



## Grades 5 – 8 English Language Arts Rubric Independent Writing

*This rubric can be used when students choose their own topic or are given a prompt by the teacher.*

Quality	5 Writing at this level:	4 Writing at this level:	3 Writing at this level:	2 Writing at this level:	1 Writing at this level:
<b>Meaning:</b> The extent to which the response exhibits understanding and interpretation of the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>thoroughly addresses a topic, either assigned or chosen</li> <li>fully conveys the purpose (e.g., to inform, entertain, persuade, or express) by developing a clear and appropriate thesis</li> <li>shows keen insight</li> <li>demonstrates complete awareness of the audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>thoroughly addresses a topic, either assigned or chosen</li> <li>fully conveys the purpose by attempting to develop an appropriate thesis</li> <li>shows insight</li> <li>demonstrates awareness of the audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addresses a topic, either assigned or chosen</li> <li>conveys the purpose with some attempt to develop an appropriate thesis</li> <li>shows some insight</li> <li>demonstrates some awareness of the audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addresses a topic, but may be broad or general</li> <li>may demonstrate an awareness of purpose but may lack an appropriate thesis</li> <li>may show limited insight</li> <li>demonstrates little awareness of the audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addresses a topic, but is broad or general</li> <li>attempts to address a purpose but lacks a thesis</li> <li>shows little or no insight</li> <li>may lack awareness of audience</li> </ul>
<b>Development:</b> The extent to which ideas are elaborated using specific and relevant evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>makes effective use of relevant and accurate examples and/or reasons to support the thesis</li> <li>fully develops ideas and thoughts with thorough elaboration</li> <li>makes relevant connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses relevant and accurate examples and/or reasons to support the thesis</li> <li>develops ideas and thoughts with sufficient elaboration</li> <li>makes relevant connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provides some examples and/or reasons to support the thesis</li> <li>presents some relevant ideas in an attempt to develop the topic, but lacks elaboration</li> <li>makes some connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may contain some irrelevant details while attempting to support the topic</li> <li>demonstrates little awareness of how to incorporate details or examples</li> <li>makes few if any connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>includes irrelevant or minor details</li> <li>makes no connections</li> </ul>
<b>Organization:</b> The extent to which the response exhibits focus, structure, and coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>establishes and maintains a clear focus based on audience and purpose</li> <li>develops an appropriate organizational structure to show a logical, coherent sequence of ideas through the use of sophisticated transitions</li> <li>contains ideas and thoughts that work together to create a unified whole</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>establishes and maintains a focus based on audience and purpose</li> <li>develops an appropriate organizational structure to show a logical, coherent sequence of ideas through the use of transitions</li> <li>contains ideas and thoughts that work together to create a unified whole</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is generally focused</li> <li>attempts an organizational structure to convey ideas</li> <li>attempts to use transitions to show sequence or the relationship of ideas</li> <li>contains some irrelevant details that may detract from the unified whole</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may show an attempt to establish a focus</li> <li>shows little attempt at organization</li> <li>contains many irrelevant details that detract from the unified whole</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows little attempt to establish a focus</li> <li>shows little attempt at organization</li> <li>may be repetitive with minor details that confuse the reader</li> </ul>
<b>Language Use:</b> The extent to which the response reveals an awareness of audience and purpose through effective word choice, sentence structure, and sentence variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is fluent and easy to read with vivid language and a sense of engagement or voice</li> <li>is stylistically sophisticated, using varied sentence structure and challenging word choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is fluent and easy to read with original language and a sense of engagement or voice</li> <li>uses varied sentence structure and grade-level word choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is readable, with some sense of engagement or voice</li> <li>attempts some variety in sentence structure and may use basic (but appropriate) word choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not show an awareness of audience or purpose, as reflected in the conversational tone and basic word choice</li> <li>uses primarily simple sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is difficult to read, with little or no sense of engagement or voice</li> <li>contains incomplete sentences that may indicate fragmented thoughts</li> <li>uses minimal vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Conventions:</b> the extent to which the writing exhibits conventional spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, capitalization, and grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates control of the conventions with essentially no errors, even with sophisticated language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates control of the conventions, exhibiting occasional errors only when using sophisticated language (e.g., punctuation of complex sentences)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates partial control, exhibiting occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension (e.g., incorrect use of homonyms)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates emerging control, exhibiting frequent errors that somewhat hinder comprehension (e.g., agreement of pronouns and antecedents; spelling of basic words)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates lack of control, exhibiting frequent errors that make comprehension difficult (e.g., subject verb agreement; use of slang; missing punctuation)</li> </ul>

SCORE POINT 0 = the responses are completely incorrect, irrelevant, or incoherent.

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