

# Facilitator's Guide to Leading the Scoring Session

## Essential Skill of Writing: In-Depth Training

### Voice & Word Choice

### For Content Area Teachers

This packet contains the following:

- Instructions for Leading Sample Paper Scoring
- Student papers with Commentary and Scores



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**Writing Scoring Guide**  
**In-depth Training: Content Teachers**  
**Part 3: Voice / Sentence Fluency**  
**Facilitator's Instructions / Suggestions for Use of Student Papers**

- Please review the bulleted notes for facilitators at the beginning of Part I of the training. They apply to this part of the training as well.

**VOICE**

With participants, review Slides # 3 -- 10 in the PowerPoint presentation. In particular, the spectrum on Slide #8 is important. Participants have a full page version of this slide included in their packet. (Point out that this handout works well with students in an instructional setting, too.)

**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 Voice:
  - 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
- At the same time, refine and clarify bullets and descriptors / add training points not written in Scoring Guide. For example, in Voice:
  - As suggested on Slide #9, an appropriate voice is dependent on several variables. The most important is probably mode. It is almost always appropriate in narrative writing to choose a personal, casual, "up-close" voice, while the expository and persuasive modes sometimes require a more academic voice, depending on the topic, writing situation, and audience.
  - For the writing assessment (where these sample student papers originated), students do not have access to outside resources. Therefore, more formal academic papers are never called for, and it is appropriate to choose a casual, personal voice, regardless of mode. The prompts are necessarily designed so that students must rely upon their own personal experiences, general background, logic and reasoning, etc.
  - In classroom work samples, it is much more likely that students will occasionally be asked to write with a more academic, objective voice. It is important to consider mode, topic, audience, and writing situation before assigning a score for Voice (and students should consider exactly the same factors before choosing a Voice).
  - *(4) everyone recognizes strong voice when it is demonstrated through humor, liveliness, suspense, excitement, and/or engagement of both reader and writer, but it is also important to recognize that simple sincerity and commitment to the topic are also signs of voice. These two qualities can be seen in much student writing, regardless of mode, and they are often all that's called for to meet the standard in most writing situations.*

- (3) in the expository and persuasive modes (especially in work samples such as formal essays, researched essays, or research papers), papers may score a 3 in Voice if a formal voice is required, but a personal, “up-close” voice permeates the paper. Many students struggle to establish and maintain a more objective, academic voice when it’s necessary.
- (3) in the narrative mode, papers may score a 3 because the topic or situation calls for a more personal voice that is not there (e.g., a life-threatening situation is being described, but the voice remains flat, or another kind of emotionally-charged situation is part of the narrative, but the voice is impersonal. If students say they don’t want to write about certain events in a personal way, then they should simply choose a different topic. Prompts are NEVER intended to pry into students’ private lives; they are deliberately open-ended so that students may take them in many different directions).
- (3) remind raters of the “too short” bullet under the 3 score point. This was added to clarify scores for papers that were clearly 4’s in Voice but that presented insufficient evidence that the writer could sustain voice in a reasonably well-developed paper.
- the “too short” bullet in the 3 does NOT mean that any paper that is too short will automatically score a 3; if the paper fits the descriptors of a 2 or a 1, it should receive those scores.
- (5/6) as raters begin to read and score student work, they will quickly recognize strong voice when they see it

### **Scoring of Student Papers**

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

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

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

- Participants read paper.
- Facilitator asks each of the following questions and waits for response:
  - “To score for Voice, ask yourself first if a voice is present.
  - Next, ask yourself if the voice is appropriate for the mode, topic, and writing situation.
- “If yes, then the paper is at least a 4, as this clearly is. Is there any reason to go above a 4 here?” (No--paper is a clear, solid 4 in Voice.) Discuss any points that should be made about the paper / bullets of scoring guide.

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

- Same questions and process, except that this time, not all the answers will be yes. This paper scores a 3 in Voice. See commentaries of all papers for more detailed explanations.

#### **Paper 17 Uncle’s Restaurant (Expository)**

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

meets with a 4. Go from there. Ask them to use language from the scoring guide to justify their scores.

#### **Paper 10: Shopping Mall (Persuasive)**

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

#### **Paper 11: Media / Moderation (Persuasive)**

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

#### **Paper 14: Car (Imaginative)**

- Same process, but narrow the discussion from the beginning to 1, 2, 3, 4.

If there's time:

#### **Paper 15: SUV's (Persuasive)**

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

## **WORD CHOICE**

### **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 Word Choice:
  - 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
- At the same time, refine and clarify bullets and descriptors / add training points not written in Scoring Guide. For example, in Word Choice:
  - (4) pretty straight call if words work to convey the message, if there's enough variety, and if words are specific (consider grade level, too)
  - (4) some degree of slang is all right--at this level it doesn't seem purposeful, is not particularly effective
  - (4) some jargon or technical language OK, even if not explained, so long as fairly clear in the context (e.g., terms related to skateboarding, surfing, technology, etc.)
  - (3) papers often a 3 partly because words are too general ("things," "stuff," "key thing")
  - (3) sometimes words are imprecise or "off"--not quite the right word in terms of shades of meaning
  - (3) sometimes simply the wrong word (misused words); IMPORTANT, especially for ELL papers: make sure it's really the WRONG WORD, not the WRONG FORM of the RIGHT WORD, which comes under Conventions--many ELL students have the right word, just the incorrect form (require instead of requirement, drive instead of driving, beautiful instead of beauty)
  - (3) lots of clichés and overused expressions

- (3) words are repeated (happens quite often in 3 papers)
- (3) remind raters of “too short” bullet; paper is a 4 in Word Choice but there is not enough writing to verify that it meets (“Too short” papers do not automatically get a 3. If descriptors for the 2 or 1 fit, then those scores apply.)
- (5/6) broad range of words; precise and accurate
- (5/6) remind raters that vivid sensory images count toward Word Choice
- (5/6) remind of effectiveness of ordinary words used in unusual way
- (3, 4, 5) several references to overdone “colorful” language at 3, 4, 5. Usually occurs in narrative, imaginative. Rarely SO overdone that paper warrants a 3. Overall attempt in Word Choice is usually high, with much at true 5 level, but with some overdone phrases mixed in. Depending on how many of those phrases there are, and how overdone and unnatural they are, the paper often balances out at a 4. (Example: “Her laugh was the sound of the wind drifting and flowing though a peaceful dove’s ivory white feathers.”)
- in expository and persuasive, “overdone” language is more likely to be multi-syllabic words straight out of a thesaurus that don’t quite fit the intended meaning and/or do not fit with the overall style of the paper

### **Scoring of Student Papers**

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

Be sure the discussion of each paper gets to the specific details unique to each paper regarding Word Choice. In preparing for Word Choice, highlight or underline the words or phrases on your own copy that justify the score.

**Papers are the same as the above papers for Voice, in the same order.** Just re-read briefly and discuss Word Choice. In addition, you could revisit any of the papers from previous in-depth training sessions for both Voice and Word Choice.

### **Score for all traits?**

In planning, it might be good to reserve some time at the end of this session to score some papers for all traits. Score them one at a time and discuss until time runs out. You might also develop a sense throughout the training of where the group needs more work. You could then revisit certain papers of your choice to provide more practice in those areas.

# Training: Writing Scoring Guide

## High School Content Area Teachers

### Part III: Voice / Word Choice

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

<b>Voice and Word Choice</b>							
<b>PAPER #</b>	<b>Title/Mode</b>	<b>I/C</b>	<b>ORG</b>	<b>VOICE</b>	<b>WC</b>	<b>SF</b>	<b>CONV</b>
1	Voting (P)	4	4	4+	4	4	4
4	Works of Art (E)	3	3	3	3	3	3
17	Uncle's Restaurant (E)	4	4	4	4	4	3
10	Shopping Mall (P)	3	3-	4-	3	3	3
11	Media / Moderation (P)	4	4	5	4	4	3
14	Car (I)	2-	2	2	1	1	1+
15	SUV's (P)	6	6	6	6	6-	5+

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

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

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

The education required to make an

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

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

## Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 1 - Voting

Mode: Persuasive

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

### Ideas:

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

### Organization:

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

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

### Sentence Fluency:

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

### Conventions:

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

### Voice:

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

### Word Choice:

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

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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 aunt's, grandma's, and grandpa's funerals. Everytime I hear that song I cry because it brings back memories of all those people.

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

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

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

## Writing Essential Skills Scores and Commentary

Paper Name: Paper 4 – Works of Art

Mode: Expository  
(purpose: to explain)

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

### Ideas:

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

### Organization:

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

### Sentence Fluency:

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

### Conventions:

The paper scores a 3 in Conventions. There are two errors in **end-of-sentence punctuation** (paragraphs 1 and 4). One of the most significant errors is in point of view consistency. The author switches from first to second to third throughout the essay. Sometimes, there is even a switch within the same sentence ("Some songs can bring *you* memories or even inspire *us*.") Spelling is correct except for "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.

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~~<sup>had me</sup> 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. Thats 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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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, clothes 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, Cloth 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 *atract*. 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*.

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 Terry 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 saw (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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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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# Practice Score Sheet

## Part III: Voice and Word Choice

PAPER #	Title	I/C	ORG	SF	CONV	VOICE	WC
1	Voting (P)						
4	Works of Art (E)						
17	Uncle's Restaurant (E)						
10	Shopping Mall (P)						
11	Media/Moderation (P)						
14	Car (I)						
15	SUV's (P)						