

Rubric for Information Writing—Eighth Grade

	Grade 6 (1 POINT)	1.5 PTS	Grade 7 (2 POINTS)	2.5 PTS	Grade 8 (3 POINTS)	3.5 PTS	Grade 9 (4 POINTS)	SCORE
STRUCTURE								
Overall	The writer conveyed ideas and information about a subject in a well-structured text. Sometimes she incorporated arguments, explanations, stories, or procedural passages.	Mid-level	The writer brought together ideas and information about a subject in a text that develops a subtopic and/or an idea. He incorporated a variety of text structures as needed, including argument, explanation, narrative, and procedural passages.	Mid-level	The writer discussed key concepts within a topic and made it clear why these concepts are important. She provided examples with relevant information, using a variety of text structures and formatting, as needed, to make concepts and information compelling and accessible.	Mid-level	The writer discussed complex concepts, presenting facts and information in an engaging manner, teaching the reader significant concepts and information. The writer conveyed the sources of the information and analyzed them when relevant.	
Lead	The writer wrote an introduction in which she interested readers, perhaps with a quote or significant fact. The writer let readers know the subtopics she would develop later and how her text would unfold.	Mid-level	The writer interested the reader in the topic by explaining its significance or providing a compelling fact, statistic, or anecdote. He made it clear what parts of this topic his text would tackle, and how the ideas and information in the text would unfold.	Mid-level	After hooking the reader, the writer provided context, introduced a focus/main idea, and oriented readers to the overall structure of the text (compare/contrast, cause and effect, claims and support, classification, etc.).	Mid-level	The writer wrote an engaging lead that explained the topic's significance, contextualized it with background information, and mentioned key points of view or issues that would be discussed.	
Transitions	The writer used transitions to help readers understand how different bits of information and different parts of her writing fit together. The writer used transitions to help connect ideas, information, and examples, and to imply relationships such as when material exemplifies, adds on to, is similar to, explains, is a result of, or contrasts. The writer used transitions such as <i>for instance, such as, similarly, therefore, as a result, in contrast to, and on the other hand</i> .	Mid-level	The writer used transitions to link concepts with related information. The transitions help the reader follow from part to part and make it clear when information is an example of a bigger idea, follows from an earlier point, introduces a new idea, or suggests a contrast. The writer used such transitions as <i>specifically, for instance, related to, just as, turning to, on the other hand, and however</i> .	Mid-level	The writer used transitions to lead the reader across parts of the text and to help the reader note how parts of the text relate back to earlier parts, using phrases such as <i>just as, returning to, as we saw earlier, similarly to, unlike, and yet</i> .	Mid-level	The writer used transitional phrases to show the relationship between parts of the text, including references to prior sections, and previewing future sections. The writer may have used transitions to show the source of cited information. These transitions might include <i>adapted from, excerpted from, according to, building from, revealed in, suggested by, illustrated by, and demonstrated in</i> .	

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STRUCTURE (cont.)								
Ending	The writer wrote a conclusion in which she restated the important ideas and offered a final insight or implication for the reader to consider.		In his conclusion, the writer reinforced and built on the main point(s) in a way that made the entire piece a cohesive whole. The conclusion may have restated the main points, responded to them, or highlighted their significance.	Mid-level	In her conclusion, the writer suggested implications, built up the significance of her main points, and/or alluded to potential challenges.	Mid-level	In the conclusion, the writer strengthened implications, suggested action to take, and/or mentioned multiple perspectives or potential challenges.	
Organization	The writer chose a focused subject. The writer used subheadings and/or clear introductory transitions to separate sections. The writer made deliberate choices about how to order sections and about the sequence of information and ideas within sections. The writer chose structures such as compare-and-contrast, categories, and claim-and-support to organize information and ideas. The writer wrote some sections as argument, explanation, stories, or procedural passages.	Mid-level	The writer focused her writing on a subtopic or a particular point or two. The writer organized her piece into parts and used structures (claims and supports, problem/solution, sequence, etc.) to organize those parts (and perhaps the whole). The writer used introductions, topic sentences, transitions, formatting, and graphics, where appropriate, to clarify the structure of the piece and to highlight main points.	Mid-level	The writer focused on key concepts within the topic. The writer organized information and ideas into broader categories and clarified how sections are ordered and connected. The writer used his organizational structure to help the reader's comprehension, perhaps holding back details until first conveying broader points, or only offering a second perspective after the first was established. The sections and information built on each other throughout the piece: concepts and examples were introduced in a logical fashion.	Mid-level	The writer's organizational structure introduced and layered key concepts and information. The writer layered information to maintain tension, engage the reader's interest, and/or build complexity. The writer build the sections upon each other logically, allowing the reader to build knowledge and deeper understandings.	
								TOTAL:

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DEVELOPMENT								
Elaboration*	<p>The writer included varied kinds of information such as facts, quotations, examples, and definitions.</p> <p>The writer used trusted sources and information from authorities on the topic and gave the sources credit.</p> <p>The writer worked to make her information understandable and interesting. To do this, she may have referred to earlier parts of her text, summarized background information, raised questions, and considered possible implications.</p>	Mid-level	<p>The writer included varied kinds of information such as facts, quotations, examples, and definitions. She analyzed or explained the information, showing how the information fits with her key points or subtopics, including graphics where appropriate.</p> <p>The writer consistently incorporated and cited sources.</p> <p>The writer worked to make her topic compelling as well as understandable. She brought out why it mattered and why the audience should care about it.</p>	Mid-level	<p>The writer brought out the parts of the topic that were most significant to his audience and to his point(s).</p> <p>The writer analyzed the relevance of his information and made sure the information supported the major concepts.</p> <p>The writer incorporated trustworthy and significant sources, and explained if and when a source seemed problematic.</p>	Mid-level	<p>The writer developed key concepts, giving some context and background. The writer used examples to clarify, explain, and interest.</p> <p>The writer analyzed the facts and information, explaining the relevance of cited source material.</p> <p>The writer included trustworthy and significant sources of information, analyzing and critiquing these sources when relevant.</p>	
Craft*	<p>The writer chose her words carefully to explain her information and ideas to have an effect on her reader.</p> <p>The writer worked to include concrete details, comparisons, and/or images to explain information and concepts, and to keep her reader engaged.</p> <p>The writer incorporated domain-specific vocabulary and when necessary explained terms to readers, providing context clues, parenthetical explanations, text boxes, or similar support.</p> <p>The writer supported readers' learning by using a teaching tone and a formal style, as appropriate.</p>	Mid-level	<p>The writer used words purposefully to affect meaning and tone.</p> <p>The writer chose precise words and used metaphors, anecdotes, images, or comparisons to explain what he meant.</p> <p>The writer included domain-specific, technical vocabulary, and defined these when appropriate.</p> <p>The writer used a formal tone, but varied it appropriately to engage the reader.</p>	Mid-level	<p>The writer intended to affect her reader in particular ways—to make the reader think, realize, or feel a particular way—and she chose language to do that.</p> <p>The writer consistently used comparisons, analogies, vivid examples, and/or anecdotes to help readers grasp the meaning of concepts and the significance of information.</p> <p>The writer varied her tone to match the different purposes of different sections of her piece.</p>	Mid-level	<p>The writer intended to affect the reader in particular ways—to make the reader think, realize, or feel a particular way—and chose particular language to do that.</p> <p>In addition to using other literary devices, the writer may have used allusions.</p> <p>The writer varied the tone to match the different purposes of different sections of the argument, as well as to develop its overall impact.</p> <p>The writer made choices about formatting, considering the best form to best convey the content.</p>	
								TOTAL:

*Elaboration and Craft are double-weighted categories: Whatever score a student would get in these categories is worth double the amount of points. For example, if a student exceeds expectations in Elaboration, then that student would receive 8 points instead of 4 points. If a student meets standards in Elaboration, then that student would receive 6 points instead of 3 points.

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CONVENTIONS								
Spelling	The writer used resources to be sure the words in her writing were spelled correctly, including technical vocabulary.	Mid-level	The writer checked spelling of technical, domain-specific words and was careful with the spelling of citations.	Mid-level	The writer checked spelling of technical, domain-specific words and was careful with the spelling and details of citations, excerpts, quotations, and statistics.	Mid-level	The writer spelled accurately throughout, including cited text and citations.	
Punctuation and Sentence Structure	The writer used punctuation such as dashes, parentheses, colons, or semicolons to help her include extra information and explanation in some of her sentences. The writer accurately cited her references, using appropriate punctuation.	Mid-level	The writer varied his sentence structure, sometimes using simple and sometimes using complex sentence structure. The writer used internal punctuation appropriately within sentences and when citing sources, including commas, dashes, parentheses, colons, and semicolons.	Mid-level	The writer used different sentence structures to achieve different purposes throughout her piece. The writer used verb tenses that shift when needed (as in when moving from a citation back to her own writing), deciding between active and passive voice where appropriate. The writer used internal punctuation effectively, including the use of ellipses to accurately insert excerpts from sources.	Mid-level	The writer used sentence structure and verb tense purposefully (i.e., using fragments to emphasize key points; using present tense to create immediacy). The writer used punctuation to emphasize connections, to strengthen tone, to clarify, and to add complexity.	
								TOTAL:

Teachers, we created these rubrics so you will have your own place to pull together scores of student work. You can use these assessments immediately after giving the on-demands and also for self-assessment and setting goals.

Scoring Guide

In each row, circle the descriptor in the column that matches the student work. Scores in the categories of Elaboration and Craft are worth double the point value (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 instead of 1. 1.5, 2, 2.5, 3, 3.5, or 4).

Total the number of points and then track students' progress by seeing when the total points increase.

Total score: _____

If you want to translate this score into a grade, you can use the provided table to score each student on a scale of 0–4.

Number of Points	Scaled Score
1–11	1
11.5–16.5	1.5
17–22	2
22.5–27.5	2.5
28–33	3
33.5–38.5	3.5
39–44	4