



Conventions Scoring Guide
All Types of Writing
Grades 9 – 12

The conventions scores provide evidence of a student’s control of standard written English. The score reflects a student’s skill in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, and paragraphing. It does not assess fluency or style – these are assessed in the rubrics for specific writing types.

- In assessing a student’s skill in spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing, the level of complexity and difficulty of word choices, sentence structure, and narrative strategies attempted should be taken into account. For example, misspelling “because” is not comparable to misspelling “accommodation”; misuse of a period is not comparable to misuse of a semi-colon; absence of all paragraphing is not comparable to those errors which may occur in an ambitious piece of extended dialogue.
- “Grammar” refers to agreed upon rules for verb forms, formation of plurals, use of parts of speech, etc.
- “Usage” refers to elements such as correct sentence structure, subject-verb agreement, consistent tense use, parallel structure, pronoun reference, etc.
- To determine that a student shows mastery or control of the conventions, the piece must be of sufficient length and substance. Very simple, risk-free sentences or vocabulary cannot provide evidence of control.

Score Point 5 <u>Exceeds the Standard</u>	Score Point 4 <u>Meets the standard</u>	Score Point 3 <u>Basic Control</u>	Score Point 2 <u>Limited Control</u>	Score Point 1 <u>Minimal Control</u>
Writing shows virtual mastery of the conventions of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, and paragraphing. There may be an occasional lapse resulting from the student’s attempt to handle complexities in ideas or style. The paper is of sufficient length and complexity to demonstrate mastery.	Writing generally shows control of the conventions of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, and paragraphing. There may be minor errors, but these in no way divert the reader’s attention or cause confusion. Such errors could easily be edited when pointed out to the student. The paper is of sufficient length and complexity to demonstrate control.	Writing shows adequate control of the conventions of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, and paragraphing. Writing errors do not significantly interfere with comprehension. While the paper may be simplistic, it is sufficient in length to demonstrate control of writing.	Writing shows some control of the conventions of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, and paragraphing. Writing shows frequent errors, some of which may be serious (e.g., misspelling common words, mistakes in sentence structure). These are distracting to a reader and may even create confusion. Errors call for re-teaching of some skills. Paper may not be of sufficient length to demonstrate control and/or may use very simple sentence structure and vocabulary.	Writing shows little control of the conventions of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, and paragraphing. Writing shows serious and numerous problems which are distracting and often confusing to the reader. In places the writing may be incoherent. The errors call for significant re-teaching and extensive practice in most of the conventions.