

ALASKA COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT

6-Point Holistic Rubric for Scoring the Extended-Constructed Response Essay on the Writing Subtests of the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination

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
- the writing has cadence; the writer has thought about sound as well as meaning
- 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 & style
- punctuation is accurate (few, if any, errors) and guides the reader through the text
- spelling is generally correct, even on 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
- occasional use of lively verbs and picturesque words and phrases
- 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
- 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 & style
- punctuation is accurate (few, if any, errors)
- spelling is generally correct, even on more difficult words

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 it may not create a strong sense of anticipation
- conclusion is recognizable but it 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

- 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 gangly
- 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

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 they 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
- the writer speaks in a monotone

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 may impede or distort meaning in some instances
- spelling errors do not impede meaning overall

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
- 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 get on with it, 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
- 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 on common words
- the reader must read once to decode, then again for 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
- 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 frequently and impede meaning
- punctuation is often missing or incorrect
- spelling errors are frequent and impede meaning
- the reader must may be unable to decode the writing