

Informative-Explanatory Essay Writing Rubric (Grades 6–8)

IDEAS

ORGANIZATION

VOICE

WORD CHOICE

SENT. FLUENCY

CONVENTIONS

Score	4	3	2	1
Purpose, Focus, and Organization	The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear controlling idea and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following: - Strongly maintained controlling idea with little or no loosely related material - Skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas - Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end with a satisfying introduction and conclusion - Appropriate style and objective tone established and maintained	The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear controlling idea and evident organizational structure with a sense of completeness. The response includes most of the following: - Maintained controlling idea, though some loosely related material may be present - Adequate use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas - Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end with a sufficient introduction and conclusion - Appropriate style and objective tone established	The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience, and task but may include loosely related or extraneous material; and it may have a controlling idea with an inconsistent organizational structure. The response may include the following: - Focused controlling idea but insufficiently sustained or unclear - Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety - Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end with an inadequate introduction or conclusion	The response is related to the topic but may demonstrate little or no awareness of the purpose, audience, and task; and it may have little or no controlling idea or discernible organizational structure. The response may include the following: - Confusing or ambiguous ideas - Few or no transitional strategies - Frequent extraneous ideas that impede understanding - Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization

*To receive a score in all categories the response must be in English, of a sufficient length, and address the prompt.

[UPDATED OCTOBER 2021]

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Evidence and Elaboration	The response provides thorough and convincing support, citing evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following: - Smoothly integrated, thorough, and relevant evidence, including precise references to sources - Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques (including but not limited to definitions, quotations, and examples), demonstrating an understanding of the topic and text - Clear and effective expression of ideas, using precise language - Academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose - Varied sentence structure, demonstrating language facility	The response provides adequate support, citing evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following: - Generally integrated and relevant evidence from sources, though references may be general or imprecise - Adequate use of some elaborative techniques - Adequate expression of ideas, employing a mix of precise and general language - Domain-specific vocabulary generally appropriate for the audience and purpose - Some variation in sentence structure	The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes partial use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following: - Weakly integrated evidence from sources; erratic or irrelevant references or citations - Repetitive or ineffective use of elaborative techniques - Imprecise or simplistic expression of ideas - Some use of inappropriate domain-specific vocabulary - Most sentences limited to simple constructions	The response provides minimal support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea, including little if any use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following: - Minimal, absent, erroneous, or irrelevant evidence or citations from the source material - Expression of ideas that is vague, unclear, or confusing - Limited and often inappropriate language or domain-specific vocabulary - Sentences limited to simple constructions
Score	N/A	2	1	0
Conventions	(2-point rubric begins at score point 2)	The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. The response may include the following: - Some minor errors in usage but no patterns of errors - Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling	The response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. The response may include the following: - Various errors in usage - Inconsistent use of correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling	The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning.

*To receive a score in all categories the response must be in English, of a sufficient length, and address the prompt.

[UPDATED OCTOBER 2021]