

Student Language Writing Scoring Guide: Grades 6-8
Narrative Writing

Ideas and Content

- Supporting details are explanations, examples, facts, descriptions, etc.
- Insights are understanding about what you have learned about yourself, other people, life, etc., or what other people have learned.
- Connections refer to how your ideas or details are connected to other experiences, people, books, events, things that are happening in the world, etc.

<p>6 The writing is very clear, focused, and interesting. It holds the reader’s attention all the way through. Many carefully selected details provide strong support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and main ideas stand out and are particularly clear and focused. • Strong, rich supporting details develop experiences, events, and characters. • Details are specific, interesting, and carefully chosen for purpose and audience. • Context and point of view are well-established. Narrator and/or characters are introduced. • When used, dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection enhance the experiences, events, and/or characters presented. • The story is thoroughly developed to present real or imagined events. 	<p>5 The writing is clear, focused, and interesting. It holds the reader’s attention. Carefully selected details provide strong support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and main ideas stand out and are clear and focused. • Supporting details are strong and develop experiences, events, and characters. • Details are specific, interesting, and carefully chosen for purpose and audience. • Context and point of view are established. Narrator and/or characters are introduced. • When used, dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection develop the experiences, events, and/or characters presented. • The story is well-developed to present real or imagined events.
<p>4 The writing is clear and focused. It is long enough to show that the writer knows how to present ideas and explain them using specific details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and main ideas are clear and focused. • Supporting details develop experiences, events, and characters. • Details are appropriate for purpose and audience. • Context and point of view are established. Narrator and/or characters are introduced. • When used, dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection help develop the experiences, events, and/or characters presented. 	<p>3 The writing has a focus, but details may be too general. Specific details are limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and main ideas are easy to understand, but may be too general or too simple. Ideas may sound too much like another story, movie, etc. • Supporting details are limited, a little off-topic, or may be simply a list. • Context and point of view may not be established. • Characters are undeveloped. • Dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection are not developed.
<p>2 Purpose and main ideas are not clear, or there are problems with supporting details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and main ideas are not clear. The reader may have to guess the main ideas. • There are few supporting details. • Many details are off-topic or are repeated. • Characters are not developed. 	<p>1 The reader cannot understand the purpose and main ideas, or the writing may be too short to show that the writer can present and develop an idea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas are extremely limited or simply unclear. • Supporting details are extremely limited or unclear.

Student Language Writing Scoring Guide: Grades 6-8
Narrative Writing

<p>Organization Transitions are words, groups of words, or sentences that allow the reader to follow along from one idea, detail, or paragraph to the next (e.g., and, but, so, because, later that day, since, two hours later, during, meanwhile, etc.)</p>	
<p>6 Organization is exceptionally strong. It fits the topic and strengthens ideas and details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization and sequence of events are well-structured and very easy to follow. • A strong beginning is inviting and makes the reader want to keep reading. • A variety of transitional words and phrases are used effectively. Transitions signal shifts from one time frame to another, show a change in location or action, and show the relationships among experiences and events. • The ending is strong, satisfying, and clearly supports the narrated experiences and events. • Paragraph breaks are effective. 	<p>5 Organization is strong. It fits the topic and helps strengthen ideas and details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization and sequence of events are well-structured and easy to follow. • A developed beginning is inviting and makes the reader want to keep reading. • A variety of transitional words and phrases are used well. Transitions signal shifts from one time frame to another, show a change in location or action, and show the relationships among experiences and events. • The ending is satisfying and supports the narrated experiences and events. • Paragraph breaks work well.
<p>4 Organization is clear. The writing shows that the writer can organize ideas and details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization and sequence of events are easy to follow with details that fit where placed. • The beginning introduces the plot, narrator, or characters. • Transitional words and phrases are used with some variety to signal shifts in time, setting, or action. • The ending supports the narrated experiences and events. • Paragraph breaks help the reader follow the writing. 	<p>3 The writer has attempted to organize the writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization and sequence of events may be a little unclear. • The beginning is undeveloped or too obvious (e.g., “Once upon a time...”) • Some details seem out of place or out of order. • Transitional words and phrases sometimes work, but the same ones are used too often (e.g., and, so, but, then, next, etc.). • The ending is too obvious or may not support the narrated experiences and events (e.g., “Then I woke up...”). • Some paragraph breaks may not be in the right place.
<p>2 The writing does not have clear organization. It is so hard to follow that the reader has to re-read major parts. The writing may simply be too short to show that the writer knows how to organize ideas and details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are attempts at sequencing. • The beginning is ineffective or missing. • Many details may be placed where they do not make sense. • Transitional words and phrases (e.g., and, next, but, so, then, etc.) may be missing or overused. • The ending is ineffective or missing. • Paragraph breaks may be missing or are incorrectly placed. 	<p>1 The writing is extremely difficult to follow. The reader is confused even after re-reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The order of ideas and details make it difficult for the reader to understand. • The beginning may be missing. • Most details are placed where they do not make sense. • Transitions may be missing. • The ending may be missing. • Paragraph breaks may be missing.

Student Language Writing Scoring Guide: Grades 6-8
Narrative Writing

Voice

- When thinking about appropriate voice, consider purpose (the reason for writing), audience (who will read the writing), and topic (what the writing is about).
- Narratives usually have a strong personal voice.
- One indicator of Voice is the writer's commitment to the topic.

<p>6 The writer has chosen an engaging voice appropriate to the events and experiences of the story. The writer shows a deep commitment to the topic and wants others to enjoy reading the story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The topic comes to life. The writing shows sincerity, originality, liveliness, honesty, excitement, humor, or suspense. • Point of view is consistent throughout the story. When various points of view are used, the effect is smooth and differing “voices” are consistent. 	<p>5 The writer has chosen a voice appropriate to the events and experiences of the story. The writer shows a commitment to the topic and wants others to enjoy reading the story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The topic comes to life. The writing shows sincerity, originality, liveliness, honesty, excitement, humor, or suspense. • Point of view is consistent throughout the story. When various points of view are used, the effect is clear and differing “voices” are recognizable.
<p>4 A voice is present. The writing is long enough to show consistent use of an appropriate voice. The writer seems committed to the topic and wants others to read the writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point of view is generally maintained. • The writer is aware of the audience most of the time and maintains an appropriate voice. • At times, the writing shows sincerity, originality, liveliness, honesty, excitement, humor, or suspense. 	<p>3 A sense of the writer comes through at times. The writing may be too short to show a consistent voice. The writer seems somewhat committed to the topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point of view may shift unexpectedly and without apparent purpose. • The writer may not be aware of the audience. • The voice is inconsistent.
<p>2 There is little sense of the writer's involvement or commitment to the topic. The writer does not seem interested in the topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point of view is inconsistent and may add to the confusion in following the story. • The writer seems to be unaware of the audience and there is little sense of “writing to be read.” • The writing seems stiff or mechanical. 	<p>1 The writing lacks a sense of involvement or commitment to the topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point of view is vague or inconsistent. • The writing shows no audience awareness. • The writing is flat, lifeless, stiff or mechanical.

Student Language Writing Scoring Guide: Grades 6-8
Narrative Writing

Word Choice

- Descriptive language means specific words or phrases that create vivid images in the mind of the reader. It helps someone imagine a scene he did not witness.
- Sensory language means language that connects to the five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch) to create an image or description.
- Figurative language means words or phrases that are not meant to be taken literally (such as similes and metaphors).

6
Words communicate in a very interesting and natural way appropriate to purpose and audience. The writer uses a rich, broad range of words that are carefully chosen and placed for impact.

- Accurate, strong, specific, powerful words energize the writing.
- Vocabulary is striking and varied, creating vivid images of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- Precise words and phrases including sensory language capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- Words are natural, effective, and not overdone.
- Figurative language may be used.
- If used, slang is purposeful and works well (as it might in dialogue).

5
Words communicate in an interesting and natural way appropriate to purpose and audience. The writer uses a broad range of words that are carefully chosen and placed for impact.

- Accurate, specific words energize the writing.
- Vocabulary is varied, creating vivid images of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- Words and phrases including sensory language capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- Words are natural, effective, and not overdone.
- Figurative language may be used.
- If used, slang is purposeful and works well (as it might in dialogue).

4
Words communicate the message in writing that is long enough to show variety. Words are appropriate to purpose and audience.

- Words communicate meaning, but may not energize the writing.
- Words are functional and clear in conveying the intended ideas and events.
- Many different words are used to describe characters, events, and setting.
- Sensory language is used to describe experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- Descriptive or figurative language may occasionally seem overdone.
- Overused sayings or expressions (clichés) are usually avoided.

3
Words lack accuracy and variety. Words may not always be the best choice for purpose and audience. The writing may be too short to show variety.

- Words are general and not specific.
- Some words may be repeated too often.
- Occasionally, wrong words may be used.
- Some sensory language may be used to describe experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- Overused sayings or expressions (clichés) may appear often.

2
Words are repeated often and/or are misused. Limited word choice makes it difficult for the reader to understand the writing.

- Words are inaccurate, colorless, or flat.
- Words show little variety or are repeated over and over again.
- Wrong words may occur so often that the reader has difficulty understanding.
- Descriptions of experiences, events, setting, and/or characters are dull, repetitive, or missing.

1
Word choices are extremely limited. The writing has so many misuses of words that the reader cannot understand the writing.

- General, vague words do not communicate.
- Words do not make sense.
- Wrong words may be used.

Student Language Writing Scoring Guide: Grades 6-8
Narrative Writing

Sentence Fluency

- Sentence fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear, not just the eye. How does it sound when read aloud? That's the test.
- Sentence structure is the way a sentence is arranged grammatically. Sentence structure includes where the noun and verb fall within an individual sentence.

<p>6</p> <p>The writing has an effective flow and rhythm. Sentences show a high level of craftsmanship. Strong and varied structure makes expressive oral reading easy and enjoyable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences glide along with one sentence flowing smoothly into the next. • Great variety in sentences makes the writing more interesting and easy to read. • Sentences begin in many different ways. • There is great variety in the length of sentences. • Variety in sentence structures draw attention to key ideas and relationships among ideas (for example, short sentences may be used for excitement, suspense, or danger). • Dialogue is effective and sounds natural. 	<p>5</p> <p>The writing has an easy flow and rhythm. Sentences are carefully crafted. A variety of structures makes oral reading easy and enjoyable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences flow smoothly from one to another. • Variety in sentences makes the writing more interesting and easy to read. • Sentences begin in different ways. • There is variety in the length of sentences. • Variety in sentence structures supports key ideas and relationships among ideas (for example, short sentences may be used for excitement, suspense, or danger). • Dialogue sounds natural.
<p>4</p> <p>The writing is easy to read out loud. It flows and is long enough to show variety in sentence beginnings, lengths, and structures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences have a natural sound. • Most sentences begin in different ways. • Some sentences are shorter and some are longer. • Simple sentences read smoothly, but more complex sentences may not be as smooth. • Dialogue usually sounds natural. 	<p>3</p> <p>Parts of the writing are easy to read, but the reader may have to slow down or re-read because of the way sentences have been formed. The writing may be too short to show variety and control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portions of the writing have a natural sound, but others do not. • Some sentences begin the same way. • Many sentences have a similar length. • Simple sentences read smoothly, but more complex sentences are awkward. • Dialogue may not sound natural.
<p>2</p> <p>Most of the writing is difficult to read out loud. Difficult parts often force the reader to slow down or re-read because of the way sentences have been formed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing does not sound natural. • Many sentences begin in the same way. • Many or most sentences are the same length. • Sentence patterns/structures are usually the same, typically short and choppy or long and rambling. • Dialogue is awkward or ineffective. 	<p>1</p> <p>The writing is very difficult to read out loud. The reader often has to slow down or re-read because of the way sentences have been formed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing does not sound natural. • Most sentences begin in the same way. • Most sentences are the same length. • Sentence patterns/structures are short and choppy or long and rambling. • Words in sentences may be out of order.

Student Language Writing Scoring Guide: Grades 6-8
Narrative Writing

Conventions

- Conventions are the rules that apply to written English.
- Run-ons are complete sentences with no punctuation between them. One sentence runs right into another.
- Comma splices are complete sentences separated by only a comma. The use of comma splices is considered to be incorrect. Each complete sentence should end with a period.
- Fragments are only part of a sentence. They are considered incomplete sentences.
- Verb tense (past, present, future) should be consistent.

<p>6</p> <p>The writing shows very strong control of standard writing conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar and usage) in a piece that is longer and more complex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences are complete and have correct punctuation. There are no run-ons, comma splices, or fragments. • Punctuation within sentences is correct. • Spelling is correct, even of more difficult words. • Capitalization is correct. • Grammar is correct. • Dialogue is correct. • A wide range of conventions (e.g., colons, semi-colons, ellipses, dashes, parentheses) are used in writing that is longer and more complex. • Few errors. Little or no need for editing. 	<p>5</p> <p>The writing shows strong control of conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar and usage) in a piece that is longer and more complex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences are complete and have correct punctuation. There are no run-ons, comma splices, or fragments. • Punctuation within sentences is correct. • Spelling is correct, even of more difficult words. • Capitalization is correct. • Grammar is correct. • Dialogue is correct. • A wide range of conventions (e.g., colons, semi-colons, ellipses, dashes, parentheses) are used in writing that is longer and more complex. • Few errors. Little need for editing.
<p>4</p> <p>The writing shows control of conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar and usage) in a piece that is long enough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences are complete with correct punctuation. There are few, if any, run-ons, comma splices, or fragments. • Punctuation within sentences is usually correct. • Spelling is usually correct, especially of common words. • Capitalization is usually correct. • Verb tense is usually correct. Subjects and verbs go together. Other grammatical errors are not severe. • Dialogue is usually correct. • A wide range of conventions may not be used. • Errors require moderate editing. 	<p>3</p> <p>The writing shows limited control of conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar and usage). In some writing the conventions may be correct, but the writing is too short to show control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most sentences are complete with correct punctuation. There may be run-ons, comma splices, or fragments. • Sentences may contain errors in punctuation. • Spelling of common words is sometimes incorrect. • Capitalization errors are present. • Verb tense may not be correct. Subjects and verbs may not agree. There may be other grammatical errors. • Dialogue may contain errors. • Errors distract the reader and require significant editing.
<p>2</p> <p>The writing shows little control of conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar and usage). Many errors make reading difficult.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences may be incomplete. There are run-ons, comma splices, and/or fragments. • Sentences contains frequent errors in punctuation. • Common words may often be misspelled. • Capitalization is inconsistent or often incorrect. • There are major errors in grammar. • Dialogue contains many errors. • Errors require substantial editing. 	<p>1</p> <p>The writing shows very limited skill in using conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar and usage). There are so many errors that the reader has to re-read and has a hard time understanding the message.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ending punctuation is incorrect, random, or missing. • Many spelling errors make reading difficult. • Capitalization may seem random. • There are many grammatical errors. • Dialogue contains numerous errors. • Errors require extensive editing.