

# Facilitator's Packet for

## Essential Skill of Writing: In-Depth Training

## Voice & Word Choice

## For ELA Teachers

This packet contains the following:

- Facilitator's Agenda
- PowerPoint Slides with Facilitator's notes
- Scoring Guides for Voice & Word Choice



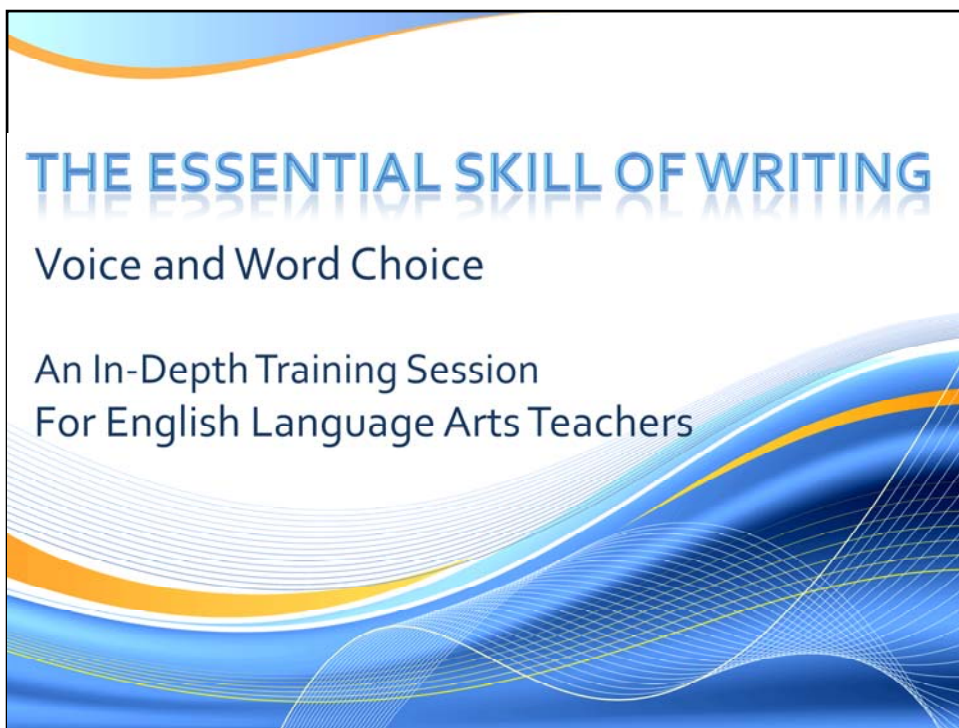
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# Essential Skill of Writing: In-Depth Training for English Language Arts Teachers

## Voice & Word Choice Facilitator's AGENDA: 2 to 2 ½ hours

5 -7 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welcome and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be done by the host or by the presenter.</li> <li>• Focus on making participants feel welcome and let them know what to expect</li> <li>• Take care of any housekeeping details</li> <li>• <b>Handout:</b> Participant's Packet</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
PowerPoint Overview Introduction Slides 1 – 2  5 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The Essential Skill of Writing: Voice &amp; Word Choice for ELA Teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Materials:</b> Laptop with PowerPoint &amp; projector</li> <li>• <b>Participant Packet: Voice &amp; Word Choice for ELA Teachers</b> contains all handouts referred to in the PowerPoint presentation as well as student papers that will be used for scoring during this session.</li> <li>• <b>Facilitator's Packet:</b> contains PowerPoint notes and other handouts used in PowerPoint, suggestions for leading the scoring session, a key to student writing samples, and student papers and commentaries.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> General scoring issues and rater bias were covered in Session One – Ideas/Content &amp; Organization. You may want to reference them briefly, depending on the amount of time that has elapsed between workshops. Information on the Common Core State Standards for Writing was also included in the workshop for Ideas/Content &amp; Organization and is not repeated here.</p> </li> </ol>
Focused training & paper scoring  About 1 ½ to 2 hours	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <b>PowerPoint Presentation:</b> Slides 3 - 8 introduce Voice – leading to practice scoring papers; Slides 11 – 13 do the same for Word Choice.</li> </ol> <p>Facilitators have been provided with Commentary for student papers which are not included in the participant's packet. It is recommended that you wait to distribute these commentaries until the in-depth training sessions are completed.</p>
20 – 30 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. <b>Optional: Practice Scoring all 6 traits</b> If time allows, it may be useful to have participants return to papers previously scored in this session or other sessions to score them for all 6 traits. Use your judgment based on the experience of your participants.</li> </ol>
5 - 10 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. <b>Optional Question &amp; Answer or Summary:</b> PowerPoint Slides 16 &amp; 17 list resources and provide a final slide to end the session.</li> </ol>
Total = 2 – 2 ½ hours	

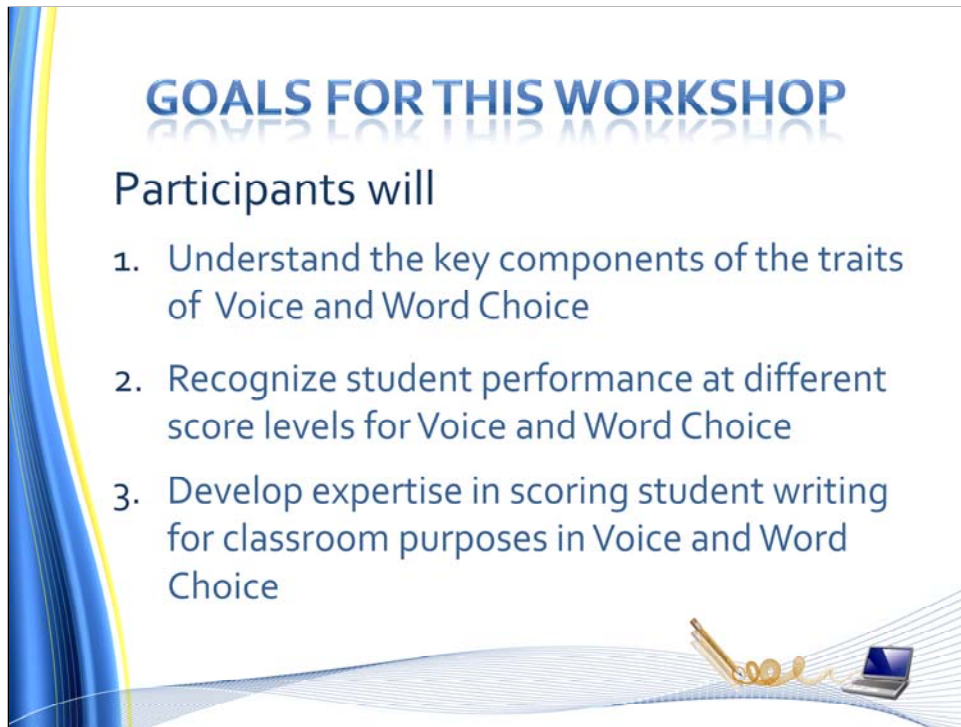
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Intro slide – get participants comfortable and oriented

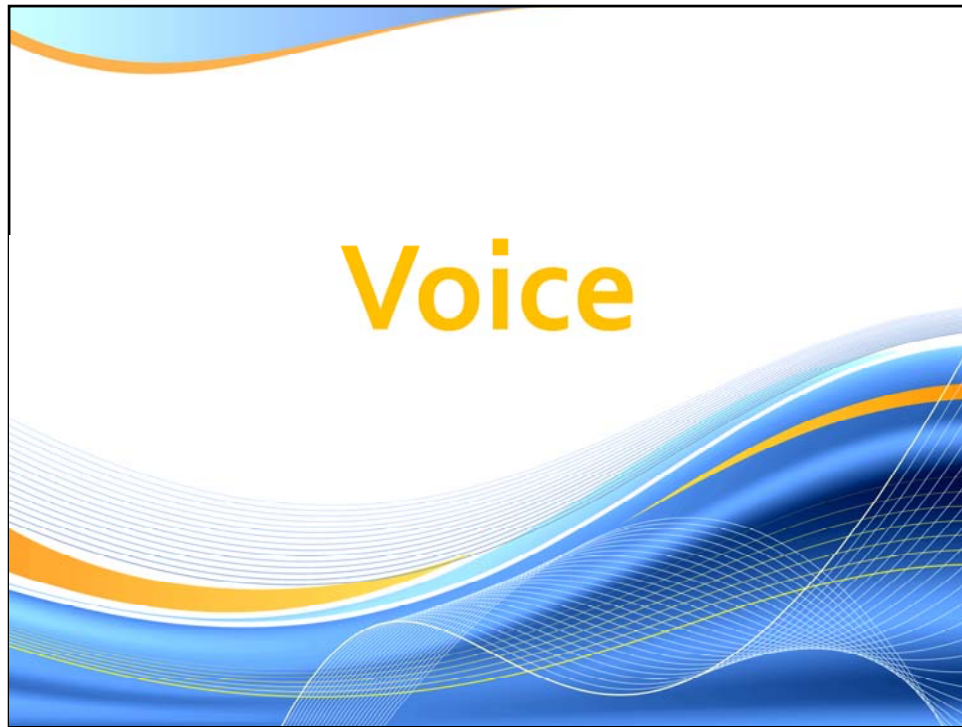
This is the third in a series of 3 in-depth training sessions. Because Voice and Word Choice are not required traits for the purpose of demonstrating proficiency in the Essential Skills, ELA teachers need to validate their belief that these are still very important traits.

The purpose of this session is to assure that teachers around the state are operating from the same reference for each score point on the scale, but especially in distinguishing between a score of 3 and a 4 which tends to be the balancing point in these traits as well. It is easy to recognize a high paper (5 or 6) and low papers (1 or 2) are often low in these traits because they are so short that it is difficult to see enough evidence of the trait to award a 3. The majority of papers fall into the 3 versus 4 category.



There are three goals for this session. **Refresh understanding** of traits of Voice and Word Choice; **re-calibrate** to scale, especially at the 3 and 4 score points; and **develop expertise** through sufficient practice -- so teachers in this session will be reviewing a lot of papers!

Remind teachers that Voice and Word Choice do not have required scores for Essential Skills proficiency, but that they are both critical skills for students to develop as part of becoming capable writers.



Time to dig into the meat of the session! Use your experience and skills to help participants internalize the important considerations in Voice.

## WHAT IS VOICE?

- Voice is the author's style, the quality that makes his or her writing unique, and which conveys the author's attitude, personality, and character;
- OR
- Voice is the characteristic speech and thought patterns of a first-person narrator; a persona.

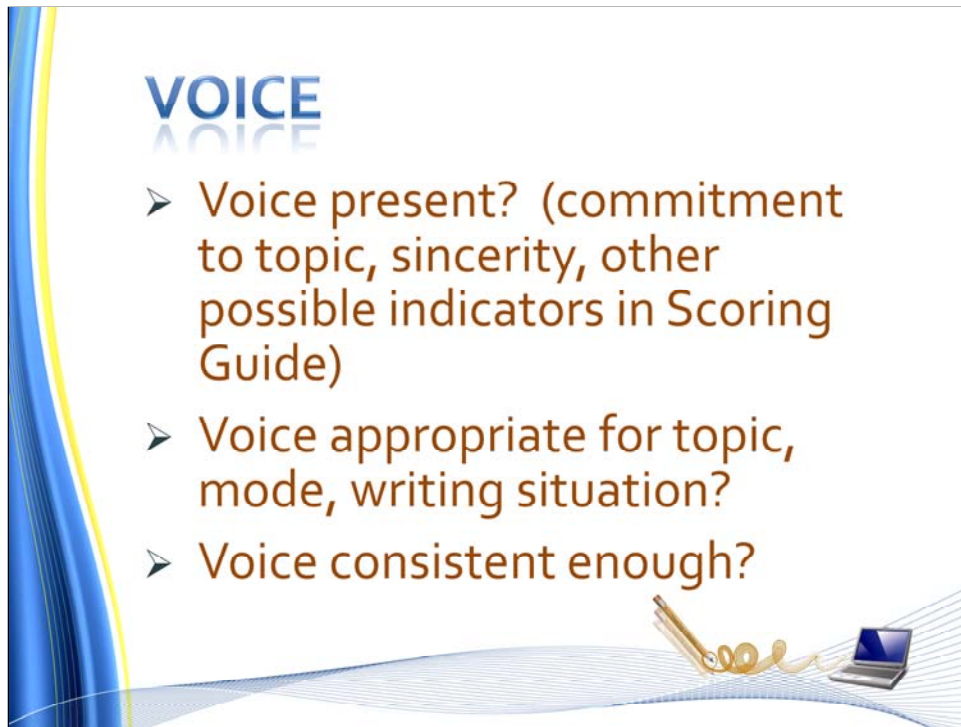
Basic definition -- overview



Because voice has so much to do with the reader's experience of a work of literature, it is one of the most important elements of a piece of writing.



Just as students respond to an author's voice in a literature selection, they need to be aware of their choices as a writer to create a strong sense of voice.

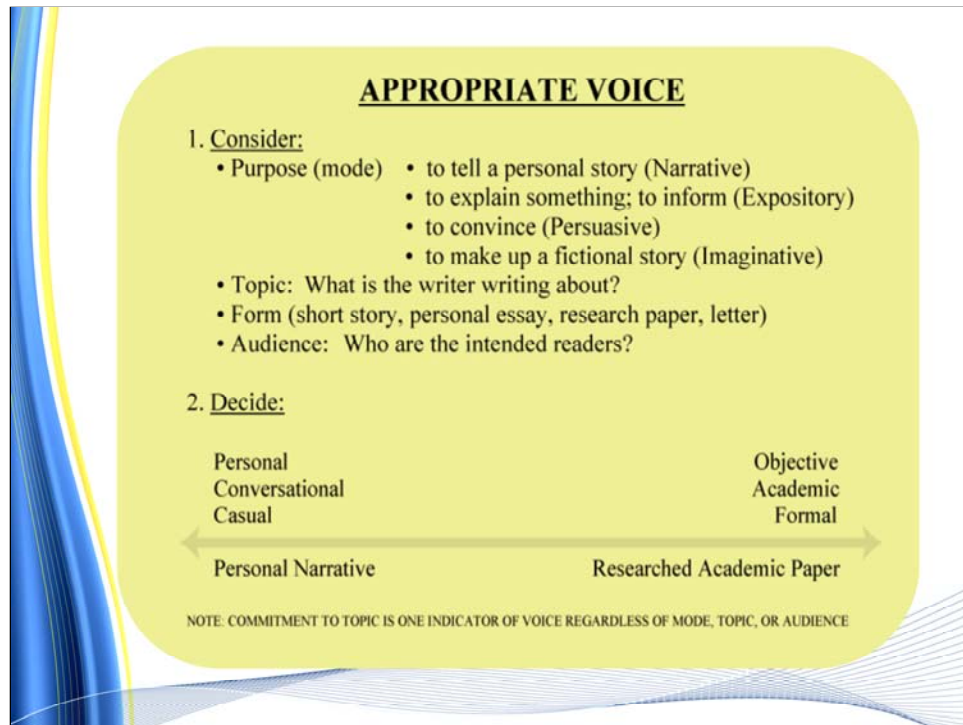


These are key elements addressed in the 4 level of the scoring guide. It is important for participants to see that a paper that scores a 4 in Voice may not reach emotional heights of grandeur – but it has more strengths than weaknesses.

Recommended: Teachers use highlighters to mark words or phrases that help them understand this trait here or later in this training.

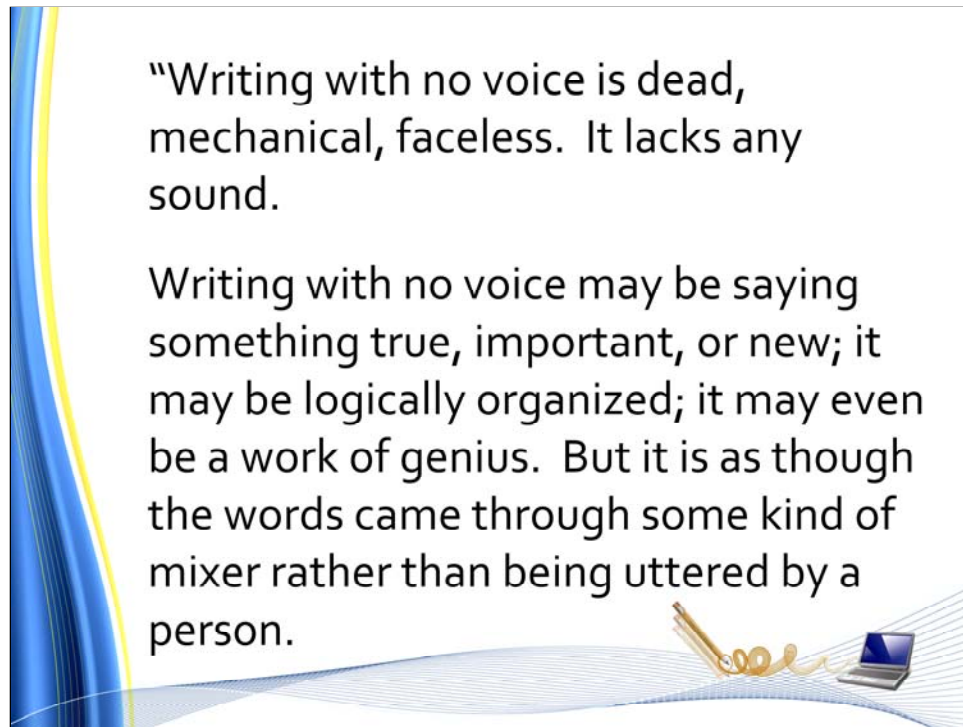
**General Comments about VOICE:**

- Be VERY aware of mode before assigning score; straightforward tone appropriate for expository and persuasive
- When students are not allowed to use outside resources, a personal voice is usually appropriate. A formal, more academic voice is usually more appropriate for classroom work samples in which outside resources are utilized.
- On the state assessment, it is common to see a 3 given when a narrative that should be exciting or suspenseful is conveyed in a flat tone

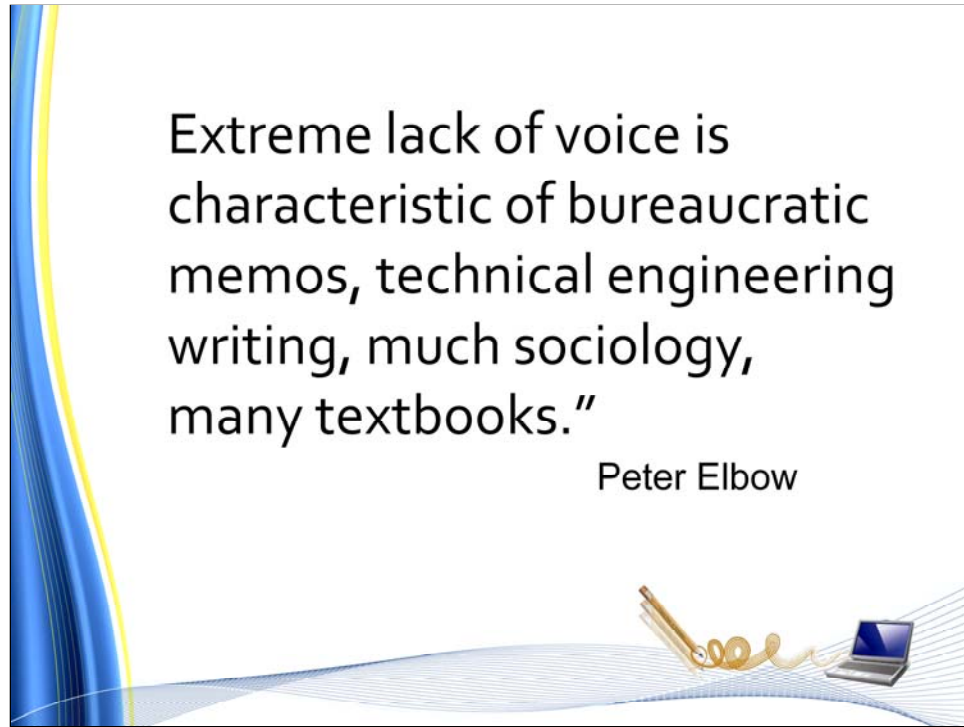


Participants have this handout in their packets. Have them pair and share or work in small groups and report out to explain the 4 purposes (modes). You could divide the group into 4 and give them chart paper and have each group explain what characteristics that mode calls for in Voice.

Be sure to discuss point #2. There are papers in which it is appropriate for the writer to take a more distant, objective stance.

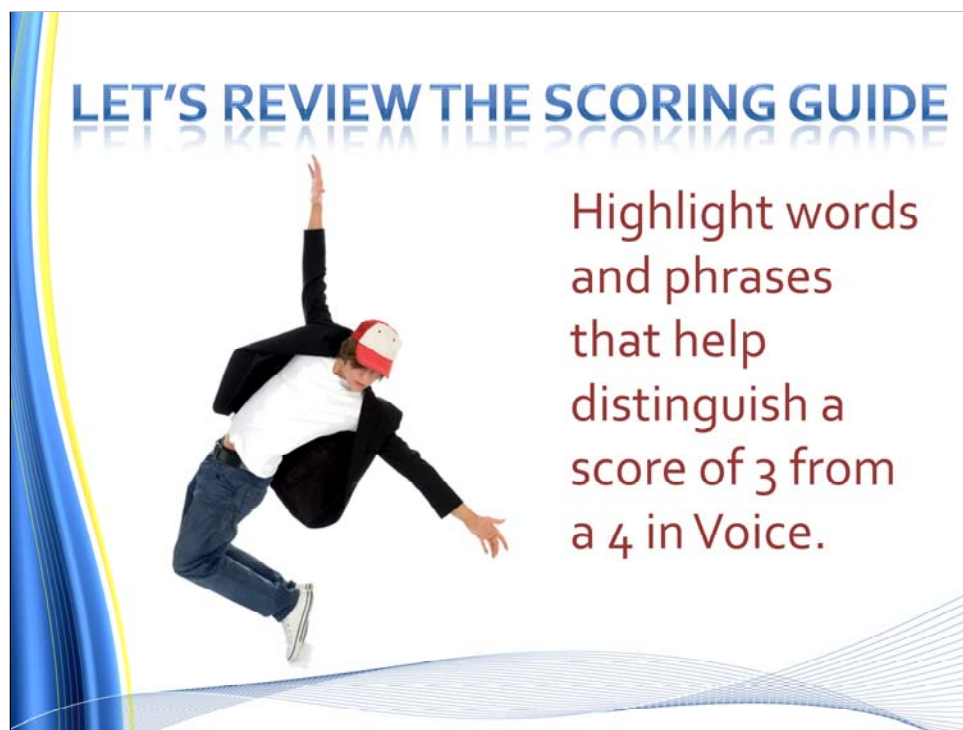


First part of quote on importance of voice – especially as it relates to informational (non-literary) writing.

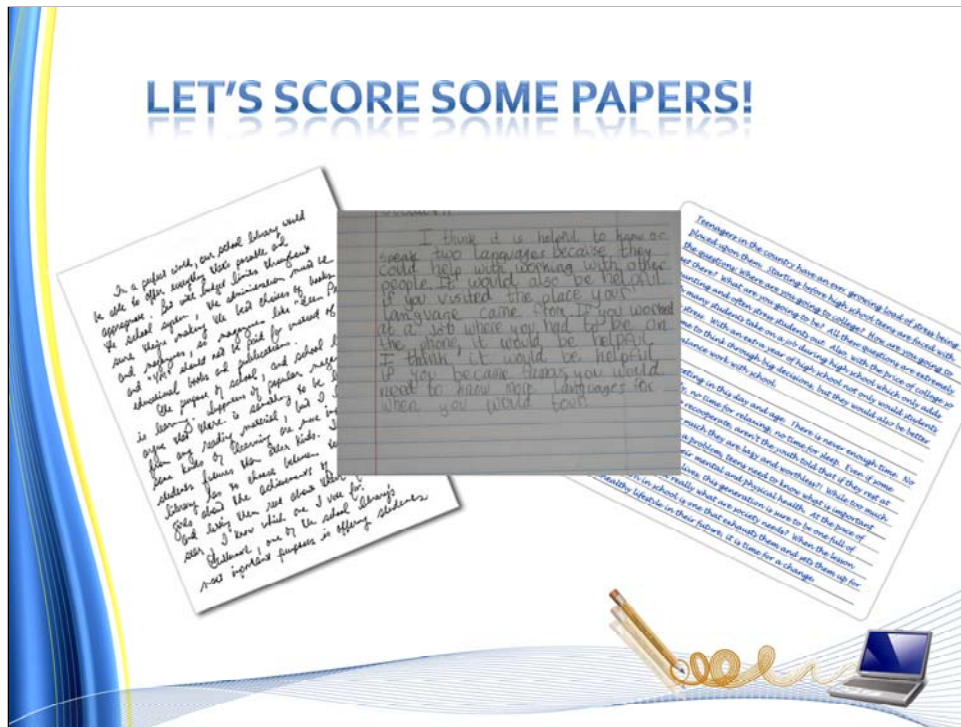


Conclusion of quote – ready to move into scoring papers

Importance of teaching and assessing Voice – students need to hear good models and learn how to convey feelings and attitudes appropriate to the purpose and audience of their writing.



The most critical differentiation occurs at the 3 and 4 score points. Don't neglect the other scores, however.



You have a set of papers with scores and commentary. Suggestions are included in the facilitator's packet for which papers to score for Voice. Participants have the student papers, but no commentary. Some of these papers may have been used in the previous in-depth training session on Ideas & Content and Organization and Sentence Fluency & Conventions.

You may wish to provide the written commentary on the papers to participants who have now completed all training sessions – **A.** Ideas/Content and Organization; **B.** Sentence Fluency and Conventions; **C.** (optional) Voice and Word Choice.



# Word Choice

Introduction to Word Choice

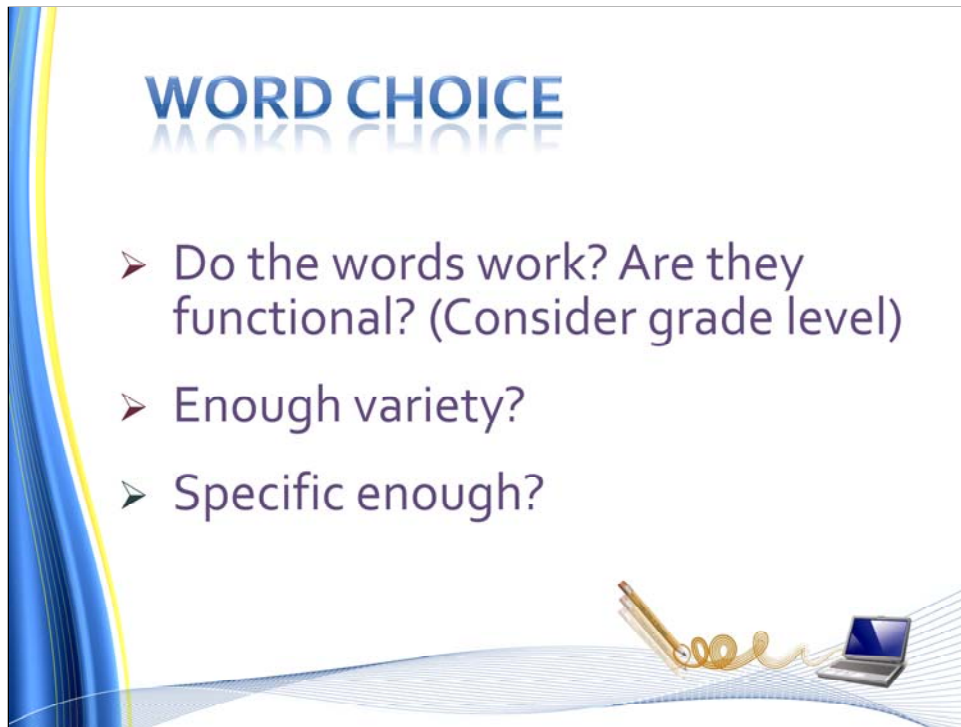


"The difference between the almost right word & the right word is really a large matter--it's the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning."

Mark Twain



Famous, often used quote – but to the point about word choice.



### **General Comments about Word Choice:**

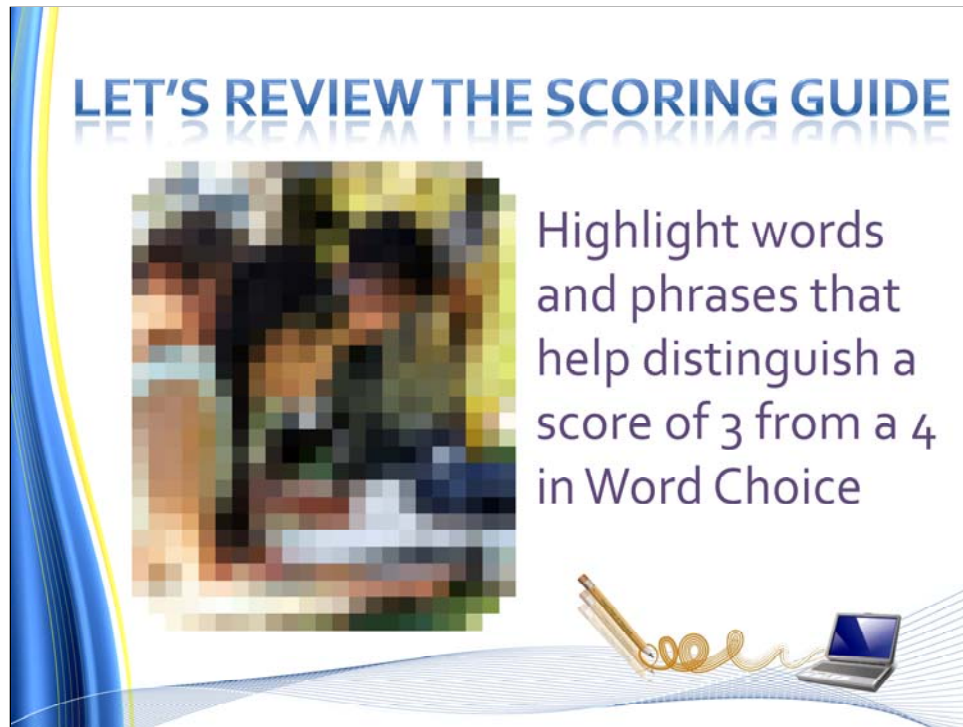
- Issue of overdone words: Score of 5 vs. 4 vs. 3: balance risk & level of attempt versus preponderance of words effective or not. Rarely so overdone that 3 is warranted; often balance out to a 4; may still be a 5 if not too many overdone.

- Consider also misused / wrong words vs. just overdone. If significant number of misused or wrong words, not a 5. Depending on how many in context of length of piece, may be a 4 or a 3.

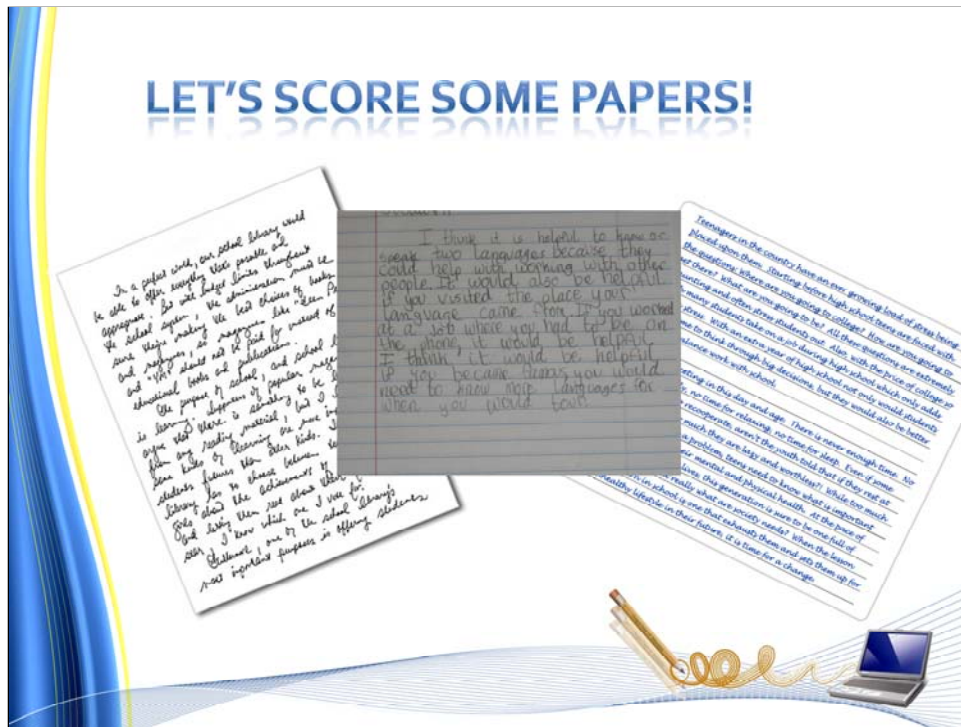
- ELL: Be sure word is really **WRONG WORD**, not wrong **FORM** of word (e.g., noun form vs. verb form: hibernation vs. hibernate); wrong forms = Conventions, NOT Word Choice

- If words obviously come from a certain genre of writing (e.g., science fiction, Westerns, detective fiction), do not penalize students--nothing wrong with the reading/writing connection--)

- jargon, technical language: OK if reader can figure out words in context; if not, should be explained



Again, focus is on helping participants distinguish between a 3 and 4, but go over other score points as well.



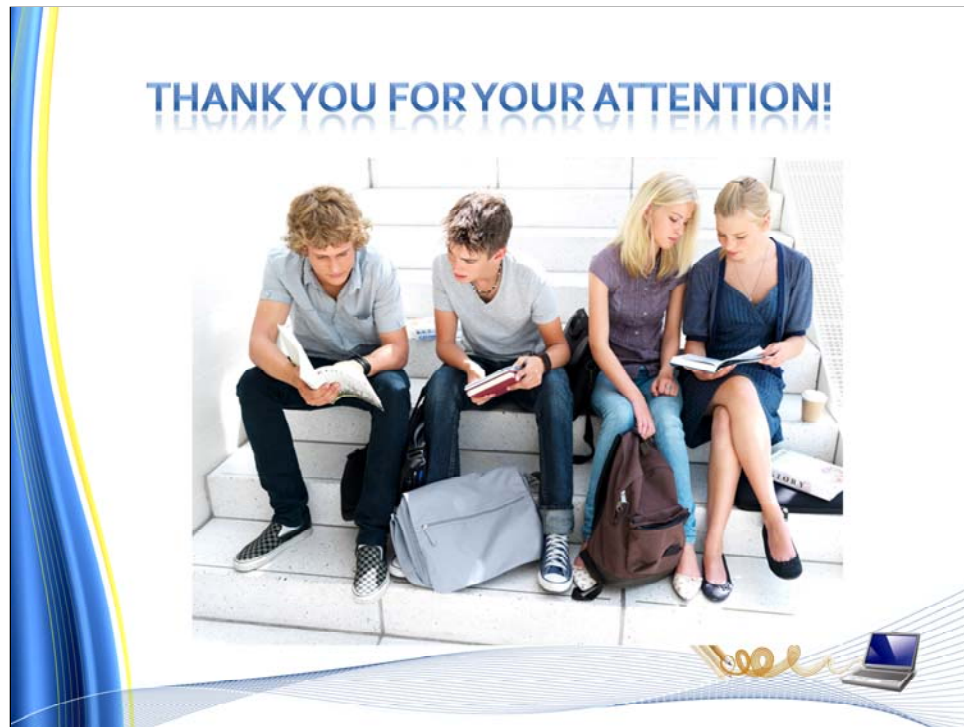
You have a set of papers with scores and commentary. Suggestions are included in the facilitator's packet for which papers to score for Word Choice. Participants have the student papers, but no commentary. Papers may be referenced again during other in-depth training session on the traits.

You may wish to provide commentaries on scores and papers to participants who have completed all three in-depth training sessions – **A.** Ideas/Content and Organization; **B.** Sentence Fluency and Conventions; **C.** (optional) Voice and Word Choice.

## 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>

These are three resources where teachers can find additional papers to score for any of the traits and then compare their scores with the official scores. Additional papers and practice opportunities will be added as resources allow.



Final slide

# OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## OFFICIAL SCORING GUIDE, WRITING

Voice	
<p><b>6</b></p> <p>The writer has chosen a voice appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. The writer demonstrates deep commitment to the topic, and there is an exceptional sense of “writing to be read.” The writing is expressive, engaging, or sincere. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an effective level of closeness to or distance from the audience (e.g., a narrative should have a strong personal voice, while an expository piece may require extensive use of outside resources and a more academic voice; nevertheless, both should be engaging, lively, or interesting. Technical writing may require greater distance.).</li> <li>• an exceptionally strong sense of audience; the writer seems to be aware of the reader and of how to communicate the message most effectively. The reader may discern the writer behind the words and feel a sense of interaction.</li> <li>• a sense that the topic has come to life; when appropriate, the writing may show originality, liveliness, honesty, conviction, excitement, humor, or suspense.</li> </ul>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>The writer has chosen a voice appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience. The writer demonstrates commitment to the topic, and there is a sense of “writing to be read.” The writing is expressive, engaging, or sincere. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an appropriate level of closeness to or distance from the audience (e.g., a narrative should have a strong personal voice, while an expository piece may require extensive use of outside resources and a more academic voice; nevertheless, both should be engaging, lively, or interesting. Technical writing may require greater distance.).</li> <li>• a strong sense of audience; the writer seems to be aware of the reader and of how to communicate the message most effectively. The reader may discern the writer behind the words and feel a sense of interaction.</li> <li>• a sense that the topic has come to life; when appropriate, the writing may show originality, liveliness, honesty, conviction, excitement, humor, or suspense.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b></p> <p>A voice is present. The writer seems committed to the topic, and there may be a sense of “writing to be read.” In places, the writing is expressive, engaging, or sincere. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a suitable level of closeness to or distance from the audience.</li> <li>• a sense of audience; the writer seems to be aware of the reader but has not consistently employed an appropriate voice. The reader may glimpse the writer behind the words and feel a sense of interaction in places.</li> <li>• liveliness, sincerity, or humor when appropriate; however, at times the writing may be either inappropriately casual or personal, or inappropriately formal and stiff.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>The writer’s commitment to the topic seems inconsistent. A sense of the writer may emerge at times; however, the voice is either inappropriately personal or inappropriately impersonal. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a limited sense of audience; the writer’s awareness of the reader is unclear.</li> <li>• an occasional sense of the writer behind the words; however, the voice may shift or disappear a line or two later and the writing become somewhat mechanical.</li> <li>• a limited ability to shift to a more objective voice when necessary.</li> <li>• text that is too short to demonstrate a consistent and appropriate voice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b></p> <p>The writing provides little sense of involvement or commitment. There is no evidence that the writer has chosen a suitable voice. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• little engagement of the writer; the writing tends to be largely flat, lifeless, stiff, or mechanical.</li> <li>• a voice that is likely to be overly informal and personal.</li> <li>• a lack of audience awareness; there is little sense of “writing to be read.”</li> <li>• little or no hint of the writer behind the words. There is rarely a sense of interaction between reader and writer.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1</b></p> <p>The writing seems to lack a sense of involvement or commitment. The writing is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no engagement of the writer; the writing is flat and lifeless.</li> <li>• a lack of audience awareness; there is no sense of “writing to be read.”</li> <li>• no hint of the writer behind the words. There is no sense of interaction between writer and reader; the writing does not involve or engage the reader.</li> </ul>



# OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## OFFICIAL SCORING GUIDE, WRITING

<b>Word Choice</b>	
<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>Words convey the intended message in an exceptionally interesting, precise, and natural way appropriate to audience and purpose. The writer employs a rich, broad range of words which have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed for impact. The writing is characterized by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accurate, strong, specific words; powerful words energize the writing.</li> <li>• fresh, original expression; slang, if used, seems purposeful and is effective.</li> <li>• vocabulary that is striking and varied, but that is natural and not overdone.</li> <li>• ordinary words used in an unusual way.</li> <li>• words that evoke strong images; figurative language may be used.</li> </ul>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Words convey the intended message in an interesting, precise, and natural way appropriate to audience and purpose. The writer employs a broad range of words which have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed for impact. The writing is characterized by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accurate, specific words; word choices energize the writing.</li> <li>• fresh, vivid expression; slang, if used, seems purposeful and is effective.</li> <li>• vocabulary that may be striking and varied, but that is natural and not overdone.</li> <li>• ordinary words used in an unusual way.</li> <li>• words that evoke clear images; figurative language may be used.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Words effectively convey the intended message. The writer employs a variety of words that are functional and appropriate to audience and purpose. The writing is characterized by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• words that work but do not particularly energize the writing.</li> <li>• expression that is functional; however, slang, if used, does not seem purposeful and is not particularly effective.</li> <li>• attempts at colorful language that may occasionally seem overdone.</li> <li>• occasional overuse of technical language or jargon.</li> <li>• rare experiments with language; however, the writing may have some fine moments and generally avoids clichés.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Language lacks precision and variety, or may be inappropriate to audience and purpose in places. The writer does not employ a variety of words, producing a sort of “generic” paper filled with familiar words and phrases. The writing is characterized by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• words that work, but that rarely capture the reader’s interest.</li> <li>• expression that seems mundane and general; slang, if used, does not seem purposeful and is not effective.</li> <li>• attempts at colorful language that seem overdone or forced.</li> <li>• words that are accurate for the most part, although misused words may occasionally appear; technical language or jargon may be overused or inappropriately used.</li> <li>• reliance on clichés and overused expressions.</li> <li>• text that is too short to demonstrate variety.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Language is monotonous and/or misused, detracting from the meaning and impact. The writing is characterized by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• words that are colorless, flat or imprecise.</li> <li>• monotonous repetition or overwhelming reliance on worn expressions that repeatedly detract from the message.</li> <li>• images that are fuzzy or absent altogether.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>The writing shows an extremely limited vocabulary or is so filled with misuses of words that the meaning is obscured. Only the most general kind of message is communicated because of vague or imprecise language. The writing is characterized by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general, vague words that fail to communicate.</li> <li>• an extremely limited range of words.</li> <li>• words that simply do not fit the text; they seem imprecise, inadequate, or just plain wrong.</li> </ul>



# APPROPRIATE VOICE

## 1. Consider:

- Purpose (mode)
  - to tell a personal story (Narrative)
  - to explain something; to inform (Expository)
  - to convince (Persuasive)
  - to make up a fictional story (Imaginative)
- Topic: What is the writer writing about?
- Form (short story, personal essay, research paper, letter)
- Audience: Who are the intended readers?

## 2. Decide:



NOTE: COMMITMENT TO TOPIC IS ONE INDICATOR OF VOICE REGARDLESS OF MODE, TOPIC, OR AUDIENCE

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