# Traits Rubric for Grades 3–12

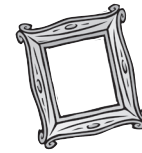ideas    organization    voice    word choice    sentence fluency    conventions    presentation
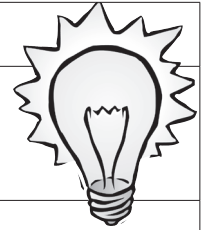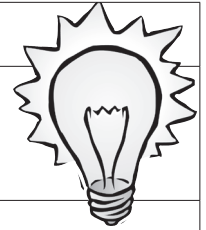
# Traits Rubric for Ideas: Grades 3–12

**Key question:**
**Does the writer engage the reader with fresh information or perspective on a focused topic?**

| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1 Beginning** | **2 Emerging** | **3 Developing** | **4 Capable** | **5 Experienced** | **6 Exceptional** |
| | Does not reflect a main idea or purpose; includes content that is off topic | Has a main idea that begins to emerge, but author's direction is unclear | States or implies a main idea, but is unclear, unfocused, inaccurate, and/or underdeveloped | Conveys a a clear, focused, and accurate main idea with adequate development and/or support | Produces a clear, focused, accurate, and complex main idea with convincing development and/or support | Conveys a clear, focused, accurate, and significant main idea and includes unique, substantial insights that are fully developed and supported |
| **A. Main idea** | Does not convey a main idea or topic | Focuses on a general topic but does not suggest a main idea | Suggests a main idea, but the direction of the piece is still unclear | Has a clear, focused main idea | Conveys a clear, focused, and substantive main idea | Conveys a clear, focused, substantive, and original main idea that drives the piece |
| **B. Details and support** | Does not develop or support a main idea | Attempts to develop or support the main idea with limited, repetitious, faulty, and/or unclear information and/or details | Provides incidental support of the main idea with information that lacks specificity and relevance and may be inaccurate; may include some generic details

In A/O writing at grade 7+, includes one or more counterclaims that are acknowledged but not addressed | Develops the main idea with generally accurate and relevant supportive information and/or details

In A/O writing at grade 7+, addresses one or more counterclaims | Develops the main idea with specific, relevant, accurate information and/or some vivid details

In A/O writing at grade 7+, addresses and thoroughly examines counterclaims | Develops the main idea with convincing, supportive information and/or concrete details that go beyond the obvious

In A/O writing at grade 7+, thoroughly examines counterclaims and addresses them in original ways that enrich the author's claim |
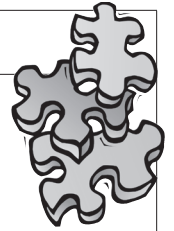| **C. Reasoning/thinking** | Does not show author's thinking in developing or connecting ideas | Generalizes about the topic without providing logical connections among ideas, or uses connections that are faulty | Begins to develop supporting ideas, some of which lack clarity or obvious logical connection | Presents useful information that helps the reader understand the author's reasoning, logic, or perspective | Presents useful, fresh information or perspective with logical reasoning that clarifies complex ideas | Conveys fresh, useful information using higher order thinking skills and convincing reasoning to provide unique insights into complex ideas |

# Traits Rubric for Ideas: Grades 3–12

**Key question:**
**Does the writer engage the reader with fresh information or perspective on a focused topic?**

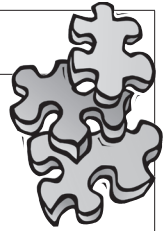| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1 Beginning** | **2 Emerging** | **3 Developing** | **4 Capable** | **5 Experienced** | **6 Exceptional** |
| **D. Evidence selection and acknowledgment** | Contains no or incorrect evidence from sources; likely plagiarizes support | Has vague, imprecise, and/or weakly integrated evidence without attribution or acknowledgment of sources; likely plagiarizes at least some support | Has weakly integrated and/or incomplete evidence; contains general attribution or acknowledgment (if any); may appear to include plagiarized support | Provides adequate evidence from sources with proper attribution or acknowledgment | Integrates strong evidence from sources with proper attribution or acknowledgment | Includes comprehensive evidence from sources that is smoothly integrated and includes proper attribution or acknowledgment |
| **E. Awareness/ engagement of reader** | Does not appear to have the reader in mind | Shares information but does not anticipate what the reader knows or believes | Attempts to engage reader; however, important questions remain that may cloud the reader's understanding | Engages reader in exploring ideas and answers questions critical for understanding | Knows audience and anticipates and addresses the reader's knowledge, questions, and possible biases | Engages audience on multiple levels, anticipating the reader's knowledge and biases and answering all critical questions |

# Traits Rubric for Organization: Grades 3–12

**Key question:**
**Does the organizational structure enhance the ideas and make them easier to understand?**

| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1 Beginning** | **2 Emerging** | **3 Developing** | **4 Capable** | **5 Experienced** | **6 Exceptional** |
| | **Doesn't use identifiable organization; writing lacks a sense of direction or seems random** | **Contains mostly ineffective organization with only occasional sections or passages that direct the reader** | **Has uneven organization that affects the reader's ability to follow text** | **Has basic organization that moves the reader through the text logically without confusion** | **Reflects smooth and cohesive organization and varied techniques that build smoothly from one idea to the next to create a unified whole** | **Uses seamless organization that enhances and showcases central ideas; orders or structures information in a compelling way; clarifies relationships among ideas** |
| **A. Lead and conclusion** | Has no lead or conclusion | Contains a lead or conclusion, which is unclear or ineffective | Includes a lead that doesn't adequately establish purpose and/or a conclusion that fails to provide closure, leaving the reader with questions | Contains a recognizable lead and conclusion but they may be formulaic or obvious | Features a lead that creates anticipation and a conclusion that ties up loose ends with a satisfying sense of closure | Has an inviting lead that draws reader in and creates a strong sense of anticipation; includes satisfying conclusion that conveys a powerful sense of closure and resolution |
| **B. Transitions** | Does not include transitions | Uses weak transitions sporadically that fail to connect ideas or minimize confusion | Uses transitions inappropriately, resulting in weak chunking of paragraphs or ideas | Includes transitions that connect ideas though they may be formulaic or predictable in places; has paragraphs with topic sentences and support | Features logical, varied transitions; uses sequence and transition words/phrases effectively; orders paragraphs to support development of ideas | Uses clear, thoughtful transitions, showing the reader how ideas relate and enhancing meaning and progress throughout the piece; includes paragraphs that ensure ideas build throughout the piece to create a unified whole |
| **C. Sequencing** | Has no evident sequencing of ideas | Has ineffective sequencing, making it difficult to see how the piece fits together as a whole | Includes sequencing that fails to showcase ideas or takes over so completely it is formulaic | Provides logical and helpful sequencing with ideas placed in an understandable order | Employs sequencing that moves beyond the obvious, building connections between ideas | Uses highly effective sequencing, making best choices for progression and enriching the reader's understanding |

# Traits Rubric for Organization: Grades 3–12

**Key question:**
**Does the organizational structure enhance the ideas and make them easier to understand?**

| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | 1 Beginning | 2 Emerging | 3 Developing | 4 Capable | 5 Experienced | 6 Exceptional |
| **D. Pacing** | Has no evident pacing | Has very uneven pacing that slows when the reader wants to move quickly, and vice versa | Appropriately controls pacing in some sections but not in others | Evenly controls pacing in nearly all places | Has well-controlled pacing throughout | Uses pacing skillfully to compel the reader through the piece and enhance its power |
| **E. Purpose/ text structure** | Leaves the reader struggling to find purpose because of missing text | Has loose text structure that leaves reader unclear or confused about purpose | Uses text structure that reflects purpose in places, but distracts in others | Has text structure that works to communicate purpose but may not enhance understanding | Includes text structure that supports and clarifies purpose for the reader | Uses text structure that flows so smoothly reader hardly notices; uses structure that enhances understanding of purpose |
| **F. Title (optional)** | Has no title or a misleading one | Has a title that doesn't match content well | Includes a title that is formulaic or nondescriptive | Creates a title that connects to the central theme | Uses a title that reflects content in an unusual or interesting way | Draws the reader in with a title that is original and captures deeper meaning |

# Traits Rubric for Voice: Grades 3–12

**Key question:**
**Does the reader clearly hear this writer speaking in the piece?**

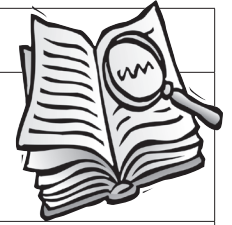| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1 Beginning** | **2 Emerging** | **3 Developing** | **4 Capable** | **5 Experienced** | **6 Exceptional** |
| | Appears the author is indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic, purpose, and/or audience | Relies on simplistic phrases such as "I like it" or "It was fun" to convey any personal quality | Has an emerging voice that is not distinct or unique; gives the reader an incomplete impression of the author's relationship to the purpose and topic | Portrays the author as sincere, yet not fully engaged or involved; offers a pleasant or even personable voice, though reader is not completely convinced of the author's commitment to the topic | Addresses topic, purpose, and audience in a sincere and engaging way that convinces the reader of the author's commitment to the topic | Addresses the reader in an individual and engaging way that shows ownership of purpose and topic; is respectful of audience and/or purpose |
| **A. Engagement with reader** | Disengages reader with flat writing; has no content that interacts with the reader in any way | Follows a predictable approach with nothing fresh to engage the reader | Seems aware of the reader, yet writing avoids original insights, preferring safe generalities | Begins to reach audience and has moments of successful interaction | Communicates with reader in an earnest, pleasing, authentic manner | Interacts with and engages the reader in ways that reveal the author's own personality, making unique choices to reach the audience |
| **B. Individual expression** | Reveals virtually nothing specific about the author, making this a piece that anyone could have written | Offers glimpses of original thinking but is mostly flat, revealing little of the author's perspective | Surprises the reader with occasional "aha" moments but shows minimal risk-taking | Surprises, delights, or moves reader in more than one or two places | Has moments of insight and risk-taking that strengthen the piece | Reveals individual thinking in a committed, distinctive manner that helps the reader "hear" this author |
| **C. Tone** | Has no evident tone | Has a tone that does not support the purpose | Conveys a flat, disinterested tone | Includes tone that begins to support and enrich the writing and clarify the message | Uses tone that supports the message and purpose most of the time | Employs tone that gives flavor and texture to message and is appropriate to both the author and purpose |

# Traits Rubric for Voice: Grades 3-12

## Key question:
## Does the reader clearly hear this writer speaking in the piece?

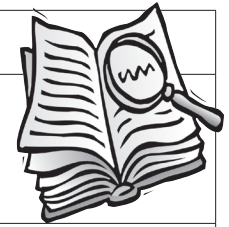| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1 Beginning** | **2 Emerging** | **3 Developing** | **4 Capable** | **5 Experienced** | **6 Exceptional** |
| **D. Commitment** | Has no commitment to topic; contains lifeless writing | Has minimal commitment to topic; does not help the reader feel anything or understand topic better | Shows an emerging commitment to the topic, though the reader is not convinced that the author cares about topic | Presents a commitment to the topic; author's point of view emerges in places but may periodically lapse into vague generalities, detracting from impact | Has a clear and focused commitment to the topic; author's enthusiasm is catching | Conveys a strong commitment to topic; author's passion is clear and compelling, prompting the reader to want to know more |
| **E. Fit with audience/purpose** | Has no discernible voice | Uses voice that does not support or is inappropriate for the purpose (e.g., sarcasm, incongruous humor)<br><br>Narrative is lifeless; I/E or A/O writing lacks conviction or authority to set it apart from a mere list of facts | Has a voice that is starting to support purpose, though it remains mostly weak; may have an inconsistent point of view | Includes a voice that supports purpose but frequently lacks spark; has consistent point of view<br><br>Narrative is sincere; I/E or A/O writing establishes credibility at moments but not consistently | Uses a voice that supports author's purpose and a point of view that enhances the piece<br><br>Narrative entertains or engages reader; I/E or A/O writing reveals why author cares about the topic and chose these ideas | Has a voice that enhances purpose and is engaging, passionate, enthusiastic, and at times creative; has a distinct point of view that clarifies meaning of the piece |

# Traits Rubric for Word Choice: Grades 3–12

**Key question:**
**Does the author's choice of words convey precise and compelling meaning and/or create a vivid picture for the reader?**

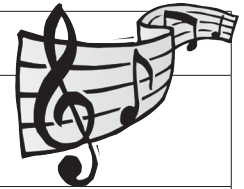| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1 Beginning** | **2 Emerging** | **3 Developing** | **4 Capable** | **5 Experienced** | **6 Exceptional** |
| | Uses limited vocabulary; attempts to use words to convey meaning are unsuccessful | Has flawed or simplistic vocabulary, resulting in impaired meaning; reader has difficulty understanding the message | Has vocabulary that is understandable yet lacks energy and imagination; some interpretation may be needed to understand parts of the piece | Uses vocabulary that is functional and achieves purpose, with some imagery and/or unique word choices; author's meaning is easy to understand and fits audience and text type | Incorporates precise and appropriate vocabulary; uses imagery and/or figurative language; features writing appropriate to audience, purpose, and text type | Creates vivid imagery, with powerful and engaging vocabulary; uses precise words and/or figurative language to enhance meaning in interesting, natural ways |
| **A. Word meaning** | Uses vocabulary that is so broad, generic, and/or inaccurate, it fails to communicate a message | Uses vocabulary that is so vague and mundane that the message is limited and unclear (e.g., "good," "bad," "nice") | Employs vocabulary that is correct in a general sense; includes message that is emerging or can be inferred; uses limited or inaccurate domain-specific vocabulary | Features vocabulary that works to clarify meaning/purpose and begins to shape a unique piece; has message that's easy to identify; uses accurate domain-specific vocabulary | Has vocabulary that suits purpose well and clearly communicates message; uses domain-specific vocabulary appropriately to demonstrate author's understanding | Features precise, accurate vocabulary, chosen to enhance purpose and meaning; has author's message that's easy to understand; uses domain-specific vocabulary professionally |
| **B. Word quality** | Has vague vocabulary so words convey no clear message | Uses confusing or misleading vocabulary and includes incorrect usage of even simple words; creates no images | Includes very basic vocabulary; uses words that tend to "tell" not "show"; has few images | Features vocabulary comprising familiar words and phrases that communicate clearly but only show a moment or two of sparkle or imagery | Has strong vocabulary that makes it easy to "see" what the author is trying to convey; employs vivid and/or figurative language | Uses striking, powerful, and engaging vocabulary that captures reader's imagination and lingers in the mind; enhances recall of significant phrases or mental images |

# Traits Rubric for Word Choice: Grades 3–12

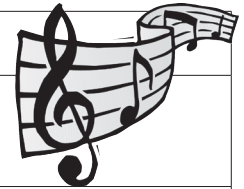| | Key question: Does the author's choice of words convey precise and compelling meaning and/or create a vivid picture for the reader? | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Not proficient** | | | **Proficient** | | |
| | **1 Beginning** | **2 Emerging** | **3 Developing** | **4 Capable** | **5 Experienced** | **6 Exceptional** |
| **C. Word usage** | Uses words incorrectly, making message unclear; distracts reader with errors and frequently uses slang and/or texting language that are inappropriate | Uses words that are inappropriate (i.e., either too plain or so exaggerated that they impede understanding); includes slang and/or texting language that do not suit purpose | Chooses words that are functional but limited, conveying only a basic message; occasionally includes slang and/or texting language that are inappropriate | Demonstrates willingness to stretch and grow with attempts at creative word choice; shows mastery of appropriate vocabulary for message, purpose, and audience | Frequently chooses creative, precise words to clarify and enhance meaning | Uses words that are natural, original, and suited to purpose and audience; features effective word choice that enriches the author's message |
| **D. Grammar** | Misuses parts of speech frequently, confusing reader and clouding the message | Has limited variety in parts of speech; uses jargon or clichés that detract from the message | Includes mechanical parts of speech that reflect a lack of craftsmanship; relies on passive verbs, overused nouns, and lack of modifiers that limit the message and make the piece uninteresting | Uses accurate and occasionally refined parts of speech that are functional and start to shape the message | Carefully chooses correct and varied parts of speech to effectively communicate message and clarify and enrich writing | Crafts parts of speech to best convey message; has lively verbs that energize the piece and precise nouns/modifiers that add depth, color, and specificity |

# Traits Rubric for Sentence Fluency: Grades 3–12

## Key question:
## Does the author control sentences so the piece flows smoothly when read aloud?

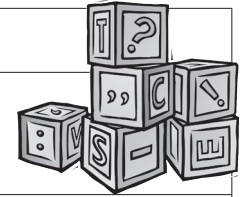| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | **1 Beginning** | **2 Emerging** | **3 Developing** | **4 Capable** | **5 Experienced** | **6 Exceptional** |
| | **Structures sentences incorrectly so reader has to reread piece several times and still has difficulty reading aloud without pausing or substituting phrases** | **Varies sentences very little; uses even simple sentence structure incorrectly in places, causing reader to stumble when reading aloud** | **Has sentences that are technically correct but not varied, creating sing-song patterns or lulling the reader to sleep; sounds mechanical when read aloud** | **Has varied sentences that flow smoothly; tends to be pleasant or businesslike, though may still be mechanical in places; is easy to read aloud** | **Incorporates some sentences that are rhythmic and flowing, using a variety of correctly structured sentence types; flows well when read aloud** | **Uses sentences that flow, have rhythm and cadence, and are well built, with strong, varied structures that invite expressive oral reading** |
| **A. Sentence structure** | Has choppy sentence structure that is incomplete, run-on, rambling, or awkward; determining where sentences begin and end is nearly impossible | Uses sentence structure that often works, but may be overly simplistic for the purpose | Uses technically correct sentence structure, yet sentences are frequently not smooth | Uses sentence structure that is correct and smooth, but mechanical in places; sentences hang together and are structurally sound | Has sentence structure that flows well and moves reader fluidly through the piece | Uses strong sentence structure, underscoring and enhancing meaning while engaging and moving the reader fluidly from beginning to end |
| **B. Sentence sense and rhythm** | Has no apparent sentence sense, making it nearly impossible to determine where sentences begin and end; has choppy rhythm; piece cannot be read aloud without author's help, even with practice | Shows little evidence of sentence sense; requires reader to reconstruct sentences to make them flow correctly; does not invite expressive oral reading | Uses inconsistent sentence sense; enables reader to read aloud after a few rereadings | Has evident sentence sense; rhythm is present; most sentences lend themselves to oral reading | Conveys sentence sense that is strong, with frequent rhythmic patterns; uses construction and variety to enhance flow; employs dialogue or fragments effectively; reader can read aloud easily | Has strong sentence sense with rhythm and cadence; has structure that contributes to meaning; may use dialogue that sounds natural and fragments that add style; reading aloud is expressive and pleasurable |

# Traits Rubric for Sentence Fluency: Grades 3–12

## Key question:
## Does the author control sentences so the piece flows smoothly when read aloud?

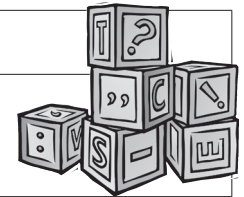| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 Beginning | 2 Emerging | 3 Developing | 4 Capable | 5 Experienced | 6 Exceptional |
| **C. Sentence variety** | Has incomplete sentences that make it hard to determine quality of beginnings or identify type of sentence | Uses simple sentences (i.e., subject-verb-object) that mostly begin the same way and are monotonous | Includes sentence beginnings that sometimes vary, but in a predictable way; limits almost all sentences to simple and compound types | Varies sentence beginnings yet many are routine or generic; includes simple, compound, and a few complex sentence types | Has varied and frequently unique sentence beginnings; uses a variety of sentence types (e.g., simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex) to create balance | Adds interest and energy with varied sentence beginnings; uses a variety of sentence types that appear chosen to enhance meaning and flow |
| **D. Connecting sentences** | Has weak or no transitions that create a jumble of choppy language and/or run-on sentences; uses sentences that muddle the sound of the piece | Incorporates basic transitions (e.g., and, so, but, then, because) that do little to lead the reader through the piece; if used, transitions seem randomly applied | Leads reader from sentence to sentence with a few, simple transitional words or phrases, though coherence remains limited | Holds piece together with varied transitional words or phrases (e.g., either, therefore, although) | Moves reader easily through the piece with thoughtful and varied transitional words or phrases | Uses creative, appropriate, and varied transitional words or phrases that show how each idea relates to the previous one and tie the piece together |

# Traits Rubric for Conventions: Grades 3–12

**Key question: How much editing is required before the piece can be shared as a final product?**
(Note: For the trait of conventions, grade level matters. Expectations should be based on grade level and include only skills that have been taught.)

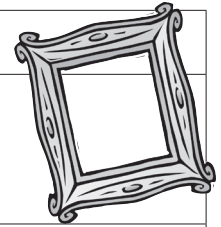| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1 Beginning** | **2 Emerging** | **3 Developing** | **4 Capable** | **5 Experienced** | **6 Exceptional** |
| | **Contains errors in conventions that distract the reader, making text unreadable** | **Has many types of convention errors scattered throughout text** | **Handles conventions well at times but, at others, makes errors that distract the reader and impair readability; displays a lack of skill with particular convention(s) through repeated mistakes** | **Applies standard grade-level conventions accurately on most occasions** | **Shows few errors with only minor editing needed to publish; may stretch, trying more complex tasks in conventions** | **Uses conventions effortlessly without significant errors; may use conventions to creatively enhance message** |
| **A. Spelling** | Has frequent spelling errors, even with common words | Uses phonetic spelling with many errors | Frequently spells simple words incorrectly, although reader can still understand the meaning | Usually uses correct or reasonably phonetic spelling for common grade-level words; may be inaccurate with more difficult words | Correctly spells most common grade-level words and often more difficult words | Has mostly correct spelling, even for more difficult words; includes occasional errors that do not detract from overall quality |
| **B. Punctuation** | Uses missing or incorrect punctuation nearly all the time | May have punctuation present but it is usually incorrect | Features simple end punctuation (e.g., period, question mark, exclamation point) that is correct, but internal punctuation (e.g., comma, apostrophe, semicolon) is often missing or wrong | Uses correct end punctuation with only minor errors; contains internal punctuation that is usually correct | Has punctuation that is almost always correct and guides reader through the piece | Includes correct punctuation that enhances readability; may use creative punctuation when appropriate |
| **C. Capitalization** | Has capitalization that is random, inconsistent, and sometimes nonexistent | Applies only the most basic capitalization rules correctly | Has capitalization that shows frequent errors except for proper nouns and sentence beginnings | Uses correct capitalization in most cases | Includes correct capitalization consistently | Includes correct capitalization consistently and may employ more sophisticated capitalization for effect |

# Traits Rubric for Conventions: Grades 3–12

**Key question: How much editing is required before the piece can be shared as a final product?**
(Note: For the trait of conventions, grade level matters. Expectations should be based on grade level and include only skills that have been taught.)

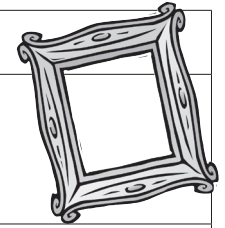| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1 Beginning** | **2 Emerging** | **3 Developing** | **4 Capable** | **5 Experienced** | **6 Exceptional** |
| **D. Grammar/usage** | Frequently includes noticeable errors in grammar/usage, making writing incomprehensible | Has serious grammar/ usage problems of many types that make comprehension difficult | Relies heavily on conversational oral language that results in inappropriate grammar/ usage; errors sometimes distract the reader | Employs proper grammar/usage fairly consistently; problems are not serious enough to distort meaning or distract the reader | Includes correct grammar/usage; shows few grammar mistakes and has meaning that is clear | Uses correct grammar that contributes to clarity and style; enhances meaning by sophisticated grammar/ usage |
| **E. Editing needed** | Requires extensive editing (i.e., on virtually every line) for meaning and publication; reader must read once to decode, then again for meaning | Requires much editing, making publication a time-consuming challenge; meaning is often unclear | Still needs too much editing to publish without multiple redrafts, although meaning begins to emerge | Needs moderate editing to publish; has clear meaning | Requires only some minor editing before publishing; has conventions that are more often correct than not; easily communicates meaning | Needs almost no editing to publish; author may successfully manipulate conventions for stylistic effect |
| **F. Bibliography (optional)** | Does not cite works or basic bibliographic information; if included, is unrecognizable | Attempts to cite works and include basic bibliographic information, but these are variable or random | Uses citations and basic bibliographic information inconsistently and/or incompletely in placement and format | Usually cites works and uses basic bibliographic information in correct format | Almost always cites works and uses basic bibliographic information in correct format | Consistently uses correct format to cite works and includes basic bibliographic information with only minor errors |

# Traits Rubric for Presentation: Grades 3–12

**Key question:**
**Is the finished piece easy to read, polished in presentation, and pleasing to the eye?**

| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1 Beginning** | **2 Emerging** | **3 Developing** | **4 Capable** | **5 Experienced** | **6 Exceptional** |
| | **Uses presentation or formatting that makes text unreadable or confusing** | **Often uses presentation or formatting that makes text confusing** | **Has uneven presentation or formatting that makes text sometimes difficult to read or understand; piece lacks a finished appearance** | **Uses presentation or formatting that supports a clear message; piece appears finished and sufficiently polished** | **Creates presentation or formatting that makes text generally easy to read with a pleasing appearance that enhances understanding** | **Has professional–looking presentation or formatting; makes choices to enhance meaning** |
| **A. Font style/size** | Includes many font styles/sizes that make piece unreadable or are completely inappropriate for the purpose | Uses multiple font styles/sizes that make piece hard to read or understand | Has font styles/sizes that are inconsistent or poorly chosen in places, creating an obstacle to reading or understanding | Uses font styles/sizes consistently so piece is easy to read and understand | Has font styles/sizes that are consistent and appropriately chosen, supporting understanding and readability | Selects font styles/sizes that enhance readability and support the meaning of the text; chooses font styles intentionally to match the purpose of the text |
| **B. White space** | Does not consider white space, so use is random and confusing; makes it difficult to identify beginning and ending text | Shows emerging use of white space, though piece seems arbitrarily placed on paper with few intentional margins or boundaries | Uses white space to frame and balance piece but is inconsistent; has margins, though some text may crowd edges, and uses uneven indenting | Uses white space to frame text by creating reasonable margins; consistently indents or blocks paragraphs | Features white space that helps reader focus on text; uses margins to frame piece and other white space to set off graphics and text features; indents or blocks paragraphs | Uses white space to optimally frame and balance text with graphics and text features; indents or blocks paragraphs; may include creative use of space to highlight important details |
| **C. Text features (optional)** | Has no text features | Attempts to include text features but they don't appear to have a purpose, so are mostly inappropriate and ineffective | Uses text features that are frequently ineffective for organizing or clarifying the piece | Includes text features (e.g., titles, bullets, page numbers, subheads) that usually organize and clarify ideas | Incorporates text features that serve to integrate ideas, articulate meaning of piece, and make it easier to read | Uses text features that help reader extend meaning of piece and develop more complete understanding |

# Traits Rubric for Presentation: Grades 3–12

**Key question:**
**Is the finished piece easy to read, polished in presentation, and pleasing to the eye?**

| | Not proficient | | | Proficient | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1 Beginning** | **2 Emerging** | **3 Developing** | **4 Capable** | **5 Experienced** | **6 Exceptional** |
| **D. Visuals and graphics (optional)** | Uses visuals/ graphics that are incomprehensible and/ or unrelated to text | Chooses visuals/ graphics that are only topically related to the text and don't enhance understanding | Uses visuals/graphics that match and support text in some instances, with effort on the reader's part | Includes visuals/graphics that support text | Features visuals/graphics that support and consistently clarify text through placement and description | Creates visuals/graphics that help enrich and extend meaning and are integrated to enhance understanding of the text |
| **E. Handwriting (optional)** | Forms handwritten letters inconsistently or incorrectly, making piece unreadable; uses spacing of letters and words that is unbalanced or absent so the piece is mostly illegible | Uses irregular letter shape and form so handwritten letters and words are often unreadable; includes spacing that is often inconsistent, further complicating readability | Has handwriting that occasionally impairs readability; uses inconsistent spacing in places | Uses correct and readable handwriting; has spacing of letters and words that is generally consistent | Features neat and readable handwriting; has uniform spacing between letters and words | Shows handwriting that is pleasing to the eye; uses uniform spacing and lettering |