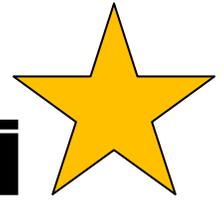


# Looking for that je ne sais quoi



The Florida Writes Assessment is graded with a 1-6 rubric using holistic scoring. When using this method of evaluation, the reader must judge a writer's ability to integrate certain criteria: focus, organization, supports, and conventions. No separate scores are given for each criterion. The writing is judged on overall effect. This is the method I will use because it is "real" and because it relates to the writing you must do well on in 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. If you make a 6 in Harrellland, you are likely to make a 6 on the test.

## **Focus refers to how well the essay sustains a clear main idea**

- Do all the supporting details relate to the topic on the whole?
- Can any extra information be removed that doesn't relate to the topic?
- Does the essay get sidetracked, losing sight of the main topic?

## **Organization refers to how clearly the essay is structured or logically planned.**

- Is the main idea clearly stated in the introduction?
- Does it have a distinct beginning, middle, and end (introduction, body, conclusion)?
- Is it clear as to what the main points of the essay are and which details support them?
- Do sentences connect logically to one another?
- Does the essay contain appropriate transitions between one idea and the next?
- Does the conclusion clearly summarize, restate, or emphasize the key ideas presented?

## **Support refers to details or examples which strengthen the overall main idea(s)**

- Are specific and appropriate facts, reasons, examples, and/or statistics present for support?
- Does the choice of words help the reader clearly understand the main point(s) of the essay?
- Is the depth of support appropriate for the audience intended?
- Is the support both thorough and credible?

## **Conventions refer to how well the essay adheres to the basic rules of grammar and spelling.**

- Is the essay punctuated properly?
- Is the spelling correct?
- Are words capitalized where appropriate?
- Are all the sentences complete?
- Are a variety of sentence structures used?

## **Just what constitutes a 6 (that's the best—the je ne sais quoi)**

The writing is focused, purposeful, and reflects insight into the writing situation. It conveys a sense of completeness and wholeness with adherence to the main idea, and its organizational pattern allows for a logical progression of ideas. Support is substantial, specific, relevant, concrete and/or illustrative. The paper demonstrates a commitment to and an involvement with the subject, clarity in presentation of ideas, and may use creative writing strategies appropriate to the purpose of the paper. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language with freshness of expression. Sentence structure is varied, and sentences are complete except when fragments are used purposefully. Few, if any, convention errors occur in mechanics, spelling, or punctuation.

# A Simplified Look

- 6: The teacher wrote it, only better
- 5: Excellent writing with a strong voice and vocabulary. Some minor errors occur and some “pop” and “pizzazz” is missing which makes it less than a 6
- 4: The “teacher pleaser” Everything is there but missing voice and creativity. A safe essay.
- 3: Some organization, some support with introduction, body, and conclusion. Some errors start to Impede the reading of the essay.
- 2: No introduction or conclusion. Weak organization and little support. Many errors.
- 1: On topic, but not much more.
- Unscorable: What were you thinking?

TOPIC	ORGANIZATION	SUPPORT	SENTENCES	VOCAB	CONVENTIONS
6 Wow! Completely on topic and you thought of something about the topic that no one else did. 5 Great job! You are completely on topic. You didn't wander off at all. 4 Good job of talking about the topic. Your response may have also included a little bit of info off topic 3 God job of talking about the topic, but you have included ideas that go off it. 2 You were on topic some, but off topic more.	6 Wow! You've written your ideas in a good order with a beginning, middle and end, and you've used transitions like <i>also, another, finally</i> . 5 Wow! You've written your ideas in good order with beginning, middle, and end and used transitions. 4 You made an effort to write a beginning, middle, and end and used a few transitions 3 You have a beginning, middle, and end but they seem to be in a confusing order 2 Your beginning, middle, and end are too brief and not developed.	6 Wow! Great specific details. You've included so many good examples that I can picture exactly what you're describing. 5 Good specific examples. Ideas clearly developed and the reader can clearly see what you're describing. 4 All ideas are developed but not enough detail for the reader to picture what you're describing. 3 Your ideas are not developed enough or at all. Some needless repetition 2 Little if any support. You may just have lists.	6 Wow! You've used lots of different kinds of sentences 5 Wow! You've used lots of different kinds of sentences. 4 Wow! You've used lots of different kinds of sentences. 3 You've used some different kinds of sentences. 2 The order of your words in some sentences (syntax) makes them hard to understand	6 Wow! Great words. <i>Blasting</i> instead of loud; <i>difficult</i> instead of hard for example 5 Wow! Great words. <i>Blasting</i> instead of loud; <i>difficult</i> instead of hard for ex. 4 The words you used are OK. They get your point across. 3 Some words you used are OK but some are babyish and not descriptive. 2 Too much slang may be used and your words are babyish and not descriptive.	6 Wow! You have only a few, if any, mistakes in spelling, punct., grammar, and the way you use words. 5 Spelling, punctuation, grammar and the way you use words are OK but you have some mistakes. 4 Spelling, punctuation, grammar and the way you use words are OK but you have some mistakes. 3 Most spelling, punctuation, grammar and the way you use words are OK but the editing could be much better. 2 The mistakes are interfering with the effectiveness of your writing.

The above charts offer you an overview of holistic grading comments and help you see what you can do to bring your work up to that je ne sais quoi (6) or 5, which is also an A. Please also use the editing sheets I gave you for Having a Writing Conference with Yourself and the Editing sheets for revising poetry. The satire sheets “How to Rite Good” et al can also help you bring your writing to Fame and Glory.