

Kentucky's Writing Portfolio

Kentucky's Writing Portfolio program began in 1990 as part of a new statewide assessment system, a cornerstone of the Kentucky Education Reform Act, which continues today and is recognized worldwide as the most comprehensive and sustained education reform effort ever undertaken in the United States. Kentucky students' portfolios are assessed in fourth, seventh, and twelfth grades, and must include writing for a variety of audiences and purposes, including narrative, literary, and informational writing.

Kentucky's Holistic Scoring Guide, reproduced below, specifies criteria for each category of performance. The Holistic Scoring Guide is used to score published pieces, so it addresses mechanics and spelling as well as content, organization, and language. However, since two of the rubrics in "Responding to Student Writing" are designed to help teachers respond to early drafts, they don't include a criterion related to mechanics. The rubrics also have been modified to reflect the characteristics of the three genres represented in "Responding to Student Writing."

Novice

- Limited awareness of audience and/or purpose
- Minimal idea development; limited and/or unrelated details
- Random and/or weak organization
- Incorrect and/or ineffective sentence structure
- Incorrect and/or ineffective language
- Errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization disproportionate to length and complexity

Apprentice

- Some evidence of communicating with an audience for a specific purpose; some lapses in focus
- Unelaborated idea development; unelaborated and/or repetitious details
- Lapses in organization and coherence
- Simplistic and/or awkward sentence structure
- Simplistic and/or imprecise language
- Some errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization that do not interfere with communication

Proficient

- Focused on a purpose; awareness of audience; evidence of voice and/or suitable tone
- Depth of idea development supported by elaborated, relevant details
- Logical, coherent organization
- Controlled and varied sentence structure
- Acceptable, effective language
- Few errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization relative to length and complexity

Distinguished

- Well-established purpose and clear focus; strong awareness of audience; evidence of distinctive voice and/or appropriate tone
- Depth and complexity of ideas supported by rich, engaging, and/or pertinent details; evidence of analysis, reflection, insight
- Careful and/or subtle organization
- Variety in sentence structure and length that enhances effect of writing

- Precise and/or rich language
- Control of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization