

Ideas

The heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme, with details that enrich and develop that theme.

5 This paper is clear and focused. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme.

The topic is narrow and manageable
Relevant, telling, quality details go beyond the obvious
Reasonably accurate details.
Writing from knowledge or experience; ideas are fresh and original.
Reader's questions are anticipated and answered
Insight.

3 The writer is beginning to define the topic, even though development is still basic or general.

The topic is fairly broad.
Support is attempted.
Ideas are reasonably clear.
Writer has difficulty going from general observations to specifics.
The reader is left with questions.
The writer generally stays on topic.

1 The paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme. The reader must make inferences based on sketchy or missing details.
The writer is still in search of a topic.
Information is limited or unclear or the length is not adequate for development.
The idea is a simple restatement or a simple answer to the question.
Topic not defined.
Everything is equally important.
The text may be repetitious, disconnected and contains too many random thoughts.

Key Question: *Did the writer stay focused and share original and fresh information or perspective about the topic?*

Voice

The unique perspective of the writer coming through in the piece through honesty, conviction, integrity and believability.

5 The writer of this paper speaks directly to the reader in a manner that is individual, compelling, engaging, and respects purpose and audience for the writing.

Adds interest: appropriate of purpose and audience.
The reader feels a strong interaction with the writer.
The writer takes risks.
Expository or persuasive reflects understanding and commitment to topic.
Narrative writing seems honest, personal, and engaging.

3 The writer seems sincere, but not fully engaged or involved. The result is a pleasant or even personable, but not compelling.

Obvious generalities.
Earnest, pleasing, safe writing.
The voice fades in and out
Expository or persuasive writing lacks consistent engagement.
Pacing is fairly well controlled.
Narrative writing is reasonably sincere.

1 The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or the audience.

No concern with audience.
Monotone.
Hum-drum and risk free.
Lifeless and mechanical.
No point of view is present.

Key Question: *Would you keep reading this piece if it were longer? MUCH longer?*

Word Choice

The use of rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the reader.

5 Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way.

Words are specific and accurate.
Striking words and phrases.
Natural, effective and appropriate language.
Language enhances and clarifies meaning.
Precision is obvious.

3 The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy.
Words are adequate and correct in a general sense.
Familiar words and phrases communicate.
Attempts at colorful language.
Passive verbs, everyday nouns, mundane modifiers.
Functional, with one or two fine moments.
Occasionally, the words show refinement and precision.

1 The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary.
Words are nonspecific or distracting.
Many of the words don't work.
Language is used incorrectly.
Limited vocabulary, misuse of parts of speech.
Words and phrases are unimaginative and lifeless.
Jargon or clichés, persistent redundancy.

Key Question: *Do the words and phrases create vivid pictures and linger in your mind?*

