

## Using the Nova Scotia Assessment: Analytic Writing Rubric

The rubric includes four criteria (Conventions, Ideas, Organization, and Language Use), and there are four levels of performance for each criterion. Level 3 and above is the expectation for writing assessments, so it's important to look at these levels first when reviewing the rubric. The following information is provided to teachers prior to scoring student writing at provincial scoring sessions.

It may also be helpful for teachers who wish to use this rubric with students in their classrooms. Please keep in mind that the expectations for specific assessments are anchored in the writing samples in a scoring guide, as they are relative to specific grade levels (end of grades 2, 5, 8). The scoring guide provides two student writing samples that illustrate each performance level outlined in the rubric.

A sample scoring guide is available in this document.

- 1) Read the rubric as a whole before looking at each criterion in more detail.
- 2) **Conventions:** Read the four levels of performance under Conventions. Conventions includes spelling of commonly used words (including homonyms), punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, verb tense agreement, noun/pronoun agreement – these are grounded in what's appropriate for a given grade level
- 3) Underline the elements that are same across all four levels in Conventions: *conventions, communication*
- 4) Circle key words that are unique to each level in Conventions:
  - a. Level 3: *variety, generally correct, effective*
  - b. Level 4: *variety, consistently correct, enhanced*
  - c. Level 2: *errors, noticeable, coherent*
  - d. Level 1: *errors, confusing, or, little evidence of conventions*
- 5) **Ideas:** Read the four levels of performance under Ideas. Ideas includes the presence and quality of a main idea, the extent to which the main idea is developed through details, and the quality of the details used to support the main idea.
- 6) Underline the elements that are same across all four levels in Ideas: *main idea, developed, details*
- 7) Circle key words that are unique to each level in Ideas:
  - a. Level 3: *clear, relevant*
  - b. Level 4: *distinct, vivid, relevant*
  - c. Level 2: *evident, somewhat, may be irrelevant* (Even if details are relevant, a piece of writing can be a Level 2 if it's only somewhat developed.)
  - d. Level 1: *not present, or, not developed*
- 8) **Organization:** Read the four levels of performance under Organization. Organization includes the way the writing is organized as a whole as well as how it is organized throughout (internal and external organization). There should be a beginning, middle, and end and a logical sequence

between ideas. Transitions include transitional words or phrases, but also the way the writer transitions from one idea to the next.

- 9) Underline the elements that are same across all four levels in Organization: *writing, organized/organization, transitions*
- 10) Circle key words that are unique to each level in Organization:
  - a. Level 3: *effective, varied*
  - b. Level 4: *skillfully, skillful, varied*
  - c. Level 2: *somewhat, vague, and/or mechanical* (Even if transitions are not vague or mechanical, a piece of writing can be a Level 2 if it's only somewhat organized.)
  - d. Level 1: *lacking, little or no evidence*
- 11) **Language Use:** Read the four levels of performance under Language Use. Language Use includes voice, word choice, sentence style, syntax. Sentence structure is considered in terms of writing style in this criterion, not the grammatical correctness of sentence structure since correctness is assessed under the Conventions criterion.
- 12) Underline the elements that are same across all four levels in Language Use: *Language use, writing*
- 13) Circle key words that are unique to each level in Language Use:
  - a. Level 3: *clear, fluid*
  - b. Level 4: *vivid, skillful*
  - c. Level 2: *vague, and/or mechanical*
  - d. Level 1: *confusing, or, little evidence of language use*
- 14) **Not Enough Evidence:** This designation would only be used in rare cases when there is not enough evidence to assess a student's writing (e.g., indecipherable, blank paper, not enough information to score such as a single word).

Once teachers have become familiar with the rubric, they may wish to use it in their classrooms to support student writing. Looking at the rubric with students may facilitate useful conversations about Conventions, Ideas, Organization, and Language Use and how these elements work together in a piece of writing. Through these discussions, writing samples (either students' own samples or scoring guide samples) could be used to illustrate the various writing components outlined in the rubric. When students have an opportunity to engage in these conversations, they may begin to enhance their own writing processes.

# Nova Scotia Assessment: Analytic Writing Rubric

## Nova Scotia Assessments: Analytic Rubric for Scoring Writing (RW3)



Conventions
<p><b>4</b> A variety of consistently correct conventions contribute to enhanced communication.</p> <p><b>3</b> A variety of generally correct conventions contribute to effective communication.</p> <p><b>2</b> Errors in conventions are noticeable, but communication is coherent.</p> <p><b>1</b> Errors in conventions contribute to confusing communication, or there is little evidence of conventions.</p>
Ideas
<p><b>4</b> A main idea is distinct and is developed through vivid and relevant details.</p> <p><b>3</b> A main idea is clear and is developed through relevant details.</p> <p><b>2</b> A main idea is evident and is somewhat developed through details, some of which may be irrelevant.</p> <p><b>1</b> A main idea is not present, or a main idea is not developed with details.</p>
Organization
<p><b>4</b> The writing is skillfully organized with skillful use of varied transitions.</p> <p><b>3</b> The writing is organized with effective use of varied transitions.</p> <p><b>2</b> The writing is somewhat organized with vague or mechanical transitions.</p> <p><b>1</b> The writing is lacking organization; there is little or no evidence of transitions.</p>
Language Use
<p><b>4</b> Language use contributes to vivid and skillful writing.</p> <p><b>3</b> Language use contributes to clear and fluid writing.</p> <p><b>2</b> Language use contributes to vague or mechanical writing.</p> <p><b>1</b> Language use contributes to confusing writing, or there is little evidence of language use.</p>
Not Enough Evidence
<p>There is not enough evidence to assess the student's writing (e.g., indecipherable, blank paper).</p>

## Using the Nova Scotia Assessment: Scoring Guide Samples

Student writing is scored using the analytic writing rubric and scoring guide. It is important to have a solid understanding of the analytic writing rubric before reviewing the scoring guide. The scoring guide includes the writing prompt and two samples at each performance level in the following order: Level 4, 3, 2, 1.

Although adherence to writing task is important during classroom instruction and assessment, it is important to note that this is not the focus of provincial writing assessments. Provincial assessment writing prompts are designed to allow for a broad interpretation of the prompt. This allows students from across the province with a variety of life experiences to connect to the prompt in some way so they can provide a response that can be assessed for writing quality based on the rubric (ideas, organization, language use, and conventions).

Each writing sample includes an annotation at the bottom of the page that provides the rationale for the scores using language from the rubric and the student's writing. Level 3 and above is the expectation for writing assessments, so it's important to look at these levels first when reviewing the scoring guide. Below are a few suggestions for reviewing the scoring guide:

- 1) Review the rubric criteria for Level 3 in Ideas, Organization, Language Use, and Conventions
- 2) Read the Level 3 Scoring Guide samples and annotations
- 3) Review the rubric criteria for Level 4 in Ideas, Organization, Language Use, and Conventions
- 4) Read the Level 4 Scoring Guide samples and annotations
- 5) Review the rubric criteria for Level 2 in Ideas, Organization, Language Use, and Conventions
- 6) Read the Level 2 Scoring Guide samples and annotations
- 7) Review the rubric criteria for Level 1 in Ideas, Organization, Language Use, and Conventions
- 8) Read the Level 1 Scoring Guide samples and annotations

Once teachers become familiar with the scoring guide, they may wish to use some of the writing samples with their students for talking about elements of writing.

Since writing is personal and involves risk-taking, students may be more comfortable critiquing anonymous writing samples from the scoring guide. After students have had an opportunity to understand the rubric, teachers could begin with showing them a sample of writing at Level 3, Level 4, then Level 2 and Level 1.

(This would be spaced out over several mini-lessons at the teacher's discretion.) The samples could anchor some wonderful conversations about what students notice about how main ideas are developed through supportive details, as well as other elements of writing. The level 2 and 1 samples could be used as a springboard for students to discuss how the writing could be enhanced in each of the criterion of the rubric. Finally, once students have had an opportunity to engage in these discussions with teachers about writing, they should feel more comfortable to begin pulling out some of their own writing from their portfolios. They could work with an existing piece of writing from their writing portfolio to focus on each criterion at a time to gradually enhance the same piece of writing each time. Students can engage in peer review and conversations to support their revisions. At the end of the process, they will be able to compare their original piece of writing with the revised piece of writing and reflect on their process and progress.

## Nova Scotia Assessment: Scoring Guide Samples

**Each time a Nova Scotia Assessment is administered, a script is provided for teachers to follow. Below is the script that was provided for the narrative writing prompt: When I Grow Up I think I Will ...**

Direct children to open their assessment booklets to the photo on page 11 (When I Grow Up I Think I Will...).

*The grade three students in this picture were asked to dress up to show what they might look like when they are grown up.*

*The first child, Chris, is dressed as a carpenter. The second child, Devon, is a cowgirl. The third child, Niko, is going to be a chef. The fourth child, Hannah, wants to be a doctor. And the fifth child, Kyle, is dressed as a firefighter.*

*What you cannot see in this picture is that Chris grew up and became a carpenter for a company that builds solar powered race cars. Devon now works with horses that were injured when they were working as race horses. She has four horses and two ponies of her own that she loves very much. To no one's surprise, Niko, with her love of food, has become a chef. We guessed that Hannah might become a doctor, but she is not a "people" doctor. She is an animal doctor. Just last week she saved a small squirrel's life. Kyle is a firefighter, but he also volunteers for children's rights all over the world.*

*Now it's your turn. What will your life be like when you are a grown up? What will you do? What will you look like? Where will you live? What will you see? Hear?*

*As you can see, there is a lot to think about. So please close your booklets and think quietly. Picture yourself all grown up. This could be 15 years in the future. Or 20. Or maybe even 50! What is happening in your life? After a quiet minute, I'll ask some of you to share your ideas about your future self.*

**Process:** After thinking about this topic, students have an opportunity to share their thoughts about life as a grown up. After students have shared their thoughts, they are asked to plan their writing piece in their student assessment booklet so the people who read it can picture what their life will be like when they are grown up. After planning time has passed, students are asked to begin writing on the lined pages provided in the student assessment booklet.

The following scoring guide includes a variety of student writing samples that reflect each of the four performance levels based on the Analytic Writing Rubric.

Please note: permissions have been obtained for the following student writing samples.

## When I Grow Up I Think I Will ...

be an artist and I would like to live in Paris. I want to live in Paris because that is where all of my favorite artists lived. I would love to be able to paint water lilies, sun sets and flowers perfectly! Art is my dream, it has been since I was five but before that I wanted to be a hair dresser. I don't want to any more. I find that art is very peaceful and calming. My favorite Artists are Monet with a silent T and Van Gogh when I am an artist, I will keep my art and sell my art! Maybe I will start an art class like my art teacher Debbie Taylor or as I call her Debbie Doodles. Oh! And I almost forgot! I like Art so much that my Parents let me turn half of the basement into an art studio

#5

4 Conventions: A variety of consistently correct conventions contribute to enhanced communication: e.g. the use of commas, end punctuation and difficult to spell words.

4 Ideas: A main idea is distinct and is developed through vivid and relevant details. The writer distinctly describes future plans to be an artist in Paris and provides vivid and relevant details: *I find that art is very peaceful and calming... Maybe I will start an art class...*

4 Organization: The writing is skillfully organized with varied transitions. Ideas are skillfully organized in a logical sequence and transitions are skillfully used: *...or as I call her Debbie Doodles... Oh! And I almost forgot...*

4 Language Use: Language use contributes to vivid and skillful writing. There is a distinct voice: *Monet with a silent T... I like art so much that my Parents let me turn half of the basement into an art studio.*

### When I Grow Up I Think I Will ...

When I grow up I want to be a Vet. I want to be a vet because I love to help animals. My grandparents have a dog and my aunt and uncle have a cat. When I drive there I always help give them food or give them a bath. My dad does not want a dog but my mom wants to get one. I also want to be a vet because I am nice to animals and they are nice to me. Also I want to be a vet because I want to learn about them so I can answer questions from other people about animals. I think I will have a lot of fun when I am

2/2

older. I love to help  
with them. They are my  
favourite thing in the world.

#27

4 Conventions: A variety of consistently correct conventions contribute to enhanced communication.

4 Ideas: A main idea is distinct: *I want to be a vet because I love to help animals* and is supported using vivid and relevant details: *I want to learn about them so I can answer questions from other people about animals.*

4 Organization: The writing is skillfully organized with skillful use of transitions: *When ever I drive... but my mom wants to get one...* Skillful use of concluding sentence: *They are my favourite thing in the world.*

4 Language Use: Language use contributes to vivid and skillful writing. Language choices enhance the writing: *When ever I drive there I always help give them food or give them a bath... I think I will have a lot of fun when I am older.*



### When I Grow Up I Think I Will ...

I think when i grow-up  
 im being an ice-cream girl-  
 jist to get a fue bucks.  
 Then when i get a fue bucks  
 i mite be a artist. I  
 think im a good drawer.  
 Others may not think im  
 a good drawer but at least  
 i think im a good drawer!  
 writer

#13

3 Conventions: A variety of generally correct conventions contribute to effective communication. Sentences are generally structured correctly. Spelling of high frequency words is generally correct.

3 Ideas: A main idea is clear and is developed through relevant details: *I'm being a ice-cream girl jist to get a fue bucks. Then when I get a fue bucks I mite be a artist. I think I'm a good drawer.*

3 Organization: The writing is organized with effective use of varied transitions: *Jist to get.. Then when... Others may not think... at least I think.*

3 Language Use: Language use contributes to clear and fluid writing: *Jist to get a fue bucks... Others may not think I'm a good drawer but at least I think I'm a good drawer!*

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### When I Grow Up I Think I Will ...

a hairdresser. I will have my own shop at my house. My hairdressing shop will be called Natalie's hair. I will have poster in town. People will see them and come to my house to get their hair done for weddings, parties, dinners, shows and work. I will love being a hairdresser.

#32

3 Conventions: A variety of generally correct conventions contribute to effective communication.

3 Ideas: A main idea is clear and is developed through relevant details: ...a hairdresser, I will have my own shop at my house... I will have poster in town.

3 Organization: The writing is organized with effective use of varied transitions: People will see them and come to my house to get their hair done...

3 Language Use: Language use contributes to clear and fluid writing: My hairdressing shop will be called Natalie's hair... to get their hair done for weddings, parties, dinners, shows and work.

### When I Grow Up I Think I Will ...

Be a sinetist because  
 I went to be a cell  
 sinetist. I like them  
 they ande exstemly cool.  
 bekause they destad .D.N.A.  
 wach I Think is cool.  
 I will  
 live in a town  
 in the future.

#44

2 Conventions: Errors in conventions are noticeable, but communication is coherent: *I went to be... they ande exstemly cool.*

2 Ideas: A main idea is evident: *I went to be a cell sinetist* and is somewhat developed: *because they destad .D.N.A. wach I Think is cool*

2 Organization: The writing is somewhat organized with vague and mechanical transitions: *because I... because they.*

2 Language Use: Language use contributes to vague and mechanical writing: *Be a sinetist because I went to be a cell sinetist.*

When I Grow Up I Think I Will ...

WHEN I GROW UP I THINK  
I WILL WORK ON 18 WHEELERS  
AND TRAILERS AND BIG TRUCKS  
IN A BIG GARAGE AND I WILL WORK  
ON CARS MAYBE

#92

2 Conventions: Errors in conventions are noticeable - the entire piece is written almost completely in capital letters - but communication is coherent.

2 Ideas: A main idea is evident and is somewhat developed through details: *WHEN I GROW UP I THINK I WILL WORK ON 18 WHEELERS AND TRAILERS AND BIG TRUCKS IN A BIG GARAGE.*

2 Organization: The writing is somewhat organized with mechanical transitions: *AND...AND...AND*

2 Language Use: Language use contributes to mechanical writing: *I WILL WORK ON CARS MAYBE.*

When I Grow Up I Think I Will ...

I want to be a wasler

I will have a masc + have wasler

#9

1 Conventions: Errors in conventions contribute to confusing communication: *wasler... masc*

1 Ideas: A main idea is not developed with details. The writer wants to be a wrestler and will have a mask but this idea is not developed.

1 Organization: The writing is lacking organization; there is little evidence of transitions.

1 Language Use: Language use contributes to confusing writing: *thay wasler*

When I Grow Up I Think I Will ...

say if i could work at meadene,  
 and it will be the Boas  
 and it will be more in the and it  
 will be fun and it will be and

#99

1 Conventions: Errors in conventions contribute to confusing communication.

1 Ideas: A main idea is not developed with details: saelfood.and woke at meadene.  
 AhditwillBerelle Boasc

1 Organization: There is little evidence of transitions.

1 Language Use: There is little evidence of language use.