

Scoring Facilitator's Guide

Main Steps in the Scoring Process:

- Review the prompt, rubric & anchors papers
- Score a few training papers for practice
- Read each student paper
- Determine a holistic score (a whole number) that corresponds to a score point reflecting most of the features
- Have each paper read twice by two different scorers
- Determine the final score as the average of the first two scores
- Reconcile a greater-than-one-point score difference by having a third scorer read the paper and determine the final score.

1. **Arrange for the scoring location and refreshments.** Ensure that all Language Arts/English/ELD teachers are invited.
2. **Welcome scorers and review the prompt.** Participants should reread the prompt.
3. **Introduce scorers to the use of holistic rubrics.** Remember that using a rubric and applying it holistically may be new for your group of scorers. Discuss how a holistic rubric is different from an analytical rubric because it addresses the complexity of the writing task. A complex piece of writing is most honestly addressed and judiciously assessed when regarded not as a collection of skills viewed in isolation but as a whole. Holistic evaluation focuses on strengths of a piece of writing rather than on its weaknesses, so writers get credit for what they do best. While we want students to develop all the skills that writing requires (organization, elaboration, diction, correctness, and conventions, etc.), we're also aware that student writers develop these skills at different speeds and excel in different areas. The holistic rubric acknowledges that strong writing looks different from writer to writer. For assessment purposes, the holistic rubric is appropriate for the above reasons and ease of use.
4. **Read the rubric and the Anchor Papers, one score point level at a time.** The facilitator asks scorers to look for correspondences between the rubric features and the student writing. It's great, if there's time, to do this process orally, welcoming teacher comments along the way. Point out that scores should be based on:
 - ♦ strengths (rather than weaknesses) of the writing
 - ♦ *only* features identified in the rubric (therefore, **not** handwriting, length of paper or number of paragraphs, or particular teachers' pet peeves not in the rubric, for example)
 - ♦ A match between student writing and features described on the rubric. Sometimes students are strong in one or two areas (say, organization of ideas and elaboration of ideas, and not in spelling or punctuation.) Scorers look for the features that are *most present* in the student writing. This is called a "preponderance of evidence" in the student writing that corresponds to the rubric.

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5. **Read and score papers in the Training Packet.** Choose a paper from each score level and have people score these without looking at the annotations. Ask scorers to “hold themselves accountable” to the rubric and explain that they will be asked to share their scores. When scoring is completed, the Facilitator should do a quick public (and visual) assessment of the scores. When we’re facilitating, we do this by sketching a grid on a chart at the front of the room (or on a chalkboard), with the titles of each paper in the order they appear in the left column. Across the top of the grid we jot the score points. Then we move through each of the chosen Training Papers, asking scorers to raise their hands when we call out the score they gave that paper. We record the number of scores for each score point and quickly determine the degree of agreement among scorers.

6. **Present the scores the Writing Proficiency Project (WPP) Leadership Team determined by circling the score point box on the grid.**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---------|------|-----|------|----|
| Paper A | | III | II | |
| Paper B | IIII | I | | |
| Paper C | | I | III | II |
| Paper D | | I | IIII | |

7. **Invite scorers who agreed with the (WPP) Leadership Team to talk about why they assigned the scores they did.** Remind them to use language from the rubric, but don’t “shut them down” if they elaborate or wax enthusiastic.

8. **Invite scorers who disagreed with the (WPP) Leadership Team to talk about why they assigned the scores they did.** Either the facilitator or another scorer can point out rubric features in the writing to persuade this person to agree with the score. After “converting” the outlying scorers (or adjusting slightly the Leadership Team’s scores) you’re ready to proceed with scoring. If there’s wide disagreement (two point differences, for example) we extend the discussion and point out the correspondence(s) between the writing and the rubric. Feel free to move on if the clear majority of scorers is agreeing with the scores the Leadership Team gave to each of the Training Papers. If there are a few outlying scores on the grid (either higher or lower), these scorers tend to “calibrate themselves,” noting that they were consistently higher or lower than the rest of the group and they adjust their scoring appropriately. Scorers should keep their annotated Anchor and Training Papers to refer to as scoring proceeds. Sometimes these concrete representations of the rubric score points help scorers stay consistent over many reads. After the scoring session, we encourage scorers to keep training materials to use for instruction.

9. **Explain how participants are to record their scores.** Reader scores should be recorded in the three circles at the top of the front page. Use removable dot stickers or Post-It notes to cover the first score, directing scorers to jot down their initials outside the dot to avoid reading the same paper twice.

10. **Proceed with “first reads.”** When the facilitator is confident that scorers are ready to proceed with confidence and accuracy, begin scoring papers. Participants take a batch of papers and do “first reads” by reading and recording scores. Scorers should be encouraged to develop a swift momentum that facilitates holistic evaluation. Once again, scorers should look for the features that resonate, that “call out” to the scorer. The scorer then links these features (it gets quicker and quicker) and records a score.

There are a few cases when a scorer may want to resist scoring a paper. The facilitator should alert scorers to withholding scores in the following cases:

- ♦ the scorer recognizes the student's handwriting and doesn't feel s/he can be objective
- ♦ something that the writer expresses is offensive to the scorer and it is not possible to score objectively
- ♦ something deeply personal and troubling has appeared in the writing; a counselor's guidance is called for, and scoring such a paper is not appropriate
- ♦ the paper is illegible
- ♦ the student writes on a topic completely outside the prompt

What to do with these? In the first two cases, the scorer simply passes the paper on to another scorer. In the case of the "counselor needed" paper, some schools collect these in a box or labeled folder that reads, "Referred to a Counselor," and the facilitator makes sure counselors see *copies* of those papers, which then get scored like other papers. In the case of illegibility or off-topic responses, we leave this to the decision of the classroom teacher; some allow students to do a rewrite while others let the papers go unscored and use this as an opportunity to emphasize the importance of writing legibly or reading the prompt carefully.

11. **Proceed with "second reads."** After papers are read once, they get read a second time. The second reader proceeds swiftly (by the second read, most scorers are moving apace), and records a second score.
12. **Maintain a quiet reading environment, with a few short breaks.** As some people cannot concentrate and read well in a noisy environment, it helps to keep the room quiet and focused. At the breaks, the facilitator can invite scorers to share effective strategies for "landing" on the right score, ask participants to share observations about trends in student writing and share amusing quotes.
13. **After first and second reads are completed, record final scores.** These are the average of the first two scores. The second reader records his/her score next to the first score, and then averages and records the final score, and writes it in the box next to the student's name. If there is a spread of two points or more between the two scores, a third reader is necessary.
14. **Allow enough time at the end of the scoring to debrief and identify strengths and weaknesses of student writing.** Scorers may choose to jot down strengths and weaknesses by rubric criteria.
15. **Finally, the papers need to be "unbatched"** and reorganized into various teachers' classes. Solicit students to help with this task!