

New Writing HSQE Practice Test Items (1/2003)

State of Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

Directions A student wrote a paragraph about a school game. The paragraph has some mistakes.

¹After school, we checked out the big game. ²Playing the team from across town. ³The game lasted for over three hours, but it was exciting the whole time. ⁴We won in the final minute!

Sample A

Choose the best way to write Sentence 2.

- (a) Our team playing the team from across town.
- (b) Having to play the team from across town.
- (c) Our team was playing the team from across town.
- (d) Best as it is: Playing the team from across town.

Sample B

Where would this sentence best fit in the paragraph?

Now we're the best team in the city.

- (a) after Sentence 1
- (b) after Sentence 2
- (c) after Sentence 3
- (d) after Sentence 4

Directions Look at the underlined part. Choose the answer that shows the best capitalization and punctuation for that part.

Sample C

The huge tractor had blocked the highway it was moving a rock slide off the road.

- (a) Highway. It
- (b) highway, it
- (c) highway. It
- (d) Correct as it is

Directions A student wrote the following paragraph. There are ~~four~~ corrections needed in grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. Draw a line through each part that has a mistake, and write the correction above it.

Sample D

In the summer, the days are more longer, so there is time to do things I enjoy. I can ride my bike. And go swimming. I can also plays in the park with my friends.

Sample E

Combine the three sentences below into a single sentence.

Annette visited the Alaska SeaLife Center.

She bought a postcard at the gift shop.

She sent the postcard to her cousin.

Sample F

Write the sentences below in a paragraph, putting them in the order that makes the most sense. Add transitional words or phrases as needed to make the paragraph flow.

- They pulled the king crab out of the pots.
- The crew swung the crab pots onto the deck.
- They threw the females and undersized males back into the water and stored the remaining crab in special tanks.
- The crew sorted their catch.

SCORING GUIDE FOR SAMPLE QUESTIONS

SAMPLE A

Multiple Choice: C

SAMPLE B

Multiple Choice: d

SAMPLE C

Multiple Choice: C

Constructed-Response Questions:

SAMPLE D

Exemplary Response:

In the summer, the days are ~~more longer~~ longer, so there is time to do things I enjoy. I can ride bike and my ~~bike~~ bike. ~~And~~ go swimming. I can also ~~plays~~ play in the park with my friends.

Score Points: 4 points possible

- 1 point for changing more longer to longer [grammar]
- 1 point for changing bike. to bike [punctuation]
- 1 point for changing And to and [capitalization]
- 1 point for changing plays to play [grammar]

NOTE: In the first sentence, the student may simply cross out the word “more.”

SAMPLE E

Exemplary Response:

When Annette visited the Alaska SeaLife Center, she bought a postcard at the gift shop and sent it to her cousin.

OR

Annette visited the Alaska SeaLife Center, where she bought a postcard at the gift shop and sent it to her cousin.

OR

While visiting the Alaska SeaLife Center, Annette bought a postcard at the gift shop and sent it to her cousin.

Score Points: 1 point possible

- 1 point Exemplary response or any sentence that correctly combines the three sentences, maintains the meaning, removes the redundant or repeated words, adds words or phrases as needed, and is syntactically correct.
- 0 points Other; incorrect sentence or incorrect meaning

SAMPLE F

Exemplary Responses:

After the crew had swung the crab pots onto the deck, they pulled the king crab out of the pots, sorting their catch. They threw the females and undersized males back into the water and stored the remaining crab in special tanks.

OR

The crew swung the crab pots onto the deck and pulled the king crab out of the pots. The crew then sorted their catch. Finally, they threw the females and undersized males back into the water and stored the remaining crab in special tanks.


OR

After the crew had swung the crab pots onto the deck, they pulled the king crab out of the pots. Once the crew sorted their catch, they threw the females and undersized males back into the water and stored the remaining crab in special tanks.

Score Points: 2 points possible

- 2 points Response lists sentences in the order given in the exemplary responses and includes at least one transitional word or phrase used appropriately.
- 1 point Response lists sentences in correct order but doesn't include an appropriate transitional word or phrase.
- 0 points Response lists sentences in a different order.

NOTE: Other transitional words or phrases may be used, as long as they are appropriate. Small variations in the sentences are allowed to accommodate the transitions the student is using. No deduction is made for transcription errors (misspelling a word or making a mistake in punctuation) or for failing to indent the paragraph.



Use the Writing Skills Checklist below to improve your composition.

Make sure you do the following:

- 1** Write a composition with a thesis statement that is supported with details, well-developed paragraphs, transitions, and a conclusion.
- 2** Use appropriate voice.
- 3** Write so that your composition will make sense to the person who reads it.
- 4** Vary the sentence structure.
- 5** Choose your words carefully.
- 6** Use complete sentences.
- 7** Use correct grammar.
- 8** Use correct capitalization and punctuation.
- 9** Spell words correctly.
- 10** Write neatly.

PRACTICE TEST

Directions Read the following paragraph about how cacao beans are processed into chocolate. Then do Numbers 1 and 2.

¹ At the plantation, after being carefully removed from the tree, the cacao pods are cracked open and the cocoa beans are taken out. ² Then the beans are fermented. ³ Fermentation breaks down the sugars in the beans. ⁴ Fermentation breaks down the proteins in the beans to form compounds critical to the taste of the chocolate. ⁵ The beans are then dried and shipped to factories. ⁶ After further processing, people would recognize the cocoa powder and chocolate candies.

1. Where would the following sentence best fit in the paragraph?
At the factory, the beans are cleaned and the shells removed.
 - (a) after Sentence 1
 - (b) after Sentence 3
 - (c) after Sentence 4
 - (d) after Sentence 5

2. Which of these is the best way to combine Sentences 3 and 4?
 - (a) Fermentation breaks down the sugars and proteins in the beans.
 - (b) The sugars and the proteins in the beans are fermented to form compounds.
 - (c) Fermentation breaks down the sugars and proteins to form compounds critical to the taste of the chocolate.
 - (d) Fermentation breaks down the sugars in the beans and breaks down the proteins in the beans to form compounds critical to the taste of the chocolate.

Directions Read more about chocolate and then do Numbers 3 through 5.

1 _____ 2 Chocolate contains about 30 to 50% oil, 15% starch, and 15% protein, as well as several vitamins and minerals. 3 In emergency situations such as mountain rescue, it has often been used to provide quick energy and nutrition. 4 It is also a major ingredient in trail mix. 5 Like all cocoa-based products, chocolate contains theobromine, a natural chemical similar to caffeine, which stimulates the brain and mental processes. 6 Chocolate has a stimulating effect. 7 It is much less than that of coffee or tea.

3. Choose the sentence that best fills the blank in the paragraph.

- (a) Chocolate is a rich and complex food, not just a sweet treat.
- (b) Chocolate does not cause acne and very few people are allergic to it.
- (c) Cocoa is a great source of income for the African nations of Ivory Coast, Nigeria, and Cameroon.
- (d) Cocoa reached Europe in the late 1500s or early 1600s, before either coffee or tea.

4. Choose the best way to write sentence 3.

- (a) In emergency situations such as mountain rescue, it has often been use to provide quick energy and nutrition.
- (b) In emergency situations such as mountain rescue, it is often been used to provide quick energy and nutrition.
- (c) In emergency situations such as mountain rescue, it will finally be used to provide quick energy and nutrition.
- (d) Best as it is: In emergency situations such as mountain rescue, it has often been used to provide quick energy and nutrition.

5. Which of these is the best way to combine Sentences 6 and 7?

- (a) Chocolate has a stimulating effect, it is much less than that of coffee or tea.
- (b) Chocolate's stimulating effect is much less than that of coffee or tea.
- (c) While chocolate's stimulating effect is much less than coffee or tea.
- (d) Chocolate has a stimulating effect because it is much less than coffee or tea.

6. What kind of music do you prefer? Classical? Rap? Country? R&B? Other? Describe your music and why you like it. Make your response as complete as possible. This item is worth 4 points. Use the Writing Skills Checklist to check your work.

7. Choose the sentence that is written correctly.
- (a) I love to swimming when the weather is warm.
 - (b) I swum in the river yesterday.
 - (c) I have often thought about swimming in a cool lake.
 - (d) Have you swam in the new pool in Whitehorse?

8. Combine these three sentences into a single sentence.

Balance is important in mountain biking.
It can be helpful in getting through tricky spots.
Tricky spots could be boulders, potholes or roots.

Directions Read the following passage a student wrote, and do Numbers 9 and 10.

¹One day I was riding in the pickup with my mother. ²I said something that made her very upset with me. ³I asked her if she had ever seen a live “Big Foot” in her lifetime. ⁴She respond by saying, “No, that was the stupid’s thing I had ever heard you say.” ⁵She also said that there was not such a thing.

- 9.** Which of these is the best way to combine Sentences 1 and 2?
- (a) One day when I was riding in the pickup with my mother, I said something that made her very upset with me.
 - (b) One day I was riding in the pickup with my mother but I said something that made her very upset with me.
 - (c) One day I was riding in the pickup with my mother and I said something to my mother that made her very upset with me.
 - (d) I said something to my mother that made her very upset with me because I was riding in the pickup with my mother.
- 10.** Choose the correct way to edit Sentence 4.
- (a) She responded by saying, “No, that is the stupidís thing I had ever heard you say.”
 - (b) She respond by saying, “No, that is the stupidest thing I had ever heard you say.”
 - (c) She responded by saying, “No, that is the stupidest thing I had ever heard you say.”
 - (d) She responded by saying, “No, that is the stupidest thing I have ever heard you say.”
- 11.** Imagine that you and your best friend are planning a week-long road trip for after you graduate. Explain in detail your preparations and planning. Where would you go? What activities would you do along the way and when you get there? How would you pay for it? Where would you stay—camping, motels, friends? What safety precautions would you use? Make your response as complete as possible. This item is worth 6 points. Use the Writing Skills Checklist to check your work.

12. Choose the sentence that is written correctly.
- (a) If I would go to the game Saturday night.
 - (b) I would have went to the game Saturday night.
 - (c) I would of gone to the game Saturday night.
 - (d) I would like to have gone to the game Saturday night.

Directions A student wrote the following paragraph. Six corrections are needed in grammar, capitalization, punctuation and spelling. Draw a line through each mistake and write the correction above it. This item is worth 6 points

13.

Yesterday my neighbor's calls my Dad asking if I could babysit for there three kids. Dad said I could if my homework was done. I decided too babysit because I needed the money. I'm saving up for a Video game.

14. Which of these should be written as two complete sentences?
- (a) I am reading the greatest book it is called Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.
 - (b) Harry, a magician who lives with his Muggle aunt and uncle, goes to school called Hogwarts.
 - (c) With his two sidekicks, Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley, he fights an evil wizard.
 - (d) You can get this book at your school or public library, the bookstore or on the Internet.

- 14.** Read the sentences below about getting a driver's license. Write the sentences into a paragraph, putting them in the order that makes the most sense. Add transitional words or phrases as necessary to make the paragraph flow. This item is worth 2 points.

Taking the behind-the-wheel driving test requires you to make an appointment, have a clean, functioning car, and bring your parent or guardian.

You get your license.

Reading the driver's manual is a prerequisite.

You have to fill out paperwork, present two items of ID and have your photo taken.

You can take the written test either on paper or using a computer.

There are several steps to getting a driver's license.

Directions Read the letter below and look at the numbered, underlined parts. Choose the answer that shows the best capitalization and punctuation for each part.

July 22, 2003

Returns Department
Alaska Fashions
7525 Front Street
16 Juneau AK 99801

17 Dear Return's manager

The halibut jacket that I recently bought is the wrong size. Usually a large is big enough, but after washing it according to your instructions, it now fits my five-year-old sister.

18 I am returning the jacket along with the reciept I would like to be refunded my money as soon as possible.

Thank you.

19 Sincerely Yours
Cindy J. Clausen

- 16.** (a) Juneau, Ak, 99801
(b) Juneau ALASKA 99801
(c) Juneau, AK 99801
(d) Correct as it is

- 17.** (a) Dear Return's Manager,
(b) Dear Returns manager;
(c) Dear Returns Manager:
(d) Correct as it is

- 18.** (a) reciept. I
(b) receipt. I
(c) receipt, I
(d) Correct as it is

- 19.** (a) Sincerely yours,
(b) Sincirely Yours,
(c) Sincerely yours
(d) Correct as it is

- 20.** Choose ONE of the following prompts to write about. Make your response as complete as possible. This item is worth 4 points. Use the Writing Skills Checklist to check your work.
- a. Describe your favorite free time activity. You could consider writing about sports, games, music, friends. Include why you prefer this activity above other choices.
 - b. Write a letter to your favorite public figure. This could be a politician, athlete, actor, musician, teacher or local hero. Tell them what you admire about them and why.

New Writing HSQE Practice Scoring Guide (1/2003)

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Items 1-5

Multiple Choice

1. d
2. c
3. a
4. d
5. b

Item 6

Complete and Correct Response

Use Four-Point Scoring Guide to score this prompt:

What kind of music do you prefer? Classical? Rap? Country? R&B? Other? Describe you music and shy you like it. Make your response as complete as possible. This item is worth 4 points. Use the Writing Skills Checklist to check your work.

Item 7

Multiple Choice

c

Item 8

Complete and Correct Response

Many variations could be correct. Here are some correct answers:

When riding a mountain bike, balance is important to help you get through tricky spots such as boulders, potholes or roots.

OR

When mountain biking, balance is important to help you get through tricky spots such as boulders, potholes or roots.

OR

Balance is important in mountain biking to help you get through tricky spots such as boulders, potholes or roots.

Item 9

Multiple Choice

a

Item 10**Multiple Choice**

d

Item 11**Complete and Correct Response**

Use Six-Point Scoring Guide to score this prompt:

Imagine that you and your best friend are planning a week-long road trip for after you graduate. Explain in detail your preparations and planning. Where would you go? What activities would you do along the way and when you get there? How would you pay for it? Where would you stay—camping, motels, friends? What safety precautions would you use? Make your response as complete as possible. This item is worth 6 points. Use the Writing Skills Checklist to check your work.

Item 12**Multiple Choice**

d

Item 13**Complete and Correct Response**

One point for each of the corrections made below:

Yesterday my ^{neighbor} ~~neighbor's~~ ^{called} ~~calls~~ my Dad asking if I could babysit for ^{their} ~~there~~ three kids. Dad said I could if my homework was done. I decided ^{to} ~~too~~ babysit because I needed the money. I'm saving up for a ^{video} ~~videoe~~ game.

Item 14**Multiple Choice**

a

Item 15**Complete and Correct Response**

2 points: Sentences are in correct order, including at least one transitional word or phrase used appropriately. Examples below are not the only possibilities:

There are several steps to getting a driver's license. Reading the driver's manual is a prerequisite. **Next**, you can take the written test either on paper or using a computer. Taking the behind-the-wheel driving test requires you to make an appointment, have a clean, functioning car, and bring your parent or guardian. **Then** you have to fill out paperwork, present two items of ID and have your photo taken. **Finally**, you get your license.

OR

There are several steps to getting a driver's license. **First**, reading the driver's manual is a prerequisite. **Second**, you can take the written test either on paper or using a computer. **Third**, taking the behind-the-wheel driving test requires you to make an appointment, have a clean, functioning car, and bring your parent or guardian. **Fourth**, you have to fill out paperwork, present two items of ID and have your photo taken. **Finally**, you get your license.

1 point: Sentences are in correct order, as follows. Does not include appropriate transitional word or phrase.

There are several steps to getting a driver's license. Reading the driver's manual is a prerequisite. You can take the written test either on paper or using a computer.

Taking the behind-the-wheel driving test requires you to make an appointment, have a clean, functioning car, and bring your parent or guardian. You have to fill out paperwork, present two items of ID and have your photo taken. You get your license.

Item 16

Multiple Choice

c

Item 17

Multiple Choice

c

Item 18

Multiple Choice

b

Item 19

Multiple Choice

a

Item 20

Use **Four-Point Scoring Guide** to score this prompt:

Choose ONE of the following prompts to write about. Make your response as complete as possible. This item is worth 4 points. Use the **Writing Skills Checklist** to check your work.

- a. Describe your favorite free time activity. You could consider writing about sports, games, music, friends. Include why you prefer this activity above other choices.
- b. Write a letter to your favorite public figure. This could be a politician, athlete, actor, musician, teacher or local hero. Tell him/her what you admire and why.

Rubric

Score Points: 6 points possible

6 points

Ideas and Content

- ideas are fresh, original, and/or insightful
- ideas are based on the writer’s knowledge and/or experience
- details are relevant, telling, and contribute to the whole
- content goes beyond the obvious or predictable
- topic makes a point or tells a story

Organization

- sequencing of ideas and details is logical and effective
- introduction is inviting—draws in the reader
- conclusion is satisfying—leaves reader with a sense of resolution
- transitions are thoughtful; clearly show how ideas connect
- organization flows smoothly, seems effortless

Voice

- language is highly individual
- reader senses the person behind the words; feels an interaction with the writer
- tone gives the writing flavor, adds interest
- language is appropriate for purpose and audience
- narrative writing seems honest, appealing, heartfelt
- expository or persuasive writing reflects a strong

commitment to the topic; anticipates reader’s questions, shows why the reader should care or want to know more

Word Choice

- words are specific, accurate, striking
- language is natural, not overdone
- verbs are lively
- nouns and modifiers are precise
- clichés and jargon are used sparingly and only for effect

Sentence Fluency

- sentence construction makes meaning clear
- sentences are purposeful and build upon each other

Conventions

- paragraphing reinforces the organizational structure
- grammar and usage are correct (few, if any, errors) and contribute to clarity and style
- punctuation is accurate (few, if any, errors) and guides the reader through the text
- spelling is generally correct, even of more difficult words
- the writer may manipulate conventions for stylistic effect

5 points

Ideas and Content

- ideas are based on the writer’s knowledge and/or experience
- details are relevant, telling, and contribute to the whole
- topic makes a point or tells a story
- some ideas are fresh and original

Organization

- sequencing of ideas and details is logical and effective
- introduction is inviting—draws in the reader

- conclusion is satisfying—leaves reader with a sense of resolution
- transitions are thoughtful; clearly show how ideas connect
- organization usually flows smoothly

Voice

- reader senses the person behind the words
- there are occasional moments that surprise, amuse, or move the reader
- tone gives the writing flavor, adds interest
- language is appropriate for purpose and audience

- narrative writing seems honest, appealing, heartfelt
- expository or persuasive writing reflects a strong commitment to the topic

Word Choice

- words are specific and accurate
- lively verbs and picturesque words and phrases are occasionally used
- language is natural, not overdone
- verbs are lively
- nouns and modifiers are precise
- clichés and jargon are used sparingly and only for effect

4 points**Ideas and Content**

- topic and direction are evident, but more information is needed to “fill in the blanks”
- ideas draw on knowledge and/or experience but may not move beyond general observations to specifics
- details are reasonably clear but may not be detailed, personalized, or expanded
- supporting details are present but may not “flesh out” the main point or story line
- original ideas may be blended with ones that are more obvious or predictable

Organization

- sequencing is usually logical but may be predictable or distracting
- introduction is recognizable but may not create a strong sense of anticipation
- conclusion is recognizable but may not tie up all loose ends
- transitions often work well but some connections between ideas may be unclear
- pacing is fairly well controlled but there may be some lapses (e.g., moving ahead too quickly or spending too much time on less important details)
- organization mostly supports the main point or story line, with occasional lapses

Voice

- writing communicates in an earnest, pleasing manner
- voice is inconsistent: it may emerge strongly, then retreat behind general, dispassionate language
- writing hides as much of the writer as it reveals

Sentence Fluency

- sentence construction makes meaning clear
- sentences are purposeful and build upon each other
- sentences vary in length and structure
- fragments are used only for style or effect
- dialogue, if used, sounds natural

Conventions

- paragraphing reinforces the organizational structure
- grammar and usage are correct (few, if any, errors) and contribute to clarity and style
- punctuation is accurate (few, if any, errors)
- spelling is generally correct, even of more difficult words

- writer seems aware of audience and purpose but often weighs words too carefully or discards personal
- insights in favor of safe generalities

Word Choice

- words are mostly correct and adequate but may lack flair and color
- familiar words and phrases communicate
- attempts at colorful language are made but some may be overdone
- clichés and jargon may be used occasionally in place of fresh language

Sentence Fluency

- sentences are grammatical and hang together
- some variation in sentence length and structure; sentence beginnings are not all alike
- some transitions between sentences are missing or hidden
- parts may be stiff, awkward, choppy, or too long
- dialogue, if used, sounds stiff at times

Conventions

- paragraphing is attempted but some paragraphs run together or begin in the wrong place
- problems with grammar or usage are not serious enough to impede or distort meaning
- terminal punctuation is usually correct; internal punctuation is sometimes missing or incorrect
- spelling is usually correct or reasonably plausible on common words; misspellings do not impede communication

3 points

Ideas and Content

- topic and direction are evident, but writer may digress and go in a different direction or introduce a different topic
- ideas may not draw on knowledge and/or experience; may be general observations
- details are reasonably clear but may not be detailed, personalized, or expanded
- supporting details are present but may not “flesh out” the main point or story line or may be irrelevant to it
- original ideas are rare or absent

Organization

- sequencing is usually logical but there may be lapses or digressions
- there may be an attempt to write an introduction or conclusion but it may not be clearly recognizable as such; a conclusion, in particular, may be absent
- transitions may be attempted but not work well; connections between ideas may be unclear
- there are frequent lapses in pacing
- there is an attempt at organization but it may depart from supporting the main point or story line

Voice

- writing communicates but without much style or interest
- writing hides the writer; the reader has little or no sense of the writer behind the words
- writer shows some awareness of audience and/or purpose but is inconsistent
- writer speaks in a monotone

2 points

Ideas and Content

- topic and direction are not evident; the writer has not defined the topic in a meaningful, personal way
- information is very limited or unclear
- text may be repetitious or read like a collection of disconnected, random thoughts
- the writer does not distinguish the main ideas or critical points from the supporting details or less critical points

Organization

- sequencing needs work
- there is no real lead or introduction to set up what follows

Word Choice

- words are mostly correct and adequate with some lapses
- familiar words and phrases communicate with some lapses
- attempts at colorful language are rare or absent
- clichés and jargon may be used as a crutch

Sentence Fluency

- sentences are usually grammatical and hang together with some lapses
- little variation in sentence length and structure; most sentence beginnings are alike
- many transitions between sentences are missing or hidden
- fragments may be present
- dialogue, if used, sounds stiff and unnatural

Conventions

- paragraphing is attempted but many paragraphs run together or begin in the wrong place
- problems with grammar or usage may be serious enough to impede or distort meaning in some instances but not overall
- terminal punctuation is usually correct; internal punctuation is sometimes missing or incorrect and errors may impede or distort meaning in some instances
- spelling errors may impede or distort meaning in some instances but not overall

- conclusion is missing or does not wrap things up
- transitions seldom work well, with many connections between ideas unclear
- pacing feels awkward; the writer slows to a crawl when the reader wants to move on, and vice versa
- problems with organization make it hard for the reader to get a grip on the main point or story line

Voice

- it is hard to sense the writer behind the words
- the writer does not seem to reach out to an audience or to anticipate the reader’s interests or questions

- writing may communicate on a functional level but does not move or involve the reader
- writer does not seem sufficiently at home with the topic to take risks, share personal insights, or make the topic/story personal and real for the reader

Word Choice

- language is so vague and general that only the most general message comes through (e.g., It was a fun time. We did lots of neat stuff.)

persistent redundancy distracts the reader

- words are often used incorrectly, making the message hard to decipher
- clichés and jargon frequently serve as a crutch
- problems with language leave the reader wondering what the writer is trying to say

Sentence Fluency

- sentences are choppy, incomplete, rambling, or awkward; there may be many fragments
- phrasing does not sound natural; the reader must sometimes reread to get the meaning

1 point**Ideas and Content**

- topic and direction are missing
- information is very limited or unclear
- text may be repetitious, or may read like a collection of disconnected, random thoughts

Organization

- sequencing is absent
- there is no introduction or conclusion
- transitions are absent
- organization is absent; writing may be a brief list

Voice

- the writer seems unaware of an audience or reader; writing seems “painful” to the writer
- writing may not communicate on a functional level
- writer seems uncomfortable with the topic

Word Choice

- language is so vague, inaccurate, and/or general that even the most general message does not come through

- many sentences begin the same way and follow the same pattern (e.g., subject-verb-object) in a monotonous pattern
- transitions between sentences are missing or hidden, or endless connectives create a massive jumble of language in which clear beginnings and endings are lost

Conventions

- paragraphing is missing, irregular, or so frequent (e.g., every sentence) that it has no relationship to the organizational structure of the text
- errors in grammar or usage are very noticeable and may affect meaning
- punctuation is often missing or incorrect
- spelling errors are frequent, even of common words
- the reader must read once to decode, then again for meaning

- words are frequently used incorrectly, making the message hard to decipher
- problems with language leave the reader unable to understand what the writer is trying to say most of the time

Sentence Fluency

- sentences are choppy, incomplete, rambling, or awkward; there may be many fragments
- the reader must frequently pause or reread
- sentences begin the same way and follow the same pattern (e.g., subject-verb-object) in a monotonous pattern

Conventions

- paragraphing is missing, irregular, or so frequent that it has no relationship to the organizational structure of the text
- errors in grammar or usage are frequent and impede meaning
- punctuation is often missing or incorrect
- spelling errors are frequent and impede meaning
- the reader may be unable to decode the writing

Score Points: 4 points possible

4 points

- the writer defines and stays on topic
- supporting details are relevant, develop the topic, and provide important information
- ideas and/or details are explicitly connected to the topic
- topic is developed in a logical, organized, sequential way
- words are accurate, specific, and appropriate for the purpose and audience
- colorful or figurative language may be attempted
- there is a variety of sentence structures
- sentences are purposeful, with clear transitions
- sentence structures are correct (few, if any, errors)
- grammar and usage are correct (few, if any, errors)
- punctuation and capitalization are correct (few, if any, errors)
- spelling is generally correct, even on more difficult words (few, if any, errors)

3 points

- the writer defines and stays on topic, but does not fully develop it
- supporting details are relevant but may be limited, overly general, or less important; main idea may not be clearly delineated from the details
- writer attempts to develop the topic in a logical, organized, sequential way but may falter
- ideas and/or details are connected with the topic implicitly rather than explicitly
- words are mostly accurate, specific, and appropriate for the purpose and audience
- sentence structures are simple but accurate
- there may be an attempt to vary sentence structures
- transitions between some sentences may be missing or unclear
- grammar and usage are mostly correct and errors do not impede meaning
- punctuation and capitalization are mostly correct and errors do not impede meaning
- spelling errors are limited to more difficult words and do not impede meaning

2 points

- topic may be defined but not developed, or writing may be a collection of ideas from which no central topic emerges, or topic may be defined, but writer digresses from it
- supporting details are minimal or many are irrelevant
- main idea is not clearly delineated from the details
- writer does not attempt to develop the topic in a logical, organized, sequential way; writing may be a list rather than a developed paragraph
- ideas and/or details are not connected with the topic, even implicitly
- some words are not accurate, specific, or appropriate for the purpose and audience
- sentences may be choppy or repetitive; there may be some sentence fragments
- there is no attempt to vary sentence structures
- transitions between sentences are missing or unclear
- errors in grammar and usage may impede meaning in some instances
- errors in punctuation and capitalization may impede meaning in some instances
- spelling errors in common words may be present and may impede meaning in some instances

1 point

- topic, idea, or story line is not defined
- supporting details are absent or irrelevant
- there is no evidence of organization; writing may be a brief list
- many words are not accurate, specific, or appropriate for the purpose and audience
- sentences are simple, repetitive; there may be many fragments
- errors in grammar and usage may severely impede meaning
- errors in punctuation and capitalization may severely impede meaning
- spelling errors are numerous and may severely impede meaning