

Six-Point Writing Assessment Rubric

Score of 6: Superior. A 6 essay is superior writing, but may have minor flaws. An essay in this category:

- addresses the task clearly and responds effectively to all aspects of the task
- explores the issues thoughtfully and in depth, explaining the writer's assumptions and reasoning
- is coherently organized, with ideas supported by apt reasons and well-chosen examples, and demonstrates smooth, coherent transitions
- has an effective, fluent style marked by clear, precise use of language and syntactic variety
- is generally free from errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure

Score of 5: Strong. A 5 essay demonstrates clear competence in writing. It may have some errors, but they are not serious enough to distract or confuse the reader. An essay in this category:

- clearly addresses the task, but may respond to some aspects of the task more effectively than others
- shows some depth and complexity of thought
- is well organized and developed into logical paragraphs with appropriate reasons and examples and effective transitions
- displays increasingly clear and precise use of language and syntactic variety
- may have a few errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure

Score of 4: Adequate. A 4 essay demonstrates adequate writing. It may have some errors that distract the reader, but they do not significantly obscure meaning. An essay in this category:

- accurately interprets the task, but may slight some aspects of the task
- may treat the topic simplistically or repetitively
- is adequately organized and developed, generally supporting ideas with reasons and examples
- demonstrates adequate facility with syntax and language, but may be less than clear and precise
- may have some errors, but generally demonstrates control of mechanics, usage, and sentence structure

Score of 3: Marginal. A 3 essay demonstrates developing competence, but is flawed in some significant ways. An essay in this category reveals one or more of the following weaknesses:

- Distorts or neglects aspects of the task
- lacks focus, or demonstrates confused or simplistic thinking
- is poorly organized or developed
- does not provide adequate or appropriate details to support generalizations, or provides details without generalizations
- has problems with or avoids syntactic variety
- has an accumulation of errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure

Score of 2: Very Weak. A 2 essay is seriously flawed. An essay in this category reveals one or more of the following weaknesses:

- indicates confusion about the topic or neglects important aspects of the task
- lacks focus and coherence, or often fails to communicate its ideas
- has very weak organization, or little development
- provides simplistic generalizations without support
- has inadequate sentence control and a limited vocabulary
- is marred by numerous errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure

Score of 1: Incompetent. A 1 essay demonstrates fundamental deficiencies in writing skills. An essay in this category reveals one or more of the following weaknesses:

- suggests an inability to comprehend the question or to respond meaningfully to the topic
- is unfocused, illogical, incoherent, or disorganized
- is undeveloped
- provides little or no relevant support
- has serious and persistent errors in word choice, mechanics, usage, and sentence structure

This rubric is not intended to penalize ESL writers for slight shifts in idiom, problems with articles, confusion over prepositions, and occasional misuse of verb tense and verb forms, so long as such features do not obscure meaning. However, common ESL issues can be noted in written feedback and the student referred to IGPO or the GWC for additional skill-building support.