

# Facilitator's Guide to Leading the Scoring Session

## The Essential Skill of Writing: In-Depth Training *Ideas/Content & Organization* *For Content Teachers*

This packet contains

- Instructions for Practice Scoring including recommended sequence for scoring papers
- 8 Student Papers with Commentary and Scores



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# **The Essential Skill of Writing – In-depth Training for Content Teachers**

## **Tips for Using Student Papers**

Before beginning the portion of training using the sample student papers, consider the following points and share with participants:

- Explain that this training will focus on distinguishing the differences between the 3 and 4 score points for three main reasons:
  - 1) The difference between a 3 and a 4 is the most critical one for students because it determines whether or not they meet the standard, and ultimately earn a diploma.
  - 2) The 3/4 distinction is most likely the decision that will have to be made most frequently because most student papers fall into this score range.
  - 3) It is relatively easy to identify papers that both exceed the standard and those that fall far below the standard (the 5/6 scores and the 1/ 2 scores). It isn't worth the investment of limited time to debate the 5 versus 6 or the 1 versus 2 score points. However, there are a few papers at those score points included to illustrate what papers at each end of the scale look like.
- There is a range of performance within a given score point. A strong 3 that is close to a 4 looks very different from a low 3 that is just barely above a 2. However, ALL papers must be "funneled into" one of six score points, and the descriptors encompass a range of characteristics. Therefore, it is best not to compare one with another (i.e., "How could THAT paper be a 4 and THIS paper also be a 4?"). Rather, compare each paper to the Scoring Guide to see which bullets best describe a given paper.
- Usually, multiple bullets in a score point on the Scoring Guide describe a paper. However, a single bullet can, in some cases, determine a score. There are many examples, but they include such bullets as, in Ideas, "minimal development; insufficient details" for a 2, or "a close retelling" for a 3. In Organization they would include such bullets as "a missing or extremely undeveloped beginning, body, and/or ending" for a 2.
- It is critical for raters to keep the traits separate in their minds as they're scoring. For example, they need to overlook distracting errors in Conventions or Sentence Fluency to see Ideas.
- A cautionary note about the student work that will be scored here. It was generated during the State Writing Assessment, when students had no access to outside resources and were given a choice of 4 broad topics as prompts. These samples are likely quite a bit shorter than most classroom work samples will be. With work samples, teachers also have the advantage of being able to provide feedback after the first set of scores using the Official Score Form. This should enable students to improve the quality of their work from the first submission to a revised submission.
- Teachers should recognize the difference between a GRADE FOR AN ASSIGNMENT AND SCORES FOR A WORK SAMPLE. If a student fails to follow the directions for a classroom assignment, he or she might receive a low grade for that reason. However, the piece could and should be scored as a stand-alone work sample when it is scored with the Scoring Guide. It is conceivable that an assignment would receive a failing grade as an assignment but pass as a legitimate writing work sample.

- All work samples for the purpose of the Essential Skills are scored based on the Scoring Guide. Students who are on an IEP, and who are working toward a modified diploma or alternative certificate may have the standards altered to align with the requirements of their IEP. However, if students are working toward a regular diploma, then the work sample must meet the standard score of 4 in the 4 required traits on the scoring guide.
- For ELL students working toward a regular diploma, work samples must meet all requirements. A small number of ELL students who meet the criteria in OAR 581-22-0617 may be eligible to complete work samples in their home language.
- The mode of writing (Expository, Persuasive, or Narrative) can have an impact on the scores for traits. Think about how Organization might be altered depending on the purpose of the writing, or how Ideas and Content in a persuasive or expository paper might differ from a narrative paper.
- Scores are assigned ONLY as whole points--no pluses or minuses. However, for facilitator clarification here, we have sometimes included a plus or minus to indicate where on the spectrum for that score point this particular paper falls. It is meant to help give participants a sense of whether their own thoughts about the paper were right on with those of the scoring team, close, or quite far off. (Teachers might use pluses and minuses with their students in certain situations, but all need to understand that only whole score points are "official.")
- "Official scores" on the Keys were assigned by large groups of scoring directors from around the state who meet twice a year for three days at a time to develop and score training materials. Scores have been thoroughly discussed and a consensus arrived at by these experienced directors. As facilitator, your role is to help teachers understand why the paper received a particular score by referring to the language of the scoring guide. Do not get dragged off track by an individual who wants to argue about the validity of the score.



# **The Essential Skill of Writing – In-depth Training for Content Teachers**

## **Part 1: Ideas/Content and Organization**

### **Instructions for Leading Scoring of Student Papers**

#### **IDEAS AND CONTENT**

##### **Close Reading of Scoring Guide with Highlighter Pens**

- Ask participants to read the scoring guide closely, beginning with a score of 4 for Ideas and Content only. They should highlight words and phrases that will help them identify a 4. They should then move to the 3, highlighting words and phrases that differentiate it from a 4. Discuss as a group
- Ask participants to move quickly through the other score points, identifying and highlighting words and phrases that distinguish one score point from the adjacent score point(s).
- Clarifies the factors that usually differentiate one score point from another, again focusing on the 4 and 3. This is also the time to refine and clarify the bullets and descriptors--points that are not written in the Scoring Guide. For example, in Ideas and Content:
  - (3) Clarify what a "list" paper looks like in different modes (e.g., "bed-to-bed" in narrative--lots of irrelevant details before getting to the point of the paper, which is then not as developed as it should be; in expos or persuasive, mentioning the supporting points without any explanation, examples, elaboration).
  - (3) Explain what is meant by details that are "uneven" (much development of some supporting points, only a mention of others that are of similar or equal importance)
  - (3) Clarify the bullet about retellings of movies, TV episodes, short stories, songs, etc. (i.e., degree to which the writer changes the ideas and details enough to make the story his or her own; could be a 4 if it's changed enough, but a 3 if it's a straight retelling--rater judgment)
  - (3) Explain what "limited" details mean (not enough)
  - (3) Caution about dream endings (often but not necessarily a 3; writer doesn't know how to end the story, usually Imaginative, so protagonist wakes up; no evidence that the writer can develop an idea; can score 4 if ending is woven into reality or something else that rescues it)
  - (3/4 and higher) Remind raters that accuracy of details is not as relevant an issue for the assessment as it is for classroom work samples when students may have had access to outside resources or have just finished studying certain content
  - (4 and higher) Explain what is meant by "connections" and "insights" and more...

##### **Scoring of Student Papers**

To prepare for the discussions that follow, the facilitator should read the commentaries included as a separate document and make any relevant notes on their copies of the student papers. Commentaries will help raise points for the discussions here--there is a full page for each paper. All scores are also listed on a one-page Key.

Be sure the discussion of each paper gets to the specific details unique to each paper regarding each trait.

##### **Paper 1: Voting (Persuasive)**

- Participants read paper.
- Facilitator asks each of the following questions and waits for response: "To score for Ideas, ask yourself first if the writing is clear. Is it clear in this paper? Is it focused? Are there relevant developmental details? Are there enough details?" "If yes, then the paper is at least a 4, as this clearly is. Is there any reason to go above a 4 here?" (No--paper is a clear, solid 4 in Ideas.) Discuss any points that should be made about the paper / bullets of scoring guide.

### **Paper 2: Pendleton (Expository)**

- Same questions and process, except that this time, not all the answers will be yes. (Be sure their perceptions are correct. For example, if they say the details are too general and that's not the problem, then say so and then get them to identify what the problem really is (e.g., an unelaborated list of point, repetitious points, whatever--see commentary). This paper scores a 3 in Ideas.

### **Paper 3: Marching Band (Expository)**

- This time, don't lead participants with the questions. Just ask them to consider the questions, consult the scoring guide, and determine a score in their own minds. Say that you imagine they're thinking about the scores of 3, 4, or 5, and ask how many think the paper at least meets with a 4. Go from there. Ask them to use language from the scoring guide to justify their scores.

### **Paper 4: Works of Art (Expository)**

- Same process as for above, except you can narrow the discussion from the beginning to 3 versus 4.

### **Paper 5: Effective Parent (Expository)**

- Same process, but narrow the discussion from the beginning to 1, 2, and 3.

### **Paper 6: Limits on Technology--ELL (Persuasive)**

- **Same process, but narrow the discussion from the beginning to 3, 4, and 5. Check the time here.** The last two papers clearly exceed, and you need to leave plenty of time for the trait of Organization. It's not worth the investment of time to haggle over 5 versus 6, interesting though it may be. Choices are to have teachers simply read the papers, telling them that these are what high papers look like in Ideas and telling them the scores, or have brief discussions.

### **Paper 7: Saving the Planet (Expository)**

- Same process, but narrow the discussion from the beginning to 4, 5, 6.

### **Paper 8: Football (Expository)**

- Same process, but narrow the discussion from the beginning to 4, 5, 6.

## **ORGANIZATION**

### **Close Reading: Scoring Guide with Highlighter Pens**

- Ask participants to read the scoring guide closely again, beginning with 4 for Organization only. They should highlight words and phrases that will help them identify a 4. They should then move to the 3, highlighting words and phrases that differentiate it from a 4. After that, they should move to all the other score points, although they should read the other score points more quickly.
- The main purpose should be to identify and understand words and phrases that distinguish one score point from the adjacent score point(s).
- Facilitator then clarifies the factors that usually differentiate one score point from another, beginning with the 4 and then moving to the 3, spending the most time on these two score points. This is also the time to refine and clarify the bullets and descriptors--points that are not written in the Scoring Guide. For example, in Organization:
  - encourage raters to be aware of the mode of the paper right away; this will help them score Organization appropriately (Narrative and Imaginative are often organized chronologically; Expository and Persuasive can take many different forms: standard formula, comparison/contrast, most to least important, etc.)

- (4) clarify what “formulaic” means specifically; ask them to be on the lookout for it, since it will help them see the structure of the paper and score it accordingly
- (5) mention that the standard formula can be used with skill, grace, and subtlety; it doesn’t happen that often, but when it does (which also means the reader barely notices it), then it can receive a score of 5
- make sure raters interpret “beginning” (introduction) and “ending” (conclusion) broadly; they should not limit their “look” to the discrete first and last paragraphs. Many “introductions” consist of more than one paragraph; many “conclusions” begin to wind down well before the last separate paragraph.
- IMPORTANT: explain that if a paper has no paragraph breaks but is a SOLID 4 in EVERY OTHER WAY, it can receive a 4 (meaning a well-developed introduction, a well-developed conclusion, smooth and varied transitions, and effective sequencing so that the reader can follow the paper easily. If any one of these other elements is weak, the paper scores a 3. Lack of paragraph designation will be accounted for in Conventions.
- remind raters that Narrative and Imaginative papers do not necessarily contain a thesis statement or any explicit statement of the main idea, which is appropriate for those modes
- when a thesis statement is present, it is not necessarily a detriment if it does not appear in the traditional place (i.e., last sentence of first paragraph); just determine if it’s effectively placed
- (5/6) what is meant by “creative” organization at 5 and 6? (example: a persuasive paper begins with a brief narrative about a person in a dilemma; paper goes on to explain how a proposal would remedy the problem; conclusion might return to the narrative. There are other possibilities for “creative” organization--anything out of the ordinary, but it must be effective--
- (5/6) could consider 5 or 6 when major time shifts are handled skillfully and gracefully (e.g., present to past; present to future and back, etc.)
- and more...

## Scoring of Student Papers

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Be sure the discussion of each paper gets to the specific details unique to each paper regarding each trait.

Participants have already read all of the papers below and discussed them for Ideas and Content, so it should take much less time to re-read them and score for Organization.

## Paper 1: Voting (Persuasive)

- Participants read paper.
- Facilitator asks each of the following questions and waits for response: “To score for Organization, ask yourself first if the introduction is developed. Is it in this paper? Next, is the conclusion developed? Can you follow the paper? Are there transitions? Are there paragraph breaks?” Discuss along the way. “If yes, then the paper is at least a 4, as this clearly is. Is there any reason to go above a 4 here?” (No--paper is a clear, solid 4.) Ask what else they noticed about the organization. (It follows the formula for the standard five-paragraph essay). Discuss any points that should be made about the paper / bullets of scoring guide.

**Paper 2: Pendleton (Expository)**

- Same questions and process, except that this time, not all the answers will be yes. (Be sure their perceptions are correct.) This paper scores a 3 in Ideas.

**Paper 3: Marching Band (Expository)**

- This time, don't lead participants with the questions. Just ask them to consider the questions, consult the scoring guide, and determine a score in their own minds. Say that you're sure they're thinking about the scores of 3, 4, or 5, and ask how many think the paper at least meets with a 4. Go from there. Ask them to use language from the scoring guide to justify their scores.

**Paper 4: Works of Art (Expository)**

- Same process as for above, except you can narrow the discussion from the beginning to 3 versus 4.

**Paper 5: Effective Parent (Expository)**

- Same process, but narrow the discussion from the beginning to 1, 2, and 3.

**Paper 6: Limits on Technology--ELL (Persuasive)**

- Same process, but narrow the discussion from the beginning to 3, 4, and 5.

**Check the time here.** The last two papers clearly exceed, and you want to have time to at least take a look at both. Be careful not to spend a lot of time on one and then have no time for the other. Choices are to have teachers simply read the papers, telling them that these are what high papers look like in Organization and telling them the scores, or to have brief discussions.

**Paper 7: Saving the Planet (Expository)**

- Same process, but narrow the discussion from the beginning to 4, 5, 6.

**Paper 8: Football (Expository)**

- Same process, but narrow the discussion from the beginning to 4, 5, 6.

# Training: Writing Scoring Guide

## High School Content Area Teachers

### Part I: Ideas and Content / Organization

Note: Official scores are comprised of whole numbers only--no pluses or minuses. These are here for training purposes only. Because a score point encompasses a wide range of characteristics, it can be helpful for both trainers and raters to know whether a given paper was high, low, or solidly in the middle of the score point spectrum.

<b>Ideas and Content / Organization</b>							
<b>PAPER #</b>	<b>Title/Mode</b>	<b>I/C</b>	<b>ORG</b>	<b>VOICE</b>	<b>WC</b>	<b>SF</b>	<b>CONV</b>
1	Voting (P)	4	4	4+	4	4	4
2	Pendleton (E)	3	3	4	4	4	3
3	Marching Band (E)	4+	4	4+	4	4	4
4	Works of Art (E)	3	3	3	3	3	3
5	Effective Parent (E)	2	2	2+	3-	2-	2-
6	Limits on Technology (P)	4	4	4	4	3	3
7	Saving the Planet (E)	5	5	5	5	5	5
8	Football (P)	6	6	6	5+	5+	5+

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There are many laws that affect the rights of teenagers. Some of the laws are for the best, while others are just restricting. One law that exists that is in place for a good reason is the one that restricts the voting age. Teenagers should not be allowed to vote until age eighteen because most of them don't pay attention to politics, would not make wise voting decisions, and don't have enough education to vote.

The majority of teenagers have no idea what goes on in politics, mostly because they don't care. With all the other things going on in a teenager's life, staying up-to-date with political happenings simply doesn't take priority. If teenagers don't care about politics, then giving them the right to influence what goes on in it should definitely not be allowed.

This apathy for politics and the voting process would only lead to teenagers making unwise decisions while voting. Since most teens wouldn't know enough about the topics that would need to be considered before voting, many of the votes would be shots in the dark that wouldn't reflect what the voter really would have thought to be the best decision had they investigated further.

The education required to make an



informed decision is a key thing that teenagers don't have. They don't know enough about the voting process and what it means to vote wisely. They should have to wait until they are age eighteen and have received a full education to have the privilege to be able to vote.

Teenagers under the age of eighteen should not be allowed to vote because the majority of them don't pay attention to politics, would not make good voting decisions, and are not educated enough to vote. This is not a law that exists simply to restrict teenagers, but rather one that is beneficial for everyone. It is just one of the many laws that, for good or bad, affects the rights of teenagers.



## Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 1 - Voting

Mode: Persuasive

Ideas & Content	Organization	Sentence Fluency	Conventions	Voice	Word Choice
4	4	4	4	4	4

### Ideas:

The paper scores a 4 in Ideas, which are **clear, focused**, and just **developed** enough to warrant a 4. The main idea is stated in the third sentence, and the next sentence lists the three main points to support it. The logic is sound throughout the essay (e.g., “This apathy for politics... would only lead to...unwise decisions...Since most teens wouldn’t know enough about the topics that would need to be considered before voting, many of the votes would be shots in the dark that wouldn’t reflect what the voter really would have thought to be the best decision had they investigated further.”) However, each main point would ideally be further developed, especially to make more clear distinctions among the points. As it is, they overlap quite a bit. Nevertheless, this piece meets the standard in Ideas. For a persuasive piece to score higher, opposing points should be raised and refuted.

### Organization:

The paper scores a 4 in Organization. The introduction is **developed** and contains the thesis and three main supporting points. The **organization** is **predictable**, using the standard **formula** for the five-paragraph essay. The conclusion is **developed**, following the formula as it restates the thesis and three main points before broadening out to more general statements. A variety of **transitions** work well both between paragraphs and within paragraphs. (The transition from paragraphs 2 to 3 is especially effective: the first two words of the third paragraph refer back to the concept in the last sentence of paragraph 2--“This apathy...”). The reader has no problem following the logical sequence of ideas throughout the essay.

Note: Mention to teachers that it’s really good to be aware of the standard formula for Organization, which students often use in the expository and persuasive modes. Once teachers are alerted to it, it’s easy to spot immediately. It will almost always get a 4, although once in a while, a student can apply it in such a skillful and subtle way that the reader is almost unaware of the formula. In such cases, it could score a 5.

### Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a 4 in Sentence Fluency. There is sufficient variety of **sentence structure, length, and beginnings**, and the writing **flows when read aloud**. A few sentences contain awkward spots (e.g., “One law that exists that is in place for a good reason is the one that restricts the voting age” and the sentence quoted above under Ideas and Content), but a score of 4 allows for a few awkward places. Overall, the writing is fluent enough to meet the standard.

### Conventions:

The paper scores a high 4 in Conventions. There are no errors in **end-of-sentence punctuation**. The only misspelled words are “recieved” and “privilage.” **Internal punctuation** is correct, including hyphens in “up-to-date”; commas are used in a variety of grammatical settings, including a fairly sophisticated one in the last sentence. Except for the two misspellings, the conventions are correct. To score a 5, there would have to be more range in conventions used, and/or the paper would have to be longer and more complex.

### Voice:

The paper scores a 4 in Voice. Considering the topic of teen voting, the persuasive mode, and the general audience, the voice is entirely **appropriate**. The writer seems **sincere** and **committed to the topic**.

### Word Choice:

The paper scores a 4 in Word Choice. The word choices demonstrate sufficient **variety**, and they **convey the intended message**. A few words are generic (“key thing”), but most are **accurate** and **specific** enough.

## "The Pendleton Round-up"

When September rolls around Pendleton comes alive! On September twelfth thru the fifteenth the little towns population doubles within one day. The streets are lined with booths and food of all kinds. When these cowboys come to town you won't need any sleep!

Horse trailers and big pick-up trucks fill the streets. The towns filled with the sounds of cowboys and their horses. They anxiously awaiting for slack to begin. There are events like; bull riding, team roping, barrel racing, calf roping and my favorite wild cow milking! Every day, for five days the rodeo eliminates its competitors one by one. After the rodeo is over for the day you can go to the dances. The dances are held in the Convention Center. People attend from all ages and lasts until eleven pm! If you are twentyone you can party and dance in the Let'er Buck Room! Saturday is the last day of the rodeo. The winners of each event are rewarded with; saddles, blankets and customized buckles!

The Pendleton Round-up consists of bull riding, barrel racing, calf roping, team roping and my favorite wild cow milking! There are a large variety of things to do and it is a blast!

## Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 2 - Pendleton

Mode: Expository  
(purpose: to explain)

Ideas & Content	Organization	Sentence Fluency	Conventions	Voice	Word Choice
3	3	4	3	4	4

### Ideas:

The paper scores a 3 in Ideas. **The reader can understand the main idea** (the Pendleton Round-up provides variety and fun), but it may be **too general**. The entire paper consists of fewer than 200 words to support such a broad thesis, and the details are little more than a **list** of points with insufficient development. The details themselves are specific, but they should be explained further and additional details should be provided. (The list of events in the second paragraph is repeated almost verbatim in the last paragraph.)

### Organization:

The paper scores a 3 in Organization. The introductory paragraph works well, but the **undeveloped** conclusion is ineffectively **formulaic**: a repetition of points already made. **Paragraph breaks** occur in only three places, and the second “paragraph” should contain more breaks as topics change.

**Transitions** function all right for the most part, although they are missing in places.

### Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a low 4 in Sentence Fluency. The sentences are fluent enough, with enough **variety of beginnings, structures, and lengths**, but there are only 17 of them. A missing word affects fluency (“They anxiously awaiting...”), as does a missing subject (“People attend from all ages and lasts untill eleven pm!”). However, all other sentences are easily read aloud. As in Voice and Word Choice, some raters might reasonably justify a 3 based on text length.

### Conventions:

The paper scores a 3 in Conventions. **End-of-sentence punctuation** is correct. Semi-colons are misused twice before a list (a colon would also be incorrect). Misspelled words include *threw* instead of *through* and *competaters*. Commas are used incorrectly in several situations. The singular possessive is missing an apostrophe in “the towns population,” while the simple plural for *saddle* does have an apostrophe (“rewarded with *saddle’s*”). Subject-verb agreement is a problem in the last sentence (“*There are* a variety...”). These problems, given the relatively brief text, bring the score to a 3.

### Voice:

The paper scores a low 4 in Voice. The writer clearly enjoys the lively events of the Round-up. However, a score of 3 could be justified because the text is relatively short (17 sentences and about 196 words).

### Word Choice:

The paper scores a low 4 in Word Choice. Almost all of the words are **functional** and **appropriate to audience and purpose**, with the exception of “slack” in the second paragraph. Given the general audience, specialized terms should be either explained or used in a context that makes their meaning clear. One phrase is imprecise: “People attend *from all ages...*” Otherwise, the **words work** well and there is **variety**. Again, the length of the passage is problematic; a score of 3 could be argued for that reason.



Activities, jobs, and hobbies often come with responsibilities. One activity that requires great responsibility is Marching band. To do good in marching band, one must be disciplined, patient, responsible, and hardworking. Marching band is an activity where if one does not practice the above listed attributes, he or she may bring the entire band down with them.

In any given marching band, there are different levels in which a member must work. There is the band as a whole, the individual sections, and the individual. The entire band practices every fifth period, and depending on the band, they might practice in the afternoons and weekends as well. When entire band practices together, first they must go out on to a football field. Then they learn how to march, learn the music, and then learn the field positions before they finally put all of that together to create a fantastic field show.

In order to be good in a field show, sections will get together to practice their parts. A section consists of one grouping of instruments from the band. In this year's field show the saxophones practiced every Wednesday during academic seminar. They referred to their section leader as a Nazi, but they did better than they would have without her. In the Tuba section, our section leader held no practices, or sectionals. This resulted in us not being as organized or

prepared as we could have been.

Finally; one of the most important parts of marching band is the solo practice each member should partake in. In order to win trophies and high placings in competitions, each member of the band must make sure they know their music, their positions, and they must practice good marching techniques. Each person is as important to the band as the next, so everyone must practice until they are as good as their peers.

Marching band is an activity that requires a lot of responsibility, responsibility to yourself for the band, and for your school.

## Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 3 – Marching Band

Mode: Expository  
(purpose: to explain)

Ideas & Content	Organization	Sentence Fluency	Conventions	Voice	Word Choice
4	4	4	4	4	4

### Ideas:

The paper scores a 4 in Ideas. The **main idea** is **clearly** stated in the second sentence (“One activity that requires great responsibility is marching band.”). At first, probably because of the paragraph break, many readers may expect that the paper will discuss explicitly the traits of self-discipline, patience, responsibility, and hard work. However, as explained at the beginning of the second paragraph, the focus of the paper is to explain the different levels at which these traits are required, which the writer does effectively. **Details** are **relevant** and **specific**, and there are enough of them to develop the ideas.

### Organization:

The paper scores a 4 in Organization. The introduction is **developed**, but the conclusion is significantly underdeveloped, with just one sentence comprising the entire conclusion. However, **the body is easy to follow with details that fit where placed**. **Transitions** are varied and work well, especially within paragraphs (e.g., “In order to win trophies...”). A different paragraph break between the first and second paragraphs may have helped the reader, but, **despite some** organizational **weaknesses**, organization is **clear and coherent**.

### Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a 4 in Sentence Fluency. There is sufficient variety of **sentence structure, length, and beginnings**, and the writing **flows** easily enough **when read aloud**. The writer struggles a little with two attempts at parallel structure in the fourth and last paragraphs (“...each member must make sure they know their music, their positions, *and they must practice good marching techniques*” and, in the last sentence, “...responsibility to yourself, *for* the band, and *for* your school.”). Except for those two spots, however, the writing reads smoothly and meets the standard easily.

### Conventions:

The paper scores a 4 in Conventions. There are no errors in **end-of-sentence punctuation** or **spelling**. In the second sentence, the writer says, “To do good” instead of “To do well.” At the beginning of the fourth paragraph, there seems to be a semi-colon rather than a comma after the word “Finally.” In the last sentence, a dash or colon should follow the first “responsibility,” rather than a comma. Almost all of the other errors involve the use of pronouns. Usually, they are errors of noun-pronoun agreement (e.g., “each member ...must make sure they...”). Sometimes, they are errors of number (e.g., “he or she may bring the entire band down with them.”). Once, it is an error in case (e.g., “This resulted in us not being as organized” instead of “This resulted in our not being as organized.”) However, grade level expectations specify that this skill should be under “general control,” rather than “solid control,” so the errors are not as significant as many others. There are a few other minor errors, but overall, the writing demonstrates **control of conventions**.

### Voice:

The paper scores a 4 in Voice. Considering the topic, the expository mode, and the general audience, the voice is **appropriate**. The writer seems **sincere** and **committed** to explaining how the parts fit into the whole.

### Word Choice:

The paper scores a 4 in Word Choice. Word choices are a little “off” in a couple of places (e.g., “partake” in solo practice; “pile” everything together to create a show). A couple of other word choices are general (e.g., “In order to be good in a field show”). Nevertheless, word choices **convey the intended message** and demonstrate enough **variety** to meet the standard.

Works of art such as music, films etc. can produce strong reaction to a person. Like movies can bring you to some laughter that can have you crying from laughter. Some songs can bring you memories or even inspire us.

One song called In the Garden was played at my aunt's, grandma's, and grandpa's funerals. Everytime I hear that song I cry because it brings back memories of all those people.

The movie, Super Troopers is the funniest movie I have ever seen. Some parts of the movie I was rolling around on the ground laughing so hard I was crying.

Some paintings are some amazing and inspiring that they move people. Like, A Starry Night it is so beautiful it has made many probably become artists.

Some movies and other forms of entertainment can make you feel all emotions. My personal favorite is comedy. I think all literature, movies, shows and music move us all in different ways. I think everyone needs a little of all emotions sometimes.



## Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 4 – Works of Art

Mode: Expository  
(purpose: to explain)

Ideas & Content	Organization	Sentence Fluency	Conventions	Voice	Word Choice
3	3	3	3	3	3

### Ideas:

The paper scores a 3 in Ideas. **The reader can understand the main idea** (works of art can produce strong reactions in us), and there is some development. However, the ideas are **overly broad and simplistic** for high school. The main idea, expressed in the first sentence, is itself too **general**, and even though three specific examples are provided (one song, one movie, and one painting), each example is underdeveloped. The paragraphs in the body of the essay consist of only two sentences; **detail is limited**.

### Organization:

The paper scores a 3 in Organization. **An attempt has been made to organize the writing, but the overall structure is skeletal**. An introduction and conclusion are present (three and four sentences respectively) and functional, and the reader can certainly **follow** the writing. Paragraph breaks are effectively placed, but **placement of details is not always effective** (e.g., the specific detail about the author's personal favorite in the conclusion).

### Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a 3 in Sentence Fluency. Although **some** sentences **invite fluid reading**, others contain **awkward constructions**, especially in the first and fourth paragraphs, which introduce sentences with the word "Like..." **Sentence beginnings** would benefit from more **variety** (several begin with "Some..." and "I think..."). There are at least two missing words, which affect fluency ("a" in the first sentence and perhaps "During" at the beginning of a sentence in paragraph 3. Lastly, it is difficult to demonstrate enough variety in a total of only 13 sentences; the **text may be too short** to accomplish that.

### Conventions:

The paper scores a 3 in Conventions. There are two errors in **end-of-sentence punctuation** (paragraphs 1 and 4). One of the most significant errors is in point of view consistency. The author switches from first to second to third throughout the essay. Sometimes, there is even a switch within the same sentence ("Some songs can bring *you* memories or even inspire *us*.") Spelling is correct except for "laughter," which is spelled correctly the second time it is used) and "everytime," which should be two words. In English usage, we say that something produces a strong reaction "in" a person, not "to" a person. The writing shows **limited control of standard conventions**.

### Voice:

The paper scores a low 4 in Voice. The writer does seem **sincere** and **committed to the topic**, especially when discussing the specific examples. However, the essay consists of only 13 sentences, so it is difficult to assign a score of 4 in any trait because **the text may be too short** to demonstrate consistent and appropriate voice. Districts would have to make this decision.

### Word Choice:

The paper scores a 3 in Word Choice. The **language lacks precision** (e.g., use of the word "like" to mean "for example"). Other words are **general** for the high school level, and a **misused word** appears ("Some paintings are some amazing..."). Even though that error is likely due to a lack of careful proofreading, it nevertheless remains an incorrect word as a minor factor in the assessment of Word Choice. Lastly, with only 13 sentences **the text is too short to demonstrate** enough **variety**. A combination of the first problems described along with text length results in the score of 3.

an effective parent is that they take care of there kids by, one make sure that they have good higen and have food and clothes and a nice house to live in and make sure they go to school and behave, and they give there kids good quilty attenchen.

## Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 5 – Effective Parent

Mode: Expository  
(purpose: to explain)

Ideas & Content	Organization	Sentence Fluency	Conventions	Voice	Word Choice
2	2	2	2	2	3

### Ideas:

The paper scores a 2 in Ideas. Ideas and purpose are both clear, which distinguishes the paper from score of 1. Developmental details are relevant, but **development is minimal**, with **insufficient details**. (This paper illustrates how a single bullet from the Scoring Guide may determine a score; in this case, the second bullet is the only one of four that applies, yet it describes the paper and determines the score.)

### Organization:

The paper scores a 2 in Organization. There is some sense of movement, with an occasional organizational device discernible (“...by one, make sure...” “and”). Order or relationship among ideas is never unclear, and the reader is never confused. However, the **piece is simply too short to demonstrate organizational skills**.

### Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a low 2 in Sentence Fluency. Construction is **rambling**. The beginning is **awkward** (“an effective parent is that they take care of there kids...”), and from that point, every phrase is connected with “and.” The rambling construction does not allow natural pauses when the piece is read aloud.

### Conventions:

The paper scores a low 2 in Conventions. The only punctuation is an internal comma (incorrect) and a period at the end, so **end-of-sentence punctuation** is almost non-existent. The first letter is not **capitalized**, and many common words are misspelled. The paper does not score a 1 because some words are **spelled** correctly, and, more importantly, the meaning is clear despite conventions errors.

### Voice:

The paper scores a high 2 in Voice. There is **little sense of involvement or commitment; the writing is largely flat**. (If there were more writing there, perhaps a voice would emerge that is suitable for the expository mode, but with so little written, a voice does not emerge.)

### Word Choice:

The paper scores a low 3 in Word Choice. Some words work (hygiene, quality attention), but others are general. Most relevant is the bullet that says **text is too short to demonstrate variety**.

As our society continue to growth in new technology, the number of personal use has increase dramatically, especially in teenagers. The abusing of new technology by teenagers and their spending time has put an alarming worried to parents. As a parent, I'm more concern about my children when they spend their time on these technology trends. When teens spend their time on text messaging, talk on phone, play game and using computer, they are less involving in community as well as isolated themselves from society.

When teens are not working and not involved in any school program, they have lots of time during the day. Instead of do homework or any school related. They would spend their time on text messaging, watch T.V, using Computer and play games all day. Relaxing their minds is a good thing but when they get into these activities and it would brings our teens to less care about study. No education might will affect their future later on.

As a parent, I have the responsibility to find a way to help my teen to manage their times more useful. First, I could discipline the limitation of spending time. Make a schedule when and how teens can watch television or how long they can be on the phone. For an example, they could talk and text messaging on the weekend more than week days, and could even stay up later than usual. Allow them to use computer depending on how long they have been using and the reason what they using for. If they do homeworks then should be allowed to use longer. Helping the teens limited their amount of time is an opportunity to keep them

Stay on track and let them know that parents are <sup>really</sup> care about them.

Every time teens spend more times on television, cell phone, computer or anything that take their time to do homework, then parents should be worried. Teenagers are caring more about fun than their education, and that's why they always need the supporting and caring from parents. If parents are not paying enough attention to their teens, then they will easily go off track by the environment surround them. Later, their grade will be affect because of distraction. Gradually, there is no more motivation to social with the family and less time for friends, especially study.

Using your time on these medias, will damage the child ability to learn and isolate themselves from society. As a parent, we must restricted our teens on these usage of media as a way to help our children. I know that socialize is a good way to meet new friends and understanding each other better, but one is involved in extensive use of their socialize aids will cause threat<sup>a</sup> person to less concern with people that are near by.



## Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 6 – Limits on Technology (Note: ELL Paper)

Mode: Persuasive  
(purpose: to convince)

Ideas & Content	Organization	Sentence Fluency	Conventions	Voice	Word Choice
4	4	3	3	4	4

### Ideas:

The paper scores a high 4 in Ideas. The reader must look past problems in Sentence Fluency and Conventions (especially errors in forms of words), to see that ideas and details are **clear, focused**, and solid. The main ideas are supported by plenty of **relevant details**, including several logical points (“No education might will affect their future,” “Their grade will be affect because of distraction,” the social isolation that may occur). The writer also makes good use of specific examples (“Make a schedule...,” allow for some compromise and acknowledge different circumstances). A point on the opposing side is cited (“Relaxing their minds is a good thing”) and then refuted.

### Organization:

The paper scores a 4 in Organization. Both the introduction and the conclusion are well **developed**. **Transitions** are effective (*As a parent, Instead of do homework, First, For an example, Gradually*), producing a **body that is easy to follow with details that fit where placed**. There is clear, logical **sequencing** and effective **paragraph breaks**.

### Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a 3 in Sentence Fluency. The writer actually demonstrates a solid grasp of several varieties of **sentence structures**. There are a significant number of rough spots, however, often involving a missing word (e.g., “Allow them to use computer depending on how long they have been using and the reason what they are using for”). The frequent problem with wrong forms of words and parallel structure does interfere with fluency (e.g., “...text messaging, talk on phone, play game and using computer). Word inversion also interferes with fluency (“...brings our teens to less care about study...”).

### Conventions:

The paper scores a 3 in Conventions. **End-of-sentence punctuation** is almost always correct, with only two fragments in a fairly long and complex piece. However, as already mentioned, the problem with correct forms of words is significant, and it occurs frequently. Subject-verb agreement is a problem (“As our society continue to...”), as is the formation of plurals (“...teens spend more times on television, cell phone, computer, or anything else that take their time...”). Capitalization is fine. Spelling is generally correct with just a couple of errors (*dramaticly, damage*).

### Voice:

The paper scores a high 4 in Voice. The writer seems **sincere** in his or her feelings about the possible harmful effects of the unrestricted use of technology by teens. There seems to be a **commitment to the topic by** suggesting specific ways to handle the problem, acknowledging at the same time the benefits of using technology for both educational and social reasons.

### Word Choice:

The paper scores a low 4 in Word Choice, although there could be a debate about the 3 versus 4 score points. However, it is critical for raters to recognize the difference between a word that is **WRONG** and a word that is the wrong **FORM** of the right word. When the word is wrong, it is an error in Word Choice. When the form of the word is wrong, it is an error in Conventions. Almost every error in this paper is one of the wrong forms. Wrong words are rare, although there are a few, primarily in the first half of the paper. Otherwise, the words **function to convey the intended meaning**, and there is **variety**.

## Saving the Planet

Organizations around the world are working to solve problems that threaten our well-being. The American Cancer Society funds research about cancer, there are groups researching AIDs and educating people about it, and there are numerous organizations trying to save the rainforest. These are all examples of organizations trying to make a difference in the world, but if I had unlimited resources, I would donate to a different cause. The Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) funds research on alternate energy solutions, which I believe to be important to the future of our planet.

The current forms of energy we use today, namely fossil fuels, are leading to the pollution and destruction of our planet. Each day, more and more chemicals and fumes are expelled into the atmosphere by cars and other modes of transportation, as well as nuclear and other energy plants. This pollution is slowly leading to the erosion of Earth's ozone layer, which is turn affecting us negatively by increasing the amount of ultraviolet rays that reach the earth's surface and changing weather patterns. This will increase the number of skin cancer cases a year, and will make deserts expand with changing weather. We however, can stop the pollution by funding research to find more efficient and natural forms of energy.

The NESEA researches other types of energy and how to apply them to our daily lives. Sunlight, water, and wind are natural ways to obtain energy that do not harm the enviroment. Research is being done right now to find a new way to power cars so that they will not emit fumes into the atmosphere. Electric cars are one possible solution, but water is also

being researched. By providing NESEA with the resources to research energy even more, I would be contributing to the health of not only the generations of today, but to the health of all future people.

Finding a more natural energy source could also directly make life better for each one of us. If researchers were to find a more efficient or less expensive energy source, it would cost each of us less money for things we use in our daily lives. If a car was run on water or electricity, it would cost the average American next to nothing to operate. In order to make these cars more affordable however, more research needs to be done.

I believe that the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association is an important organization that will benefit the future of our earth. The NESEA researches alternate energy sources to prevent pollution and help stop Global Warming. They are trying to find ways to apply natural forms of energy so they can be used in our everyday lives. For these reasons, I believe that the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association is the organization that I would use my unlimited sources to help.



## Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 7 – Saving the Planet

Mode: Expository

Ideas & Content	Organization	Sentence Fluency	Conventions	Voice	Word Choice
5	5	5	5	5	5

### Ideas:

The paper scores a 5 in Ideas. This is a strong expository paper with **credible support** despite the lack of access to outside resources. The first half of the paper describes the issue that concerns the writer with **relevant** details that explain the problem. Subsequent details explain what the organization is doing about it and why the writer supports its work. Finally, the writer uses sound logic and reasoning to project the impact of the organization in the future.

### Organization:

The paper scores a 5 in Organization. The introduction begins with a general statement, provides examples, and narrows to the thesis at the end of paragraph 1. The **sequencing** and paragraphing are effective, with **smooth transitions**. The conclusion is well-developed although somewhat repetitious.

### Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a 5 in Sentence Fluency. One phrase in the second paragraph where there has been an erasure is awkward due to a missing word and a misplaced word; the phrase should read “which in turn is affecting us.” In the same sentence, parallel structure could be improved. However, that sentence is the only weak spot. The rest of the paper has an easy **flow and rhythm**, with good **variety of structures, lengths, and beginnings of sentences**.

### Conventions:

The paper scores a 5 in Conventions. Paragraph 1 is flawless. Other errors are **few and minor** (e.g., a comma that shouldn’t be there, two missing commas, “amount” instead of “number,” an error in the subjunctive: should be “If a car were run on water...”). The **conventions are strong**, however, **in a long and complex piece**, especially considering the many different uses of the comma in a wide variety of grammatical situations.

### Voice:

The paper scores a 5 in Voice. **Sincerity, commitment**, and strong **conviction** come through.

### Word Choice:

The paper scores a 5 in Word Choice. Words convey the message in a **precise, natural** way: “threaten our well-being,” “fumes are expelled,” “erosion of Earth’s ozone layer.” The score of 5 is supported by the use of a **broad range of words appropriate** to topic, mode, and **audience**.

### What's So Unusual About Football?

My heart is racing. Thoughts are flying through my head. I am scared, but at the same time I am excited. Everyone is silent while they think about what they are getting ready to do. The atmosphere in the locker room is tense because we are about to go play a football game.

But wait-- let's put the tension-filled locker room on hold for a bit and go back in time a few days. I was sitting in the sophomore hall listening to two girls, who are my friends, talk about football. Basically they think it is just a bunch of stupid boys messing with testosterone and chest-bumping. I was appalled. Football is much more than that. It is a difficult and demanding game, and obviously, misunderstood. Back to the locker room.

Before the game, we review anything special the team has worked on that week, such as a special defense for the opponent's deadly quarterback or double-teaming the league's leading receiver. The coach draws on the chalkboard and talks, reminding us of basic strategies. He encourages us to be heroes and team players at the same time, then we take a knee for a pre-game prayer. No testosterone and chest-bumping there.

Finally, it's time to take the field. At our school, there is not a tunnel or anything. We just run across the practice field and on to the main field. Because we play at night, it's tricky getting across the dark practice field without someone stepping in a low spot and spraining an ankle. We also have to be very careful not to run over the little kids who are playing who-knows-what in the dark behind the bleachers. Public relations are important in a small town.

Once we hit the field amid cheering fans, we do warm-ups. Our captains count us 1-2-3-4 through drills, then we do jumping jacks and spell out our school name while we're jumping. This gets our heart pumping and warms us up, so we can avoid muscle strain. It also lets us review our math and English.

The buzzer blows. Each team is introduced, the players running on to the field one at a time so the crowd can cheer and Mom and Dad can get a picture. Then the captains meet with the referees, shake hands with each other, and the referee flips a coin. Etiquette matters, as it is all very gentlemanly. The team that wins the toss chooses to kick or receive, and the game officially begins. Granted, this is where it gets a little messy at times.

The purpose of football is to storm the opponent's territory and get the ball across the goal line. This can be done by passing, running, or occasionally, if a locker room prayer is answered, recovering a fumble on the goal line. Passing and running require players to understand the play that is discussed in a huddle, "42 right 17 on four" or a code called out by the quarterback at the line of scrimmage, "15-1-white-hut. Hut." This means that while the player is trying to inflict bodily damage to the opponent and avoid it himself, his mind is constantly reviewing the playbook. It is important to not run the wrong direction, or let the quarterback get sacked because a player misunderstood the call. A player on defense must also handle players who are sometimes bigger than he is, which requires backing up and taking a run at them instead of just meeting them head on at the line of scrimmage.

Eventually, the game ends, and almost always there's a winner and a loser. Hopefully, the crowd that is cheering is wearing the same school colors as you, which means everyone hugs you, regardless of mud, blood and sweat. Only mothers will do that if their team loses.

And finally, it's back to the locker room. A team has come full circle, engaging in religious study, public relations, aerobics, school subjects, manners, memory recall activities,

and now, personal hygiene. My girl friends obviously do not understand what an unusual sport football is. After all, they play volleyball, which is just estrogen and screaming.

## Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 8 – Football

Mode: Expository

Ideas & Content	Organization	Sentence Fluency	Conventions	Voice	Word Choice
6	6	5	5	6	5

### Ideas:

The paper scores a 6 in Ideas. The **main idea** is **clear**, appearing at the end of the second paragraph: Football is a difficult and demanding game, much misunderstood. The piece is tongue-in-cheek, with **rich details connecting** skills in football to social and academic skills, all in good humor. The writer's perspective is fresh and **interesting**, slightly self-deprecating at times. The paper **makes connections and shares insights, holding the reader's attention throughout**.

### Organization:

The paper scores a 6 in Organization. The introduction is **inviting**. The **satisfying sense of closure** summarizes the connections made in the body of the paper and echoes the introduction by referring back to the girls who were making disparaging remarks about football. The time shift in second paragraph is effective. The overall structure is **creative** ("full circle," as the writer puts it), and **the reader moves through the text easily**.

### Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a high 5 in Sentence Fluency. There is much **variety in sentence structures**, including short, punchy sentences that **enhance the meaning** at times of stress or excitement: ("My heart is racing," "I was appalled," "The buzzer blows.") An effective mix of other, more complex structures adds variety. The writing reads very smoothly.

### Conventions:

The paper scores a high 5 in Conventions. **End-of-sentence punctuation** is fine except for two comma splices where "then" connects two independent clauses, functioning incorrectly as a coordinating conjunction. A few fragments are effective: "Back to the locker room." or "No testosterone or chest-bumping there." Spelling is correct except for *messy and quarterback*; *on to* should be one word. Extraneous **commas** appear in a few places, but many commas are used correctly in a variety of grammatical situations. The piece begins in the present tense, which is maintained consistently except for a correct use of past tense in the second paragraph. Range is demonstrated by correct uses of commas, hyphenated words, a dash, and quotation marks. Overall, the writing shows **strong control** of conventions in **long, complex piece**.

### Voice:

The paper scores a 6 in Voice. There is an **exceptional sense of writing to be read**; the writing is **engaging, original, lively, and humorous**. Understatement is effective, too: ("We take a knee for a prayer. No testosterone and chest-bumping there.") The tone is not only light but conversational: "At our school, there is not a tunnel or anything. We just run across the practice field..."

### Word Choice:

The paper scores a high 5 in Word Choice. Remind raters to avoid the "halo effect" of strong papers. For the most part, the words are **fresh and vivid**; **slang seems purposeful** for the most part and is **effective**. **Ordinary words are used in unusual way** (e.g., see the last paragraph), but the paper is not a 6.

# Practice Score Sheet

## Part I: Ideas & Content/Organization

PAPER #	Title/ Mode	I/C	ORG	SF	CONV	VOICE	WC
1	Voting (P)						
2	Pendleton (E)						
3	Marching Band (E)						
4	Works of Art (E)						
5	Effective Parenting (E)						
6	Limits on Technology (P)						
7	Saving the Planet (E)						
8	Football (P)						