



Opinion Essay Writing Rubric (Grades 3–5)

| Score | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Purpose, Focus, and Organization | <p>The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clearly stated opinion and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly maintained opinion with little or no loosely related material • Skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas • Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end with a satisfying introduction and conclusion | <p>The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has an opinion and evident organizational structure with a sense of completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A maintained opinion, though some loosely related material may be present • Adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify the relationships between and among ideas • Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end with a sufficient introduction and conclusion | <p>The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience, and task but may include loosely related or extraneous material; and it may have an opinion with an inconsistent organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partially focused opinion but insufficiently sustained or unclear • Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety • Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end and an inadequate introduction or conclusion | <p>The response is related to the topic but may demonstrate little or no awareness of the purpose, audience, and task; and it may have no discernible opinion and little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent, confusing, or ambiguous opinion • Frequent extraneous ideas impeding understanding • Few or no transitional strategies • Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization |

*To receive a score in all categories the response must be in English, of a sufficient length, and address the prompt.

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| Score | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Evidence and Elaboration | <p>The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the writer’s opinion that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant evidence integrated smoothly and thoroughly with references to sources • Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques, demonstrating understanding of the topic and text • Clear and effective expression of ideas, using precise language • Academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose • Varied sentence structure, demonstrating language facility | <p>The response provides adequate support/evidence for the writer’s opinion that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally integrated evidence from sources, though references may be general, imprecise, or inconsistent • Adequate use of some elaborative techniques • Adequate expression of ideas, employing a mix of precise and general language • Domain-specific vocabulary generally appropriate for the audience and purpose • Some variation in sentence structure | <p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the writer’s opinion that includes ineffective use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weakly integrated evidence from sources and erratic or irrelevant references • Repetitive or ineffective use of elaborative techniques • Imprecise or simplistic expression of ideas • Inappropriate or ineffective domain-specific vocabulary • Sentences possibly limited to simple constructions | <p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the writer’s opinion, including little if any use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal, absent, erroneous, or irrelevant evidence from the source material • Expression of ideas that is vague, unclear, or confusing • Limited or inappropriate language or domain-specific vocabulary • Sentences limited to simple constructions |
| Score | N/A | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Conventions | <p>(2-point rubric begins at score point 2)</p> | <p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some minor errors in usage but no patterns of errors • Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling | <p>The response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various errors in usage • Inconsistent use of correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling | <p>The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning.</p> |

*To receive a score in all categories the response must be in English, of a sufficient length, and address the prompt.