Middle School Scoring Rubrics (2017)

# Composing/Written Expression

## Score Point 4 (2017):

The writer demonstrates consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control\* of the Composing/Written Expression domain’s features. The writing at this score point level:

* Demonstrates clear, consistent focus on a central idea or thesis that indicates a well-defined position or purpose, with clear awareness of the intended audience.
* Elaborates the central idea fully and consistently by providing deliberate, coherent information, details, and evidence that support the purpose and intended audience.
* Contains an effective introduction and follows a clear and logical organizational plan that consistently clarifies the relationship of one idea or event to another.
* Exhibits consistent unity by having few if any digressions, using effective transitions that connect ideas within and across paragraphs, and maintaining a consistent point of view.
* Provides an effective conclusion, which enhances the message, advocates a position, or offers a solution when appropriate.
* Includes purposeful sentence variety and appropriately subordinates ideas and/or embeds modifiers to create a rhythmic flow throughout the piece.
* Uses highly specific word choice, descriptive and/or figurative language, and selected information to create purposeful tone and enhance the writer’s voice.

## Score Point 3 (2017):

The writer demonstrates reasonable, but not consistent, control of the Composing/Written Expression domain’s features. The writer may control some features of the domain more than other features. The writing at this score point level:

* Demonstrates reasonable focus on a central idea or thesis, with awareness of the intended audience.
* Provides reasonable elaboration on the central idea, though some thinness or unevenness in elaboration may occur.
* Contains an introduction and evidence of an organizational plan that clarifies the relationship of one idea or event to another, although some lapses in organization may occur.
* Exhibits reasonable unity through purposeful use of some transitions, though minor digressions or shifts in point of view may be present.
* Provides a reasonable conclusion, which conveys a message, advocates a position, or offers a solution when appropriate.
* Includes sentences of various lengths and structures, though at times, a lack of complex sentences disrupts a rhythmic flow.
* Uses specific word choice, descriptive and/or figurative language, and selected information to create tone and voice, though some general statements or vague words are present.

## Score Point 2 (2017):

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control of several of the Composing/Written Expression domain’s features, indicating significant weakness. The writing at this score point level:

* Demonstrates inconsistent focus on a central idea or thesis, with limited awareness of the intended audience.
* Provides inconsistent elaboration on the central idea by listing general, underdeveloped .statements.
* Provides little introduction and organizes ideas inconsistently, with limited evidence of the relationship between ideas.
* Exhibits little unity due to the inconsistent use of transitions to connect ideas, major digressions, competing central ideas, and occasional shifts in point of view.
* Provides a limited or abrupt conclusion that lacks a clear message.
* Contains little variety in sentence lengths and structures, resulting in a lack of rhythmic flow.
* Contains mostly imprecise, bland language, though some specificity of word choice may allow the writer’s voice or tone to begin to emerge.

## Score Point 1 (2017):

The writer demonstrates little or no control of most of the Composing/Written Expression domain’s features. The writing at this score point level:

* Has little or no focus on a central idea or thesis and little or no awareness of the intended audience.
* Has little or no purposeful elaboration.
* Provides no introduction and has little or no organizational plan, failing to develop relationships between ideas.
* Demonstrates little or no unity due to major digressions, shifts in point of view, and a lack of transitions connecting ideas.
* Lacks a conclusion, with little to no evidence of a purpose or message.
* Lacks sentence variety, creating a monotonous flow.
* Uses general, vague, and/or repetitious vocabulary with little or no selected information, failing to create tone or to develop the writer’s voice.

# Usage/Mechanics

## Score Point 4 (2017):

The writer demonstrates consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of the Usage and Mechanics domain’s features. The writing at this score point level:

* Exhibits consistent control of complex sentence formation, avoiding sentence fragments and run-on sentences.
* Exhibits consistent control of usage, including subject/verb agreement, pronoun agreement, verb tenses, and parallel structure.
* Exhibits consistent control of mechanics, including punctuation, capitalization, formatting, and spelling.

## Score Point 3 (2017):

The writer demonstrates reasonable, though not necessarily consistent, control of the Usage and Mechanics domain’s features. The writer exhibits control that outweighs occasional errors present in the paper. The writing at this score point level:

* Exhibits reasonable control of sentence formation, avoiding sentence fragments and run-on sentences.
* Exhibits reasonable control of usage, including subject/verb agreement, pronoun agreement, verb tenses, and parallel structure.
* Exhibits reasonable control of mechanics, including punctuation, capitalization, formatting, and spelling.

## Score Point 2 (2017):

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control of several of the Usage and Mechanics domain’s features. Evidence of the writer’s knowledge of the domain appears alongside frequent errors. The density and variety of errors outweigh the control present in the paper. The writing at this score point level:

* Exhibits inconsistent control of sentence formation, including occasional sentence fragments and run-on sentences.
* Exhibits inconsistent control of usage, including subject/verb agreement, pronoun agreement, verb tenses, and parallel structure.
* Exhibits inconsistent control of mechanics, including punctuation, capitalization, formatting, and spelling.

## Score Point 1 (2017):

The writer demonstrates little or no control of most of the Usage and Mechanics domain’s features. Frequent and severe errors in usage and mechanics distract the reader and make the writing hard to understand. Even when meaning is not significantly affected, the density and variety of errors overwhelm the performance and keep it from meeting minimum standards of competence. The writing at this score point level:

* Exhibits little or no control of sentence formation, including sentence fragments and run-on sentences.
* Exhibits little or no control of usage, including subject/verb agreement, pronoun agreement, verb tenses, and parallel structure.
* Exhibits little or no control of mechanics, including punctuation, capitalization, formatting, and spelling.

\* Control is the ability to use a given feature of written language effectively at the appropriate grade level. A paper receives a higher score to the extent that it demonstrates increasing control of the features in each domain.