The Essential Skill of Writing

Participant’s Training Packet
Sentence Fluency & Conventions
For Content Area Teachers

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The Essential Skill of Writing
Sentence Fluency & Conventions
For Content Area Teachers
An In-Depth Training Session

Goals for this Workshop

Participants will
1. Understand the key components of the traits of Sentence Fluency and Conventions
2. Recognize student performance at different score levels for Sentence Fluency and Conventions
3. Develop expertise in scoring student writing for classroom and Essential Skills purposes in Sentence Fluency and Conventions

SENTENCE FLUENCY
Sentence Fluency

- Is the writing fairly easy to read aloud? (Supply punctuation wherever natural)
- Enough variety of:
  - sentence structures
  - sentence beginnings
  - sentence lengths?

Sentence Fluency

- Marking punctuation is scored under conventions. “Sense of sentence” shows when reading aloud.
- Missing words can affect fluency
- Inverted word order can affect fluency

Let's Review the Scoring Guide

Highlight words and phrases that help distinguish a score of 4 from a 3 in Sentence Fluency
Let's Score some Papers!

CONVENTIONS

Conventions

- Spelling
- Run-on sentences
- Capitalization
- Fragments
- Agreement
- Commas
Conventions

Analyze:

- Kinds of errors
- Significance of errors (refer to grade-level expectations in Skill Level Guidelines)
- Proportion of errors relative to overall text length and complexity

Conventions

- Correct end of sentence punctuation?
  - Run-on sentences (none or very few)
  - Fragments (none or just a few effective ones)
- Correct spelling of common words (grade level appropriate)
- Correct capitalization

End of Sentence Punctuation

In Conventions:

Score of 4: "run-on sentences and/or incorrect punctuation may sometimes be present"
Score of 3: "sentence punctuation that is usually correct, occasional incorrect punctuation or sentences"
Score of 2: "sentences that are generally well written, capitalization and punctuation are correct"
Score of 1: "sentences are generally well written, capitalization and punctuation are correct"

Correct end of sentence punctuation means that the writing:

- is characterized by complete sentences, punctuated correctly
- avoids run-on sentences
- avoids comma splices
- generally avoids fragments, they are used sparingly and effectively, if at all
Run-on Sentences

- A complete lack of punctuation between sentences.
- Never correct (may not make sense in context). In published works:

  Last summer we camped near Cape Alava on the southern Oregon coast. We saw lots of seals, sea lions, porpoises, and other marine life. My brother climbed on the huge rock formations he thought they looked like alien spaceships.

  Just for fun, my grandmother and I rode on the train in Portland from the river up to Columbia. It was great because at the top, we could see the whole city, the river, and Mount Hood.

Sentence Fragments

- Fragments: parts of sentences; incomplete sentences
- O.K. (used sparingly and effectively)
- Incorrect if used frequently and ineffectively

Ineffective fragments: We wanted to visit the Interpretive Center at the John Day Fossil Beds. Although we didn’t have much time, it seemed important to visit a fossil bed from the period of a tropical forest. It was so amazing. Especially since it’s a high desert now. At different times various animals lived there. Such as a rhino, an elephant, a saber-toothed cat, and a very small horse.

Effective fragment: The car careened around the icy curves at top speed when it suddenly went into a series of crazy spins. We were thrown violently from one side to another until we came to a stop. A screeching, lurching stop.

Conventions
Correct usage?
10th: subject-verb agreement
- My brother is a nutritionist and my sisters are mathematicians.
- Each of the girls sings well.
- On the wall were several posters.

Verb Tense: correct? consistent?

7th and 10th Grade: Verb tense correct and consistent
Last August our family went to the coast near Newport, and my sister and I tried surfing. We had borrowed boards from a neighbor, and we couldn t wait to try them out.
We paddled out beyond the waves and wait for one that looks just right. Suddenly, one came along. I jump up on top of my board and crouch low until I can finally stand. It seemed like I rode that wave forever! It was one of the most exciting things I ever did, and it happened in Oregon, not Hawaii.

Consistent Point of View

10th Grade:
Point of view (1st, 2nd, 3rd): consistent
My mom and I decided to drive along the old Columbia River Highway to see Vista House at Crown Point. It was built in the 1940's, and they recently renovated it. It's open to the public with no admission fee. When you drive out to the point, which is up very high, you can see a vast area up and down the Columbia. We put a quarter in the huge binoculars there and could see sailboats, colorful windsurfers, barges with cargo, and freighters. At the river's edge you can see trains coming and going, and beyond the river you can see houses and farms, the huge paper mill on the Washington side, and lots of other interesting things.
If dialogue present, correctly punctuated & paragraphed?

- Use **quotation marks** [“”] to set off material that represents quoted or spoken language.
- In the United States, periods and commas always go inside quotation marks regardless of logic.
- Quotation marks used around words to give special effect or to indicate irony are usually unnecessary.

**Direct vs. Indirect Quotations**

- Mr. Johnson, who was working in his field that morning, said, "The alien spaceship appeared right before my own two eyes."

- Mr. Johnson, a local farmer, reported last night that he saw an alien spaceship on his own property.
Let’s Review the Scoring Guide

Highlight words and phrases that help distinguish a score of 3 from a 4 in Conventions

Let’s Score some Papers!

Resources to Practice Scoring

• ODE High School Writing Samples:
  http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=527

• OPEN Scoring Site:
  http://www.openc.k12.or.us/scoring/

• Clackamas ESD Writing Samples
  http://www.clackesd.k12.or.us/cie/writing.html
Thank you for your attention!
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## Sentence Fluency

### 6
The writing has an effective flow and rhythm. Sentences show a high degree of craftsmanship, with consistently strong and varied structure that makes expressive oral reading easy and enjoyable. The writing is characterized by

- a natural, fluent sound; it glides along with one sentence flowing effortlessly into the next.
- extensive variation in sentence structure, length, and beginnings that add interest to the text.
- sentence structure that enhances meaning by drawing attention to key ideas or reinforcing relationships among ideas.
- varied sentence patterns that create an effective combination of power and grace.
- strong control over sentence structure; fragments, if used at all, work well.
- stylistic control; dialogue, if used, sounds natural.

### 5
The writing has an easy flow and rhythm. Sentences are carefully crafted, with strong and varied structure that makes expressive oral reading easy and enjoyable. The writing is characterized by

- a natural, fluent sound; it glides along with one sentence flowing into the next.
- variation in sentence structure, length, and beginnings that add interest to the text.
- sentence structure that enhances meaning.
- control over sentence structure; fragments, if used at all, work well.
- stylistic control; dialogue, if used, sounds natural.

### 4
The writing flows; however, connections between phrases or sentences may be less than fluid. Sentence patterns are somewhat varied, contributing to ease in oral reading. The writing is characterized by

- a natural sound; the reader can move easily through the piece, although it may lack a certain rhythm and grace.
- some repeated patterns of sentence structure, length, and beginnings that may detract somewhat from overall impact.
- strong control over simple sentence structures, but variable control over more complex sentences; fragments, if present, are usually effective.
- occasional lapses in stylistic control; dialogue, if used, sounds natural for the most part, but may at times sound stilted or unnatural.

### 3
The writing tends to be mechanical rather than fluid. Occasional awkward constructions may force the reader to slow down or reread. The writing is characterized by

- some passages that invite fluid oral reading; however, others do not.
- some variety in sentence structure, length, and beginnings, although the writer falls into repetitive sentence patterns.
- good control over simple sentence structures, but little control over more complex sentences; fragments, if present, may not be effective.
- sentences which, although functional, lack energy.
- lapses in stylistic control; dialogue, if used, may sound stilted or unnatural.
- text that is too short to demonstrate variety and control.

### 2
The writing tends to be either choppy or rambling. Awkward constructions often force the reader to slow down or reread. The writing is characterized by

- significant portions of the text that are difficult to follow or read aloud.
- sentence patterns that are monotonous (e.g., subject-verb or subject-verb-object).
- a significant number of awkward, choppy, orrambling constructions.

### 1
The writing is difficult to follow or to read aloud. Sentences tend to be incomplete, rambling, or very awkward. The writing is characterized by

- text that does not invite—and may not even permit—smooth oral reading.
- confusing word order that is often jarring and irregular.
- sentence structure that frequently obscures meaning.
- sentences that are disjointed, confusing, or rambling.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The writing demonstrates exceptionally strong control of standard writing conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar and usage) and uses them effectively to enhance communication. Errors are so few and so minor that the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them. The writing is characterized by</td>
<td>The writing demonstrates strong control of standard writing conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar and usage) and uses them effectively to enhance communication. Errors are few and minor. Conventions support readability. The writing is characterized by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• strong control of conventions; manipulation of conventions may occur for stylistic effect.</td>
<td>• strong control of conventions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• strong, effective use of punctuation that guides the reader through the text.</td>
<td>• effective use of punctuation that guides the reader through the text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• correct spelling, even of more difficult words.</td>
<td>• correct spelling, even of more difficult words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• correct grammar and usage that contribute to clarity and style.</td>
<td>• correct capitalization; errors, if any, are minor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• skill in using a wide range of conventions in a sufficiently long and complex piece.</td>
<td>• skill in using a wide range of conventions in a sufficiently long and complex piece.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• little or no need for editing.</td>
<td>• little need for editing.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writing demonstrates control of standard writing conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar and usage). Significant errors do not occur frequently. Minor errors, while perhaps noticeable, do not impede readability. The writing is characterized by</td>
<td>The writing demonstrates limited control of standard writing conventions (e.g., punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar and usage). Errors begin to impede readability. The writing is characterized by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• control over conventions used, although a wide range is not demonstrated.</td>
<td>• some control over basic conventions; the text may be too simple or too short to reveal mastery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• correct end-of-sentence punctuation; internal punctuation may sometimes be incorrect.</td>
<td>• end-of-sentence punctuation that is usually correct; however, internal punctuation contains frequent errors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• spelling that is usually correct, especially on common words.</td>
<td>• spelling errors that distract the reader; misspelling of common words occurs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• correct capitalization; errors, if any, are minor.</td>
<td>• capitalization errors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• occasional lapses in correct grammar and usage; problems are not severe enough to distort meaning or confuse the reader.</td>
<td>• errors in grammar and usage that do not block meaning but do distract the reader.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• moderate need for editing.</td>
<td>• significant need for editing.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writing demonstrates little control of standard writing conventions. Frequent, significant errors impede readability. The writing is characterized by</td>
<td>Numerous errors in usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. In fact, 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 is characterized by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• little control over basic conventions.</td>
<td>• very limited skill in using conventions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• many end-of-sentence punctuation errors; internal punctuation contains frequent errors.</td>
<td>• basic punctuation (including end-of-sentence punctuation) that tends to be omitted, haphazard, or incorrect.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• spelling errors that frequently distract the reader; misspelling of common words often occurs.</td>
<td>• frequent spelling errors that significantly impair readability.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• capitalization that is inconsistent or often incorrect.</td>
<td>• capitalization that appears to be random.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• errors in grammar and usage that interfere with readability and meaning.</td>
<td>• a need for extensive editing.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• substantial need for editing.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Conventions: Clarification of “End-of-sentence punctuation”

Score of 4: “correct end-of-sentence punctuation; internal punctuation may sometimes be incorrect” (Scoring Guide)

Score of 3: “end-of-sentence punctuation that is usually correct; however, internal punctuation contains frequent errors” (Scoring Guide)

Correct end-of-sentence punctuation means that the writing

- is characterized by complete sentences, punctuated correctly
- avoids run-on sentences
- avoids comma splices
- generally avoids fragments; they are used sparingly and effectively, if at all

Run-on sentences

- complete lack of punctuation between sentences
- never correct (maybe stream-of-consciousness in published works)

Last summer we camped near Cape Arago on the southern Oregon coast we saw lots of seals, sea lions, cormorants, and other marine life. My brother climbed on the huge rock formations he thought they looked like alien spaceships.

Just for fun, my grandmother and I rode on the tram in Portland from the river up to OSHU it was great because at the top, we could see the whole city, the river, and Mount Hood.

Comma splices

- separating two complete sentences with only a comma
- never correct

Last summer we camped near Cape Arago on the southern Oregon coast, we saw lots of seals, sea lions, cormorants, and other marine life. My brother climbed on the huge rock formations, he thought they looked like alien spaceships.

Just for fun, my grandmother and I rode on the tram in Portland from the river up to OSHU, it was great because we could see the whole city, the river, and Mount Hood.

Fragments

- parts of sentences; incomplete sentences
- OK if used sparingly and effectively incorrect if used frequently and ineffectively

Ineffective fragments:

We wanted to visit the Interpretive Center at the John Day Fossil Beds. Although we didn’t have much time. It shows how eastern Oregon was once a tropical forest. Which is so amazing. Especially since it’s a high desert now. At different times various animals lived there. Such as a rhino, an elephant, a saber-toothed cat, and a very small horse.

Effective fragment:

The car was careening around the icy curve at top speed when it suddenly went into a series of crazy spins. We were thrown violently from one side to another until we came to a stop. A screeching, lurching stop.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 7</th>
<th>Grade 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Spelling**| • correctly spelled common words and bases (roots) of words appropriate to grade level  
• difficult words may be phonetically spelled                      | • correctly spelled common words appropriate to grade level, and words derived from common bases or roots  
• few misspellings of more difficult words                            | • correctly spelled common words appropriate to grade level  
• few misspellings of more difficult words                             |
| **Usage**   | • basic control of subject/verb agreement although there may be a few lapses  
• generally correct verb tense in regular and irregular verbs  
• generally correct use of adverbs, prepositions and coordinating conjunctions (and, or, but) | • basic control of noun/pronoun and subject/verb agreement  
• generally correct verb tense in regular and irregular verbs  
• correctly use the various parts of speech and types and structures of sentences | • solid control of subject/verb agreement  
• general control of noun/pronoun agreement  
• correct verb tense in regular and irregular verbs  
• consistent control of point of view (first, second, third person) |
| **Punctuation** | • correct end of sentence punctuation  
• use quotation marks to identify the words of a speaker and titles of short works (e.g., articles, poems and songs).  
• apostrophes are generally used correctly in contractions and singular and plural possessives  
• Use commas in dates, locations, and addresses, and for items in a series | • correct end of sentence punctuation  
• commas are correctly placed in dates and in a series  
• attempts at internal punctuation (commas, colons, semi-colons) although they may occasionally be incorrect quotation marks, if used, are used correctly; punctuation in dialogue applied accurately  
• apostrophes are used correctly in contractions and singular possessives and plural possessives | • correct end of sentence punctuation  
• generally correct use of commas (after introductory phrases, in compound sentences, in a series)  
• internal punctuation is generally correct  
• correct use of apostrophes in contractions and singular possessives and plural possessives  
• Use conventions of punctuation correctly, including semicolons, colons, ellipses, and hyphens |
| **Capitalization** | • correctly capitalize sentence beginnings, proper nouns, titles (Mr., Mrs., and titles of short works), and pronoun “I”  
• correctly capitalize titles and first words of quotations, when appropriate. | • correct capitalization, including within quotation marks | • correct capitalization, including within quotation marks |
### Error Analysis and Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Errors</th>
<th>Type of Error</th>
<th>Trait Affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Someone that <strong>encourage</strong> you…”</td>
<td>Subject/Verb Agreement</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When parents <strong>talks</strong> about school…”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“I wonder where <strong>he get</strong> the energy…”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Both his <strong>grandparent</strong> were poor…”</td>
<td>Problem with Plural Form</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“At the age of 5, both his parents <strong>die</strong>…”</td>
<td>Verb Tense Problem</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He had to <strong>start</strong> working…”</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“He has always <strong>work</strong> hard…”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“If one student is doing <strong>good</strong>…”</td>
<td>Adverb vs. Adjective Form</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Some parents <strong>requirement</strong> a uniform…”</td>
<td>Word Form Problem</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The principal <strong>ruler</strong> is that you need…”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“You need to have <strong>a permit</strong> of your parents…”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Second issue is what parents think…”</td>
<td>Missing Article (perhaps 1 in an essay can be overlooked, but not if there’s a pattern)</td>
<td>Sentence Fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Big influence in schools is…”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…first thing comes into mind…”</td>
<td>Missing Word(s) (perhaps one can be overlooked but not if there’s a pattern)</td>
<td>Sentence Fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What education <strong>there will be</strong>?”</td>
<td>Inverted Word Order</td>
<td>Sentence Fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Error in Word Use (Wrong word is used.)</td>
<td>Word Choice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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