

Pennsylvania Writing Assessment Holistic Scoring Guide

	6	5	4	3	2	1
Focus	sharp, distinct focus	clear focus	adequate focus	Vague focus	confused focus	absence of focus
Content	Substantive, specific and/ or illustrative content; sophisticated ideas that are particularly well developed	specific and illustrative content	sufficient content	content limited to a listing, repetition or mere sequence of ideas	superficial content	absence of relevant content
Organization	obviously controlled and/ or subtle organization	logical and appropriate organization	appropriate organization	inconsistent organization	confused organization	absence of organization
Style	Writer's voice apparent in tone, sentence structure and word choice	precision and variety in sentence structure and word choice	some precision and variety in sentence structure and word choice	limited sentence variety and word choice	Lack of sentence and word choice variety	no apparent control over sentence structure and word choice
Conventions	few mechanical and usage errors	some mechanical and usage errors	mechanical and usage errors not severe enough to interfere significantly with the writer's purpose	repeated weaknesses in mechanics and usage	mechanical and usage errors that seriously interfere with the writer's purpose	mechanical and usage error so severe that writer's ideas are difficult, if not impossible, to understand

Focus	Content	Organization	Style	Conventions
Demonstrates an awareness of audience and task. Establishes and maintains a clear purpose. Sustains single point of view. Exhibits clarity of ideas.	Information and details are specific to topic. Information and details are relevant to focus. Ideas are fully developed.	Logical order of sequence is maintained. Paragraphs deal with one subject. Logical transitions are made within sentences between and paragraphs. Introduction and conclusion are evident.	Precise language. Effective word choice. Voice, tone originality of language. Variety of sentence structures, types and lengths.	Mechanics: spelling, capitalization, punctuation. Usage (e.g. pronoun references, subject-verb agreement). Sentence completeness.