

Student Language Writing Scoring Guide: Grades 4-5
Informative/Explanatory and Opinion Writing and Research Projects

	6/5: STRONG The writing is thorough and demonstrates strong writing skills.	4: MEETS The writing is complete and demonstrates adequate writing skills.	3: ALMOST MEETS The writing demonstrates progress toward meeting grade level writing skills.	2/1: NEEDS WORK The writing is limited, confusing, or too short to demonstrate grade level writing skills.
IDEAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writer’s purpose and main ideas are interesting and easy to understand. • For opinion writing, an opinion and reasons are clearly stated. • The writer elaborates with many accurate facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. • Many strong, specific details are on-topic and support main ideas. • Details are good choices for the purpose and the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writer’s purpose and main ideas are easy to understand. • For opinion writing, an opinion is clearly stated and reasons are given. • The writer includes accurate facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples about the topic. • Specific details support main ideas. • Details are on-topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writer’s purpose and main ideas are easy to understand. • For opinion writing, an opinion is stated and a reason is given. • The writer includes some facts, definitions, concrete details, or other information about the topic. • Details may be too general. They are not specific. • Details may be inaccurate or off-topic. • Details may be listed, but not explained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writer’s purpose and main ideas are not easy to understand; the reader may have to guess at what they are. • For opinion writing, no opinion may be stated or no reasons are given. • The writing may be much too short with few details. • Details are general. • Details are inaccurate or off-topic. • Details may be repeated.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing is very easy to follow. Information is grouped to make sense. • The introduction identifies the topic, is interesting, and makes the reader want to keep reading. • The concluding section is about the opinion or information presented. • Transition words and phrases (especially, specifically, in contrast, etc.) make the writing easy to follow all the way through. • Paragraph breaks are in places that make sense. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is grouped to make sense. • The introduction is developed and identifies the topic. • The concluding statement or section is about the opinion or information presented. • Transition words and phrases (also, because, for example, in addition, etc.) connect ideas and make the writing easy to follow. • Paragraph breaks help the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parts of the writing are not easy to follow. • The introduction is underdeveloped. • The concluding statement or section may not be about the opinion or information presented, or it may be too short. • The same transition words may be used too often (and, so, but, then, etc.). • There may be some paragraph breaks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing is difficult to follow and confusing. Information and details are not in an order that makes sense. • The introduction may be missing. • The concluding statement may be missing. • Transition words may be missing or the same one is used over and over. • Paragraph breaks may be missing. • The paper may be much too short to show organization.
VOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing is lively, sincere, exciting, or honest. • The writing allows the reader to engage and pay attention to the information and ideas. • The writer is very interested in the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts may be lively, sincere, exciting, or honest. • The writing helps the reader to engage and pay attention to the information and ideas. • The writer seems interested in the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing may not be lively, sincere, exciting, or honest. • The writer shows little interest in the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing seems flat or lifeless. • The writer shows no interest in the topic.

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WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The words are interesting and precise. • Many different words are used. • The writing includes many rich content vocabulary words about the topic. • Just the right words have been chosen for the purpose and audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words get the message across. • Words have variety. Many different words are used. • The writing includes many content vocabulary words about the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many words are not specific. • Little variety. Some words may be repeated too often. • The writing includes some content vocabulary words about the topic. • Sometimes the wrong word may be used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most words are too general. • Words may be repeated over and over. • The writing includes few content vocabulary words about the topic. • It may be hard to tell what the writing means because so many wrong words are used.
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing is smooth and very easy to read out loud. • Sentences begin in many different ways. • Sentences are different lengths. • Sentences have many different patterns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing is easy to read out loud. It sounds natural. • Sentences begin in different ways. • Some sentences are shorter and some sentences are longer. • Sentences have different patterns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of the writing are easy to read out loud, but other parts are difficult. • Some sentence beginnings are the same; some are different. • Many sentences are about the same length. • Many sentence patterns are the same. Some are different. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing is difficult to read out loud. The reader has to slow down or re-read. • Many sentences begin in the same way. • Sentences may be short and choppy or long and rambling. • Sentence patterns may be repeated over and over.
CONVENTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences end where they should with the correct punctuation mark. • Higher-level punctuation is used (such as parentheses, hyphen, etc.) and is correct. • Even difficult words are spelled correctly. • Grammar is correct. • Capital letters are correct. • Few errors. Little need for editing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences end where they should with the correct punctuation mark. • Grade-level punctuation is used (commas in dates, commas in a series, etc.) and is correct. • Common words are spelled correctly. • Grammar is usually correct. • Capital letters are usually correct. • Errors require some editing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most sentences end where they should with the correct punctuation mark, but some do not. • Some errors in punctuation. • Some words are spelled incorrectly. • Grammar is incorrect in places. • Few capital letter errors. • Errors distract the reader. Much editing is needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many sentences do not end where they should with the correct punctuation mark. • Many errors in punctuation. • Many words are spelled incorrectly. • Incorrect grammar. • Many capital letter errors. • There are so many errors that the reader has a hard time figuring out what the writer is trying to say.

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USE OF SOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer uses specific information about the topic from several sources. • Sources are accurately cited. • The writer uses quotations and/or paraphrases information from sources. • When required, the writer provides a complete list of sources using correct formatting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer uses information about the topic from several sources. • Sources are accurately identified. • The writer summarizes or paraphrases information from sources. • When required, the writer provides a list of sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer uses some information about the topic from mainly one source. • Sources may be incorrectly identified. • The writer may copy some text exactly from a source without paraphrasing. • When required, the writer provides a partial list of sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer uses little information about the topic from mainly one source. • Sources are not identified, are not correct, or are not used. • Chunks of text may be copied from a source. • When required, the writer does not provide a list of sources.