



Building a
Powerful,
Research-based
Writing Component in a
Balanced Literacy
Program

with

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BUILDING SIMPLE WRITING RUBRICS TO ADDRESS SPECIFIC SKILLS

Almost any aspect of writing can be put in this simple rubric format. Teach the focus lessons, and when you feel that students understand the skill, tell them to hand in one piece of writing that clearly shows that they can employ that writing skill/technique. This is fairly subjective, but gets students to focus on a single aspect of writing.

Focus

All sentences stay on topic	3
Most sentences stay on topic	2
Few Sentences stay on topic	1

Concrete Examples

Many good examples show	3
Some examples that show	2
Only sentences that tell	1

Sentence Variety (types)

Mixture of simple/compound/complex	3
Mostly simple sentences	2
All simple sentence constructions	1

Complete Sentences

All sentences express complete thoughts	3
Most sentences express complete thoughts	2
Few sentences express complete thoughts	1

Sentence Variety (beginnings)

Sentences show variety: length, start	3
Some different patterns	2
All sentences follow same, simple pattern	1

Punctuation (ending)

All sentences end appropriately	3
Most sentences have correct punctuation	2
Correct punctuation rarely used	1

Grading Option 1: For letter grades, assign as follows: 3 = A; 2 = B; 1 = C

Grading Option 2: For numerical grades, instead of using 3, 2, and 1 for the grade points, use 10 (A), 8 (B), and 6 (C). Over a period of applying 10 different rubrics, add the total points. For example, a student has earned 8, 6, 10, 10, 8, 8, 8, 10, 10, 10 = 88.

Sellersburg, IN, teachers put standards they've taught on a small mailing label. They print a sheet of labels, peel them off and stick them on individual student papers to score. Once the total number of points earned are added up, they divide that number by the total possible points (32) to arrive at a numerical grade that their system requires.

Writing Rubric				
Spelling - hi-freq.	1	2	3	4
End Punctuation	1	2	3	4
Comp. Sentence	1	2	3	4
Ideas	1	2	3	4
Focus	1	2	3	4
Development	1	2	3	4
Sent. Variety	1	2	3	4
Voice	1	2	3	4
Totals	/32			

Individual mailing label

This rubric is built on a combination of any criteria taught.

Writing Rubric		
Criteria	Frequency	Comments
Writes w/out hesitation		
Stays focused		
Uses specific details		
Organizes writing		
Complete sentences		
Capitalizes appropriately		
Punctuates appropriately		
Spells hi-freq. words		
Varies sentence structure		
Uses voice		
Appropriate paragraphing		
Total Points		

Usually = 10 points
Sometimes = 8 points
Rarely = 6 points

A first sentence in narrative text can:

- *Begin to describe the setting/mood.*
- *Begin to describe the main character(s).*
- *Begin to define the problem in the story.*
- *Catch the reader's attention (a "hook").*



Examples:

Once upon a time there was a farmer who had but one horse.

(The One-Horse Farmer by Sally Derby, Spider magazine, February 1999)

Likely Purpose: _____

On a night when the moon was full of itself, full of restless dreams and wide-awake thoughts, a girl by the name of Firen could not sleep.

(Moonflute by Audrey Wood, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986)

Likely purpose: _____

A first sentence in expository text can...

- ✓ **Catch the reader's attention. (Again, a "hook")**
- ✓ **State what the subject of the text is by defining or describing it.**



Examples:

The bald eagle is a magnificent bird.

(The Bald Eagle by Patricia Ryon Quiri, Children's Press, 1998)

Likely purpose: _____

Picture a huge dinosaur standing in front of you.

(Tyrannosaurus Rex by Elaine Landau, Children's Press, 1999)

Likely purpose: _____

Now, how do you want to start your writing?

Individual Writing Conference Form



Name _____

Date	Title or Mode of Writing	3 + s	1 to grow on

