

# Grade 8 Standards of Learning Writing Rubric

<p><b>Composing: Grade 8</b> <b>4 = Consistent Control</b></p> <p><b>Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of composing features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full elaboration focuses at both sentence level and throughout entire piece</li> <li>• Purposeful examples, illustrations, anecdotes, or details</li> <li>• Strong organizational plan apparent</li> <li>• Narrative organization intact; in other modes, <i>minor</i> lapses may occur</li> <li>• Appropriate transitions</li> <li>• Consistent point of view, e.g. not switching from “I” to “you”</li> <li>• Lack of digressions</li> <li>• Strong lead and closure; not just repetition of statements</li> </ul>
<p><b>3 = Reasonable Control</b></p> <p><b>Reasonable, but not consistent, control of composing features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some features may exhibit more control than others</li> <li>• Purposeful elaboration focuses central idea at sentence level and throughout entire piece</li> <li>• Some thinness or unevenness may occur</li> <li>• Organizational plan is apparent with few digressions</li> <li>• Narrative organization generally intact</li> <li>• Lapses of organization do not significantly detract</li> <li>• Purposeful transitions</li> <li>• Introduction and closure present but not sophisticated</li> </ul>
<p><b>2 = Inconsistent Control</b></p> <p><b>Inconsistent control of several features indicating significant weakness in composing domain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas often compete with no one idea central</li> <li>• Even if single idea dominates, writing may be a few brief details, a list of general, underdeveloped statements, or a skeletal plot</li> <li>• Very little organization</li> <li>• Contrived or trite opening/closure may be present</li> <li>• Inconsistent control of transitions or lack of logically elaborated central idea prevents unity</li> </ul>
<p><b>1 = Little or No Control</b></p> <p><b>Little or no control of domain’s features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus of paper is lacking, or the elaboration is so sparse that the focus is insufficient</li> <li>• Bare statement is the norm</li> <li>• May jump from point to point with no logic or transitions</li> <li>• Sentences can be rearranged without changing meaning</li> <li>• Writing is haphazard</li> <li>• No purposeful elaboration even if several pages long</li> </ul>

<p><b>Written Expression: Grade 8</b> <b>4 = Consistent Control</b></p> <p><b>Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of written expression domain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purposefully crafted ideas</li> <li>• Memorable for reader because precise information and vocabulary resonate with reader</li> <li>• Highly specific word choice and information create purposeful tone and enhance writer’s voice</li> <li>• Figures of speech, if present, are purposeful</li> <li>• Sentences varied for effect</li> <li>• Appropriately subordinates ideas and embeds modifiers to create rhythm</li> </ul>
<p><b>3 = Reasonable Control</b></p> <p><b>Reasonable, but not consistent, control of domain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific word choice and information create a clear message</li> <li>• Some figurative language may be present</li> <li>• A few general statements or vague words may flatten tone somewhat</li> <li>• Effective use of normal word order and competent variation in sentence length and complexity</li> <li>• Occasional awkward construction may diminish rhythm</li> </ul>
<p><b>2 = Inconsistent Control</b></p> <p><b>Inconsistent control of several features, indicating significant weakness in written expression domain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally written in imprecise, bland language.</li> <li>• Writer’s voice rarely emerges</li> <li>• Selection of information uneven and/or consists of attempt to tell everything writer knows</li> <li>• Lack of sentence variety makes reading monotonous</li> <li>• Occasional awkward constructions distract from meaning</li> <li>• Overall sense of rhythm not present</li> </ul>
<p><b>1 = Little or No Control</b></p> <p><b>Little or no control of most of the features of the written domain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General, vague, bland, or repetitive word choice and information</li> <li>• Lack of sentence variety makes paper monotonous</li> <li>• Existence of several very awkward constructions</li> <li>• Lack of control of vocabulary and information prevents both tone and voice from emerging</li> </ul>

<p><b>Usage and Mechanics: Grade 8</b> <b>4 = Consistent Control</b></p> <p><b>Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of domain’s features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough understanding of usage and mechanics as found in VA K-8 SOLs</li> <li>• Uses standard principles for spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation</li> <li>• A few errors may be present but the control of the domain’s many features is too strong to let these errors detract from the performance</li> </ul>
<p><b>3 = Reasonable Control</b></p> <p><b>Reasonable, but not consistent, control of most of the domain’s features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic understanding of usage and mechanics as specified in VA K-8 SOLs</li> <li>• Appropriately applies rules of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation expected of 8<sup>th</sup> graders</li> </ul>
<p><b>2 = Inconsistent Control</b></p> <p><b>Inconsistent control of several features, indicating significant weakness in the domain of usage and mechanics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent errors appear along with evidence of writer’s knowledge of domain features</li> <li>• Inconsistently applies rules of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation as specified in VA K-8 SOLs</li> <li>• Density of errors outweighs the feature control present in paper</li> </ul>
<p><b>1 = Little or No Control</b></p> <p><b>Little or no control of most of the domain’s features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent and severe errors in mechanics and usage as specified in VA K-8 SOLs distract reader and limit meaning</li> <li>• Even if meaning not significantly affected, density of errors overwhelms paper to keep it from meeting minimum standards of competence</li> </ul>