8th Grade Argument Writing Rubric

W8.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.				
Scoring Criteria	1 - Beginning	2 - Approaching	3 - Competent*	4 - Advanced
Purpose and Focus W8.1.a-e; W8.4	 □ Launches directly into topic with no introduction. □ Shows limited awareness of purpose. □ Does not establish focus. □ Does not acknowledge alternate or opposing claim. □ Shows limited awareness of audience's needs by providing little or no context. 	 □ Introduces the topic vaguely or bluntly. □ Shows some awareness of purpose by implying a claim. □ Attempts to establish focus, but the non-specificity of the claim may cause lapses. □ Attempts to acknowledge alternate or opposing claim. □ Indicates some awareness of audience's needs by providing some context. 	 □ Orients the reader with an introduction to the topic. □ Establishes a purpose by stating a claim. □ Maintains focus on the claim throughout. □ Acknowledges and distinguishes the claim from alternate or opposing claim. □ Indicates an awareness of audience's needs by providing relevant contextual details. 	 □ Orients and engages the reader with an angled and compelling introduction. □ Establishes a purpose by making a convincing claim. □ Maintains clear focus on the claim throughout. □ Acknowledges and distinguishes the claim from alternate or opposing claim, showing awareness of multiple perspectives. □ Indicates strong awareness of audience's needs by providing context and anticipating reader's response to the claim.
Idea Development W8.1.a, b, c, e; W8.4	 □ Includes some facts and/or details, but does not give reasons for their inclusion, or facts and/or details do not support a particular claim. □ Uses few or no sources. □ Shows limited understanding of the topic or text. □ Ends seemingly in the middle of a section with no sense of closure. 	 □ Includes facts and details and connects them to the reasons they support, but makes some inaccurate connections or fails to account for some information. □ Uses limited sources that may be insufficient to support the intended claim and/or that lack credibility. □ Shows some understanding of topic. □ Provides conclusion that may feel abrupt or insufficient. 	 □ Supports claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence. □ Uses accurate, credible sources that are sufficient to support the claim. □ Shows a clear understanding of the topic or text. □ Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented. 	 □ Supports claim with insightful, logical reasoning and compelling evidence. □ Uses accurate and credible sources that fully support the claim. □ Shows insightful understanding of topic. □ Provides a compelling concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
Structure W8.4	 □ Includes Ideas, reasons, facts and/or details that appear to be in no particular order. □ Use of transitional words, phrases and clauses to link ideas and reasons is limited or ineffective. 	 ☐ Groups ideas, reasons, facts, and details into sections or paragraphs that feel mostly cohesive, but may also include some information that does not seem to fit. These sections or paragraphs appear to be in no particular order. ☐ Uses some transitional words, phrases and clauses, but may be repetitive or awkward. 	 ☐ Groups related ideas, reasons, facts, and details into sections or paragraphs that are logically ordered. ☐ Uses a variety of transitional words, phrases and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons and evidence. 	☐ Groups ideas, reasons, facts, and details into sections or paragraphs that are strategically ordered to strengthen the impact of the claim (e.g., presenting and refuting opposing side or ordering reasons from least to most compelling). ☐ Uses transitional words, phrases and clauses, including some sophisticated ones, to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons and evidence.
Research W8.7-9	 □ Attempts to quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others (may or may not avoid plagiarism). □ Does not cite sources. 	□ Quotes or paraphrases the data and conclusions of others with lapses in accuracy (may or may not avoid plagiarism). □ Cites sources inconsistently	□ Quotes or paraphrases the data and conclusions of others accurately (with no evidence of plagiarism). □ Follows standard citation format.	□ Quotes or paraphrases the data and conclusions of others with accuracy (with no evidence of plagiarism). □ Consistently follows standard citation and effectively embeds citations.
Language and Conventions L8.1-4; W8.1.d	 ☐ Shows little evidence of correct grammar/usage. ☐ Makes convention errors (capitalization, punctuation, spelling) that impede communication. ☐ Shows little or no evidence of how to use language and its conventions to create reader interest. ☐ Shows little or no awareness of good word choice to convey appropriate tone for audience; does not establish a formal style. 	 ☐ Shows some evidence of correct grammar/usage. ☐ Use of conventions is mostly correct; errors do not impede communication. ☐ Shows some evidence of how to use language and its conventions to create reader interest. ☐ Makes some good word choice to express appropriate tone, but also may use simple or ineffective language for audience and purpose; does not consistently maintain formal style. 	 ☐ Shows command of the conventions of standard English grammar/usage. ☐ Shows command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. ☐ Uses knowledge of language and conventions to create reader interest and style, e.g., uses verbs in active/passive voice and conditional/subjunctive mood. ☐ Chooses words to convey an appropriate tone for audience and purpose; consistently maintains a formal style. 	 ☐ Shows and maintains a consistent command of the conventions of standard English grammar/usage. ☐ Shows and maintains a consistent command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. ☐ Skillfully uses knowledge of language and its conventions to connect with audience. ☐ Chooses words carefully to convey and maintain an appropriate tone for audience and purpose within a formal style.

KWP/jb/May2016