**Sumer Essay Scoring Guide**

**IDEAS AND CONTENT: Communicating knowledge of the topic, including relevant examples, facts, anecdotes and details**

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| **6/5**  The writing is clear, focused, and interesting. Main ideas stand out and are developed by supporting details. The claim is strong, as is its connection with all the evidence. The writing has   * A clear focus and control * Main ideas that stand out * Details that are on topic and carefully selected * An appropriate amount of details to support a thorough exploration of the topic * Main ideas and selected details that fit the purpose and hold the reader’s attention | **4**  The writing is clear and focused. The reader can easily understand the main ideas. A claim is present and support is present but may be limited or somewhat general. The writing has   * A clear focus and main idea * Details that are on topic with support * Details may sometimes be too many or too few * Main ideas and selected details that fits the purpose | **3**  The writing has main idea (Claim) but they may be too broad or simplistic. Supporting evidence is often too limited, or sometimes off the topic. The writing has:   * A focus that is easy to find * Main ideas that are easy to find but overly obvious or predictable * main points or conclusions repeat ideas often heard | **2/1**  The writing has some main idea(s) but they are undeveloped. Evidence is limited.The writing has   * An unclear focus that requires the reader to guess the main ideas * Lacking details, but when included, are not well connected * Details are sometimes repeated |

**ORGANIZATION: Structuring information in logical sequence, making connections and transitions among ideas, sentence and paragraphs**

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| **6/5**  The organization helps clarify the central idea(s) and supporting details. The order and structure of the 9 paragraphs are strong. The writing has   * Ideas, details, and examples in an order that makes sense and is easy to follow * An inviting beginning that draws the reader in and an ending that concludes the writing * Smooth transitions that tie together ideas, sentences, and paragraphs. The reader can move easily from one part to the next | **4**  The organization is clear and meets the purpose of the assignment. Order and structure or the 9 paragraphs are present, but may seem predictable. The writing has   * A beginning that is recognizable but may not be especially inviting * A developed ending that is functional but may seem repetitive * Transitions that work but they may seem awkward or common * A body that is easy to follow with appropriate details | **3**  An attempt to organize the writing has been made, but it doesn’t work well in places or is too obvious. The writing has   * Attempts to put ideas in order, but the order is sometimes unclear * A beginning and an ending, but they are either too short or too obvious (e.g., “My topic is...” “Today I will...” “To conclude...”) * A limited number of transitional words that are used too many times. (e.g., “and,” “then,” “but,” “so,”) | **2/1**  The writing lacks a clear structure. An attempt at organizing is made, but the writing is difficult to follow. The writing may seem incomplete. The writing has   * Some attempts to organize ideas, but the order does not make the meaning clear * A missing or extremely underdeveloped beginning body or ending * Few or no transitions |

**VOICE: Expressing ideas in an engaging and credible way for audience and purpose**

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| **6/5**  The writer has chosen an appropriate voice for the topic and purpose and audience and shows with the topic. The writing is interesting. The writing has   * A strong sense of purpose * Voice is appropriate to assignment * Voice is effective | **4**  A voice is present, and there is a sense of investment with the topic. In places the writing is interesting. The writing has   * A sense of purpose of the assignment * Voice may be too casual or formal | **3**  The writer doesn’t seem particularly involved with the topic or may seem either too personal or too impersonal. The writing has   * A voice that doesn’t seem to match the topic, purpose or audience * A limited sense that the paper was written for a particular audience * Writing isn't clearly written for a particular audience * Voice is inconsistent | **2/1**  The writing provides little sense of investment or evidence of appropriate voice. The writing has   * Little or no sense that the writer cares about the topic * The writing is largely flat, lifeless, or stiff * Little to no awareness of matching the topic a, purpose or audience * A voice that is formal or overly personal |

**WORD CHOICE: Selecting functional, precise and descriptive words appropriate for purpose**

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| **6/5**  Words communicate the intended message in an interesting, accurate and natural way. The writer uses a broad range of words that have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed. The writing has  .   * Word choices that make the writing more interesting and lively * If slang is used it is for reason and works well * Appropriate vocabulary that may have variety and get noticed * Words that create clear pictures * Metaphors or similes if used are effective | **4**  Words communicate the intended message. The writer uses a variety of words that work and appropriate for the topic and purpose. The writing has   * Words that work and may make the writing more interesting and lively * Slang if used should match the purpose and seem effective * Some attempts at colorful language * Generally avoids cliches | **3**  Language is ordinary. The writer does not use a variety of words. Words may be too technical. The writing has   * Words that work, but are rarely interesting. * Expression that seems ordinary and general * Attempts at colorful language that do not fit * Too many cliches or overused expressions | **2/1**  The language is monotonous and or misused, taking away from the meaning and impact. The writing has   * Words that are flat or not specific enough * Words or expressions that are overused * Descriptions that don't work because they are not clear |

**SENTENCE FLUENCY: Developing the flow and rhythm of sentences**

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| **6/5**  The writing has a smooth, natural flow. Sentences make the piece easy and interesting to read aloud. Smooth transitions are used in all appropriate body paragraphs The writing has   * Sentences glide along one into the next * A variety of sentence lengths, patterns, and beginnings make the writing interesting * Control over sentence structure * Natural sounding dialogue if dialogue is used at all | **4**  The writing flows, however, it might be less than fluid. Transitions are used for most body paragraphs. Sentences are somewhat varied, making oral reading easy. The writing has   * A natural sounding flow * The reader can move easily through the piece * Some repetition in sentence structure * Strong control over simple sentences * Dialogue, if used, usually sounds natural | **3**  The writing tends to be choppy rather than smooth. Sometimes awkward writing forces the reader to slow down and reread. Transitions are used but not used enough for the overall flow.The writing has   * Some passages that are easy to read aloud and some that are choppy. * Some repetition in sentence lengths, patterns, and beginnings * Simple sentences used correctly, but more complex sentences may have problems * Dialogue may sound unnatural | **2/1**  The writing tends to be choppy or rambling. Transitions are not used. Awkward writing often forces the reader to slow down or reread.   * Large portions of the text that are difficult to follow or read aloud * Sentence patterns that are repetitive * A large number of choppy, awkward, or rambling sentence structures |

**CONVENTIONS: Demonstrating knowledge of spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, usage, paragraphing**

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| **6/5**  The writing demonstrate strong control of standard conventions which effectively contribute to the writing. Errors are so few and so minor that they do not distract the reader. The writing has     * Correct grammar and usage * Appropriate paragraphing and structure * Effective use of punctuation * Correct spelling, even of difficult words * Few capitalization errors * Skill in using a wide variety of conventions such as semi-colons, apostrophes, or colons * Little need for editing | **4**  The writing demonstrates skillful use of standard conventions. Minor errors are distracting but not confusing. The writing has:   * Correct end-of-sentence punctuation; very few instances of confusion with commas, semicolons, apostrophes, or colons * Common or key words spelled correctly * Paragraph breaks that are logically placed * Correct capitalization; errors, if any, are rare * Occasionally incorrect grammar and usage; problems do not confuse or change the meaning * A need for some editing | **3**  The writing shows a limited control of standard conventions. Errors begin to interfere with readability.The writing has   * Errors in grammar, usage, and capitalization that do not block the meaning but do distract the reader * Paragraphs sometimes run together or begin at ineffective points * End-of-sentence punctuation that is usually correct, but internal punctuation contains frequent errors * Errors that distract the reader; misspelling of common words sometimes occurs * A significant need for editing | **2/1**  The writing shows limited understanding of standard conventions. Errors often distract and confuse the reader, requiring the reader to reread passages. The writing has   * Many places where punctuation is left out or incorrect. * Frequent spelling errors * Random paragraph breaks or none at all * Many capitalization errors including sentence beginnings and names * Errors in grammar and usage that confuse the reader or change the meaning * A need for major editing |