Holistic Rubrics: 4 Best Practices

The literary analysis holistic rubric shows a summary of scoring details. Full training on using this and other rubrics are included within the five-part Grading Calibration series by the Stride Professional Development Center.

Best methods for using the holistic rubric.

1 **Choose the Review Score:** When you receive the student essay, read it quickly and give it an "overview" score. *(See chart below.)*

2 **Compare with Detailed Summary:** Read the summary description of that score to see if it matches your first assessment. Ask yourself, does this score still make sense after I have read the score summary? Should you adjust your score?

3 **Check Criteria for Crossover Scores:** Go back to the essay and identify the score for each individual criterion in the column matching the score you gave. If scores fall in more than one column, take an average score based on where each criterion falls, and consider that information as you choose a percentage grade.

4 **Highlight and Feedback:** Highlight the score on the table, the summary for that score, and each individual criterion in the score columns. This will allow you to quickly give written or oral feedback on areas of strengths and weaknesses. It will also allow for students to easily see what score they received and why they received it.

Score	Overview
5 (90-100%)	Writing demonstrates exceptional understanding of the material. All requirements are met and some are exceeded.
4 (80-89%)	Writing demonstrates consistent understanding of the material. All requirements are met.
3 (70-79%)	Writing demonstrates partial understanding of the material. Some requirements are met.
2 (60-69%)	Writing demonstrates minimal understanding of the material. Few requirements are met.
1 (50-59%)	Writing demonstrates limited understanding of the material. Minimal requirements met.

The detailed summaries and criterion columns are on the next page.

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Detailed Summary

5	The writing skill in a 5 response is excellent and shows skill above acceptable. This writer presents clear analysis and a fully developed thesis with supporting points throughout the essay. The writer connects some broader historical context to the analysis of characters and theme with an order of importance construct and elaboration. The paper is written in literary present tense and identifies the title, author, and other relevant background information. Balanced and relevant quotes are tied to the thesis and the broader context of purpose. The writer incorporates literary vocabulary effectively and writes in a formal tone with audience awareness. Sophisticated vocabulary is void of colloquialisms and/or opinion. The writer demonstrates thoughtful diction and constructs sentences with careful craftsmanship for flow and enhanced style. Paper contains few errors and does not disrupt flow or readability.
4	The writing skill in a 4 response is appropriate and acceptable. The writer presents competent analysis with minor gaps in thesis development that may include some supporting points throughout essay. The writer includes some valid connections to historical context with character analysis, with coherent organization that can lean toward formulaic development. While the paper is written in literary present tense and identifies the title, author, and some relevant quotes, it may present more summary than analysis. The writer expresses key ideas with some literary terms and overall remains objective. Sentences are varied but with simple construction and adequate vocabulary. Paper contains few errors that do not impede readability. Some of the attributes
3	The writing skill in a 3 is average. While some analysis is present, there are significant gaps and/or an underdeveloped or ineffective thesis with vague focus and few supporting points throughout essay. Analysis often presents unsupported connections to historical context and character analysis. The paper contains inconsistent organization with informational gaps. Although the paper may identify title and author, the analysis contains irrelevant detail and few literary terms tied to analysis. The writer relies on opinion more than analysis and incorporates colloquialisms and slang terms. The writer misuses words within a simple sentence construction which contain significant errors that can disrupt flow. While this paper may meet one or two bullets in a 4 score, the majority of the attributes fall in the 3 range.
2	A Score of 2 reflects less than average skill. The writer lacks analysis of both historical context, characters, and theme. Because the thesis is unclear or invalid, the paper lacks historical connection or character analysis with no direct support. The writer summarizes events rather than analyzing the text. The title and author of the work are often missing, and the writer ineffectively develops literary analysis through lack of literary terms and inclusion of strong personal opinion. The reader must often reread to infer meaning and understanding because of awkwardly constructed sentences that contain significant errors and impede readability. Although this paper may satisfy a bullet from a 3, it fits into the 2 more clearly.
1	The writing skill in a 1 presents inferior written communication. While length alone is not sufficient reason to score the response as a 1, the paper lacks a thesis, focus, and support and no analysis of historical connection and/or characters. The writer does not identify title or author, and the organization lacks structure or separation of ideas. The writer uses extremely limited vocabulary with no literary terms. The paper contains an informal tone with personal opinion and often overuse of slang. The sentence construction is often confusing, and severe/frequent errors prevent readability. Although this paper may satisfy a bullet from a higher score, the majority of the response attributes are 1.

Criterion Columns

5	4	3	2	1
• Excellent writing skill • Presents analysis clearly and with skillful focus • Fully develops the thesis with supporting points throughout • Connects broader historical context to character analysis • Organizes essay with order of importance • Identifies title and author • Written in literary present tense • Balanced and relevant quotes tied to thesis • Uses effective literary vocabulary void of colloquialisms and opinion • Demonstrates thoughtful word choice with varied sentence craftsmanship • Minor errors	• Appropriate and acceptable writing skill • Competent analysis with minor gaps • Partial development of thesis with some supporting points throughout • Some connections to historical context with character analysis • Organized coherently but can be formulaic • Identifies title and author • Written in literary present tense • Some relevant quotes but more summary than analysis • Expresses key ideas with some literary terms and remains objective • Varied sentences structure with simple construction • Few errors that do not impede readability	• Less than adequate writing skill • Some analysis but with significant gaps Ineffective/underdeveloped thesis with vague focus and minimal supporting points throughout • Unsupported connections to historical context and character analysis • Inconsistent organization with informational gaps • Identifies title or author, but not both • Uneven analysis with irrelevant detail • Few literary terms • Reliance on opinion and slang/colloquialisms • Misused words • Simple sentence constructions • Significant errors that can disrupt flow	• Less than average writing skill • Lacks analysis of historical context or characters or theme • Unclear/invalid thesis with no direct support • Lacks historical connection and character analysis • Organization often a summary of events • Does not identify title or author • Missing or ineffective analysis without development • Lacks literary terms and is strongly opinionated • Reader must often reread and infer meaning • Awkwardly constructed sentences with significant errors • Errors impede readability	• Inferior written communication • Length alone not sufficient reason to score the response as a 1 • Lack of thesis, focus, and support • No analysis of historical connection and character analysis • Does not identify title or author • Organization lacks structure or separation of ideas • Extremely limited vocabulary with no literary terms • Informal tone with personal opinion and overuse of slang • Confusing sentence construction • Severe/frequent errors prevent readability

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