

Name Marshawn Cooper Date March 27 # 4

Expository and Narrative Scoring Rubric: This paper was scored only for WORD CHOICE.

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Assessment Criteria	-successfully experiments with advanced/new vocabulary	-mostly successful in experimenting with advanced/new vocabulary	-attempts to experiment with advanced/new vocabulary	-uses mostly familiar and simple vocabulary words	-repeats simple vocabulary words throughout	-uses limited vocabulary	-blank paper/no paper turned in -does not address topic
	-extremely precise and accurate word choice	-very precise and accurate word choice	-precise and accurate word choice	-some well-chosen and precise words	-words are often misused or vague	-many incorrect or vague words	-only/repeated/paraphrased the prompt -handwriting is unreadable
	-extremely well varied word choices	-highly varied word choices	-strong attempt at varying word choices	-some attempt at varying word choices	-mostly mundane and/or repetitive word choice	-mundane and/or repetitive word choices	-incoherent -written in another language
	-words create lasting images or impressions	-words paint a clear picture in the reader's mind	-words communicate ideas effectively	-words convey the basic idea	-words often confuse the message	-words makes it very difficult to understand the message	
	A+	A	B 50%	C	D	F	F

I love the way you incorporated new words from the novel you're reading!

by Angela Watson

THE ONE TRAIT RUBRIC
A fast, effective system
for teaching & grading writing

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Thank you so much for my respecting the work I put into this product and for cooperating with these guidelines!

Angela Watson
TruthforTeachers.com

The One Trait Rubric:

A fast and effective system for grading student writing

Does it take you hours to grade a stack of student essays? Is your grading system too subjective and confusing? These one trait (or single trait) rubrics will help you refine your writing instruction, help students better understand characteristics of effective writing and how their work is assessed, and simplify your scoring process.

This product includes 6 rubrics, one for each of the 6 traits of effective writing: ideas/content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. I chose these traits because they're a well-known way to organize writing instruction. However, you can use these rubrics with ANY writing curriculum and methodology, including Lucy Calkin's Writer's Workshop, Write Steps, Step Up to Writing, etc.

Why score only one trait per essay?

While it's very important to regularly use standard rubrics that assess all 6 traits of effective writing, scoring just one trait per writing assignment is also a helpful strategy for the following reasons:

- ✓ We teach each trait of effective writing individually, therefore, it makes sense to assess the traits individually.
- ✓ It can be overwhelming for students (especially younger children, reluctant writers, and English language learners) to try to concentrate on all aspects of great writing at one time. Knowing that they'll only be assessed on a single trait helps narrow their focus and makes the task more manageable.
- ✓ Assessing student writing is a subjective process that is often a mystery to students and parents: using a straightforward rubric with only 3 or 4 criteria makes it clear why an assignment earned the grade it did.
- ✓ It is tempting to downgrade a paper by weighting one aspect of good writing too heavily. Concentrating on only one trait makes it easier for the teacher to fairly assess a student's skills in a particular trait.
- ✓ Not every piece of writing needs a full assessment: one trait rubrics make it easy for teachers to give meaningful feedback quickly without spending hours grading essays.

What types of assignments should I use the rubrics for?

- **Initial writing attempts after trait instruction:** One trait rubrics are perfect for students' first writing attempts after learning about a trait: they help kids focus on the skill they were just taught, and they give teachers some initial information about how well students are able to apply the skill. After that first assignment and assessment, you'll have a much better idea of what type of follow-up lessons you'll want to implement and which students need more help.
- **Mid-unit assessment and documenting growth:** You can use the rubric on another writing sample in the middle of your unit on the trait, or later in the school year, to assess student progress. Keep both writing samples in students' portfolio to document their growth.
- **Short writing assignments:** It's extremely time consuming for students to write multi-paragraph essays, and often, they don't need to do so in order for you to assess a writing trait. If you want to see how much progress students have made in using conventions, for example, have them compose a paragraph and use the rubric to grade it.
- **Writing samples from other subject areas:** If you teach multiple subject areas, occasionally use a one trait rubric to assess random writing samples from students, such as their paragraph responses on a social studies or science test. This helps students make cross-curricular connections and understand that good writing skills are relevant in all aspects of their work. If you feel that most students would score much lower than on a traditional writing assignment, you can a) tell them ahead of time you'll be using a particular rubric, b) use it as a feedback tool and don't assign a grade with the rubric, or c) have students self-reflect with the rubric instead of having you score them with it.

How do I introduce and explain the rubrics to students?

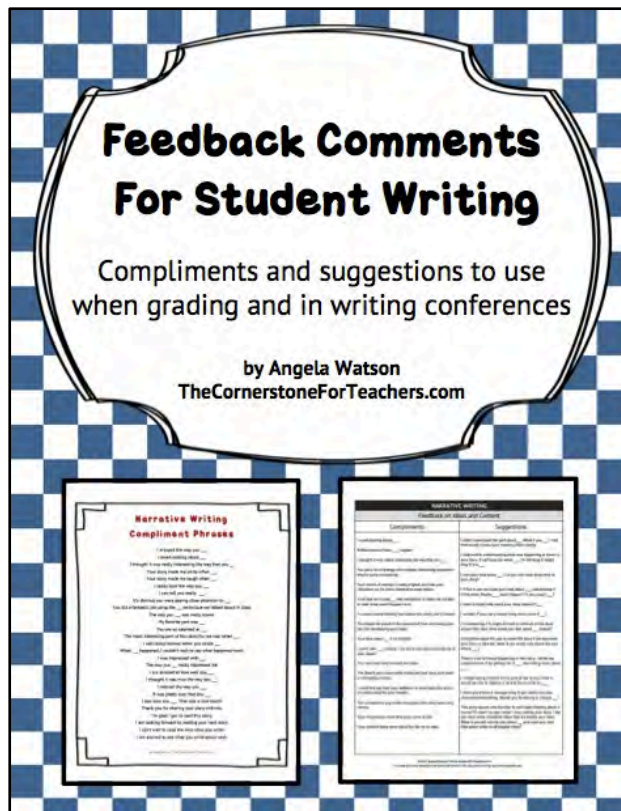
- 1) Start by introducing the trait to students and ask what they think it looks like in the context of good writing. What does it mean for an essay to have strong voice or effective organization? You may want to write down students' responses in a list.
- 2) Display the rubric for students using a document camera (or project the PDF of the rubric using an LCD projector). Use a sheet of paper (or a text box/other object if you're projecting the digital file) to cover everything except the "6" column, which is the set of criteria students should be trying to meet. Talk about the characteristics listed under the "6", making connections between what students suggested and what is on the rubric. Be sure to clarify any terms students are unsure about.
- 3) Now display the rubric row by row. Cover up the bottom of the rubric and read what constitutes a score of 6,5,4,3,2, and 1 for the first characteristic of the trait. Repeat for the other characteristics until students have looked at the full rubric.
- 4) Display, project, or pass out a short sample of writing. This should be either an anonymous student sample from a previous school year or one you've written yourself. Ideally, this should be something that would score a 2 on the rubric so students can see what's missing.
- 5) Provide students with their own copies of the rubric and provide a few minutes for them to assess the sample individually or in groups.
- 6) Talk with students about the scoring process. Where did the writing sample fall on the rubric's scale? Why did the sample earn the score it did? What could have been done to earn a higher score?
- 7) Repeat this process with another sample. This time, use an exemplar that scores a 5 or 6 so students can see what they should be striving for.
- 8) Tell students that when they turn in their next writing assignment, they will be graded using this exact rubric. You may want to give them a copy of the rubric to keep handy when writing and encourage them to use it to self-assess.

How do I assess students' work with the rubrics?

Photocopy a blank set of the rubrics: I've fit them two to a page (with the exception of the conventions rubric) in order to save paper and ink. Cut them apart and place the stack in a location where students can easily access it. Before they turn in their essays, have students staple a blank copy of the rubric to the top so it's ready for you to grade.

When scoring, read the student work with ONLY that trait in mind. Afterwards, circle the characteristics on the rubric that best fit the student work. Then circle the corresponding letter grade and write in the numerical score. (If you don't want to use the letter/numerical grades and only wish to use the scores from 0-6 at the top of the rubric, simply cut the letter grades off the bottom when making your photocopies.)

Be sure to write comments on students' work or on the back of the rubric to provide specific feedback. If you need help composing your comments, check out the product below, which contains hundreds of comment suggestions to help you give meaningful feedback to students on their writing assignments. The 21 page PDF includes general compliment and suggestion phrases, specific compliments and suggestions on effort and overall writing progress, and specific compliments and suggestions for each of the 6 traits of writing (Ideas and Content, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions.)



How do I calculate the grade?

If a student's work falls between two letter grades (for example, a 4 in two characteristics and a 3 in two other characteristics), I typically bump it up to the higher letter grade but give the lowest end of the numerical score: in this case, I would circle "B" but would write in "80%" (see example below.)

Name Marshall Cooper Date March 27 # 4

Expository and Narrative Scoring Rubric: This paper was scored only for WORD CHOICE.

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Assessment Criteria	-successfully experiments with advanced/new vocabulary	-mostly successful in experimenting with advanced/new vocabulary	-attempts to experiment with advanced/new vocabulary	-uses mostly familiar and simple vocabulary words	-repeats simple vocabulary words throughout	-uses limited vocabulary	-blank paper/no paper turned in -does not address topic
	-extremely precise and accurate word choice	-very precise and accurate word choice	-precise and accurate word choice	-some well-chosen and precise words	-words are often misused or vague	-many incorrect or vague words	-only repeated/paraphrased the prompt -handwriting is unreadable
	-extremely well varied word choices	-highly varied word choices	-strong attempt at varying word choices	-some attempt at varying word choices	-mostly mundane and/or repetitive word choice	-mundane and/or repetitive word choices	-incoherent -written in another language
	-words create lasting images or impressions	-words paint a clear picture in the reader's mind	-words communicate ideas effectively	-words convey the basic idea	-words often confuse the message	-words makes it very difficult to understand the message	
	A+	A	B 80%	C	D	F	F

I love the way you incorporated new words from the novel you're reading!

You can either give a set numerical score for every letter grade (A=95, B=85, C=75, etc. or A=90, B=80, C=70), or you can be flexible with it. There may be two papers that earn 3's all the way down and therefore earn a C, but one might be a stronger C and receive a 78 and the other a weaker C and receive a 72. I recommend doing whatever you think would make more sense to your students and their parents, and explaining your process thoroughly so they understand.

Name Julia Martinez Date 3/27/14 # 18

Expository and Narrative Scoring Rubric: This paper was scored only for IDEAS AND CONTENT.

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Assessment Criteria	-extremely well-developed and engaging topic	very well-developed and engaging topic	-well-developed and engaging topic	-somewhat developed and engaging topic	-some evidence of a topic	-unclear topic	-blank paper/no paper turned in
	-very thorough support for the topic using a variety of relevant details	-thorough support for the topic using a variety of relevant details	-well-developed support for the topic using many details	-good support for the topic with a few gaps or inaccuracies	-minimal or inaccurate support for the topic	-topic is mostly unsupported	-does not address topic
	-all ideas are very thoroughly explained	-all ideas are effectively explained	-most ideas are effectively explained	-some ideas are effectively explained	-a few ideas are explained	-most ideas are not explained	-only repeated/paraphrased the prompt
	-ideas are highly original and based on strong expertise	-ideas are original and well-founded	-ideas are thoughtful and make sense	-ideas are mostly broad and generally make sense	-ideas are based on common info or have some inaccuracies	-very limited originality and background knowledge	-handwriting is unreadable
	A+	A	B 85%	C	D	F	F

I think I did a good job explaining but the 2nd paragraph could be stronger. Agreed-you have terrific ideas! How could you develop the 2nd paragraph more fully?

How can the rubrics help students reflect on and self-assess their writing?

Students really internalize the criteria for good writing when they have the opportunity to discuss the rubric in advance and score several writing samples themselves using the rubric. Make sure they have access to the rubric during the writing process, as well.

Above, you can see an example of what a completed rubric might look like when used as a self-reflection tool and assessment tool. The student uses a pencil to self-assess her work, then staples the rubric to the top of her essay and turns it in. The teacher reads the essay and uses the same rubric (writing in pen) to assess the students' work. This creates a powerful springboard for discussion during writing conferences.

Expository and Narrative Scoring Rubric: This paper was scored only for VOICE.									
Score	6	5	4	3	2	1	0		
Assessment Criteria	highly expressive, engaging, and sincere voice	-very expressive, engaging, and sincere voice	expressive, engaging, and sincere voice	expressive, engaging, and sincere voice in some places	expressive, engaging, and sincere voice in a few places	-flat or un-engaging voice most of the time	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	extremely strong sense of audience and purpose	-very strong sense of audience and purpose	strong sense of audience and purpose	some sense of audience and purpose	limited sense of audience or purpose	no sense of audience or purpose in writing	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	highly distinctive sense of the writer's personality	strong sense of the writer's personality	a sense of the writer comes through in many places	some sense of the writer comes through in some places	little sense of the writer, mostly stiff or mechanical	no sense of the writer, stiff or mechanical	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Grade	A+	A	B	C	D	F	F		

Voice

Expository and Narrative Scoring Rubric: This paper was scored only for IDEAS AND CONTENT.									
Score	6	5	4	3	2	1	0		
Assessment Criteria	extremely well-developed and engaging topic	-very well-developed and engaging topic	well-developed and engaging topic	some-what developed and engaging topic	developed and engaging topic	no-what developed and engaging topic	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	very thorough support for the topic using a variety of relevant details	thorough support for the topic using a variety of relevant details	well-developed support for the topic using many details	good support for the topic using a few key or interesting details	minimal or no support for the topic	no support for the topic	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	all ideas are very thoughtfully explained	all ideas are thoughtfully explained	most ideas are effectively explained	some ideas are effectively explained	a few ideas are explained	most ideas are not explained	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	ideas are highly original and based on strong expertise	ideas are original and well-founded	ideas are thoughtful and make sense	ideas are mostly based and generally make sense	ideas are based on common info and background knowledge	very limited originality and background knowledge	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Grade	A+	A	B	C	D	F	F		

Ideas/Content

Expository and Narrative Scoring Rubric: This paper was scored only for SENTENCE FLUENCY.									
Score	6	5	4	3	2	1	0		
Assessment Criteria	extremely strong flow and rhythm	-very strong flow and rhythm	strong flow and rhythm in most places	good flow and rhythm in most places	has some flow and rhythm in a few places	mostly disjointed or confusing	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	sentences are highly varied in structure, length, and complexity	a wide variety of sentence structures and lengths are used	sentences are accurately constructed and lengths vary in complexity	most sentences are accurately constructed, but with little variation in sentence types	some sentences are inaccurately constructed with little variation in sentence types	most sentences are poorly constructed or incomplete	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	transitions phrases are highly effective and varied	transitions phrases are generally effective and varied	transitions phrases are generally effective and varied	transitions phrases are generally effective and varied	transitions phrases are often missing, repetitive, or missed	transitions phrases are almost always missing, repetitive, or missed	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Grade	A+	A	B	C	D	F	F		

Sentence Fluency

Expository and Narrative Scoring Rubric: This paper was scored only for WORD CHOICE.									
Score	6	5	4	3	2	1	0		
Assessment Criteria	successfully experiments with advanced vocabulary	successfully successful in experimenting with advanced vocabulary	attempts to experiment with advanced vocabulary	uses mostly familiar and simple vocabulary words	repeats simple vocabulary words throughout	uses limited vocabulary	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	extremely precise and accurate word choice	very precise and accurate word choice	precise and accurate word choice	some well-chosen and precise words	words are often vague or misspelled	many incorrect or vague words	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	words create lasting images or impressions	words paint a clear picture in the reader's mind	words communicate ideas effectively	words convey the basic idea	words often confuse the message	words make it very difficult to understand the message	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Grade	A+	A	B	C	D	F	F		

Word Choice

Expository and Narrative Scoring Rubric: This paper was scored only for ORGANIZATION.									
Score	6	5	4	3	2	1	0		
Assessment Criteria	highly logical and creative organization	logical and creative organization	logical organization with some lapses	logical organization with few lapses	loose organization with many lapses	no-what organizational pattern	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	thoughtful and highly engaging beginning, middle, and end	clear and effective beginning, middle, and end	clear beginning, middle, and end	some deorganization in beginning, middle, and end	structure is unclear in most places	evidence of a beginning, middle, and end is missing	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	smooth transitions connect ideas and paragraphs	very effective transitions connect ideas and paragraphs	effective transitions connect ideas and paragraphs	some use of transitions connect ideas and paragraphs	connections between ideas and paragraphs are often disjointed	most transitions are missing or don't fit the genre	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	thoughtful pacing that highlights important ideas very effectively	strong pacing that highlights important ideas very effectively	strong and consistent pacing	some important ideas highlighted but repeat or skip info in places	a few important ideas highlighted with inconsistent pacing	spacing does not emphasize what is important	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Grade	A+	A	B	C	D	F	F		

Organization

Expository and Narrative Scoring Rubric: This paper was scored only for CONVENTIONS.									
Score	6	5	4	3	2	1	0		
Assessment Criteria	expertly uses the rules of English to enhance clarity and style	properly uses the rules of English to enhance clarity and style	properly uses most of the rules of English properly	usually uses most of the rules of English properly	misses of English rules often detracts from meaning	misses of English rules makes it difficult to understand the message	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	spelling reflects mastery of common words and most advanced vocabulary	spelling reflects mastery of common words and most advanced vocabulary	spelling reflects mastery of common words and most advanced vocabulary	spelling reflects mastery of common words and most advanced vocabulary	misses words are misspelled or misspelled	misses words are misspelled or misspelled	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	punctuation capitalization are used expertly	punctuation capitalization are used expertly	punctuation capitalization are used expertly	punctuation capitalization are used expertly	missing and/or incorrect punctuation/capitalization in many places	missing and/or incorrect punctuation/capitalization throughout	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Assessment Criteria	exceptional skill in a wide range of conventions, making editing unnecessary	skill in a wide range of conventions, requires some editing	skill in most conventions, requires some editing	skill in simple conventions, requires editing for more advanced conventions	needs significant editing for frequent errors in various conventions	almost every sentence needs editing for conventions	blank paper/no paper turned in		
Grade	A+	A	B	C	D	F	F		

Conventions

2 identical rubrics per page, except for Conventions

Name _____ Date _____ # _____

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Score	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Assessment Criteria	-extremely well-developed and engaging topic	-very well-developed and engaging topic	-well-developed and engaging topic	-somewhat developed and engaging topic	-some evidence of a topic	-unclear topic	-blank paper/no paper turned in
	-very thorough support for the topic using a variety of relevant details	-thorough support for the topic using a variety of relevant details	-well-developed support for the topic using many details	-good support for the topic with a few gaps or inaccuracies	-minimal or inaccurate support for the topic	-topic is mostly unsupported	-does not address topic
	-all ideas are very thoroughly explained	-all ideas are effectively explained	-most ideas are effectively explained	-some ideas are effectively explained	-a few ideas are explained	-most ideas are not explained	-only repeated/paraphrased the prompt
	-ideas are highly original and based on strong expertise	-ideas are original and well-founded	-ideas are thoughtful and make sense	-ideas are mostly broad and generally make sense	-ideas are based on common info or have some inaccuracies	-very limited originality and background knowledge	-handwriting is unreadable
Grade	A+	A	B	C	D	F	F

Name _____ Date _____ # _____

Expository and Narrative Scoring Rubric: This paper was scored only for IDEAS AND CONTENT.

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Grade	A+	A	B	C	D	F	F

Expository and Narrative Scoring Rubric: This paper was scored only for CONVENTIONS.

Score	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Assessment Criteria	-expertly uses the rules of English to enhance clarity and style	-properly uses the rules of English to enhance clarity and style	-properly uses most of the rules of English	-usually uses the rules of English properly	-misuse of English rules often detracts from meaning	-misuse of English detracts significantly from meaning	<i>-blank paper/no paper turned in</i>
	-spelling reflects mastery of common words and advanced vocabulary	-spelling reflects mastery of common words and most advanced vocab	-spelling reflects mastery of most common words and advanced vocabulary	-some common words and advanced vocabulary are misspelled	-many words are misspelled or spelled inconsistently	-misspelling makes it difficult to understand the message	<i>-does not address topic</i>
	-punctuation/capitalization are used expertly	-punctuation/capitalization reflect mastery	-punctuation/capitalization are consistent with few exceptions	-punctuation/capitalization are used correctly in most places	-missing and/or incorrect punctuation/capitalization in many places	-missing and/or correct punctuation/capitalization throughout	<i>-only dictated/paraphrased the prompt</i>
	-exceptional skill in a wide range of conventions, making editing unnecessary	-skill in a wide range of conventions, requires minimal editing	-skill in most conventions, requires some editing	-skill in simple conventions, requires editing for more advanced conventions	-needs significant editing for frequent errors in various conventions	-almost every sentence needs editing for conventions	<i>-handwriting is unreadable</i>
Grade	A+	A	B	C	D	F	F
<p>For next time, let's work on:</p> <p>spelling capitalization end marks commas quotation marks other punctuation run-on sentences incomplete sentences other</p>							

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BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE...

I'm **Angela Watson**, the creator of this resource. I'm a National Board Certified Teacher with a masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction, and have 11 years of classroom teaching experience and over a decade of experience as an instructional coach. I currently work as a Productivity and Mindset Specialist in the area of educational consulting. In practical terms, this means I author books, design curriculum, and provide professional development services. Everything I do is centered on sharing more effective, efficient, and enjoyable ways of teaching and learning!

I founded my website ([TruthforTeachers.com](https://www.truthforteachers.com)) in 2003 to connect with other educators. You can now find thousands of ad-free articles and resources there from me and our K-12 teacher-writer's collective.

Check out my other resources below:

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40 HOUR
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I send a personal, uplifting message every Sunday night to over 95,000 educators.

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truth for
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