

PENNSYLVANIA WRITING ASSESSMENT HOLISTIC SCORING GUIDE

6	5	4	3	2	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharp, distinct focus • Substantial, specific, and/or illustrative content; sophisticated ideas that are particularly well developed • Obviously controlled and/or subtle organization • Writer's voice apparent in tone, sentence structure, and word choice • Few mechanical and usage errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear focus • Specific and illustrative content • Logical and appropriate organization • Precision and variety in sentence structure and word choice • Some mechanical and usage errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate focus • Sufficient content • Appropriate organization • Some precision and variety in sentence structure and word choice • Mechanical and usage errors not severe enough to interfere significantly with the writer's purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vague focus • Content limited to a listing, repetition, or mere sequence of ideas • Inconsistent organization • Limited sentence variety and word choice • Repeated weaknesses in mechanics and usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confused focus • Superficial content • Confused organization • Lack of sentence and word choice variety • Mechanical and usage errors that seriously interfere with the writer's purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of focus • Absence of relevant content • Absence of organization • No apparent control over sentence structure and word choice • Mechanical and usage errors so severe that writer's ideas are difficult if not impossible to understand

NON-SCOREABLE (NS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is illegible; i.e., includes so many undecipherable words that no sense can be made of the response <i>or</i> • Is incoherent; i.e., words are legible but syntax is so garbled that response makes no sense <i>or</i> • Is a blank paper

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE WRITING

FOCUS	CONTENT	ORGANIZATION	STYLE	CONVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an awareness of audience and task • Establishes and maintains a clear purpose • Sustains a single point of view • Exhibits clarity of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and details are specific to topic • Information and details are relevant to focus • Ideas are fully developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logical order or sequence is maintained • Paragraphs deal with one subject • Logical transitions are made within sentences and between paragraphs • Introduction and conclusion are evident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precise language • Effective word choice • Voice, tone, originality of language • Variety of sentence structures, types, and lengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanics: spelling, capitalization, punctuation • Usage (e.g. pronoun references, subject-verb agreement) • Sentence completeness