

**Figure 3** Generic grade eight writing rubric

	4	3	2	1	0
<b>Ideas and Content</b>	The topic is focused. Main ideas are clear. Numerous relevant and accurate details or examples support the ideas (e.g., facts, similes, metaphors, or comparisons).	The topic and ideas are clear but there is not enough detail. The writing stays on topic but doesn't address minor parts of the assignment.	There is a very general topic but the writing strays off topic or doesn't address major parts of the assignment.	The topic and ideas are unclear. It's hard to see which information is most important. May be repetitious or disconnected thoughts with no main point.	
<b>Organization</b>	The writing has a catchy beginning to grab the reader's attention, a developed middle, and meaningful ending. The order of ideas makes sense. Transitions show how ideas connect. Pacing is well-controlled.	The paper has a beginning, middle and end. The order makes sense. Transitions are used but some don't work well. Pacing is reasonable.	The paper has an attempt at an introduction &/ or conclusion. Some ideas seem out of order. Transitions need a lot of work. Writing may lunge ahead or hover over details.	There is no real introduction or conclusion. Ideas seem strung together in a loose fashion. Pacing is uncontrolled.	
<b>Paragraphs</b>	Paragraphs are properly indented and begin in the right spots. Each has one topic, and has topic, supporting, and closing sentences.	Paragraphs are indented; some begin in the right spots and have topic, supporting and closing sentences.	Paragraphs tend to begin in the wrong places. May not have topic sentences.	There are either 1-2 long paragraphs or random paragraph breaks.	
<b>Voice</b>	The writing has personality. The writer cares about the topic and speaks right to the intended audience.	The writing seems sincere but the author's personality fades in and out.	The writer seems to be aware of an audience but does not attempt to engage it.	The style is mismatched with the purpose or audience. The tone is bland.	
<b>Word Choice</b>	Uses vivid, precise words and phrases that help make the meaning clear (e.g., 5 senses words). Avoids clichés and jargon.	Words used are adequate and correct, with a few attempts at colorful language.	Words used are ordinary. Some language may seem forced and/or clichéd.	Limited, repetitive vocabulary. Words are sometimes used incorrectly.	
<b>Sentence Fluency</b>	Sentences are well-constructed, and have different beginnings and lengths. Fragments, if used, add style. Dialogue, if used, sounds natural.	Sentences are usually constructed correctly. Some variety in beginnings and length.	Many incorrect sentences. Little variety in beginnings or length. Dialogue, if used, sounds unnatural.	Incomplete &/or run-on sentences make the paper hard to read. Little or no variety in beginnings or length.	
<b>Conventions</b>	Few, if any, errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar. Misspellings are of sophisticated vocabulary.	Spelling, punctuation, caps and grammar are usually correct.	Errors are frequent enough to make the writing hard to understand.	Errors are so frequent that they are distracting and make the paper almost impossible to read.	