



# Six-Trait Analytical Assessment



## Sentence Fluency

**5** An easy flow and sentence sense make this text a delight to read aloud.

- ⊙ Sentences are well-crafted, with a strong and varied structure that invites expressive oral reading
- ⊙ Purpose sentence beginnings show how each sentence relates to and builds on the one before.
- ⊙ The writing has cadence, as if the writer hears the beat in his or her head.
- ⊙ Sentences vary in both structure and length, making the reading pleasant and natural.
- ⊙ Fragments, if used, are intentional and add style.

**3** The text hums along with a steady beat.

- ⊙ Sentences are mostly grammatical and easy to read aloud, given a little rehearsal.
- ⊙ Graceful, natural phrasing intermingles with more mechanical structure.
- ⊙ More variation in length and structure would enhance fluency.
- ⊙ Some purposeful sentence beginnings aid the reader's interpretation of the text.
- ⊙ Fragments may be present; not all add flair or punch.

**1** A fair interpretative oral reading of this text takes practice. Readers will likely notice more than one of these problems:

- ⊙ Irregular or unusual word patterns make it hard to tell where sentences begin and end.
- ⊙ Ideas are hooked together by numerous connectives (*and...but...so then*) to create one gangly, endless "sentence."
- ⊙ Short, choppy sentences bump the reader through the text.
- ⊙ Repetitive sentence patterns put the reader to sleep.
- ⊙ Transitions are either missing or so overdone they become distracting.
- ⊙ The reader must often pause and reread for meaning.
- ⊙ Fragments, if used, seem accidental and do not work.

## Ideas & Content

**5** The writing is clear, well-supported or developed, and enhanced by the kind of detail that keeps readers reading.

- ⊙ The writer selectively chooses *just* the right information to make the paper understandable, enlightening and interesting—without bogging down in trivia.
- ⊙ Details work together to expand the main topic or develop a story, giving the whole piece a strong sense of focus.
- ⊙ The writer's knowledge, experience, insight, or unique perspective lends the writing a satisfying ring of authenticity.
- ⊙ The amount of detail is just right—not skimpy, not overwhelming.

**3** The writer has made a solid beginning in defining a topic or mapping out a story line. It is easy to see where the writing is headed, though more expansion is needed to complete the picture.

- ⊙ General, global information provides the big picture—and makes the reader long for specifics.
- ⊙ Well-focused information blends with repetitive points, trivia, or meanderings.
- ⊙ The writer draws on *some* personal evidence—but too often settles for generalities or clichéd thinking.
- ⊙ Unneeded information may eat up space that should have gone to important details. Where's the balance?

**1** Sketchy, loosely focused information forces the reader to make inferences. Readers will likely notice more than one of these problems:

- ⊙ The main topic is still unclear, out of focus, or not yet known...even to the writer.
- ⊙ Missing, limited, or unrelated details require the reader to fill in many blanks.
- ⊙ Lists of "factlets" may be substituted for true development.
- ⊙ Everything seems as important as everything else.

## Organization

**5** The order, presentation, or internal structure of the piece is compelling and guides the reader purposefully through the text.

- ⊙ The entire piece has a strong sense of direction and balance. Main ideas or key points stand out clearly.
- ⊙ An inviting lead draws the reader in; a satisfying conclusion ties up loose ends.
- ⊙ Details seem to fit right where they are placed, making the text easy to follow and understand.
- ⊙ Transitions are strong but natural.
- ⊙ Pacing feels natural and effective; the writer knows just when to linger over details and when to get moving.
- ⊙ Organization flows so smoothly the reader does not need to think about it.

**3** The organizational structure allows the reader to move through the text without undue confusion.

- ⊙ Sequencing of main ideas seems reasonably appropriate; the reader rarely, if ever, feels lost.
- ⊙ Attempts introduction & conclusion
- ⊙ Transitions are usually present, but sometimes a little too obvious or too structured.
- ⊙ Structure may be so dominant or predictable that it literally smothers the ideas and voice.
- ⊙ Information is *mostly* presented in an orderly, if not quite compelling, fashion.

**1** Ideas, details, or events seem loosely strung together. Readers will likely notice more than one of these problems:

- ⊙ As yet, there is no clear sense of direction to carry the reader from point to point.
- ⊙ No real lead sets up what follows.
- ⊙ No real conclusion wraps things up.
- ⊙ Missing or unclear transitions force the reader to make giant leaps.
- ⊙ Sequencing feels more random than purposeful, leaving the reader with a sense of being adrift.
- ⊙ The writing does not move purposefully toward any main message or turning point.

## Voice

**5** The writer's energy and passion for the subject drive the writing, making the text lively, expressive, and engaging.

- Ⓒ The tone and flavor of the piece fit the topic, purpose, and audience well.
- Ⓒ The writing bears the clear imprint of *this* writer.
- Ⓒ The writer seems to know his/her audience, and shows a strong concern for their informational needs and interests.
- Ⓒ Narrative text is open and honest.
- Ⓒ Expository or persuasive text is provocative, lively, and designed to hold a reader's attention.

**3** The writer seems sincere and willing to communicate with the reader on a functional, if distant, level.

- Ⓒ The tone and flavor of the piece could be altered slightly to better fit the topic, purpose, or audience.
- Ⓒ The writer has not quite found his or her voice, but is experimenting—and the result is pleasant or intriguing, if not unique.
- Ⓒ The writer only occasionally speaks right to the audience.
- Ⓒ The writer often seems reluctant to “let go,” holding individuality, passion, and spontaneity in check. Nevertheless, voice pops out on occasion.
- Ⓒ The writer is “there”...then gone.

**1** The writer seems definitely distanced from the topic, audience, or both; as a result, the text may lack life, spirit, or energy. Readers are likely to notice one or more of these problems:

- Ⓒ The tone and flavor of the piece are inappropriate for the topic, purpose, and/or audience.
- Ⓒ The writer does not seem to reach out to the audience or to anticipate their interests and needs.
- Ⓒ Though it may communicate on a functional level, the writing takes no risks and does not engage, energize, or move the reader.
- Ⓒ The writer does not project personal enthusiasm for the topic or make it come alive for the reader.

## Word Choice

**5** Precise, vivid, natural language paints a strong, clear, and complete picture in the reader's mind.

- Ⓒ The writer's message is remarkably clear and easy to interpret.
- Ⓒ Phrasing is original—even memorable—yet the language is never overdone.
- Ⓒ Lively verbs lend the writing power.
- Ⓒ Striking words or phrases linger in the writer's memory, often promoting connections, reflective thoughts or insights.

**3** The language communicates in a routine, workable manner; it gets the job done.

- Ⓒ Most words are correct and adequate, even if not striking.
- Ⓒ A memorable phrase here or there strikes a spark, leaving the reader hungry for more.
- Ⓒ Familiar words and phrases give the text an “old couch” kind of feel.
- Ⓒ Attempts at colorful language are full of promise, even when they lack restraint or control. Jargon may be mildly annoying but does not impede readability.
- Ⓒ General meaning is clear, but the brush is too broad to convey subtleties.

**1** The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary—or uses language that simply does not speak to the intended audience. Readers will notice more than one of these problems:

- Ⓒ Vague words and phrases (She was nice... It was wonderful... The day was cold) convey only the most general sorts of messages.
- Ⓒ Clichés or redundant phrases encourage the reader to skim, not linger.
- Ⓒ Words are used incorrectly (“The bus *impelled* into the hotel.”).
- Ⓒ Inflated or jargonistic language makes the text ponderous and uninviting.
- Ⓒ The reader has trouble grasping the writer's intended message.

## Conventions

**5** The writer shows excellence control over a wide range of standard writing conventions and uses them with accuracy and (when appropriate) creativity to enhance meaning.

- Ⓒ Errors are so few and so minor that a reader can easily overlook them unless searching for them.
- Ⓒ The text appears clean, edited, and polished.
- Ⓒ Older writers (grades 6 and up) create text of sufficient length and complexity to demonstrate control of conventions appropriate for age and experience.
- Ⓒ The text is easy to mentally process; there is nothing to distract or confuse a reader.
- Ⓒ Only slight touch-ups would be required to polish the text for publication.

**3** The writer shows reasonable control over the most widely used writing conventions, creating text that is adequately readable.

- Ⓒ There are enough errors to distract an attentive reader; however, errors do not seriously impair readability or obscure meaning.
- Ⓒ It is easy enough for an experienced reader to get through the text, but the writing clearly needs polishing.
- Ⓒ The paper reads much like a second rough draft—readable, but lacking close attention to conventions.
- Ⓒ Moderate editing would be required to get the text ready for publication.

**1** The writer demonstrates limited control even over widely used conventions. Readers are likely to notice one or more of these problems:

- Ⓒ Errors are sufficiently frequent and/or serious enough to be distracting; it is hard for the reader to focus on ideas, organization, or voice.
- Ⓒ The reader may need to read once to decode, then again to interpret and respond to the text.
- Ⓒ the writing reads like a rough first draft, scribbled hastily without thought for conventions.
- Ⓒ Extensive editing would be required to prepare the text for publication.