

**SAINT IGNATIUS COLLEGE PREPARATORY  
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

**Rubric for Scoring the Junior Writing Exam**

While this rubric is specifically designed for scoring the Junior Writing Exam, it provides a basis for evaluating writing at any level; it includes descriptors of writing performance in the following areas:

- a) quality and clarity of thought in response to topic
- b) support, development, and organization
- c) syntax and command of language
- d) grammar, usage, and mechanics

**Score of 8: Strong**

These papers are those of students who can clearly and eloquently express themselves. They may have minor flaws, but represent superior writing. A typical essay in this category:

- a) understands the situation of the topic and addresses the problem with a clear, insightful thesis statement that is proven throughout the body of the essay; the writer takes risk in her assessment of the problem.
- b) includes compelling evidence and analysis that advances the thesis and builds a coherent, organized argument; ideas are supported by apt reasons and well-chosen examples, and transitions between paragraphs allow for a smooth progression of the paper; introduction grabs reader's attention and conclusion ties up loose ends, provoking further thought
- c) uses an effective, fluent style marked by a variety of sentence structures and a clear command of the language; striking words catch the reader's eye; the writer takes risk with style and voice.
- d) may have some flaws, but is generally free from errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

**Score of 6: Proficient**

These papers also belong to students who demonstrate competence in writing. They may have some errors, but they are not serious enough to significantly distract or confuse the reader. A typical essay in this category:

- a) addresses the topic with a thesis statement, but is less clear in its assessment of the problem or in its solution to it; may treat the topic simplistically or repetitively, but shows depth of thought in places
- b) is adequately organized and developed, generally supporting ideas with reasons and examples; uses some transitions between paragraphs; includes an introduction and conclusion, but they may not draw reader in or tie up loose ends
- c) demonstrates adequate use of syntax and language although in some cases sentences might be wordy or display little sentence variety; uses some active verbs and strong word choice
- d) may have some errors, but generally demonstrates control of grammar, usage, and mechanics

**Score of 4: Deficient**

These papers belong to students whose writing requires remediation. A typical essay in this category:

- a) suggests confusion about the topic, neglects important aspects of the problem, and/or does not include a thesis statement; demonstrates confused or simplistic thinking;
- b) lacks focus and organization; provides simplistic generalization without support; ideas do not follow one another; points lack reference to the overall purpose of their paragraph; uses few or no transitions between ideas; introduction and/or conclusion are simplistic and could be more engaging or clearer
- c) includes poor vocabulary, poor sentence structure, wordy expressions, repetition of the verbs "is" and "has."
- d) is marred by numerous errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that frequently interfere with meaning

**Score of 2: Weak**

These papers belong to students who have fundamental problems with the language. A typical essay in this category:

- a) suggests an inability to comprehend the question or to respond meaningfully to the topic
- b) is unfocused, illogical, or incoherent; is disorganized and undeveloped, providing little or no relevant support; uses no transitions between ideas; lacks an introduction and/or conclusion
- c) lacks basic control of sentence variety and vocabulary
- d) has serious and persistent errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that severely interfere with meaning

Papers will be scored based upon how well they match the criteria outlined above. If a borderline essay meets half the criteria of one category but fails in the other two areas, precedence will be given to the criteria under "c" and "d" when assigning a score.