

HOLISTIC MARKING GUIDE

GRADE 8 WRITING

LEVELS: DESCRIPTORS:

Very interesting and engaging work. outstanding

6 **PARAGRAPH:** Clear, creative development of the topic (imagery, metaphor, simile risk taking)
SENTENCES: Complex sentences predominate, but simple sentences used for effect. (variety, style)
PUNCTUATION: May have semicolon, colon, dash
VOCABULARY: Succinct, precise vocabulary enhances topic. No spelling errors.

Interesting, well thought out

5 **PARAGRAPH:** Clear, logical development of topic
SENTENCES: Good use of compound and/or complex sentences
 Complex: Because he dreamed of being a hero, he enlisted in the army.
 Compound complex: Because he dreamed of being a hero, he enlisted in the army and prepared to give his life for democracy.
PUNCTUATION: Very good punctuation, few errors.
VOCABULARY: Very good level of vocabulary - vivid verbs, adverbs, descriptive adjectives. Few spelling errors.

Some interest created by the writer

4 **PARAGRAPH:** Basic structure is there - decent development of the topic
SENTENCES: Evidence of compound and/or complex sentences.
PUNCTUATION: Introductory clauses, phrases punctuated correctly.
VOCABULARY: Good level of vocabulary - vivid verbs, adverbs; descriptive adjectives. Some spelling errors.

Flat and workmanlike: despite errors, message understood

3 **PARAGRAPH:** Has basic topic sentence, standard transitions, and conclusion.
SENTENCES: All sentences are complete. Simple sentences predominate.
PUNCTUATION: No errors with the comma in series (adjectives), introductory transitions, end punctuation and capitalization.
VOCABULARY: Basic vocabulary. Noticeable spelling errors.

Major errors make the paragraph incomprehensible

2 **PARAGRAPH:** No topic sentence or no standard transitions or no conclusion.
SENTENCES: Sentences fragments: Because he wanted to be a hero.
 Run-on sentences: He wanted to be a hero he joined the army.
 Comma splices: He wanted to be a hero, therefore he joined in the army.
PUNCTUATION: Lacks commas for series, end punctuation, capitalization.
VOCABULARY: Many usage errors. Spelling errors make reading difficult.
 Its vs. it's; there, their, they're; a lot; of vs. have; then vs. than; to, too, two.

1 No indenting. Very little work has been done to make this a useful piece of writing. Four or fewer sentences.

The ONE Paragraph

1

No indenting. Very little work has been done to make this a useful piece of writing **Four or fewer sentences.**

Yes!

You will receive a 1(ONE) if you **do not indent.**

You will receive a 1(ONE) if you **indent each sentence.**

You will receive a 1(ONE) if you do not have at least **5 sentences.**

Note: After seeing any of these mistakes, the **teacher will not read further.**

Note: For **most** of the paragraphs this year, students will be expected to rewrite.

The TWO Paragraph

Major errors make the paragraph incomprehensible

2
PARAGRAPH: No topic sentence or no standard transitions or no conclusion.
SENTENCES: Sentences fragments: Because he wanted to be a hero.
Run-on sentences: He wanted to be a hero he joined the army
Comma splices: He wanted to be a hero, therefore he joined in the army.
PUNCTUATION: Lacks commas for series, end punctuation, capitalization.
VOCABULARY: Many usage errors. Spelling errors make reading difficult.
Its vs. it's; there, their, they're; a lot of vs. have; then vs. than; to, too, two.

Please refer to attached "Usage Error Sheet" (page 7) for the vocabulary problems of the 2 scale.

Note: After seeing any of these mistakes, the teacher will not read further.

Note: For most of the paragraphs this year, students will be expected to rewrite.

Yes!

You will receive a 2 (TWO) if you do not capitalize proper names and the first word of a sentence. *Is john good? are you coming tonight?*

You will receive a 2 (TWO) if you do not separate items in a series with a comma. *I like football_ hockey and ballet.*

Sentence Errors:

Necessary grammar:

Sentences are made up of words, phrases and clauses.

A **phrase** is a group of words, which **does not** have a subject or predicate.
over the fence = a prepositional phrase

A **clause** is a group of words, which **does** have a subject and predicate.

I went to the store. I = subject

went = predicate (verb)

Clauses are either **dependent** (subordinate) or **independent** (principle, main).

Dependent clauses begin with **subordinate conjunctions** (because, since, although etc.) and, therefore, are not complete sentences. *Although he was*

hungry. = a sentence fragment (2) [Please, note: numbers in brackets () refer to the potential score for the paragraph].

Independent clauses do not begin with subordinate conjunctions and, therefore, are complete sentences. *He was hungry.* (3)

Note: A sentence may begin with a subordinate clause (because) but that means that it has begun with a dependent clause and must be completed by an independent clause. *Although he was hungry, he refused to eat.* (4)

A **simple sentence** is one independent clause. *He refused to eat.* (3)

A **complex sentence** is one independent clause combined with at least one dependent clause. *Although he was hungry, he refused to eat.* (4)

A **compound sentence** is two independent clauses combined with 'and, or, but'. *He was hungry, but he refused to eat.* (4)

A **FRAGMENT** is a dependent clause treated as a sentence. *Although he was hungry.* (2)

A **FRAGMENT** can also be a prepositional phrase treated as a sentence. *After the game but before the party.* (2)

A **RUN-ON** is two independent clauses written together as one sentence. *I hate you you are mean.* A period or a conjunction between them will correct this problem. [*I hate you because you are mean.* (4)]

A **COMMA SPLICE** is two independent clauses separated by a comma. *I hate you, you are mean.* A period or a conjunction between them will correct this problem. [*I hate you. You are mean.* (3) *I hate you, and you are mean.* (4) *I hate you because you are mean.* (4)]

Paragraphs have a definite unifying structure based on a single idea.

Basic: **Topic sentence** (introduces topic and grabs reader's attention)
 Transitions and body development
 Conclusion (not a summary but an answer to the question "so what?")

Errors: **Topic Sentence:**

I am going to write about basketball in this paragraph. (2)

This is not a topic sentence.

I think basketball is great. (2)

This is redundant. What you write is what you think (is your opinion).

Basketball is played on the court. (2)

This is support (development) - not the topic sentence.

Transitions:

You need to show the reader the logical development of your topic.

Basketball is an exciting sport. The players are athletic. Many people watch basketball...

You are jumping from idea to idea with little or no connection.

Basketball is an exciting sport. The players are athletic and, therefore, many people watch basketball...

Conclusions:

Those are the reasons why basketball is exciting.

This is a boring summary.

This concludes my paragraph on basketball.

This is stating the obvious.

Incorrect use of any of the following will result in an automatic **TWO** for your paragraph:

Its = possessive:	The dog ate its bone.
It's = contraction:	It's time to leave. (It is)
There = adverb	We went there.
Their = possessive	Their dog is sick.
They're = contraction:	They're going to the concert.
A lot = 2 words	Thanks a lot.
Of = preposition	The first of October...
Have = verb	I should have studied!
Then = adverb	Then, we went home.
Than = comparison	She is taller than he.
To = preposition	We went to the store.
Too = also	I went, too.
adverb	She drove too fast
Two = 2	I want two cars.
(Your = possessive	your house)
(You're = you are	You're going to the store.)

N.B. Do not use 'you' in your paragraphs.

Example of a THREE Paragraph

The media affects our lives in many ways. It influences us to buy certain products. They make us watch commercials that show cool people. If a person buys the same product it makes them cool. The media makes North American men look bad, like Homer Simpson on the "Simpsons" for example. In the WWF, they make all of the girls dress like "sluts". The media is powerful and can change the way people think about themselves and others.

This paragraph has no major sentence errors, but it is quite flat because of the dominance of simple sentences. Furthermore, ideas are not completely developed.

The FOUR Paragraph

Some interest created by the writer

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SENTENCES: Evidence of compound and/or complex sentences.
PUNCTUATION: Introductory clauses, phrases punctuated correctly.
VOCABULARY: Good level of vocabulary - vivid verbs, adverbs, descriptive adjectives. Some spelling errors.

Sentences: To create interest, a writer uses a variety of sentence structures and lengths. Please, see the TWO paragraph (page 5) for definitions and examples.

Vocabulary: A good writer avoids repetitive and over-used words.

Vivid = 'saunter' versus 'walk'
'laboriously' versus 'slowly'

Descriptive adjectives = 'thoughtful' versus 'nice'

Example of a FOUR Paragraph

Boating is a growing recreational activity in the world. For instance, boats are used for water sports, fishing and sightseeing. Water sports with boats include skiing, tubing, knee boarding and wake boarding. Also, more and more people are using boats for fishing. They are using boats for both fresh and salt water fishing. Another recreational use for boats is sightseeing. People go whale watching on boat trips. Recreational boating is a growing popular sport because it is fun and exciting.

The writer has developed a clear but basic paragraph. Some evidence of trying to create interest by varying sentences is present.

The FIVE Paragraph

Interesting, well thought out

PARAGRAPH: Clear, logical development of topic

SENTENCES: Good use of compound and/or complex sentences

Complex: Because he dreamed of being a hero, he enlisted in the army

5

Compound complex: Because he dreamed of being a hero, he enlisted in the army and prepared to give his life for democracy.

PUNCTUATION: Very good punctuation, few errors.

VOCABULARY: Very good level of vocabulary - vivid verbs, adverbs, descriptive adjectives. Few spelling errors.

Please see pages 7, 11 and 15 for relevant definitions and suggestions.

Example of a FIVE Paragraph

Robin Astor was a sneaky, selfish man with a cold heart. He had had a note sent to him not too long ago that said he owed a lot of money and that he had to get it to them fast or else he would be in serious trouble. Robin was the only person who found out that Max had already found the treasure but he wasn't going to tell anyone yet. He found this out one night when he went out on deck to smoke a cigarette. He saw Max all alone in a place where any lookout person was out of sight. Max was sitting there looking over some blocks of gold in a treasure chest, and he was obviously trying to figure out some kind of old writing on a piece of papyrus. At that moment, Robin came up with a plan that would get him the money and get rid of Max Jordan who was disliked by many.

The topic in this paragraph is developed clearly and logically. Compound and complex sentences are used well. Good punctuation is present.

The SIX Paragraph

Very interesting and engaging work. outstanding

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Creative implies poetic and literary thoughtfulness and imagination.

Imagery = *He sat in the garden.* versus *He lounged amongst the red and yellow roses in the traditional English garden.*

Metaphor = a metaphor is a comparison of two unlike objects, but which have, through the comparison, a new connection.

Cliché = *love is a rose*

Metaphor = *love is a vampire*

Simile = a simile is a comparison of two unlike objects, but which have, through the comparison, a new connection. It uses 'like' or 'as' to make the new image.

Old = *He walked as slowly as a turtle.*

New = *He walked like a zombie.*

Punctuation:

Use a **semicolon** to join two independent clauses, which are related in meaning.

He was hungry; he bought a sandwich.

He was late; therefore, he had a detention.

Use a **colon** to introduce a list of items.

For lunch I ate the following: a ham sandwich, six cookies and a banana.

Use a **dash** to show an emphatic turn to the sentence's meaning.

For lunch I ate the following: a ham sandwich, six cookies and a banana – now I'm sick.

Example of a SIX Paragraph

Ichabod Crane is like Wile E. Coyote from the "Bugs Bunny, Road Runner Hour". The gullibility of these two clowns leads them into many self-inflicted problems. For example, Ichabod's downfall begins when he believes the story about witches congregating in his classroom at night. Likewise, Wile E. believes the 'ACME' products he orders, though very sophisticated, will help him catch the supersonic Road Runner. Furthermore, Ichabod and Wile E. are dreamers. Ichabod wants to marry Katrina for the money he covets while Wile E. obsesses about catching and eating his elusive prey. Therefore, as Wile E. Coyote's plans ironically come back to haunt him, Ichabod's superstitions destroy his fantasies of wealth and happiness.

Please note the excellent use of metaphor, simile, allusion and irony. Sentences are varied for interest and the voice is assured.