



Formative Single-Point Rubric

Argument Writing
5th Grade ELA

December 18, 2025

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Introduction

To better support elementary teachers with assessing writing at the classroom level, the Office of Assessment and Standards, along with ELA content experts, teachers, and literacy leaders from across the state, has created grade-level writing rubrics for each mode of writing in the *2024 SC CCR ELA Standards*. These rubrics will provide teachers with common writing goals for their students and a common tool to evaluate student writing.

Overarching Expectation 6 (ELA.OE.6) in the 2024 ELA Standards notes that students should “create quality work by adhering to an accepted format.” Using rubrics to assess writing provides students with expectations and an accepted format for various types of writing assignments. While rubrics communicate learning goals to students, they also support teachers by providing a tool for quick, targeted feedback and promoting collaboration and conversations between teachers.

The formative rubrics created for South Carolina elementary teachers are single-point rubrics. These rubrics list the criteria for proficiency in the different modes of writing at each grade level and allow teachers to identify where students approach proficiency and exceed proficiency.

Single-point rubrics are formative and instructional because they allow teachers to provide students with feedback for improvement. This differs from the holistic Text-Dependent Writing (TDW) scoring rubrics, which are summative and do not allow explicit feedback for improvement. Another advantage of the single-point rubric for classroom use is that teachers can use only the parts of the rubric they want to focus on at that time. This allows for more targeted feedback and remediation. This also allows for more variety in the format of student writing.

We would like to thank all the ELA content experts, teachers, and literacy leaders who assisted us in the creation of the ELA formative rubrics.

How to Use a Single-Point Rubric

Single-point rubrics allow teachers to focus on one or two areas of weakness instead of focusing on all elements in a student’s written work. Using single-point rubrics also provides teachers with the ability to provide targeted feedback and instruction to each student based on his or her individual needs.

Example: Transitional Words and Phrases

Suggestions	Criteria	Strengths
	Transitional Words and Phrases: The student uses a variety of transitional strategies to link and structure ideas. The transitions support the organization of the written work.	

In the table above, the criterion to be targeted through feedback and revision is “*transitional words and phrases*.” The criterion is outlined in the middle section of the table. The left-hand side of the table provides space for a teacher to provide suggestions for improvement on the targeted criterion—transitional words and phrases. The box on the right-hand side of the table provides space for a teacher to note any strengths in the student’s use of transitional words and phrases. Teachers may choose to leave feedback in both categories or in one category.

Student Sample: Figure 1

I do not like naps. Naps are not fun. Schools should not require naps during the school day.

A nap at school could make our day longer. We might lose recess.

Figure 1 contains an excerpt of student writing that does not use transitional words and phrases to link ideas.

Example: Providing Suggestions and Noting Strengths

Suggestions	Criteria	Strengths
In the first sentence, you say you do not like naps. In the second sentence, you say why you don't like naps. Is there a word or phrase you can put between these two sentences to show how the two ideas connect?	Transitional Words and Phrases: The student uses a variety of transitional strategies to link and structure ideas. The transitions support the organization of the written work.	

In the sample, the student does not use transitions to connect ideas. In the “suggestions” column of the rubric, the teacher’s feedback focuses only on the first two sentences and asks the student to choose a word or phrase that shows the relationship between the two ideas.

Steps for Using a Single-Point Rubric

This is a suggested list of steps, not a prescribed list.

1. The argumentative writing criteria for “meeting expectations” are provided within the rubric. These criteria are aligned to the grade-level indicators for ELA.C.1.1, ELA.C.4.1, and ELA.C.5.1. The criteria presented in the single-point rubric are clear, specific, and measurable.
2. Familiarize yourself with the rubric and then introduce it to your students. Ensure that students understand the criteria and that you may choose to focus on one criterion or multiple when assessing their writing.
3. As you assess student writing, check the criteria outlined in the rubric. You may also wish to refer to the additional support provided for each criterion.
4. Provide suggestions for improvement and revision in the left-handed column of the rubric. Use the right-hand column to highlight any areas where the student exceeds expectations.
5. Once you have identified an area(s) of weakness for the student, determine appropriate instructional support to help the student improve his or her writing and meet the expectations of that criterion. The document provides suggestions for each criterion in the rubric.
6. After additional instructional support or remediation, allow the student to revise the written work. Some students may have to revise the work several times, focusing on different criteria with each revision.

Argumentative Elements for 5th Grade

The following definitions are based on the definitions provided in the *2024 SC CCR ELA Standards* Glossary of Terms. The Glossary applies to K-12 instruction. The language of the following definitions has been adapted to suit 5th-grade ELA instruction.

Texts

Before a student can write an argument, the student must have a text(s) that provides information on a topic. Students will use the text(s) to learn about the topic before writing and will draw details and facts from the text(s) to support their argument.

Topic or Issue

A student writer in 5th grade should thoroughly investigate a topic or issue before taking a stance and writing an argument. To help the student writer better understand the topic, the teacher should allow him or her time to discuss the texts and topic with other students before the writing process begins. It is the writer's responsibility to show a thorough understanding of the topic

Claim (enters in 5th grade)

A *claim* is a statement of what the writer wants to persuade the reader to think, believe, or feel. A claim differs from an opinion. An opinion reflects the personal beliefs of the writer, whereas a claim may not. A claim is a debatable statement that reasons, facts, and details can support. The writer's goal in argumentative writing is to prove that his or her claim is the most logical conclusion.

Reasons

Reasons support the student writer's claim. Using reasons allows the student writer to explain why he or she believes his or her claim to be valid.

Details and Facts

The student writer uses details and facts to support his or her reasons and claim. Details provide additional information to support the reasons. Facts can be proven. Using details and facts strengthens the student's reasoning and claim.

Organization

The term organization does not refer to a specific number of sentences or paragraphs. It refers to how the student organizes his or her argument. When organizing an argument, the student writer should introduce the topic, followed by the claim. In the body of the written response, the writer should include at least one reason and at least one supporting detail and/or fact. The number of reasons, details, and facts will vary depending on factors such as the length of the written response. The concluding section or statement should include a reiteration of the writer's claim.

Transitional Word and Phrases

Transitions enter the language of C.1.1 in the 1st grade. A student is expected to progress in the sophistication of the use of transitional words and phrases as he or she advances in grade level and in writing ability. The purpose of transitional words and phrases in argumentative writing is to connect or link the topic, claim, reasons, details, and facts. Transitions help the writer sequence and organize the response.

Language and Voice

In argumentative writing, the student's choice of words impacts the effectiveness of the argument and holds the reader's attention. The student should use vocabulary that is relevant to the topic. For example, if a student is writing about horses, he or she would refer to a horse's hoof instead of a horse's foot.

Concluding Statement or Idea

The *concluding statement* or *idea* should restate or reiterate the student's opinion statement or claim.

Grammar, Capitalization, Punctuation, and Sentence Structure

For specific information about the grade-level expectations, teachers should refer to ELA.C.4.1.

Citing Sources

Any time a student uses information from source material, he or she should cite the source(s). This includes information directly quoted from the source material, facts, data, and ideas.

5th Grade Argumentative Single-Point Rubric

Each targeted criterion of 5th-grade argumentative writing can be addressed singularly or in groups, depending on the instructional focus and the individual student’s strengths and weaknesses.

Suggestions	Criteria	Strengths
	Topic: The student presents the topic clearly and carries it throughout the written response.	
	Claim: The student takes a clear position on the topic or issue and makes a defensible claim.	
	Reasons: The student provides reasons and details to support the claim.	
	Facts: The student provides facts to support his or her reasons and claim.	
	Organization: The student organizes the claim, reasons, and facts in a way that progresses the argument and supports the reader’s understanding.	
	Transitional Words and Phrases: The student uses a variety of transitional strategies to link and structure ideas. The transitions support the organization of the written work.	
	Language and Vocabulary: The student’s word choice and variety of sentence types and phrases enhance the response and engage the reader.	
	Grammar and Conventions: The student writes grammatically correct sentences to include punctuation and capitalization.	
	Citing Sources: The student thoroughly cites source material using an academic style guide as pre-determined by the teacher.	

Element: Topic

Criterion: The student presents the topic clearly and carries it throughout the written response.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for topic.

A student who is on target will

- Introduce the topic at the beginning of the response.
- Stay on topic throughout the written work.
- Make it clear to the reader that the student understands the topic.

A student who needs support may

- mention the topic and then move to another topic. Sometimes the student may return to the topic at the end of the written response.
- not share enough about the topic for the reader to understand.
- not understand the topic.

Student Sample 1

The students were asked to read a flyer about a garden club and a flyer about a book club. Then, the students were asked to decide which club would be better to join and write an argument to persuade others.

I think the garden club is better than the book club. The gardening club is better because you get to go outside. And you can get dirty. It can come in handy later in life because you can learn to grow your own food.

If you don't have a lot of peppers at home you can bring some from the garden. Your mom might like them. And you mom won't have to spend more money at the store because you will bring them home.

A book club makes you read more. I read enough. I don't want to read more books. A garden club needs tools. A rake, a shovel, and a wheelbarrow is what the paper says. It is fun to dig with a shovel. You might find a worm!

These are the reasons I think the garden club is better!

The samples used in this document are excerpts of student writing that have been adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Element: Topic or Issue

Student 1

Student 1 presents the topic in the first sentence of the response. In the second paragraph, the student strays from the topic of the garden club to discuss taking home peppers to his or her mom. The student returns to the topic in the last two paragraphs. This student needs support staying on topic.

Suggestions for Student 1

The following suggestions are targeted at the writer of this student sample. These suggestions were written to support this student writer and may not apply to all students.

- First, ensure the student understands the topic and task. This may be as simple as having the student tell you what he or she is expected to write. It could also mean asking the student to rewrite the task in his or her own words. This student appears to understand the topic and task, but he or she struggles with staying on the topic.
- Writing an outline may help this student better understand how to stay on topic throughout a multi-paragraph response. This will also help with the organization of the written response. If multiple students need support staying on topic, consider modeling an outline for the class and having them write what you write as you progress. This will require a template, meaning you must determine a specific number of paragraphs to start. It is easier to start with fewer paragraphs and progress into more. Or it may be easier to begin with the introduction and conclusion provided and focus only on the body paragraph(s).
- For an argumentative response, the opinion about the topic should be presented in the introduction. The reason(s) for the opinion will serve as the main idea(s) of each body paragraph. Depending on the expectations for your students' grade level, the next elements to add to each body paragraph are reasons, details, and facts. Once a student has completed an outline, the student can begin drafting the written work. There are multiple ways an outline can be completed, depending on the needs of your student.

Element: Claim

Criterion: The writer takes a clear position on the topic or issue and makes a defensible claim.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for claim.

A student who is on target will

- take a clear position on the topic or issue.
- provide a defensible claim.
- carry the claim throughout the entire written work.

A student who needs support may

- provide an opinion instead of a claim
- only discuss the pros and cons of a topic.
- provide a vague claim, requiring the reader to infer what the writer may be expressing.
- provide only a summary of the topic or texts.

For a student to successfully write a claim, he or she must have access to texts that provide different perspectives on a topic. The student must be asked to choose a position or take a side; otherwise, he or she will only be able to provide an opinion on the topic.

Student Sample 1

After reading two texts about the introduction of high fructose corn syrup in the United States and the pros and cons of artificial sweeteners, students were asked to choose a side and write a claim. Because this was the first time students were writing a claim, the students were not yet asked to write an argument.

Adding artificial sweeteners to food has a negative impact on people’s health.

The samples used in this document are excerpts of student writing that have been adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Student Sample 2

After reading two texts about the introduction of high fructose corn syrup in the United States and the pros and cons of artificial sweeteners, students were asked to choose a side and write a claim. Because this was the first time students were writing a claim, the students were not yet asked to write an argument.

I think we should ban all artificial sweeteners in our food.

The samples used in this document are excerpts of student writing that have been adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Criterion: Claim

Student 1

This student provides a claim that is written as a fact and is debatable. It also provides the reader with a sense of the writer's argument.

Student 2

This student does not make a claim; this student provides an opinion about how she feels about artificial sweeteners being added to our food.

Suggestions for Student 2

- Fifth grade is when students move from writing an opinion to writing a claim. Before students can write an argument, they must first understand how to write a strong claim.
- A claim is debatable and stated as a fact.
Example: Adding artificial sweeteners to food has a negative impact on people's health.
- A claim defines the goal of a writer's argument and provides a reader with a sense of the argument.
- Referring to the sample claim, the reader expects the argument to provide examples of how artificial sweeteners have a negative impact on people's health.
- This also provides the writer with a guide to help him stay on topic throughout the argument.
- The claim should be presented in the introduction.
- To help students better understand the difference between opinions and claims, provide students with two sets of cards, one set containing opinion statements and one set containing claims. Ask the students to differentiate between the two and sort the cards. Once students are successful, ask students to work in small groups, rewriting the opinion statements into claims. This may require modeling before asking students to complete this on their own.
- Provide students with a checklist. An example is provided.

Example of a Checklist

Category	Check if “yes”
Is my claim based on the topic?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="228 415 721 447">• If not, what do I need to change?	
Can two people debate my claim?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="228 558 1138 632">• If not, is it my opinion on the topic instead of a claim? What do I need to change?	
Does my claim tell the reader exactly what I will present in my argument?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="228 749 992 781">• If not, what do I need to correct to be more focused?	

Element: Reasons

Criterion: The student provides reasons and details to support the claim.

Below are examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for reasons.

A student who is on target will

- provide reasons to support the claim.
- make clear connections between the claim and the reasons.
- include details that clarify the reasons.

A student who needs support may

- not provide a reason.
- not make clear connections between the claim and the reasons.
- repeat the same reasons multiple times.
- not include details.

Student Sample 1

After reading two texts about the introduction of high fructose corn syrup in the United States and the pros and cons of artificial sweeteners, students were asked to choose a side and write a claim. Because this was the first time students were writing a claim, the students were not yet asked to write an argument.

Diet drinks and foods with no added sugars are everywhere. Companies spend tons of money to convince us that artificial sweeteners are healthier than real sugar. The companies don't tell us about the harmful effects of the artificial sweeteners. Adding artificial sweeteners to food has a negative impact on people's health.

Surprise! Using artificial sweeteners can cause people to gain weight because they make people hungry. This is a negative impact on people's health.

The samples used in this document are excerpts of student writing that have been adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Student Sample 2

After reading two texts about the introduction of high fructose corn syrup in the United States and the pros and cons of artificial sweeteners, students were asked to choose a side and write a claim. Because this was the first time students were writing a claim, the students were not yet asked to write an argument.

Some people don't like the taste of diet drinks. I am one of those people. Regular sugar tastes better than fake sugar. A lot of companies use artificial sweeteners because it is cheaper than sugar. Companies should continue using fake sugars and real sugar.

One reason why companies should make food both ways is to give people a choice. The more choices we have the better.

The samples used in this document are excerpts of student writing that have been adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Element: Reasons

Student 1

Student 1 supports his claim by using the reason that “artificial sweeteners can cause people to gain weight because they make people hungry.” This reason directly supports the section of the claim that states, “...has a negative impact on people’s health.”

Student 2

Student 2 provides the reason that companies should make food both ways to give people a choice. While this reason is connected to the claim, the reason is vague. What does the writer mean by “both ways,” and why is it important to give people a choice? The writer’s claim is weak, which may also negatively impact her supporting reason.

Suggestions for Student 2

The following suggestions are targeted at the writer of the student sample. These suggestions were written to support this student writer and may not apply to all students.

- Before approaching “reasons” with this student, the teacher may wish to address how to write a clear, defensible claim. Without a clear, defensible claim, the student will not be able to write an effective argument. each
- Provide the student with two different claims on different pieces of paper. Then, provide the student with a list of reasons. Ask the student to match each reason with its correct claim.
- Once the student can provide reasons to support a claim, provide him or her with pairs of reasons. Each pair should contain one reason that is vague or imprecise and one reason that is precise and connected to the claim. Discuss with the student the

differences between the two types of reasons. Once the student can determine on his or her own which reasons are vague and unclear, remove the stronger reasons and ask the student to rewrite the vague reasons to make them better support the claim.

Element: Facts

Criterion: The student provides facts to support his or her reasons and claim.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for facts (evidence).

A student who is on target will

- use facts from source material as evidence to support reasons.
- include at least one supporting fact for each reason.
- effectively connect facts and reasons to support the claim.
- integrate facts as evidence into the written response by providing a mixture of direct quotes and summarizing as appropriate.

A student who needs support may

- include facts (evidence) that seem “thrown in” as a required element without consideration of whether they support the reasons and claim.
- include facts (evidence) that are not connected to the reasons or the claim.
- include some facts that support some reasons, but not for all.
- include mostly a summary that doesn’t explain how the facts (evidence) support the reasons or the claim.
- use the same pieces of evidence multiple times.
- not include facts (evidence) from the source material.

Student Sample 1

After reading two texts about the introduction of high fructose corn syrup in the United States and the pros and cons of artificial sweeteners, students were asked to choose a side and write a claim. Because this was the first time students were writing a claim, the students were not yet asked to write an argument.

Diet drinks and foods with no added sugars are everywhere. Companies spend tons of money to convince us that artificial sweeteners are healthier than real sugar. The companies don’t tell us about the harmful effects of the artificial sweeteners. Adding artificial sweeteners to food has a negative impact on people’s health.

Surprise! Using artificial sweeteners can cause people to gain weight because they make people hungry. This is a negative impact on people’s health. The text says that, “artificial sweeteners may increase the appetite.” If companies use artificial sweeteners to make their products diet and the diet products can make you gain weight, then why have them? Shouldn’t the companies just use real sugar?

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Student Sample 2

After reading two texts about the introduction of high fructose corn syrup in the United States and the pros and cons of artificial sweeteners, students were asked to choose a side and write a claim. Because this was the first time students were writing a claim, the students were not yet asked to write an argument.

Some people don't like the taste of diet drinks. I am one of those people. Regular sugar tastes better than fake sugar. A lot of companies use artificial sweeteners because it is cheaper than sugar. Companies should continue using fake sugars and sugar.

One reason why companies should make food both ways is to give people a choice. Just because I don't like a diet drink doesn't mean other people don't like them. My mom and teacher drink them all the time. The more choices we have the better.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Element: Facts

Student 1

Student 1 provides a fact from the text to support her reason that artificial sweeteners can cause weight gain. She also connects the reason and the fact (evidence) to the claim by stating, "This is a negative impact on people's health."

Student 2

Student 2 provides several reasons why companies should continue using artificial sweeteners and gives a personal example about his mom and teacher. The student does not include a fact (evidence) from the source material to support his reasons.

Suggestions for Student 2

The following suggestions are targeted at the writer of the second student sample.

These suggestions were written to support this student writer and may not apply to all students.

- Ensure that the student can determine and select relevant facts from the source material that support his or her claim. The teacher may need to work with this student to re-read and annotate the text. Then, the teacher should ask the student which of the highlighted facts are relevant to the claim. The claim can be the student's original claim or one that the teacher provides. Talking through this process of which facts are relevant will help the teacher understand where the student's thinking may be off track. This will also allow the teacher to help correct the student's thinking process on how to determine if something is relevant to the claim.
- When moving into writing, a graphic organizer or outline will help students better connect their reasons, details, and facts (evidence). A sample is provided.

Example of a Graphic Organizer

Claim
Example: Companies should continue providing a variety of foods that contain artificial sugars.

Reason 1	Reason 2
Example: Some people cannot eat sugar.	<i>The number of reasons is determined by the amount of information in the source material, the length of the argument, and the student's understanding of the topic. For illustration purposes, this example only provides one reason.</i>
Detail: Having options with artificial sweeteners gives more food options to people who cannot eat regular sugar.	
Fact (Evidence): Artificial sweeteners do not raise blood sugar levels. This helps people with diabetes.	

Element: Organization

Criterion: The student organizes the claim, reasons, and facts in a way that progresses the argument and supports the reader’s understanding.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate the *organization*. Transitions play an essential role in organizing writing. In the K-4 rubrics, a concluding statement or idea is an independent criterion. Beginning in the 5th grade, a concluding statement or idea is included with the criterion for organization.

A student who is on target will

- include an introduction.
- introduce the topic in the introduction.
- state the claim in the introduction.
- include a body paragraph(s).
- support the claim with reasons, details, and facts (evidence).
- show the relationship between the claim (the student’s position on the topic), reasons (why they think that way), and facts (how they know).
- restate the claim in the concluding statement or section.

A student who needs support may

- not provide an introduction.
- not introduce the topic in the introduction.
- state an opinion instead of a claim.
- not include reasons.
- not include facts from the text.
- not support the claim with reasons, details, and facts (evidence) in a way that helps the reader understand the relationship between the elements.
- not include a body paragraph(s).
- not provide a concluding statement or section
- provide a concluding statement or section, but not restate the claim.

Organization is not based on a required number of paragraphs or sentences within a paragraph. Transitional words and phrases play an important part in the structure and organization of a written work.

Student Sample 1

After reading a text about the benefits of napping, students were asked if all elementary students should nap during the school day. Students were told to choose one side and write an argument supporting that side.

Do you fall asleep in class after lunch? I do. So do some of my friends. All elementary schools should allow naptime during school. Taking a nap will help us focus better in the afternoon and it might make some people not be grouchy.

If we were able to take a nap after lunch, we wouldn't fall asleep during class. Digesting food is hard work for our body and sometimes when our body is digesting, it makes our brains tired. If we took naps after lunch, we would pay better attention because our brains wouldn't be tired. They would be refreshed.

Sometimes when people are tired, they get grouchy. When they get grouchy, they say mean things to friends. Even if they don't mean it. Taking a nap in school would give those people extra rest and they might not say mean things. Just taking a 26 minute nap would help our brains and we would be in a better mood.

If we were allowed to take naps in school we would not fall asleep in class after lunch. We also would not get grouchy and say mean things to each other.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Student Sample 2

After reading a text about the benefits of napping, students were asked if all elementary students should nap during the school day. Students were told to choose one side and write an argument supporting that side.

I read about how some schools want kids to take a nap at school. Why would kids want to do that? We have to sit all day now. I don't want to take a nap. I want to go play outside with my friends. Schools should not make us take a nap.

Taking a nap is boring. Going outside to play is not. The passage said that a 26 minute nap would boost our brain function. Playing outside would boost my brain function. I bet it would boost my friends brains too.

I don't want to take a nap at school. I am too old for that. Lets go play outside instead.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Element: Organization

Student 1

Student 1 states the claim, “All elementary schools should allow naptime during school.” Notice the yellow-highlighted parts in student sample 1 that connect to the claim are throughout the response, including the concluding statement. In yellow:

- “All elementary schools should allow naptime during school.” (claim)
- “take a nap”
- “took naps”
- “taking a nap in school”
- “if we were allowed to take naps in school”

The green-highlighted sections show the student’s first reason for why he or she thinks there should be napping in school. In green:

- “Taking a nap will help us better focus in the afternoon.”
- “If we were able to take a nap after lunch, we wouldn’t fall asleep during class.”
- “If we took naps after lunch, we would pay better attention because our brains wouldn’t be tired. They would be refreshed.”
- “would not fall asleep in class after lunch”

The text to support the reasons is highlighted in pink. Notice that the student continues to make the connection to the text with the reasons and claim at the end of paragraph 2. In pink:

- “Digesting food is hard work for our body and sometimes when our body is digesting, it makes our brains tired.”
- “Just taking a 25 minute nap would help our brains”

In paragraph 3, the student addresses his or her second reason in blue. The student uses text (in pink) to support that reason in paragraph 3 and then continues explaining how the text supports the reasons and claims. In blue:

- “it might make some people not be grouchy”
- “sometimes when people are tired, they get grouchy. When they get grouchy, they say mean things to friends. Even if they don’t mean it.”
- “would give those people extra rest and they might not say mean things”
- “and we would be in a better mood”
- “would not get grouchy and say mean things”

Student 2

Highlighted in yellow, Student 2 states that “schools should not make us nap” as his or her claim. To support the claim, the student uses reasons to support the claim. In green:

- “I want to go play outside”
- “Playing outside would boost my brain function.”
- “It would boost my friends brains too”
- “Lets go play outside instead”

In the body paragraph, the student provides a fact from the text to support his or her reason. In pink:

- “The passage said that a 25 minute nap would boost our brain function.”

The student then goes on to make a vague connection to the text while connecting the facts to the reason. In the conclusion, the student does not restate the claim, but instead shares an opinion and revisits his or her reason.

Suggestions for Student 2

The following suggestions are targeted to the writer of the second student sample.

These suggestions were written to support this student writer and may not apply to all students.

- Argumentative writing is a process and should be approached as a sequence of skills. Sequencing writing assignments helps students build a frame of reference as they move from one step to the next.
- Teachers should also consider scaffolding writing assignments from shorter pieces (quick writes, journals, paragraphs) to longer pieces. The student should receive timely feedback as they progress through a sequence of writing assignments. This will better prepare the student to write a longer written piece.

Element: Transitional Words and Phrases

Criterion: The student uses a variety of transitional strategies to link and structure ideas. The transitions support the organization of the work.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for *transitional words and phrases*. Students should use transitions to link ideas within sentences and paragraphs to link one paragraph to the next.

A student who is on target will

- select and use transitional words and phrases that enhance his or her purpose for writing.
- use transitional strategies to connect elements of the argument and show relationships between elements.
- select and use transitional strategies to support an organizational structure, making it easier for the reader to follow.
- select and use transitional strategies to progress the argument.

A student who needs support will

- use basic transitional words and phrases that seem to be randomly selected without consideration of how they function within the text.
- use transitional words and phrases that do not enhance the purpose of writing.
- use transitional words and phrases that do not enhance the structure or organization of the response.
- repeat one or two transitional words or phrases throughout the response.
- primarily use transitions only to order his or her thoughts (first, next, last...)

Student Sample 1

After reading a text about the benefits of napping, students were asked if all elementary students should nap during the school day. Students were told to choose one side and write an argument supporting that side.

Sometimes after lunch I get sleepy. When this happens, I try really hard to listen to my teacher and keep my eyes open. But sometimes that doesn't work and I end up with my head bobbing around. This wouldn't happen if we were allowed to take a nap in school.

Digesting food is hard work for our body and I have reading after lunch. Reading is hard on my body too. What happens is my body is working so hard digesting my food that my body can't focus on reading. If we could take a nap in school my body could do its work to digest my food while I am sleeping. Then, I will be ready to read.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Student Sample 2

After reading a text about the benefits of napping, students were asked if all elementary students should nap during the school day. Students were told to choose one side and write an argument supporting that side.

I do not like naps. Naps are not fun. Schools should not require naps during the school day.

A nap at school could make our day longer. We might lose recess.

Not all kids would take a nap. Some kids would talk or move around and get in trouble. This would be hard work for the teacher.

It would be more fun if we went outside. We could play. Kids who don't like to play can sit on the benches and read. This is better than taking a nap.

We should not have to take a nap at school.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Element: Transitional Words and Phrases

Student 1

Student 1 uses a variety of transitions to show relationships between ideas within each paragraph and from paragraph to paragraph. Highlighted in yellow:

- “sometimes”
- “when this happens”
- “and”
- “but sometimes”
- “and”
- “if”
- “Then”

Student 2

Student 2 uses very few transitional strategies in the written response. This makes the writing seem very choppy. By using more transitional words and phrases, the student could connect ideas and make the response easier to read.

Suggestions for Student 2

The following suggestions are targeted at the writer of the second student sample. These suggestions were written to support this student writer and may not apply to all students.

- Read short texts with the student and point out the transitions as they are used. Ask the student how the transitions affect the flow of the story or of the ideas.
- Provide a short exemplar text to the student. Model marking the different transitional words and phrases within the text. Have the student mark the text with you. Provide an explanation for each transition and how it works in that part of the text. Ask the student to write down your explanations. This can become a resource for him or her later.
- Provide the student with a short text that is missing transitions. Place a blank in the spot where each transition should be placed. Provide a transitional word bank. A sample is included below.
- Next, try the same process using a draft of the student's own work. A sample is included.

Word Bank					
Also	it could	plus	because	if we take	because
as previously stated		plus			

I do not like naps _____ naps are not fun. Schools should not require naps during the school day. _____ a nap at school, _____ make our day longer. We might _____ lose recess. _____, not all kids would take a nap. Some kids would talk or move around and get in trouble. This would be hard work for the teacher.

It would be more fun if we went outside _____ we could play. _____ kids who don't like to play can sit on the benches and read. This is better than taking a nap.

_____, we should not have to take a nap at school.

Element: Language and Vocabulary

Criterion: The student’s word choice and variety of sentence types and phrases enhance the response and engage the reader.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for *language and vocabulary*.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate the writing for *language and vocabulary*. Students in 5th grade should use words that are on topic and that enhance the response. Additionally, students should use a variety of sentence types in their writing to create variety, add interest, and engage the reader. A student’s use of language and sentence variety impacts his or her style and voice.

A student who is on target will

- use words specific to the topic and purpose.
- use words to aid the reader’s understanding.
- use words to enhance the response.
- use words to engage the reader.
- use a variety of sentence types and phrases to enhance the reader’s understanding of the topic.
- use a variety of sentence types and phrases to engage the reader.

A student who needs support may

- use vague words, leaving the reader to determine what it “could mean”.
- use words that are unrelated to the topic and detract from the reader’s understanding.
- begin most sentences with the same word or phrase.
- write using only one type of sentence (all simple sentences, for example).
- write using sentences that are all the same length.
- not use phrases.

Student Sample 1

After reading a text about the benefits of napping, students were asked if all elementary students should nap during the school day. Students were told to choose one side and write an argument supporting that side.

Do you fall asleep in class after lunch? I do. So do some of my friends. All elementary schools should allow naptime during school. Taking a nap will help us focus better in the afternoon and it might make some people not be so grouchy.

If we could take a nap after lunch, we wouldn’t fall asleep during class. Digesting food is hard work for our body and sometimes when our body is digesting, it makes our brains tired. If we took naps after lunch, we would pay better attention because our brains wouldn’t be tired. They would be refreshed.

Student Sample 1

After reading a text about the benefits of napping, students were asked if all elementary students should nap during the school day. Students were told to choose one side and write an argument supporting that side.

Sometimes when people are tired, they get grouchy. When they get grouchy, they say mean things to friends. Even if they don't mean it. Taking a nap in school would give those people extra rest and they might not say mean things. Just taking a 25 minute nap would help our brains and we would be in a better mood.

If we were allowed to take naps in school we would not fall asleep in class after lunch. We also would not get grouchy and say mean things to each other.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Student Sample 2

After reading a text about the benefits of napping, students were asked if all elementary students should nap during the school day. Students were told to choose one side and write an argument supporting that side.

I read about how some schools want kids to take a nap at school. Why would kids want to do that? We have to sit all day now. I don't want to take a nap. I want to go play outside with my friends. Schools should not make us take a nap.

Taking a nap is boring. Going outside to play is not. The passage said that a 25 minute nap would boost our brain function. Playing outside would boost my brain function. I bet it would boost my friends brains too.

I don't want to take a nap at school. I am too old for that. Lets go play outside instead.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Element: Language and Vocabulary

Student 1

Student 1 uses a variety of sentence types: simple sentences, compound sentences, etc. The student also uses a question to engage the reader. Some of the sentences are short, and some are longer. This makes the paper flow better for the reader. The student uses vocabulary that fits the topic. The use of the word “refreshed” is a good contradiction to the word “tired”. This helps illustrate the author’s argument that taking a nap will help students focus more and prevent grouchiness.

Student 2

Student 2 needs support using vocabulary that enhances the response. In the first sentence, the student states, “I read about how some schools want kids...” This student needs support choosing and using more specific words. Where did the student read this information? Is there a more precise way to describe the schools instead of “some schools”? Is the word “kids” appropriate for this type of writing? Using first person in opinion writing is appropriate; however, could the student change some of his or her sentences that begin with “I”? What effect would this have on the readability of the response?

Suggestions for Student 2:

The following suggestion is targeted at the writer of the second student sample. This suggestion was written to support this student writer and may not apply to all students.

- Exposure to the content will help the student build his or her vocabulary. While reading the source material, help the student locate and highlight vocabulary that is specific to the topic. Next, have the student create a list of those words. Help the student find synonyms of the word “kid” and add them to the list.
- Create word banks for common words that are often vague, such as “big” or “said”. Provide the student with a copy of the word bank to access as needed.
- Use mentor texts to illustrate how skilled writers use language. Ask students questions about the language an author uses and how changing a precise word, such as “shouted,” to a vague word, such as “said,” changes the meaning or tone of a sentence.

Element: Grammar and Conventions

Criterion: The student writes grammatically correct sentences to include punctuation and capitalization.

As appropriate to the written work, a student who is on target will

- write grammatically correct sentences.
- use action verbs.
- use linking verbs.
- use helping verbs.
- use and maintain the correct verb tense.
- use correct subject-verb agreement.
- use the correct type of pronoun as appropriate.
- use correct capitalization.
- use and place commas correctly as appropriate.
- use a colon to introduce a list.
- use and correctly place and punctuate phrases and clauses as appropriate.
- use correct pronoun-antecedent agreement.
- use correct punctuation for titles of short and long works.

A student who needs support may

- write one or more sentence fragments.
- write one or more run-on sentences.
- incorrectly place or punctuate one or more phrases or clauses.
- use the wrong verb tense.
- switch verb tenses unnecessarily.
- use incorrect subject-verb agreement one or more times.
- use incorrect pronoun-antecedent agreement one or more times.
- not correctly capitalize one or more words.
- not correctly use or place one or more adjectives.
- not correctly use or place one or more adverbs.
- incorrectly place a preposition phrase.
- misuse, misplace, or not use punctuation marks.
- incorrectly use a commonly confused word, such as “to” or “too”.

Student Sample 1

Students were asked to read two texts about the pros and cons of moving to a four-day school week. Students were asked to choose a side and write an argumentative response.

Have you ever wasted time at school? I know I have. At my school, we wasted a lot of time. Some days we have to climb up the big, old, green bleachers to watch a talent show or listen to a speaker. This is a waste of my time. I bet we waste enough time in one week to equal a full day of school. Our school should go to a four day school week. This would give us an extra day in the weekend and it could save the school money on the electric bill.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Element: Grammar and Conventions

The more practice students have working with writing and correcting sentences for correct grammar and conventions, the more likely students are to store these fundamental skills in their long-term memories. Students also need practice retrieving these skills from their long-term memories and applying them in different types of writing.

- In the third sentence, the student uses a prepositional phrase at the beginning of the sentence. The phrase is correctly written because it begins with the preposition “at” and ends with the object “school”. Placing it at the beginning of the sentence requires the use of a comma after it. The student has correctly placed this comma. Using a prepositional phrase at the beginning of the sentence adds variety to the student’s writing and enhances the student’s style.
- In the fourth sentence, the student writes, “Some days we have to climb up the big, old, green bleachers...” This sentence includes a list of adjectives that describe the bleachers. They are big bleachers. They are old bleachers, and they are green bleachers.
- What would happen to this sentence if we placed these adjectives in a different order? “Some days we have to climb up the green, old, big bleachers...” Does changing the order of the adjectives impact the sentence?
- Let’s see what happens when we remove one adjective and switch the order: “Some days we have to climb up the green big bleachers...” “Some days we have to climb up the green old bleachers...” Does “it sound right” when we place “green” ahead of “big”? No. There is a reason for this. While there is no hard and fast grammatical rule for listing adjectives, there is a general order. In this case, we see size (big), age (old), and color (green). We also learned that putting those in a different order changes how fluid the sentence is. One rule of thumb is the Royal Order of Adjectives, which is a standard sequence of placing adjectives that describe the same noun.

Element: Citing Sources

Criterion: The student thoroughly cites source material using an academic style guide as pre-determined by the teacher.

Before assigning writing, the teacher should select an appropriate academic style guide for instruction on how to cite sources and avoid plagiarism. Depending on the style guide, students may be required to include an author's last name, page number, the title of the work, and/ or the URL associated with the source. This is a classroom-level decision.

A student who is on target will

- include the source of a direct quotation.
- include the source of any information directly taken from another person or the entity's work.

A student who needs support may

- not include the source of a direct quotation.
- not include the source of any information directly taken from another person or the entity's work.

Element: Citing Sources

- Determine which type of citation style guide to use in the classroom. Use only that format during the school year.
- Do not teach all parts of the style guide. Only teach the parts that are relevant for 5th-grade students. This will be a brand-new skill for them.
- Model creating in-text citations and a resource page with students. Have students work alongside you so they can implement the format with you. This can also be used as a resource.
- Frequently revisit the style guide and model pieces of it. The less frequently you use the style guide in your classroom, the less students will remember.
- If most students in the class are making the same errors in their citations, reteach it to the entire class.
- Allow students to use their resources as they add citations to their work. The more they see and use the resources, the better they will be at citing sources.