What are the traits?

The Six Traits of Writing are rooted in more than 50 years of research. This research reveals that all “good” writing has six key ingredients—ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions.

These key components provide teachers and students a common understanding for how to compose, revise, and assess all types of writing. They are inherent in well-written essays, reports, blogs, poems, videos, and other genres. But they are also evident within the products of our youngest writers—pictures, labels, lists, etc.

This shared vocabulary allows teachers and students to communicate about the strengths and weaknesses in writing. The Six Traits take the mystery out of what a “good” one looks and sounds like.

It's important to recognize the Six Traits are not a program. They are simply six words, six characteristics, six ingredients inherent in strong writing. Therefore, this vocabulary integrates easily into any writing curriculum.

 Trait of Ideas
Develop a single topic to convey a clear message.

 Trait of Organization
Reveal ideas in a logical order, including a beginning, middle, and end.

 Trait of Voice
Increase reader engagement with intentional writer feeling, attitude, and emotion.

 Trait of Word Choice
Use the right word in the right place to convey just the right meaning.

 Trait of Sentence Fluency
Improve the readability of a piece with complete thoughts and sentence variety.

 Trait of Conventions
Make writing more correct by following the rules of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar.
References:


Ruth Culham
Traits of Writing