

## 6 Trait Student Informational Writing Guide

Ideas	Organization
<p><b>6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— I have a clear, focused thesis -- I have a vision!!!!</li> <li>— I know this topic like an insider and it shows.</li> <li>— I give my reader clear, accurate, insightful information.</li> <li>— I pull info. from <i>gobs</i> of sources (prior knowledge, sources).</li> <li>— Strong support makes everything I say convincing.</li> </ul> <p><b>5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— My thesis is clear.</li> <li>— I accurately respond to the prompt.</li> <li>— I give the reader useful information.</li> <li>— I pulled info from my prior knowledge and a handful of sources.</li> <li>— Good evidence makes my main points believable.</li> </ul> <p><b>4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— You can tell what my thesis is, even if I don't state it.</li> <li>— I acceptably respond to the prompt.</li> <li>— I give my reader a good overview of this topic.</li> <li>— I pulled information from prior knowledge and some sources.</li> <li>— I have some support for my thesis -- I'm not sure if it's enough.</li> </ul> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p><b>3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— I think you can figure out my thesis or main point.</li> <li>— I don't know enough to feel comfortable with this topic; most of what I say is simply common knowledge.</li> <li>— I pulled information from prior knowledge and a couple of sources.</li> <li>— My support is sketchy -- it could leave you skeptical!</li> </ul> <p><b>2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— My thesis is still coming together.</li> <li>— There are BIG gaps in what I know about this topic, and my ideas are undeveloped, OR my assertions/claims are not supported.</li> </ul> <p><b>1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— I don't have a thesis or main point.</li> <li>— I don't really know anything about this topic -- yet.</li> </ul>	<p><b>6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— My organization/structure will guide you like a light in the dark.</li> <li>— My lead sets up the discussion -- and invites you to be part of it.</li> <li>— My ending helps you draw important conclusions.</li> <li>— This piece is organized to make learning about this topic easy.</li> <li>— I show connections you might not even think of if I did not bring them up.</li> </ul> <p><b>5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— My organization/structure will help you make sense of the topic.</li> <li>— My lead invites you into the discussion.</li> <li>— My ending brings the discussion to a close.</li> <li>— The organization makes my thoughts easy to follow.</li> <li>— I connect ideas to each other -- or to a big picture.</li> </ul> <p><b>4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— This design/structure works fine for this kind of writing.</li> <li>— My lead gets the discussion started.</li> <li>— The conclusion lets you know the conversation is over.</li> <li>— I don't think you'll ever feel lost.</li> <li>— The most important connections are clear.</li> </ul> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p><b>3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— You might need to work to stay on track.</li> <li>— I think my lead goes one way, my paper another.</li> <li>— Maybe I stopped too quickly, or repeated things I had already said.</li> <li>— You might need to reread to figure out what is most important.</li> <li>— I just followed a formula for transitions: <i>First, Second</i>, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— You might find yourself asking, "Where is this going?"</li> <li>— My lead is one everyone uses -- I'm not sure it fits.</li> <li>— My ending doesn't really wrap things up.</li> <li>— It's hard to follow this -- things come at the wrong time.</li> <li>— I didn't know how to connect ideas.</li> </ul> <p><b>1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— My writing is random. There is no real design to it.</li> <li>— I don't have a lead. I just started writing.</li> <li>— I have no conclusion. I just stopped with I ran out of things to say.</li> <li>— My writing jumps from point to point.</li> <li>— Nothing goes with anything else.</li> </ul>

**Sentence Fluency**

- 6**
- My sentences are clear, direct, and to the point.
  - You could read this very quickly and easily -- and not miss one important point.
  - My sentence beginnings make it easy to follow the flow of ideas.
  - My sentences show variety, but I avoided extremes of long and short.
- 5**
- My sentences are clear and direct.
  - The whole piece is very readable.
  - Sentence beginnings show how ideas connect.
  - I avoided sentences that were overly long or uncomfortable short.
- 4**
- Most sentences are clear and fairly easy to read.
  - There might be one or two spots I could smooth out.
  - I need better transitions and less repetition.
  - I could use more variety, but there's nothing too long or short.
- 
- 3**
- Most sentences come clear if you read carefully.
  - Some bumpy moments make it hard to read quickly.
  - My beginnings (of sentences) are repetitious. They don't really show connections either.
  - I have some long, gangly sentences. I have short sentences too.
- 2**
- When I read this aloud, it's a bumpy ride.
  - You'll need to slow down and pay attention.
  - Most of my sentences start the same way.
  - Most of my sentences are too long or too short.
- 1**
- This is very tough to get through, even for me.
  - You'll have to fix things as you go.
  - It's hard to tell where sentences begin and end.
  - Are these even sentences?

**Conventions**

- 6**
- Even a picky editor will have trouble finding an error.
  - I read this silently and aloud -- the conventions bring out the meaning and voice.
  - I cited all sources correctly and used the right format.
  - This is ready to publish.
- 5**
- I have some tiny errors -- you might not even notice!
  - I read this carefully. My conventions help show a reader how to read my text.
  - All sources are cited correctly.
  - This is ready to publish with only light touchups.
- 4**
- You might spot some errors, but the meaning is clear.
  - I proofed this text, but I need to look again.
  - My citations need a few small corrections.
  - Some light editing should do the trick.
- 
- 3**
- You will notice errors -- and they might slow you down.
  - I did not proof carefully -- and I missed too many things.
  - I need to recheck my citations carefully.
  - This needs thorough, careful editing.
- 2**
- Errors jump at you. They get in the way.
  - This does not look edited. I left all the work to the reader.
  - Some citations are missing, or they're not done right.
  - I have serious problems with layout (such as no margins or unreadable fonts).
  - I need to edit this line by line.
- 1**
- Errors make my copy hard to read.
  - Even patient readers might give up.
  - I forgot about citing sources.
  - I need to read this aloud word by word, pen in hand.

**Voice****6**

- My voice is professional and enthusiastic -- just right.
- I use my voice to welcome readers into the discussion.
- I feel confident that my message is important and interesting.
- I like this topic, and want you to like it too.
- I feel certain you will want to publish this on the class website.

**5**

- My voice is professional and sincere. It suits my topic and audience.
- The voice in this piece reaches out to readers.
- Knowing my topic helps me sound confident.
- I like this topic. You can hear that in my voice.
- You will most likely want to publish it on the class website.

**4**

- My voice is sincere and appropriate.
- You can hear me -- especially in some parts.
- I sound confident in those parts I'm sure about.
- I like this topic all right -- most of the time.
- There are definitely some moments you will want to publish on the class website.

**3**

- I think I need more voice -- or a different voice.
- My voice either fades away or takes over.
- If I knew this topic better, you'd hear more confidence.
- I have to work at sounding enthusiastic.
- It's not *quite* ready to share.

**2**

- I think I sound more like an encyclopedia than a person with a message.
- I couldn't get into it. My readers will hear that.
- It's hard to be confident when you don't know the topic.
- I think you'll need to work at paying attention. I did!
- This is *not* ready to publish on the website.

**1**

- It's the wrong voice -or it's just a whisper.
- I don't really care if anyone reads this.
- I don't know anything about this topic.
- I just wrote to get done.

**Word Choice****6**

- Every word or phrase is chosen to make the message clear for the reader.
- I felt comfortable with terms I needed and used them well.
- I defined or explained things so the reader could follow the discussion easily.
- You won't find any wordiness or jargon in my writing.
- I write to inform my readers, not overwhelm them.

**5**

- My word choice makes the message clear.
- I know the language that goes with the topic, and used it correctly.
- I defined any terms a reader might not know.
- You won't find much wordiness or jargon.
- My word choice should help a reader understand this topic.

**4**

- My words make sense. They get the job done.
- If I used technical/historical terms, I'm pretty sure they're correct.
- I think if I defined anything I needed to.
- Wordiness and jargon are not a real problem.
- I think a reader can make sense of this.

**3**

- You'll get the general idea!
- I tried to use terms correctly -- I didn't always know the right words for the moment.
- New Terms might not always be explained.
- Wordiness? Jargon? Could be a problem here and there.
- I think you can figure out what I mean if you try.

**2**

- Some of this is unclear now that I take another look.
- I couldn't seem to come up with the right words.
- I was too vague and general -- OR
- I just kept repeating myself...
- You'll have some work to do to make sense of this.

**1**

- This doesn't make sense, even to me.
- I think I used the wrong words -- it's confusing.
- The language is pretty vague, OR --
- It's just nonsense. I don't know what I wanted to say.
- It's anyone's guess what this means.

## Copy Editors' Symbols

e	Delete the material.	There are <del>six</del> <sup>2</sup> six traits.
(SP)	Spell it out.	I LOVE the <sup>SP</sup> 6 traits.
∩	Close the gap.	Organi <sup>∩</sup> zation is critical.
∩	Delete material and close the gap.	Barry Lane has a <sup>∩</sup> wry sense of humor.
stet.	Return to the original.	Never <del>ever</del> <sup>stet</sup> write without voice. Mem Fox has <sup>a powerful, original</sup> voice.
^	Insert a letter, word, or phrase.	He's a <sup>i</sup> slack writer.
^	Change a letter or letters.	The lead must <sup>be</sup> a grabber.
A	Make a space.	Gary Paulsen says, "Read <sup>like</sup> wolf eats."
U	Transpose letters or words.	Write with voice, <sup>spirit</sup> and detail.
^	Insert a comma.	Say what you think. <sup>∩</sup> Tell the truth <sup>∩</sup> .
⊙	Add a period.	Good conventions won't make up for lack of thought <sup>∩</sup> they cannot rescue voiceless writing.
^	Insert a semicolon.	Use these punctuation marks sparingly <sup>∩</sup> colons, parentheses and exclamation points.
:	Insert a colon.	Kate DiCamillo <sup>∩</sup> what a fine writer. <sup>∩</sup>
^m	Insert an em dash (like two hyphens).	Who stole my scoring guide <sup>∩</sup> ?
?	Add a question mark.	Garrison Keillor's <sup>∩</sup> essay on letter writing inspired me.
∩	Insert an apostrophe.	Novelist <sup>∩</sup> poet Maya Angelou rocks the room when she reads.
=	Insert a hyphen.	Roald <sup>∩</sup> dahl never shrinks from reality—even if it's ugly.
≡	Change lower case to capital.	The <sup>∩</sup> ruth lies in the <sup>∩</sup> etails.
/	Change capital to lower case.	"What can one exclamation point tell us?" queried Watson. <sup>∩</sup> "You'd be surprised," retorted Holmes.
¶	Start a new paragraph.	<i>Lonesome Dove</i> is a long book. <sup>∩</sup> <sup>∩</sup> Of course, <i>Moby-Dick</i> is long, too, but not everyone finishes <i>Moby-Dick</i> .
2 No¶	Run lines together. No new paragraph.	<sup>∩</sup> I try to leave out the parts people skip, <sup>∩</sup> said Elmore Leonard.
" "	Add quotation marks.	A Prayer for Owen Meany left me breathless—and laughing. <i>ital.</i>
ital.	Italicize.	My favorite books are these: <i>Lonesome Dove</i> <i>Angela's Ashes</i> <i>Fried Green Tomatoes</i>
	Align.	☐ The Origin of Six-Trait Assessment ☐
☐ ☐	Center.	