each level. Standards now specify two or three required genres at each level, and leave the other genres open for students and teachers to choose. This will allow students to pursue strengths and interests, and allow for teachers to create units around one genre across multiple writing levels.

Genre Matrix

To assist teachers and students in choosing forms of writing in each genre, the committee developed a genre matrix. The matrix lists appropriate writing assignments for each genre across the writing levels.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing standards are best met through integration; combining writing with reading, science, social studies, cultural awareness, employability and other content areas. Teachers are encouraged to integrate writing into other content areas, create thematic units across several content areas and teach students to write across the curriculum. The writing standards are not intended to be taught in isolation.

“For me, writing is exploration; and most of the time,
I'm surprised where the journey takes me.”

-Jack Dann

Writing Assessment Instructions

Requirements for Advancing a Level in Writing

Advancing a level in writing is a three part process:

1. Students must complete the required **portfolio of proficient writing samples** for the level.

Note: 2007 Standards Revisions allow for teacher and student choice of some genres at each level. See the **genre matrix** for suggestions of additional genres.

2. Students must pass the **skills-based assessment** with a proficient (80%) score.
3. After completing these two steps, the teacher can request a **writing prompt** from the district writing coordinator for the **formal analytical assessment**. Students must complete the prompt they are issued, format the prompt correctly and send electronically to the writing coordinator. The prompt will be score anonymously by three LPSD teachers.

Once a student has completed the standards of the level, and scored proficient on the portfolio, skills-based assessment and formal analytical writing assessment, they will advance to the next level.

Performance Assessment: Writing Portfolio Requirements:

Level 3: Three Proficient Writing Samples in Three Different Genres

- Narrative Fiction/Story
- Two of the following genres: Letter, Description, Recount, or Observation

Level 4: Four Proficient Writing Samples in Four Different Genres

- Expository Essay/ report
- Process Essay (how-to, step-by-step)
- Teacher/Student Choice: two additional samples from different genres

Level 5: Five Proficient Writing Samples in Five Different Genres

- Compare/Contrast
- Literary Response
- Teacher/Student Choice: three additional samples from different genres

Level 6: Five Proficient Writing Samples in Five Different Genres

- Research-based Cause or Effect
- Editorial/opinion
- Narrative story using the elements of fiction
- Teacher/Student Choice: two additional samples from different genres

Level 7: Five Proficient Writing Samples in Five Different Genres

Minimum of five paragraphs or stanzas

- Research-based expository (3 pages and bibliography)
- Persuasive
- Teacher/Student Choice: three additional samples from different genres

Level 8: Five Proficient Writing Samples in Five Different Genres

- Research-based expository (4 pages and bibliography)
- Narrative (using the elements of fiction)
- Persuasive
- Teacher/Student Choice: two additional samples from different genres

Analytical Assessment: Writing Prompt Instructions and Procedures

Writing Prompt Schedule

1. After successful completion of the **required portfolio of writing samples** and the **skills-based assessment**, teachers should request an **analytical writing assessment** (prompt) from the District prompt coordinator: amokelke@lpsd.com
2. Teachers will receive a letter for the student issuing their prompt and instructions, and the appropriate analytical rubric. Teachers should review the requirements of the rubric prior to allowing students to start the prompt
3. **Writing Prompts should take NO MORE than two weeks**
 - o Day 1-2 - Brainstorm and Map, etc
 - o Day 3 - Create Outline
 - o Day 4-6 - Rough Draft
 - o Day 7-8 - Edit (BE SURE TO LOOK AT THE SCORING GUIDE)
 - o Day 9-10- Final Copy
4. Writing prompts must be returned electronically (via student or teacher email) to amokelke@lpsd.com. Students may not submit a prompt without prior approval from their teacher.
5. Prompts will not be accepted if they are not properly formatted:
 - a. Times New Roman font, size 10 or 12, standard margins
 - b. Double spaced
 - c. The prompt the student was issued pasted in the header
 - d. Student's name can not be listed in the header or in the body of the prompt
6. Prompts will be sent to three LPSD teachers to score anonymously. Teachers have **one week** to score and return prompts. Scores are then compiled by the District writing prompt coordinator, and a final score is issued to the teacher.
7. If a student **does not** pass the analytical assessment, they will be issued a new prompt on the request of their teacher. Teachers should spend adequate time (minimum of two weeks) working with students to prepare them before requesting a new prompt.

LEVEL 1 STANDARDS WRITING

Ideas	
WR 1.1a	Writes to express personal ideas using drawings, symbols, letters, or words
WR 1.1b	Begins to build recognizable words
	§ Uses random letters to represent words
	§ Strings familiar letters to look like words
	§ Attempts phonetic spelling (beginning and/or ending sounds)
Organization	
WR 1.2	Dictates or writes words, phrases, or sentences related to a single topic
Voice	
WR 1.3	No expectations at this level
Word Choice	
WR 1.4	No expectations at this level
Sentence Fluency	
WR 1.5	Practices speaking in complete sentences
Conventions	
WR 1.6a	Prints first name with proper capitalization
WR 1.6b	Uses correct spatial orientation of words on a page
WR 1.6c	Corrects mistakes in end punctuation and capitalization with support
WR 1.6d	Accurately copies printed text
WR 1.6e	Orally uses correct subject/verb agreement
WR 1.6f	Orally uses proper grammar structure when using pronouns
WR 1.6g	Orally uses proper verb tense
WR 1.6h	Begins to develop proper penmanship
	§ Writes and corrects formation of upper and lower case letters
	§ Develops legible handwriting
Publication	
WR 1.7	Verbally shares, clarifies, or adds details about pictures and writing with support
Process	
WR 1.8	Listens and responds to writing

LEVEL 2 STANDARDS WRITING

Ideas	
WR 2.1	Writes and organizes thoughts into a topic sentence and two supporting details
Organization	
WR 2.2	Writes a composition with a beginning, middle, and end
Voice	
WR 2.3	Produces a variety of written forms for specific audiences
Word Choice	
WR 2.4	Uses a variety of words to express their ideas (limits repetition of same word)
Sentence Fluency	
WR 2.5a	Writes a complete sentence with a subject and predicate with adjectives

LEVEL 4 STANDARDS WRITING

Ideas	
WR 4.1	Writes paragraphs that stay on topic and includes details to support the main idea
Organization	
WR 4.2	Writing includes beginning, middle and end. Ideas are organized logically and support the main idea
Voice	
WR 4.3	Writes for a specific audience and uses appropriate voice for the topic
Word Choice	
WR 4.4a	Uses language that is easy to understand
WR 4.4b	Uses a thesaurus to enhance word choice
Fluency	
WR 4.5	Writes using a variety of simple and complex sentences varying the beginnings, lengths, and patterns to improve flow and to enhance the meaning of writing
Conventions	
WR 4.6a	Writer applies rules of punctuation (sentence fragments, run-ons, contractions and possessives), capitalization (book titles, beginning of sentences and proper nouns) and usage (verb tense)
WR 4.6b	Spells accurately a sample of the first 500 words of the Fry word list, including homophones and contractions
WR 4.6c	Gives credit or others' information, ideas, and images by citing title and source
Portfolio	
WR 4.7a	Uses the writing process consistently to produce four proficient writing samples in four different genres with a minimum of four paragraphs or stanzas
WR 4.7b	Required Samples: 1. Expository essay/report 2. Process essay (how-to, step-by-step) -Two additional writing samples from different genres
WR 4.7c	Self reflects and peer edits using rubrics, writing checklists, and conferencing

LEVEL 5 STANDARDS WRITING

Ideas	
WR 5.1a	Writing has theme or basic plot and stays on topic
WR 5.1b	Writer provides a clear picture to the reader through personal examples, sensory details, and literary devices
Organization	
WR 5.2a	Writing includes clear introduction, body and conclusion in logical order
WR 5.2b	Writer uses simple transitional words or phrases to connect paragraphs
WR 5.2c	Revises writing by rearranging and/or adding details to improve focus, to support main ideas, to clarify topic sentence, and to make sequence clear
Voice	
WR 5.3a	Tone gives writing flavor and adds interest. Reader is sometimes surprised, amused or moved by the writing
WR 5.3b	Maintains uniform point of view (first, second or third person) throughout writing samples
Word Choice	
WR 5.4	Uses specific nouns and verbs, and imaginative adjectives and adverbs with the aid of a thesaurus and/or dictionary

LEVEL 7 STANDARDS WRITING

Ideas	
WR 7.1a	Paragraphs support thesis statement and ideas are logically organized within the paragraph. Information and details are appropriate and logical
WR 7.1b	Ideas show increasing elaboration and introduce complex themes
Organization	
WR 7.2a	Introductory paragraph includes thesis statement and lead or hook (anecdote, startling fact, or quotation). Writing includes clear introduction, body and conclusion in logical order. Concluding paragraph connects to main ideas or thesis statement
WR 7.2b	Student chooses appropriate structures to match topic or genre
WR 7.2c	Paragraph breaks are placed appropriately. Writer uses a variety of smooth transitional words and phrases between paragraphs
Voice	
WR 7.3	Voice is consistent across topics, themes and genres
Word Choice	
WR 7.4a	Writes expressively and accurately uses precise and descriptive words
WR 7.4b	Uses a thesaurus to locate and choose effective synonyms to improve style and avoid redundancy
Fluency	
WR 7.5	Writer uses a variety of sentence structures to improve flow and enhance meaning and style of writing
Conventions	
WR 7.6a	Writer applies rules of spelling, punctuation (semicolons, hyphens), capitalization and usage
WR 7.6b	Gives credit for others' ideas, images, and multimedia information by citing title and source (authors, storytellers, translators, songwriters or artists) using MLA or APA style
Portfolio	
WR 7.7a	Uses the writing process consistently to produce five proficient writing samples in five different genres with a minimum of five paragraphs or stanzas
WR 7.7b	Required writing samples: 1. Research-based expository essay (3 pages & bibliography) 2. Persuasive essay – Three additional writing samples from different genres
WR 7.7c	Self reflects and peer edits using rubrics, writing checklists, and conferencing

LEVEL 8 STANDARDS WRITING - GRADUATION LEVEL

Ideas	
WR 8.1	Thesis is well supported with complex ideas
Organization	
WR 8.2a	Writing includes clear introduction, body and conclusion in logical order. Concluding paragraph ties to the introduction
WR 8.2b	Transitions maintain the unity of the composition
Voice	
WR 8.3a	Voice enhances topics and genres
WR 8.3b	Writer is bold, experiments and takes chances with their style - style enhances the theme
Word Choice	
WR 8.4a	Uses expanded vocabulary in most sentences
WR 8.4b	Chooses effective literary devices to improve style and energize writing

LPSD WRITING GENRES MATRIX

	Technical	Creative	Narrative	Expository
Level 4	Friendly Letter Recipes	-Journal Writing -Poetry, Lyrics, Plays and Dramas -Comics	-Literary Response -Personal Accounts -Descriptive Writing	*Process (How-To) *Expository Book Report Report Writing Step by Step Directions
Level 5	*Business letter Resume	-Journal Writing -Poetry, Lyrics, Plays and Dramas -Comics	*Literary Response -Personal Accounts -Descriptive Writing -Journalism/news articles -Biography/Autobiography	*Compare/Contrast Book Report Report Writing
Level 6	-Letter of Complaint, concern, request -Resume -Scientific Report -Speech Writing	*Story -Journal Writing -Poetry, Lyrics, Plays and Dramas -Comics -Children's books	*Editorial/Opinion -Personal Accounts -Descriptive Writing -Biography/Autobiography	*Cause/Effect Book Report Report Writing
Level 7	-Grant Writing -Career Letter -Resume -Scientific Report -Instruction Manual -Advertisements -Business Plans Speech Writing	-Journal Writing -Poetry, Lyrics, Plays and Dramas -Comics -Children's books	-Biography/Autobiography -Personal Accounts -Descriptive Writing -Literary Response	*Research Paper *Persuasive
Level 8	-Grant Writing -Resume -Scientific Report -Instruction Manual -Advertisements -Business Plans Speech Writing	*Story -Journal Writing -Poetry, Lyrics, Plays and Dramas -Comics -Children's books	-Biography/Autobiography -Personal Accounts -Descriptive Writing	*Research Paper *Persuasive - Literary Analysis
Level 9		-Journal Writing -Poetry, Lyrics, Plays and Dramas		*Literary Analysis

*=required for this level

Teacher Resources

Expository Writing

Expository essays require that the writer must give information, explain the topic or define something. To accomplish that, they are best developed by the use of facts and statistical information, cause and effect relationships, or examples. Since they are factual, they are written without emotion and usually written in the third person.

Expository essays also have a distinct format.

- **The thesis statement must be defined and narrow enough to be supported within the essay.**
- **Each supporting paragraph must have a distinct controlling topic and all other sentences must factually relate directly to it. The transition words or phrases are important as they help the reader follow along and reinforce the logic.**
- **Finally, the conclusion paragraph should originally restate the thesis and the main supporting ideas. Finish with a statement that reinforces your position in a meaningful and memorable way.**
- **Never introduce new material in the conclusion.**

Here are some hyperlinks that review the specifics of writing an expository essay:

- <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Shadowlands/8239/expositoryvessay.html> Explains the Purpose of an Expository Essay
- <http://www.iss.stthomas.edu/studyguides/wrtstr3.htm> Ideas for Developing an Expository Essay
- <http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/process.html> Writing a Process Essay
- <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Agora/3006/CourseIntroduction/essayhelpers.htm> Compare and Contrast
- <http://cctc2.comnet.edu/grammar/composition/process.htm> Describe a Process

Persuasive Writing

The purpose of a persuasive essay is to convince others to agree with our facts, share our values, accept our arguments and conclusions, and adopt our way of thinking.

Characteristics of a Persuasive Essay

- **Establishing facts to support an argument**
- **Clarifying relevant facts for your audience (perspective)**
- **Prioritizing, editing, and/or sequencing the facts and values in importance to build the argument**
- **Forming and stating conclusions**
- **Persuading your audience that your conclusions are based upon the agreed-upon facts and shared values**
- **Having the confidence to communicate your "persuasion" in writing**

Here are some hyperlinks that review the specifics of writing a persuasive essay

- http://www.hamilton.edu/academic/Resource/WC/Effective_essays.html Elements of Persuasive Writing
- http://www.humboldt.k12.ca.us/sohumb_usd/sfhs/richards/pointers.pdf Seven Critical Elements in Persuasive Writing
- http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/offices/instruct/standards/language_arts/12/persuasive.pdf Persuasive Writing Instructional Plan for a Standards Based Classroom
- <http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/PersuasiveEssay.html> Topics for Persuasive Essays

Descriptive Writing

The purpose of a purely descriptive essay is to involve the reader enough so he or she can actually visualize the things being described. Therefore, it is important to use specific and concrete details. A descriptive essay can be objective or subjective, giving the author a wide choice of tone, diction and attitude.

Here are some hyperlinks that review the specifics of writing a descriptive essay:

- <http://lamer.lsu.edu/classroom/edonahalfshell/pdf/dicot3all.pdf> Lesson using Descriptive Writing in Science
- <http://powayusd.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/projects/edtechcentral/writingwStyle/modes.htm> Simple Explanation of Descriptive Writing
- <http://www.io.com/~hcexres/tcm1603/achtml/desc.html> Sample Student Technical Writing Papers

Narrative Writing

A narrative essay is a *story* written about a personal experience or a fictional event. As a piece of non-fiction a narrative essay provides an opportunity to get to know and understand yourself better. Narrative essays describe specific experiences that changed how you felt, thought, or acted. The form of a narrative is similar to a story in that it describes how your character is feeling by "showing" through his/her actions, rather than by coming right out and "telling" your readers. However, a good narrative isn't just an entertaining story, but has a *point* to make, a purpose to convey. In writing a narrative essay, your purpose is not to merely tell an interesting story but to show your readers the importance and influence the experience has had on you. This experience may be used as a springboard for reflection.

Characteristics of a Narrative Essay

- Narratives are generally written in the first person, that is, using *I*. However, third person (*he, she, or it*) can also be used.
- Narratives rely on concrete, sensory details to convey their point. These details should create a unified, forceful effect, a dominant impression.
- Narratives, as stories, should include these story conventions: a plot, including setting and characters; a climax; and an ending.

Narrative continued...

- **A narrative is usually told from a point of view--usually the author's point of view.**
- **A narrative includes detailed observations of people, places, and events. Do you recall sights, sounds, smells, tactile feelings, and tastes? Use actual or re-created dialogue? Give actual names of people and places.**
- **A narrative Shows, and doesn't tell. It Re-creates an event by setting it in a specific time and space.**

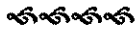
Here are some hyperlinks that review the specifics of writing a narrative essay:

- <http://www.atschool.org/materials/rubrics/samplerubric.htm> **A Narrative Rubric**
- <http://www.learn.co.uk/default.asp?WCI=Unit&WCU=3527> **Steps for Writing a Good Narrative**
- <http://www.hsd.k12.or.us/schools/ghs/staff/ballard/narrative.html> **Lots of good ideas and topics**
- <http://www.usask.ca/education/people/aikenhead/edcur328/activitiesnarrativeC12.htm> **Instructions for Writing a Narrative Lab Report**
- <http://www.ccsn.nevada.edu/english/pentad.htm> **Elements of a Narrative**

Descriptions of the Six Writing Traits



Ideas



Before we can look at how well a paper is written, there needs to be something to say. This is where our ideas come in.

To figure out if a paper is proficient in ideas, start in the middle; this is where the decision of whether a paper is passing or not is made. A four is passing, but a three is not. **In ideas, the four is clear and is supported with details. It is not an exceptional paper; there is room for improvement, but it passes.** A three also has a main idea, but the difference is in the details. In this score, the details are not all that helpful. They may be random and off topic, too general, or predictable.

The main difference between a five and a six in this trait is the depth of the ideas. Remember that depth means stronger details, not more ideas.

The one and two have major problems. The writer either doesn't have anything to say, or the ideas are so random that the reader can't figure them out. The one is also used when a paper is too short to score.

Organization



If the most important part of a paper is having something to say, the second is to have a good organizational structure. That means the ideas have to be written in a way that seems logical to the reader.

Starting in the middle of the scoring guide again, there is a great deal of differences in this trait. **While the four is only a passing paper, the main organizational issue is having a beginning, middle, and end. They don't have to be particularly strong; they just need to be there. The paper may even be formulaic and be passing.** If the paper doesn't have a recognizable beginning, middle, and/or end, it cannot be considered proficient, and is therefore a three.

To go beyond the four, the writing must have an effective and inviting organizational structure. That means the beginning and ending are well developed, and the body contains information in a way that makes the paper flow easily. The primary difference between a five and a six is the word "creative" in the scoring guide. This is where the writer can use techniques like foreshadowing, flashbacks, or dialog to enhance the writing. If done well, these can be extremely effective. If not, they can move the paper into the realm of confusion, and the score may not meet the standard in organization *or* ideas.

A one or two in this trait really says something is missing. The most common error here is a missing conclusion. Students have a tendency to do well with the introduction and the body, but when it comes to an ending, they fall short. A one paper is usually all over the place. The ideas are random at best, and the reader isn't sure what the writer is trying to say.

Voice



Voice is one of the most difficult things to perfect in writing. It is a "sense or feeling" that needs to be conveyed. Does it seem as though the writer was committed to the topic? Can you detect who the person behind the words is? **A four paper will show an adequate level of commitment to the topic--perhaps inconsistent in places, but there is still a definite sense of writing to be read.** A three paper communicates with the writer, but there is not much sense of the person behind the words. The paper will lack style or interest, or maybe it will be too personal or too formal.

A five and six in voice will emotionally or intellectually involve the reader to a high degree. The main distinction between a five and a six in voice, though, is that a six will also allow the reader to sense the uniqueness of the writer.

A one or two in voice will lack any kind of a reader/writer connection. A two paper will communicate on a functional level, though the writing may be either stiff, flat, or lifeless. On the other

hand, a one paper will not communicate even on a functional level, and the writing may seem painful or uncomfortable for the writer.

Word Choice



The words a writer uses not only affects the meaning and the sentence fluency of the piece, but they also help to create a mood.

Do the writer's words effectively convey the intended message of the piece? Are the words used correctly and accurately for the most part, but lack a certain flair? Then the paper is a four. If the writer conveys the intended message of the piece, but relies upon ordinary, generic, or over-used language, then the paper is a three.

A five paper will contain words that are not only accurate and specific, but the words will energize the writing. It is clear to the reader that many words have been specifically chosen for effect. A six paper will additionally use figurative language (language that means more than just what the words say) and fresh, original expressions.

If the words in the paper are so generic that they do not really say anything, or are so repetitious or misused to the point where they begin to interfere with the message the writer is trying to convey, the paper is a two. A one paper also fails to communicate, but there will also be an extremely limited range of words. Words will also be misused more often than they are used correctly.

Sentence Fluency



Sentence fluency is how the paper sounds when it is read aloud, or how the words and phrases flow together in the piece.

In a four paper, the writing flows, but there is not a rhythm or grace in the way the paper reads. There might also be some repetitions of how long the sentences are, how they begin, or the structure (noun-verb-noun, for instance). However, a four paper will demonstrate strong control over simple sentence structures. A three paper will have some awkward constructions that force the reader to slow down and reread, and there are many repetitions of sentence length, beginnings, and structure.

A five paper will be very easy and enjoyable to read aloud; the sentences will have a natural, fluent sound, and there is good variety in sentence length, beginnings, and structure. Six papers demonstrate a high degree of craftsmanship; the reader can tell that the writer made deliberate choices about both meaning and sound in the piece. A six paper will make the reader want to stop and read it aloud to someone else.

Two papers might be choppy or rambling, and the paper is difficult to follow or read aloud. Sentence patterns also tend to be monotonous. In a one paper, the sentences are nearly impossible to read aloud because they are disjointed, confusing, or rambling.

Conventions



This is the nuts and bolts section of the paper. Conventions cover four areas: capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling. **It is possible to have a few errors in conventions and still have a passing paper, but if the errors get in the way of reading, the paper is not proficient.**

A paper with no errors does not automatically earn a six. A five paper is usually an extremely clean paper. There are very few mistakes, if any, and the reader has to really look to find them. A six is a paper that uses conventions to manipulate the text. This is the paper that has purposeful fragments, correctly uses dialect, or changes tense in the middle to show time lapse or other significant changes in the story. To score a six, a paper must show a wide range of conventions.

A one or two means there is substantial need for editing. These are mistakes in all four areas, and the reader must really work to understand what the writer is trying to say.

Six Trait Writing Check-List

Ideas

- Paper makes sense
- Gets and holds my attention
- Has a main idea, thesis, center, sense of purpose
- Writer draws on experience
- Says something new, or says it in a fresh way
- Full of ideas that add:
Interest.
Important information

Organization

- The opening makes me want to keep reading
- Has a logical order or pattern (definition, problem solution, compare-contrast, proposal, story unfolding over time, etc.)
- I can follow the story or main points
- Sometimes I can predict—sometimes the writer surprises me!
- Ends well; ties up loose ends
Doesn't stop abruptly
- Doesn't end with, "Then I woke up and it was all a dream!"
- Doesn't repeat with, "Now you know the three reasons we should fight pollution."

Voice

- Sounds like a person wrote it
- Sounds like a particular writer
- Writing has style, flavor
- Reaches out to me, the reader
- Makes me respond; makes me feel

Word Choice

- Makes me say, "Yes, that's just the right word or phrase."
- Long after reading, some words still tug at my memory
- Words are used correctly
- The writer chooses words wisely, but isn't afraid to stretch
- This writer knows the language of the topic—but doesn't try to impress me with phony, bloated phrases
- Simple language is used when it gets the job done

Sentence Fluency

- It's smooth going—easy on the ear
- I could easily read this aloud
- Almost every sentence begins in a slightly different way, OR
- Repetition is rhythmic and stylistic, not annoying
- Some sentences are long; some aren't
- Sentences aren't choppy, yet they don't meander aimlessly

Conventions

- The writing is clean and polished; it looks proofread
- Most things are done correctly
- Careful, controlled use of conventions makes meaning clear and reading easy
- No BIG errors shoutt at me frm the Pg: Hey!"Pay attenSHUN two me! Think? a lot abowt, the mystakes!,
- Spelling, punctuation, grammar, capital letters, and paragraph indenting: This writer has thoughtfully attended to ALL conventional details

Great Rater Tips

Following are COMMON sources of rater-bias—any one of which can cause you to score unfairly!

- ♦ **The positive-negative leniency error:** A tendency to be too hard or too easy on everyone—just as a matter of principle.
- ♦ **Appearance:** Scoring up because the paper looks neat and presentable, or down because it looks messy. Judge content first! Good appearance IS important, but it is not part of the 6-trait writing criteria.
- ♦ **Length:** Is longer better? NO! In fact, length often works against a piece if there's too much "interpretive information." Papers that are too short, of course, cannot be scored fairly, but the real trick is to balance the need for good detail with an ability to be succinct.
- ♦ **Fatigue:** If you're never tired and bleary-eyed while you're doing this, you're either a machine or you're sneaking papers onto someone else's stack! The point is, take an occasional break. You'll score faster (and MUCH more accurately) in the long run if you get up to stretch or have coffee/tea/fresh air now and then.
- ♦ **Personality clash:** *I hate animal stories! I love sports papers! Oh, what a neat kid—he fishes with his dad! All this kid DOES is watch TV—he needs a couple of 2's to wake him up to reality!* This is the don't-even-go-there approach to scoring. If you simply can't ("I hate iguanas, my father hated iguanas, and I'm never going to change my mind!"), give the paper to someone else. Think: what if it were your paper? Your child's?
- ♦ **Skimming:** You might think you know the first 8 lines, but DO read the whole thing to be sure you're assessing the entire performance, not just the grand opening.
- ♦ **Self-Scoring:** Perceptive, intuitive readers fill in, anticipate, synthesize, and generally pull it all together for the writer. Be sure you're scoring the writer's work, not your skill in putting the puzzle together.
- ♦ **Sympathy Score:** *Her dog died...She loves her grandpa so much...* These situations tug at your heart, and rightly so. But the hard truth is, there are good and not-so-good pet papers, grandparent papers, etc. Be sure you score the writing, not the circumstances.