

Scoring Procedure

This scoring procedure follows a holistic scoring approach. What we lay out for you here reflects what we've found to be the most *reliable* and *efficient* process. We hope you agree.

1. Drop your biases. Cast aside personal preferences for items **not** explicitly identified and described on the rubric. That's hard to do sometimes, but important. Beautiful handwriting is one example of a teacher's personal preference that will need to be suspended a little while; a *terrific* essay might come from the hand of a student whose scribbles can be torturous to read. Conversely, an essay crafted in the best script may *look* good, but possess few characteristics of excellence.

Try to come to each piece of writing fresh without bringing knowledge of individual students' strengths and challenges. This way, you'll give each paper an objective read. Assuming that papers are anonymous (and this is important), resist the temptation to identify students' work from their handwriting. Be open to discovering new strengths (and new goals) for your students. Additional "biases" not mentioned in the rubrics that you'll want to abandon for scoring are length of papers (sometimes, but not necessarily, related to quality) or a particular political stance (we're looking for clear, developed and well-supported opinions, no matter what they are.)

2. Reread the rubric. Even if you've read it many times, even if you *wrote* the rubric, reread it. Highlight the words that differentiate each level of the rubric for each feature of writing. Finally, make the shift from using the rubric for instruction to using the rubric for holistic evaluation. This means you want to prepare yourself to look for a *preponderance of evidence* corresponding to a score point rather than looking for specific evidence for each feature of a score point.

3. Identify strengths of the writing. Read a student paper swiftly, taking note of the writer's overall success at achieving his or her purpose. For example, if the purpose was to describe a childhood passion, do you get a complete and vivid "picture" of that passion? If the purpose was to persuade you to get rid of vending machines at school, are you convinced? Ask yourself to **identify what the writer does well** and make a quick mental note of that.

4. Match the writing to the rubric. As you read, look for a "preponderance of evidence" in the writing that corresponds to a level on the rubric. Where is the greatest match in the score-point descriptions?

5. Score the paper. If you've had even minimal experience with holistic scoring, you know that papers can fall within a rather broad range for the same score point. For example, there are "high 3's" and "low 3's." There are "solid 4's" and "weak 4's." In assigning whole number scores, it's important to remember that each score point can represent a *broad range of writing*.

In addition, you'll almost always come across writing that shows evidence of rubric features **across** levels. What to do, for example, with a paper that has distinct and expressive voice (corresponding to a '4' descriptor on the rubric), but where the "*writing shows limited control of conventions*" and "*where errors are distracting?*" Where is there the **most** evidence? Into which level does **most** of the writing fall? If you can answer this question, if most of the writing demonstrates expressive voice, the ideas are "carried" by the writer's control of expression and the errors are easy to ignore because the strengths outshine the mechanical errors, then your score will likely be '3,' reflecting both aspects of both the '2' and the '4.'

6. For the most reliable scoring, papers should be read by two readers. The two scores should be averaged. If there is a 2 point spread between scores (EXAMPLE: one person gives the paper a 1, and another gives it a 3), the paper should be should be read by a third reader. Record the final averaged score in the box on the front near the student's name. When you have finished scoring all of the papers, record all final scores on Edusoft answer sheets (YOU WILL RECEIVE THESE WITH YOUR ASSESSMENT MATERIALS) and scan your scores into Edusoft by May 21, 2010.