

Facilitator's Guide to Leading the Scoring Session

Essential Skill of Writing: In-Depth Training

Sentence Fluency & Conventions

For Content Area Teachers

This packet contains the following:

- Instructions for Leading Sample Paper Scoring
- Student Papers with Commentary and Scores
- Practice Score Sheet



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

Part 2: Sentence Fluency and Conventions

Instructions for Leading Scoring of Student Papers

Please review the Tips for Using Student Papers in the Part 1: Ideas/Content and Organization section of the training. They apply to this part of the training as well.

SENTENCE FLUENCY

Close Reading: Scoring Guide with Highlighter Pens

- Main purpose: identify and understand words and phrases that distinguish one score point from the adjacent score point(s)
- Read scoring guides closely for Sentence Fluency:
 - begin w/ 4: highlight words and phrases that will help identify a 4
 - move to 3: highlight words and phrases that differentiate it from a 4
 - highlight other score points; read more quickly
- Facilitator clarifies factors that differentiate one score point from another, following same order as above
- Also refine and clarify bullets and descriptors / add training points not written in Scoring Guide. In Fluency, for example:
 - sentence fluency refers to the underlying sentence structures of the language, which can be seen most easily if the writing is read aloud
 - read through punctuation errors to see fluency; punctuation will be assessed in Conventions
 - provide examples of when and how punctuation errors do not interfere with fluency--or when lack of punctuation does not interfere. Some examples:
 - comma splices do not interfere with fluency at all; the voice pauses with a comma just as it would with a period: "We saw a cougar almost trotting down the road toward our car, it was darker than we expected cougars to be."
 - a fragment can almost always be connected to the sentence either before it or after it as you read aloud, with no disruption to fluency: "Many species of birds came to the feeder every day. Which brought so much entertainment to our family. We loved watching their interactions and behaviors." Fluency here is fine. The fragment will be assessed under Conventions.
 - even with run-ons, a reader usually knows where the sentence ends because the structure provides the pause: "Most people do not realize that up until recently, Pacific lamprey used to migrate up the rivers and streams of the Northwest to spawn they were born in fresh water, migrated to the ocean for part of their lives, and then returned to fresh water to spawn." This writer demonstrates an understanding of sentence structures, even though he or she does not demonstrate understanding of how to punctuate them. The structures lead the reader to pause after the first "spawn" despite lack of punctuation. The lack of punctuation will be assessed under Conventions, but fluency of sentence structures is present here.
 - a writer may not understand the structures of sentences. In that case, a run-on does not lead the voice to a natural pause, or the sentences may be connected by endless coordinating conjunctions--usually "and" or "so"--which create rambling constructions that come under a score point of 3 or 2, depending on the number and proportion to the rest of the text: "Our class was trying to raise money for our local Food Bank so we started with one fundraiser

where we all went to the parking lot of the local store and then we set up our tables so then we put all our information out but some of it had gotten wet so we had to make some new signs so then we finally got everything ready but..."

- (3/4) fluency is achieved by a variety of sentence structures, lengths, and beginnings; raters should be conscious of this as they read through a paper for fluency. It's easy to identify when structures are repeated, when sentence lengths are about the same, or when beginnings are repeated.
- (3/4) "awkward" constructions are also easy to identify; they occur when sentences--or, more often, phrases--are just not written the way we put words together
- (3/4) remind raters of the "too short" bullet under the 3 score point--it was added because some papers were 4's in fluency, but there weren't enough sentences there to feel comfortable saying that the student had met the standard. This seems especially critical now that a diploma is at stake.
- missing words also affect fluency; if one, two, or even three are missing in an entire paper, we can overlook them completely--it may be an error in copying a final draft or of the mind getting ahead of the keyboard. However, if it's a pattern, it's a problem. Some languages do not have articles (a, an, the), which creates a problem in English. Sometimes, other words are missing as well. This would contribute to a score of 3 or even possibly of 2, depending on other fluency factors. ("Question is, what should student do in situation like this?")
- inverted word order causes problems in fluency (it is often the result of structures of the writer's first language--e.g., "What problems there will be?")
- (5/6) the positive impact of some short sentences to enhance meaning cannot be overstated; when writers try for variety of sentence lengths, short sentences effectively placed can contribute to high scores. Enhancing meaning is key: they function well if they occur at points of emphasis, tension, excitement, stress, etc. (In a piece about students getting their first drivers' licenses: "We had power!") Point out examples in the sample student work.

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 commentary for each paper. All scores are also listed on a Key.

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

Paper 9: Tradition/Fair (Expository)

- Participants read paper.
- Facilitator asks each of the following questions and waits for response:
 - To score for Sentence Fluency, ask yourself first if the writing is fairly easy to read aloud. Is it in this paper?
 - Is there a variety of sentence structures?
 - Variety of sentence lengths?
 - Variety of sentence beginnings?
 - "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.) Discuss any points that should be made about the paper / bullets of scoring guide.

Paper 10: Shopping Mall (Persuasive)

- Same questions and process, except that this time, not all the answers will be yes. (Be sure their perceptions are correct. If they're not, then ask for an example of what they're saying and if they can't supply one, then move on to what the real problems are.)

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

- 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 and 4, 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 11: Media--Moderation (Persuasive)

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

Paper 12: Dirt Track (Expository)

- Same process, but narrow the discussion to 2, 3, 4.

Paper 13: TV--(Persuasive)

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

Check to see if you have enough time to even have them read the next two papers quickly. (Conventions needs a lot of time.) The next paper shows what a score of 1 in Fluency looks like, which might be good for them to take a VERY QUICK look at--no time for discussion. The last paper for Fluency exceeds, and again, maybe just have them read it quickly to see what a high paper looks like. Ask them ahead of time to notice the short, effective sentences that add great variety. Just tell them the scores of both papers. Ask them for quick scores for Ideas and Organization for the SUV paper (6's). Important to put aside possible bias and defensiveness.

Paper 14: Car (Imaginative)

Paper 15: SUV's

CONVENTIONS

Before raters read the Scoring Guide, the trainer should go through all the slides in the PowerPoint presentation related to Conventions. Conventions is the most complex of the traits, and it can be a challenge to beginning raters to balance all the factors. Reassure teachers that they'll likely recognize the papers that clearly meet and exceed and the papers that clearly don't meet. If and when they have questions about the papers that are really close with the 3/4 call, they should have an ELA colleague with whom they could consult--or, some districts are forming Scoring Committees who would handle borderline work samples (this seems ideal). Out of every class batch of work samples, there shouldn't be that many that are on the 3/4 cusp--and of course the cusp is not always in Conventions--other traits can be problematic also.

In the course of training, try not to use grammatical terminology. Instead, you might briefly mention the terms, but emphasize the examples, which everyone will understand.

Slide 10: VERY important: After reading a paper, raters should ask themselves these three questions:

1. What kinds of errors am I seeing here? (Run-ons, spelling, apostrophes?)

2. How significant or important are these errors (Look at the Skill Level Guidelines--the chart in the handouts; pay attention to the adjectives that describe the skill: "solid" control indicates more importance than "general" control)
3. What's the proportion of the errors relative to the amount and complexity of the text (e.g., Are there 3 run-ons in 2 pages of dense writing, or 3 run-ons in 1 page of simple constructions with huge handwriting?)

Slides 11-14: clarify end-of-sentence punctuation (run-ons, comma splices, fragments)--tell participants to pay close attention--important elements for students to get correct in order to meet--don't get hung up on the term "comma splices"--just explain briefly that you can't connect two complete sentences with just a comma

Slide 15: Skill Level Guidelines (also a handout)--important for raters to go over before they score--look at high school only--look at adjectives that describe skills--

Highlight most important elements of Grade 10 (= high school) quickly now.

- ***Correct end-of-sentence punctuation--one of most important factors, since sentence is most basic unit of communication. Unanimous agreement around the state that students should know where and how to end their sentences. More elaboration on what this means in a minute, and it is important for content teachers to grasp this.
- ***Spelling: emphasize common, everyday words at high school level for a 4; some errors acceptable; no magic list of words--all high school teachers know in our bones what high school students should be able to spell. To get 5/6: more difficult words spelled correctly.
- Grammar:
 - SOLID control of subject/verb agreement--give examples: "There were four reasons for the school board's decision, NOT "There was four reasons..." or "The parents were going to attend," NOT "The parents was going to attend."
 - Correct/consistent verb tense: more in a minute
 - Correct/consistent point of view: more in a minute
- Capitalization: be careful--handwriting can be a factor
 - To get a 5/6: broad range of "tools": correct use of a few of the following: parentheses, colon, semi-colon, dash, dialogue, ellipses, etc. Using commas in a wide variety of grammatical situations qualifies as range.

Slides 16-17: Correct/consistent verb tense; maybe ignore with content teachers--not likely to see in Expository and Persuasive work samples--more in Narrative--

Slide 18: Correct/consistent point of view: applicable to Expository and Persuasive; important, but not enough in and of itself to lower to a 3; one of several important factors

Slides 19 – 20: Review of Quotation Marks – something Content Area Teachers are likely to required in research papers or shorter selections where student need to show evidence.

Slide 21: Error Analysis and Classification: handout also. Kinds of errors often seen on ELL papers; want to be sure we're scoring consistently across state; go through, discuss. Purpose is to pinpoint kinds of errors so that errors are not falling under multiple traits unnecessarily--watch out for content teachers glazing over here--may be too much--if so, just highlight most important or skip it altogether--

Close Reading: Scoring Guide with Highlighter Pens

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- Facilitator clarifies factors that differentiate one score point from another, following same order as above
- Also refine and clarify bullets and descriptors / add training points not written in Scoring Guide. Many important point covered above. Others include calling attention to:
 - (4) "Significant errors do not occur frequently."
 - (4) good to go through the following questions after reading a paper:
 - How's end-of-sentence punctuation?
 - Spelling?
 - Grammar/usage?
 - Are errors significant?
 - How many of them are there compared to length and complexity of text?
 - (3) end-of-sentence punctuation is often problematic (run-ons, comma splices, fragments); this is why most papers score a 3 in Conventions
 - (3) text may be too simple or too short to reveal mastery (not enough evidence for a 4, or, VERY rarely, the text is too simple: every sentence is written like that of, for example, a fourth grader)
 - (5/6) "errors are so few and so minor..."
 - (5/6) needs to show "wide range of conventions in a sufficiently long and complex piece"--range can include commas used correctly in a wide variety of grammatical situations
 - recognize that last bullets on amount of editing needed are subjective
 - bullets on readability: recognize that many significant errors do not impede readability

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. All scores are also listed on a Key.

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

Participants have already read many of the papers below and discussed them for Sentence Fluency, so it should take much less time to re-read them and score for Conventions.

The commentaries give a fairly specific breakdown of the errors in each paper.

Revisit Paper 9: Tradition/Fair (Expository)

- Participants read paper.
- Facilitator asks each of the following questions and waits for response:
 - To score for Conventions, ask yourself first about end-of-sentence punctuation. How is it here?
 - Next, how is spelling?
 - Grammar/usage?
 - How are the errors relative to the overall length and complexity of the paper? Are there too many significant errors considering that?

- “If these factors and others are all right, 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.) Discuss any points that should be made about the paper.

Paper 16: Environmentalists (Persuasive)

- Same questions and process, except that this time, not all the answers will be yes. (Be sure their perceptions are correct.) Cite specific errors, which will help teachers gain confidence and see the problems. This paper scores a 3.

Revisit Paper 1: Voting (Persuasive)

- 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 cite specific errors.

Paper 17 Uncle's Restaurant (Expository)

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

Revisit Paper 12: Dirt Track (Expository)

- Same process, but narrow the discussion from the beginning to 2, 3, 4.

Paper 18: Piercing (Persuasive)

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

Revisit Paper 4: Works of Art (Expository)

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

Revisit Paper 13: TV (Persuasive)

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

Revisit Paper 14: Car (Imaginative)

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

Revisit 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 2: Sentence Fluency / Conventions

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.

Sentence Fluency							
PAPER #	Title/Mode	I/C	ORG	VOICE	WC	SF	CONV
9	Tradition / Fair (E)	4	4	4	4	4	4
10	Shopping Mall (P)	3	3	4	3	3	3
6	Limits on Technology (P)	4	4	4+	4-	3+	3-
11	Media / Moderation (P)	4	4	5	4	4	3
12	Dirt Track (E)	3	3-	3+	3+	3+	3
13	TV (P)	2	2	2	2	2	2
14	Car (I)	2-	2	2	1+	1	1+
15	SUV's (P)	6	6	6	6	6	5
Conventions							
PAPER #	Title/Mode	I/C	ORG	VOICE	WC	SF	CONV
Revisit 9	Tradition / Fair (E)	4	4	4	4	4	4
16	Environmentalists (P)	3	3	4	4	3	3
1	Voting (P)	4	4	4	4	4	4
17	Uncle's Restaurant (E)	4	4-	4	4	4-	3
Revisit 12	Dirt Track (E)	3	3-	3+	3+	3+	3
18	Piercing (E)	5	4	5	4	4	4
4	Works of Art (E)	3	3	3	3	3	3
Revisit 13	TV (P)	2	2	2	2	2	2
Revisit 14	Car (I)	2-	2	2	1+	1	1+
8	Football (P)	6	6	6	5+	5+	5+

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TRADITIONS

Our lives are based on traditions, habits. Some of these are good, some are bad, and yet others sickeningly pointless and time wasting. But no matter how arbitrary they may seem, they are what shape our culture, and more importantly, our lives.

A major tradition of the town in which I now live is the Fair. The Fair takes place annually, lasting one week in the suffocating heat of late August. Upon witnessing this custom, I feel strongly that it should be continued. My reasons are as follow.

The very first thing that struck me was the feeling of community comradeship. Everyone glowed with the light of hometown pride. From the concession stands to 4-H booths to the carnival rides, everyone wears a smile. This came as a shock to me having spent the first 16 years of my life in the megalopolis of San Francisco. In San Francisco, community togetherness is not even stated on the list of city priorities. This is mainly because the three items that take up that entire list are me, myself, and I.

Another concept that was very unique to me was how the Fair was centered around the kids. All the local clubs and athletic teams were represented by poster or fundraiser booth. The townspeople supported them by either giving

donations or buying vendibles.

Thirdly, the Fair produces a clean family fun atmosphere. Many carnivals and fairs are filled with crummy concessions, garbage, and questionable characters. With the already low morals of our society deteriorating into nothing it is nice to have some decent fun and entertainment, just ask any parent

As you can see, continuing the Fair is an all win situation. It produces community unity, a clean and fun environment, and, most importantly, is centered around the youth. With all these in mind, I strongly encourage the upholding of the tradition of the Fair.

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.

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If my town or city would like to build something for the community to enjoy, and I had to present them with my ideas on what it would be and how people could enjoy and benefit off of it I would have to say they should build A huge Shopping mall with everything imaginable.

In this shopping mall it would have A grocery store, Car Dealer, clothe stores and every other place you usually buy things in it. There are A few reasons why I think having these things All in one store will be something the community will enjoy and profit off of.

This mall will be a huge plus for our community, It will be a good money maker because It will have everything you need All in one and I will put it right in the of town so everyone can Drive A short Distance and never have to go Across town to get what they need.

It will attract and be an enjoyment to people of All ages. The higher percentage of the people that come to this mall will be most the teen population, mom's looking for a good Deal, and All the working class that Dont have time to go all around town looking for what they need.

Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 10 – Shopping Mall

Mode: Persuasive
(purpose to convince)

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

Ideas:

The paper scores a 3 in Ideas. **The reader can understand the main idea** with no problem, but the developmental details are somewhat **simplistic**. More importantly, the details read like a **list of underdeveloped points**.

Organization:

The paper scores a low 3 in Organization. **An attempt has been made to organize the writing**. The introduction consists of one very long sentence that states the main idea. The paragraphs of the body attempt to put related points into the same paragraph, although the point of having a variety of stores in one place is repeated in each paragraph. The function of the last paragraph is debatable: some might argue that it has some sense of stating the final points and of “wrapping up” the paper to some extent, although even they would acknowledge that it’s a weak conclusion; others might argue that the last paragraph does not contain enough of a sense of closure to be considered a conclusion.

Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a 3 in Sentence Fluency. Quite a few sentences are **functional** but **lack energy**; many **show lapses in stylistic control**. The second and third paragraphs are both good illustrations of the problems (one example: “In this shopping mall it would have A grocery Store, Car Dealer, Clothe stores and every other place You usually Buy things in it.”) A couple of words are missing, which also affects fluency.

Conventions:

The paper scores a 3 in Conventions. **End-of-sentence punctuation** is fine, although it’s difficult to tell in a couple of places. Misspelled words include *shoping*, *emaginable*, *clothe store*, and *attract*. Some plurals have apostrophes (*a few reason’s why*, *mom’s looking for deals*), and some contractions don’t have apostrophes (*Dont*). Usage is incorrect in the phrases *benefit of off* (rather than *benefit from*) and *profit off of* (rather than *profit from*). Capitalization seems random, although it is probably a function of handwriting. Verb tense is incorrect (*the community will enjoy*, rather than *would enjoy*). Point of view switches are problematic as well (*mall will be good for the community...everything you need all in one place*). The writing shows **limited control of standard conventions**.

Voice:

The paper scores a low 4 in Voice. The writer seems **sincere** and **committed to the topic** of explaining why a shopping mall would be a good idea in his or her town.

Word Choice:

The paper scores a 3 in Word Choice. Words are often **generic, lacking precision and variety**. Examples include *everything*, *it would have*, *every other place you usually buy things in it*, *big plus*, *things*, *a higher percentage of the people*.

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 ^{really} 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^a 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**.

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America as a whole is always busy with something, whether it be work or school, we're pretty active. What do we do, however, when we're finished laboring? The answer is simple, we come home and relax! We text message or talk to our friends, we jump on MySpace or World of Warcraft, we plant ourselves on the sofa and turn on the TV, or we lie in bed, cheerily mouthing the words to a song about cutting ourselves.

But what about limits? We can't just sit and watch some actor get pummeled on Jerry Springer, or feverishly eat Hot Pockets while trying to gain levels on World of Warcraft!

Sadly though, this is what a vast majority of teenagers are doing and as it turns out, playing a never-ending video game till four in the morning is actually harmful!

Why are these things harmful? You get enjoyment out of them, so why are they harmful?

For starters let's visit text messaging, the average text messenger doesn't take the time to spell out words words, instead they substitute them with a grammatical blunder called the acronym. Take a guess where this lazy habit over to, the classroom. The next time your kid gets a 1 in conventions, you'll know why.

On the subject of watching TV, and playing video games, they generally run along the same lines. We watch television in excessive amounts, in fact if you don't own a television you're not American.

There should indeed be limits on using this media device. Your vision becomes greatly damaged when you're rooted to the couch. In fact, I would bet money that brain cells are actually dying as you sit there watching mindless and unthinking programs. Also you're not getting any exercise, so you can kiss the body you've always seen (and wanted!) on TV goodbye.

Playing video games have much of the same effect. Eye damage because of prolonged exposure to a television screen one foot away. No exercise because because of very limited movement, that movement being in your hands.

Lastly, Music. It usually is accompanied by an iPod, and that is usually accompanied by headphones, which when you're plugged in, usually can't hear a thing. Also I've heard many state, "Oh I love this song!" which is then followed by the worst string of lyrics I've ever heard. They cheer unknowingly about violence and degradation.

All these media devices have some negative effects, and they also have some positive effects. Some are used for an escape to mundane life, others used for pure enjoyment. The point of it all is, whether playing video games or jogging about the park. Moderation...

Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 11 – Media (Moderation)

Mode: Persuasive

Ideas & Content	Organization	Sentence Fluency	Conventions	Voice	Word Choice
4	4	4	3	5	4

Note: Good example of how a paper can have a range of scores, this one from 3 to 5.

Ideas:

The paper scores a 4 in Ideas. The writer suggests the **main idea** in the first sentence of the second paragraph (“But what about limits?”). Subsequent **details** explain some of the negative effects of the media on teenagers (and some of the ironies), and the conclusion calls for moderation. Many of the examples cited are very **specific**, yet the writer covers a lot of territory overall, touching on a variety with just a few sentences of explanation for each. Still, the paper is **focused and specific** enough to warrant a 4.

Organization:

The paper scores a low 4 in Organization. The introduction is **developed**; the conclusion is weak but present. There seems to be no particular order in which the various media are discussed, although **transitions** are present and the reader **can follow the writing**. **Paragraph breaks** help the organization.

Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a 4 in Sentence Fluency. There are quite a few end-of-sentence punctuation errors, especially comma splices, but they do not interfere with fluency; they are easy to read through, with natural pauses occurring at the commas. (The very first few sentences are an exception; the reader hesitates, not quite knowing where the first sentence should end.) A few words are repeated twice in a row, and there are a couple of missing words, which negatively affect fluency. There are also a couple of **awkward** spots. Overall, however, the writing flows smoothly, with good **variety of structures, beginnings, and lengths**. A good example occurs at the end of the first paragraph, with the series of well-crafted sentences, which lead to the short beginning of the second paragraph.

Conventions:

The paper scores a 3 in Conventions. **End-of-sentence punctuation** is problematic, with many comma splices. Point of view changes in a distracting and incorrect way throughout the paper. (THIS PAPER IS A GOOD ONE FOR SHOWING CONTENT AREA TEACHERS WHAT WE MEAN BY INCONSISTENT POINT OF VIEW. THERE ARE MANY CLEAR EXAMPLES THROUGHOUT THE PAPER.) One example is the use of “we” in the second paragraph, which switches to “you” in the next paragraph; there are many other examples. Ask raters to identify some. Verb tense is incorrect for “to see” (“you can kiss the body you’ve always saw...”). A subject-verb agreement error occurs (“Playing video games have much of the same effect.”). “Your” should be “you’re” at least four times. There are also some comma errors, and “lets” is missing an apostrophe. Spelling is generally all right, except for *degradation* and *mundane*. Overall, the writing demonstrates limited control of conventions.

Voice:

The paper scores a 5 in Voice. A light sense of irony comes through a few times (“...or we lie in bed, cheerily mouthing the words to a song about cutting ourselves,” or seeing the irony of wanting fit, glamorous bodies while being “rooted” to a couch). Other touches of humor include “...feverishly eat Hot Pockets while trying to gain levels on World of Warcraft.” A **sense of the immediate audience** is apparent when the writer alludes to “the next time your kid gets a 1 in conventions.” Overall, the writing is **lively and engaging**, with a **sense of writing to be read**.

Word Choice:

The paper scores a high 4 in Word Choice. The words are **functional** and **appropriate**, with enough **variety** to meet. In fact, the **writing has some fine moments**, some of which are mentioned above under Voice; others include such active verbs such as *jump on My Space*, *plant ourselves on the sofa*, *mouthing the words*, *pummeled on Jerry Springer*, *substitute (words) with a grammatical blunder*, and more.

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I decided to go to The Crestview races it is a very fun and unusual event.

The Crestview races is a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile oval dirt race track that people race on for fun. When you go through the gates you automatically smell the smell of race fuel and the concessions stand. Hot Laps or warm up Laps start at 5:30pm and go until 6:30pm.

The races start at 7:00pm. There are various classes like Sportsman, 360 sprints and unlimited sprints. The races end about 10:30pm or 11:00pm. They have to stop at 11:00pm because of noise regulations. When the races are over you can go into the pits and see your favorite driver and his car. You can also get autographs and walk on the track just to check it out.

I find it pretty weird that so many people race at such a small track for no money.

Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 12 – Dirt Track

Mode: Expository

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

Note: Length: About 148 words; 11 sentences. Watch handwriting and Conventions bias: paper may give appearance of lower paper, but close scrutiny shows more.

Ideas:

The paper scores a 3 in Ideas. The **main idea is clear**, with specific details that convey a sense of this race track--in terms of both sensory details and in terms of what occurs at the race track. However, the topic needs more development in order to meet the standard, and some details are not quite relevant (such as the specific times of certain events).

Organization:

The paper scores a low 3 in Organization. There is an **attempt at organization**, but the results are **skeletal**. There is a sense of an introduction and a conclusion, but they are both **undeveloped**, especially the conclusion. **Transitions** work sometimes but are not always present. **Placement of details** is not always effective.

Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a high 3 in Sentence Fluency, even though it is actually quite fluent. It is not difficult to read through the conventions errors to see the fluency of the sentence structures. (For example, in the introduction, the voice naturally pauses at the end of the first real sentence, even though there is no punctuation there. The same is true for the structure of other run-on sentences, which will be assessed under Conventions.) This is a classic example of a paper in which readers can see fluency if they realize they should ignore punctuation and let the structures “speak for themselves.” Sentences do have variety, and they’re fairly easy to read aloud. The text is too short to meet, however; there isn’t enough evidence to assign a score of 4.

Conventions:

The paper scores a 3 in Conventions. End-of sentence punctuation errors include three run-ons in a total of about 11 sentences. Spelling errors include *decided*, *because*, *people*, and *concessions*. The reader gets the impression that some errors result from handwriting and general carelessness (misspelling of walk=wulk), but errors must count as they appear. The same applies to capitalization, which again is likely the result of handwriting, rather than a deliberate capitalization. A simple plural has an apostrophe (lap’s).

Voice:

The paper scores a high 3 in Voice. The **writer seems very sincere and committed to the topic**. The writing that is there definitely shows a **sense of the writer behind the words**; however, **the text is too short** to provide enough evidence to meet the standard. (This kind of paper is the reason for the “too short” bullet in the Scoring Guide in the traits of Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions. The text itself is actually described by the bullets under a score of 4, but there isn’t enough text to provide sufficient evidence of meeting the standard. This is critical for raters to understand)

Word Choice:

The paper scores a high 3 in Word Choice. The words are **functional and convey the intended message**. Many are specific and precise (*oval dirt race track*, *noise regulations*). Two terms are specialized and could use explanation (*animated sprints*, *Sportsman 1360 sprints*). Some phrases create sensory images in the mind of the reader (*the smell of race fuel and the concessions stand, you can go into the pits*). However, the text is too short to meet (see comment above related to this).

The TV Shows

Television is good for people not to watch because is bad for your eyes. Is not good for people to watch bad TV because of the bad shows. TV is a ways of time to people because that can do other stuff. people get fat because that sit all day. That get lazy. TV is not good to watch all day.

Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 13 – TV

Mode: Persuasive

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

Ideas:

The paper scores a 2 in Ideas. The reader has no trouble understanding the main ideas and supporting details; the writer lists four reasons not to watch TV. **Development is attempted but minimal** for the high school level, however. There are **insufficient details** to warrant even a score of 3.

Organization:

The paper scores a 2 in Organization. **An occasional organizational device is discernible**: there is a thesis statement at both the beginning and end of the paper, and the word “because” connects ideas in the first two sentences. However, there are no other transitions or sense of movement. Furthermore, the piece is simply **too short to demonstrate organizational skills**.

Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a 2 in Sentence Fluency. Sentence structures are not so awkward that the reader must slow down to comprehend meaning, which sometimes occurs in “2” papers, but there are a **significant number of choppy constructions**. Missing words and word inversions affect fluency adversely (e.g., “Television is good for people not to watch because is bad for your eyes. Is not good for people to wach...”). There is not much variety in sentence beginnings, lengths, or structures.

Conventions:

The paper scores a high 2 in Conventions. End-of-sentence punctuation is actually correct, much to the writer’s credit, except for one fragment. The second sentence is missing a subject and is therefore a fragment, but all the rest are simple sentences with periods. (Actually, the clause in the second half of the first sentence is also a fragment because it, too, is missing a subject. Spelling is correct except for two important basic common words: *wach* for *watch* and *thay* for *they*, as well as *ways* for *waste*. The level of attempt is not at grade level; the writing **demonstrates little control of standard conventions** at the high school level.

Voice:

The paper scores a 2 in Voice. **The writing provides little sense of involvement or commitment**, and the topic and mode provide opportunities for that. The writing is **largely flat and mechanical**, with an apparent **lack of audience awareness**. There may be a slight hint of the **writer behind the words** towards the end.

Word Choice:

The paper scores a 2 in Word Choice. While the words do communicate the basic meaning (and the paper is therefore **not** a 1), they are **monotonous, flat, and repetitious** for the high school level. Some are generic and lack precision (e.g., bad, stuff, fat). (This may be an ELL student who is just learning English.)

One time a car was to play route then he has that go to California for the route final and he to be the winning but he go to California but the trailer open the door, the car is lost he wanted go back to continue in the route. The car has sadness because knowled in what peare is them he looked a car and was to can help. The other car not look but the car is lost the pursued is that look a town where only little houses the cars he went. Fast that the Police the Percussion. He only wanted go to finish the route, where he is find not to come not any car because this road is close and to build other new road but he was California and he winning the route.

Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 14 – Car

Mode: Imaginative

Ideas & Content	Organization	Sentence Fluency	Conventions	Voice	Word Choice
2	2	1	1	2	1

Ideas:

The paper scores a low 2 in Ideas. The purpose is clear (to tell a story). **Ideas require extensive inferences**, but the basic storyline can be detected, even by readers who have not seen the animated movie *Cars*. Development is attempted but minimal. (In a score of 1, the reader cannot tell what the purpose or main ideas are, or development is more minimal than this.)

Organization:

The paper scores a 2 in Organization. There is a sense of a beginning, conflicts and obstacles, reaction, and resolution. However, despite **an occasional organizational device** (*One time, then, and, but, because*), **order or relationships among ideas is frequently unclear**.

Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a 1 in Sentence Fluency. **Text does not permit smooth oral reading. Word order is confusing, often jarring. Sentence structure frequently obscures meaning.**

Conventions:

The paper scores a 1 in Conventions. There are four periods, and each succeeding sentence begins with a capital letter. Many words are spelled correctly, some with correct capitalization (California). However, the **severity and frequency of errors are so overwhelming that the reader finds it difficult to focus on the message and must reread for meaning. The writing shows very limited skill in using conventions.**

Voice:

The paper scores a low 2 in Voice. **The writing tends to be mechanical**, most likely because of difficulties with the language.

Word Choice:

The paper scores a 1 in Word Choice. **Vocabulary is extremely limited, so filled with misuses of words that meaning is obscured. Only the most general kind of message is communicated because of imprecise language.**

Destroying The Environment, One Mile At a Time

Around four o'clock, September second, Two Thousand and Three, Staples parking lot was busy, people coming and going in the pursuit of school supplies, on the first day of school. It was into this scene that a middle aged, mom-of-schoolchildren woman drove, parked, got out of her vehicle and entered staples. It was all completely unremarkable except for the vehicle she drove. Big and yellow, it was a Hummer H2, its massive dimensions crammed into a regular parking space, like an oil tanker at a yacht club. But if anyone noticed, it was with envy that they looked at the big rugged SUV, envy instead of disgust. No one questioned why it was there in the staples parking lot. If anyone had, the answer would be simply: it shouldn't be.

In car-obsessed American society, one's personal transportation is a statement of wealth, success, importance. This is the appeal of SUVs: A fashion statement. An arrogant, irresponsible fashion statement made at the expense of the environment.

SUVs are not a new idea. They've existed for years, valued for off-road ability, the towing and load capacities of a truck with the ability to carry more people. Going stiling, driving back roads, hauling a boat or horse trailer. These are all legitimate purposes for a Sport Utility Vehicle, and through this the acronym SUV can be understood. Unfortunately, SUVs are rarely used legitimately. Instead, they are commonly used for driving around town, grocery shopping and running errands, rarely carrying more than one or two

people at a time. With this as SUV's primary function, they have become little more than a display of status in a materialistic culture.

Evidence is abundant. Governor Schwarzenegger is said to own a fleet of Hummers. SUVs are commonly equipped with low profile tires and stylish custom wheels, thus completely ruining off road capability. SUVs are available without four wheel drive, supporting the subconscious rarely-spoken-of truth that few people will ever use their SUVs for the originally intended purpose.

It's said that making a fashion statement is far more important in our society than concern for the environment. Most people are aware that their SUVs guzzle gas, and poison the atmosphere with greenhouse gasses and toxic carbon monoxide. People just don't care enough to sacrifice driving them. No single person holds him or her self responsible or feels guilty just as no single drop of water holds itself responsible for a flood. It seems unlikely that people will ever take this responsibility, so our country's sport utility vehicle obsession is likely to continue, until rising gas prices make the already impractical vehicles totally unaffordable.

Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 15 – SUV

Mode: Persuasive

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

Rater warning: Watch potential bias when scoring this paper.

Ideas:

The paper scores a 6 in Ideas. Strong support and rich details develop an anti-SUV position; the writing is clear, focused, and interesting throughout. Descriptive and explanatory details add to a balanced, in-depth exploration. The writing makes connections and shares insights about contemporary society. The “other side” is presented in an acknowledgement of the valid purpose of SUV’s, but it is then refuted.

Organization:

The paper scores a 6 in Organization. The organization is creative, with compelling sequencing for a persuasive paper: it begins with an interesting narrative device of an SUV pulling into a parking lot, although the thesis statement with the writer’s position still appears in the classic position at the end of the first paragraph. The next paragraph expands the thesis. The writer then raises opposing points, acknowledging “legitimate purposes” of SUV’s, followed by refutation. Additional evidence and examples are presented. Restatement of the thesis appears in the classic position at the beginning of the last paragraph. Additional points are raised--points of which “most people are aware”--followed by a pessimistic look at future. Organization is a blend of classic and creative--highly effective--with strong control over the most challenging mode.

Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a low 6 in Sentence Fluency. Sentences show a high degree of craftsmanship, with effective variation of lengths. Some are short when meaning is enhanced, such as the thesis statement: “It shouldn’t be,” or “This is the appeal of an SUV: A fashion statement. Writer has strong control over long, complex sentences when dealing with a series of more complex arguments and ideas.

Conventions:

The paper scores a high 5 in Conventions. End-of-sentence punctuation is correct; a fragment appears at the end of paragraph 2, but it is effective. The effectiveness of second fragment in paragraph 3 is debatable (“Going skiing...”). Spelling is correct for the most part, even of difficult words; exceptions are subconscious, gases. Numbers should not be spelled out in first sentence, and there are several comma errors. Still, the writer shows strong control of conventions and demonstrates a range of punctuation used correctly in a long and complex piece.

Voice:

The paper scores a 6 in Voice. There is a sense that the topic has come to life, especially for persuasion. The writing is engaging, lively, and interesting, demonstrating deep conviction about the thesis.

Word Choice:

The paper scores a 6 in Word Choice. Word choices are fresh; expression is original. It is unusual but effective here to utilize figurative language in a persuasive piece: “like an oil tanker at a yacht club,” “No single person holds him or herself responsible (or) feels guilty, just as no single drop of water holds itself responsible for a flood.” Moreover, ordinary words are used effectively: “its massive dimensions crammed into a regular parking space,” “envy instead of disgust.”

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In Oregon you run into a lot of environmentalists, people here are very much aware of the environment. So much that that they are environmentalist freaks, they want their state to be completely clean.

I'm not at all interested in being an environmentalist, but I do my best to try and help out with the environment. We should try to keep Oregon, or anywhere clean.

Don't think you need to become a recycling "super freak", recycling every little thing that you encounter. Buying only recycled products, just do little every once and awhile to help out. Just do what you can when you can, and help out your community. Every little bit helps.

The choice is up to you. It's your state, your country, your world, your responsibility. Help out every now and then, to preserve the world for future generations.

There are millions of things you can do to help, there's also a lot of organizations around you that could give you some ideas, on how you can help. With a lot of group activities, that can be very enjoyable.

You don't need to be an environmental extremist, you just need to be environmentally aware, because the world around you

is getting pretty bad. Every little bit you do, goes a very long way. Go for a walk around your block and pick up some garbage, or pick up just the garbage in your lawn. But at least try and do something, it will be the easiest thing you have ever done.

You can help out however you want, whenever you want, and stop whenever you like. You are the one who will make, all the difference in the world.

Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 16 – Environmentalist

Mode: Persuasive

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

Ideas:

The paper scores a 3 in Ideas. **The reader can understand the main idea** (i.e., you don't have to be an extreme environmentalist, but you should do your part to keep the environment clean). However, the paper **has difficulties moving from general observations to specifics**. While **support is attempted, developmental details are...too general** and sometimes repetitious. The only two specifics are that "you should...pick up some garbage" and the suggestion that a variety of organizations might have some ideas about how to help, especially with ideas for group activities. Otherwise, the paper consists of one general statement after another, with no examples or other kinds of supporting details.

Organization:

The paper scores a 3 in Organization. **An attempt has been made to organize the writing**. The introduction is **developed** and could be viewed as including both the first and second paragraphs. However, the conclusion is not developed, consisting of only two sentences. Most importantly, **the placement of details is not always effective**, with several points repeated throughout the paper.

Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a 3 in Sentence Fluency. It is possible to read through most of the errors in punctuation to see the underlying fluent structures, such as the fourth paragraph ("The choice is up to you...," where the voice pauses naturally after the first sentence). However, that is not possible in all situations; a couple of notable ones occur in the third and fifth paragraphs. Therefore, the paper scores a 3.

Conventions:

The paper scores a 3 in Conventions. There are several errors in **end-of-sentence punctuation** (e.g., fragments in paragraphs one and three, a run-on in paragraph four, comma splices in paragraphs five and seven). **Misspellings** of both common and more difficult words occur (e.g., *invironmentalist*, *there state*, *recycling*, *perserve*, *alot*, *whith*, *injoyable*, *easyiest*, *diffrence*). A subject/verb agreement error appears in paragraph five ("**theres** also alot of organizations), and the contraction is missing an apostrophe. Sometimes it is unclear if the student intended a punctuation mark to be a comma or a semi-colon, but even disregarding those, **the writing demonstrates limited control of standard conventions**.

Voice:

The paper scores a 4 in Voice. Despite a disclaimer about being an environmentalist, the writer seems **sincere** in feeling that everyone should do his or her part to keep the environment clean; there is a **sense of audience** as the writer tries to convince the reader that we all share responsibility.

Word Choice:

The paper scores a low 4 in Word Choice. The words **convey the intended message**, and there is **sufficient variety** to meet the standard. Although there are a few cliches (e.g., "Every little bit helps"), the words are functional and appropriate to audience and purpose for the most part.

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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.

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The biggest responsibility people have in the community is probably safety to everyone. For example, drive safely and avoid car accidents because it's not only the people that cause the accident get hurt but also the one that got involve. Does anybody ever think about food safety? Nobody would know what the food had been through or how they make it. My name is Jackson and I work at my uncle's restaurant as a helper and theres alot of responsibilities that I'm responsible for

My first task is to hand out the food when my uncle or aunt finish cooking it. All I have to do is put what ever the customer would need, like a spoon or fork and sometime maybe sauces. Then I put it on a tray and give it to the waitress. Before I give it to the waitress, I have to make sure the meat is fully cooked, if the meat is not fully cook, I have to give it back to my uncle and if theres alot of blood I have to throw it away because the vegetables are contaminated

My second task is to wash the vegetables and sometimes the dishes too if theres no more customers in the restaurant and everything is clean up where I hand out the food. Everyday I have to wash the broccolis, carrots, mushrooms, onions, and lettuces. I wash the broccolis with warm water for fifteen minutes to get the dirt off and then drain with cold water for ten minutes. All I have to do with the other vegetables is to wash it with cold water until it's clean and put it back into the refrigerator. The lettuces have to be in ziplock bags before they can go into the refrigerator because if it's not cover, the skin would be dry.

When my work is done and I'm about to go home, I have

to help clean everything up and put it away. Sometimes I even help the waitress clean up and vacuum. My uncle usually ~~had~~^{had me} rinse the vegetables with cold water to get it a little fresh and put it back to the refrigerator or they called the walk-in. I'm not allow to touch the meat, so I don't have to put those away. Then if the dishes need to be wash, my uncle usually had me stay late and wash it.

Working in a restaurant will fill people with alot of responsibilities, even though they are only doing one small part of the work. For example, watch out for raw meat, wash the vegetables, vacuum, cleaning, and then put everything away. That's what people got to do in rest aurants if they want to attract more customers and keeping the community healthy.

Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 17 – Uncle’s Restaurant

Mode: Expository

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

Note: Raters need to overlook conventions errors to see basic strengths in other traits.

Ideas:

The paper scores a 4 in Ideas. After a somewhat rambling, general introduction about the overall safety of a community (which does tie in with the main idea), and after an example of community safety related to driving, the main idea does appear at the end of the first paragraph: the author’s work at his uncle’s restaurant involves many responsibilities. That main idea is developed with **specific, relevant details** that explain those responsibilities.

Organization:

The paper scores a low 4 in Organization. The introduction is **developed**. The conclusion, also **developed**, summarizes the details and echoes the point made in the introduction about community health. The reader **can follow** the text. **Transitions** are present and work; transitions between paragraphs are obvious (*My first task...*), but internal transitions are more skillful and function well.

Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a low 4 in Sentence Fluency, just barely meeting the standard. (A case could be made for a 3.) The first sentence is awkward. Parallel structure suffers in a couple of spots (as in the last sentence: *keeping* instead of *keep*). However, many sentences read smoothly, and there is **variety of structures and beginnings**.

Conventions:

The paper scores a 3 in Conventions. **End-of sentence punctuation** errors include a fragment and two comma splices. **Spelling** is correct except for *refrigerator, a lot, and every day*, including some difficult words. There are many subject-verb errors, especially involving pronouns (*there’s no more customers*). There are some verb tense errors (*everything is clean up, I’m not allow to touch the meat*) and pronoun errors, especially singular vs. plural (*rinse vegetables...and put it back*). However, many conventions are correct; the writing shows **limited control**.

Voice:

The paper scores a 4 in Voice. The writer seems **sincere** and **committed to the topic** with a **sense of audience**.

Word Choice:

The paper scores a 4 in Word Choice. The words are **functional, convey the intended message, and demonstrate variety**.

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Accessorizing ones ears used to be an elegant way for women to dress up. Now, both men and women dangle earrings from their navels and tongues. Body piercing has become as mainstream as blue jeans. Around every corner there's a hoop hanging off someone's lip or a stud in a person's chin. What used to be a way to express individuality has become a monotonous trend.

Why has body piercing gained so much popularity? For starters famous bands and actors admired and watched by millions display huge diamonds in eyebrows and cartilages alike. These are the people most teenagers admire the most. Getting a body piercing is an easy way to mimic that rapper or rock star with the giant gem pierced in their skin.

The wide spectrum of cost for a body piercing opens doors to even the lowest incomes to be trendy. Every income can afford it. An individual can buy the most expensive earring, or one that costs five bucks. Infact, some people even pierce themselves without spending the additional money for a professional. The only thing stopping a youth from having that extra pizzazz of an earring is their parents' consent.

A piercing isn't forever. Unlike a tattoo an earring can always be removed. This way one can display their piercing for casual events and

omit it to look more professional for a job or interview. Also, the factor of aging contributes on whether to keep a body piercing from a person's youth. The nose that was once smooth may become wrinkled and no longer does an earring look flattering. In this case all that must be done takes a matter of seconds, simply remove the earring. This process requires no extra money or time unlike the permanence of a tattoo.

Body piercing will most definitely keep its popularity. For the factors that matter the most; it's easily afforded, it is not permanent, and it is suited for both male and female of all ages. For years to come the population will continue to show off their body jewelry which neither time nor money will diminish.

Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 18 – Piercing

Mode: Expository

Ideas & Content	Organization	Sentence Fluency	Conventions	Voice	Word Choice
5	4	4	4	5	4

Ideas:

The paper scores a low 5 in Ideas. Readers often expect the thesis statement to appear at the end of the first paragraph; in this case, it appears as the first sentence of the second paragraph. The main idea is not about piercing becoming a “monotonous trend,” which has a slightly negative tone. Rather, it is about why piercings have become popular, as expressed in both the second and concluding paragraphs. The **supporting details** are neutral or positive, not negative. They are **specific**, fresh, and **interesting**, and they reveal some thoughtfulness and **insight**. (Perhaps it is the use (misuse?) of the word “monotonous” that throws the reader off a bit at first; without it, or with a different word, there would be no problem establishing and maintaining a focus.) Warn raters to beware of their potential bias about the subject matter.

Organization:

The paper scores a 4 in Organization. The introduction succeeds in introducing the topic and generating interest, and the conclusion is well **developed**. **Transitions** work both within and between paragraphs (an exception is the lack of transition to paragraph four). **Details fit where placed** in a **body** that is **easy to follow**. Placement of the thesis statement could be more effective for clarity.

Sentence Fluency:

The paper scores a high 4 in Sentence Fluency. **The reader can move easily through the piece** because of effective variation in sentence structures, beginnings, and lengths. The writer demonstrates **stylistic control** over more complex sentences as well as simple sentences.

Conventions:

The paper scores a 4 in Conventions. **End-of-sentence punctuation** is solid (one comma splice towards the end of paragraph 4 and an ineffective fragment in the last paragraph). Several words are misspelled (e.g., *earing*, *monotonous*, *additonal*, *tatoo*, *proffessional*--although it's also spelled correctly in a different paragraph--*permanace*, *deminish*), but the level of attempt is high and most words are spelled correctly. An apostrophe is missing in the second word (*one's ears*), but the singular possessive is used correctly in several other places, as is the plural possessive (their parents' consent). Pronoun agreement is a problem in a couple of spots (“This way *one* can display *their* piercing...”), but that error is not considered as significant. Overall, **the writing demonstrates control of standard conventions**.

Voice:

The paper scores a 5 in Voice. There is a **sense of writing to be read**, and the writing is **expressive** and **lively**, especially considering the expository mode. **Commitment to the topic** is evident.

Word Choice:

The paper scores a 4 in Word Choice. It is an interesting paper to consider for Word Choice because many of the words are vivid and energize the writing, which characterizes a score of 5. At other times, ordinary words are used in an unusual way, also an indication of a 5 (e.g., “Body piercing has become as mainstream as blue jeans,” or “Getting a body piercing is an easy way to mimic that rapper or rock star with the giant gem pierced in their skin”). However, several word uses are off, which keeps the score at a 4 (e.g., “Every income can afford it”, or “the factor of aging contributes on whether to keep a body piercing from a person's youth,” or “...to show off their body jewelry which neither time nor money will deminish”).

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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 aunts, 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 "laugter," 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.

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.

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Practice Score Sheet

Part II: Sentence Fluency and Conventions

Sentence Fluency							
PAPER #	Title	I/C	ORG	SF	CONV	VOICE	WC
9	Tradition /Fair (E)						
10	Shopping Mall (P)						
6	Limits on Technology (P)						
11	Media /Moderation (P)						
12	Dirt Track (E)						
13	TV (P)						
14	Car (I)						
15	SUV's (P)						

Conventions							
PAPER #	Title	I/C	ORG	SF	CONV	VOICE	WC
Revisit 9	Tradition /Fair (E)						
16	Environmentalists (P)						
1	Voting (P)						
17	Uncle's Restaurant (E)						
Revisit 12	Dirt Track (E)						
18	Piercing (E)						
4	Works of Art (E)						
Revisit 13	TV (P)						
Revisit 14	Car (I)						
8	Football (P)						