

# Analytic Writing Assessment

Analytic scoring is based on the premise that it is possible to define the components of good writing and that a piece of writing may be excellent in one respect while revealing significant weaknesses in others. For example, a paper may be mechanically sound with exceptional vocabulary but weak in the areas of ideas and organization.

Analytic scoring involves isolating and defining the characteristics of writing and then scoring these characteristics individually. This approach is appropriate when measuring the students' abilities to deal with the individual components of writing: ideas and content, organization, voice and tone, word choice, sentence structure, and writing conventions (punctuation, etc.). The results of the writing assessment offer students specific information about their strengths and weaknesses and provide instructors with specific, comprehensive guidelines for instruction.

A scoring rubric (guideline) is used to analyze each student's paper based on the following six traits: ideas and content, organization, voice/tone, word choice, sentence structure, and writing conventions.

**Ideas and Content:** The degree to which the paper clarifies its purpose and conveys ideas that hold the reader's attention.

**Organization:** The degree to which the writer develops the central idea or theme and organizes the material to enhance the reader's understanding of the topic.

**Voice/Tone:** The degree to which the writer seems sincere, candid, and committed to the topic; that is, the style in which the writer speaks to the reader.

**Word Choice:** The degree to which the writer selects interesting and precise words to convey the intended message.

**Sentence Structure:** The degree to which the writer uses strong and varied sentence structure.

**Writing Conventions:** The degree to which the writer uses correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, and paragraphing.

Two raters score each paper independently. A score may range from 1 to 5. The two scores are averaged, and the result is the paper's final score. The mean score is 2.5.

The composite score is an average of the component scores.