# Assessing Student Learning in the Arts

Assessment in the arts is an integral part of effective arts instruction. The arts toolkit presents assessment not as a "grade," but as a vital form of <u>feedback</u> to students to help them improve the <u>quality</u> of their work in the arts.

Assessments in the arts can take many forms from studio critiques, to checklists to rubrics, but all assessments clarify <u>criteria</u> for quality work in the art form.

The following examples of scoring guides, or rubrics, can be used as models for assessment of composition – or the process of **creating** – in the arts.

The following six-trait writing rubric was developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory to assess student written compositions. The rubric may be adapted for use in the assessment of student compositions in art, music, drama/theatre, and dance. The six traits in both writing and the arts are:

- ### Ideas & Content
  Both written and artistic compositions rely on powerful ideas and content.

- ### Organization
  Successful student artworks follow organizing principles.

- ### Voice
  Students create an expressive "voice" used to convey the ideas of their compositions.

- ### Word Choice
  In the case of the arts, this is the choice of arts elements.

- ### Sentence Fluency
  In artworks, successful compositions rely on transitional devices to achieve fluency.

- ### Conventions
  Each of the arts has techniques and principles that define the art form.

# WRITING SCORE GUIDE SUMMARY

| SIX TRAITS | 4 POINTS | 3 POINTS | 2 POINTS | 1 POINT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ideas & Content (Development)** | The writing is clear and focused.  It holds the reader's attention.  Main ideas are developed by supporting details suitable to audience and purpose. | The writing is mostly focused, and the reader can easily understand the main idea.  Support is present, although it may be too general. | The ideas are somewhat unclear or the attempted development is minimal, too simple, irrelevant, or incomplete. | The ideas are unclear, inconsistent, and/or lack a central theme and/or purpose. |
| **Organization** | The organization enhances the central ideas; the sequence and structure are strong and move the reader through the text. | The organization is generally clear and logical; a structure is present but may be predictable. | The writer has made an attempt to organize the text, but the overall structure may be inconsistent. | The writing lacks organizational structure and may be haphazard and/or disjointed. |
| **Voice** | The writer has chosen a voice appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience.  The writer demonstrates commitment to the topic, purpose, and audience.  There is a clear sense of writing to be read. | The writer's voice is present.  The writer seems committed to the topic, and there is a sense of "writing to be read." | The writer's voice may emerge at times.  The writer's commitment to the topic seems inconsistent, and there is little sense of writing to be read. | The writer's voice provides little, if any, sense of involvement or commitment, and there is no sense of writing to be read. |
| **Word Choice** | Words convey the intended message in an interesting, precise, and natural way appropriate to audience and purpose. | The variety of words used is functional and appropriate to audience and purpose. | Language is predictable, ordinary and/or imprecise, and at times, may not be appropriate for intended audience and/or purpose. | Language is limited, monotonous and/or misused; only the most general kind of message is communicated. |
| **Sentence Fluency** | Sentences are well built, with strong and varied structure that invite oral reading. | The text flows; sentence patterns are somewhat varied and contribute to the ease of reading aloud. | The sentence structure tends to be mechanical rather than fluid; occasional awkward constructions may force the reader to slow down or reread. | The writing is difficult to follow or read aloud; sentences tend to be incomplete, run-on, or awkward. |
| **Conventions** | The writing demonstrates strong control of standard writing conventions and uses them effectively to enhance communication. Errors are so few and minor that the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them. | The writing demonstrates reasonable control of standard writing conventions.  There may be a few errors, but they do not impede readability. | The writing demonstrates limited control of standard writing conventions.  Errors begin to impede readability. | The writing demonstrates little or no control of standard writing conventions.  The severity and frequency of errors are so overwhelming that the reader finds it difficult to focus on the message and must reread for meaning. |

Based on the work of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

| Visual Arts Composition Scoring Guide Summary (Grade 5) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **SIX TRAITS** | **4 points** | **3 points** | **2 points** | **1 point** |
| **Ideas & Content** Clarity Use of Details | The idea and content of the artwork shows meaning and focus. Details and ideas go beyond the obvious or predictable. | The artwork addresses a topic and shows a sense of purpose. Supporting details are present but predictable. | The ideas are unclear and lack focus. Details are unrelated to main composition. | The ideas and content are unclear. The composition is incomplete. |
| **Organization** (Structure) | The organization enhances the center of interest. Structure is strong and moves the viewer through the work. | The organization is clear. Structure is present but may be predictable. | The artist has made an attempt to organize the work. The overall structure is inconsistent. | The work lacks structure and does not communicate an idea. |
| **Voice** Personal style/voice  Audience/ purpose | The artist has chosen a voice appropriate to the topic. The work expresses personal style. | The artist's voice is clear and supports the topic | The artist's voice is present but may not be appropriate for the audience. | The artist's voice is missing or copied. |
| **Choice of Arts Elements** Materials | The art elements and materials convey the intended message and are interesting to the viewer. | The art elements and materials are functional but may be predictable. | Choices of art elements and materials are ordinary and show lack of purpose. | Choice of art elements and materials are monotonous and do not enhance the subject matter. |
| **Fluency** Transitions Flow | The work shows stylistic control and creates a flow that invites the viewer into the work. | The composition shows inconsistent style yet moves the viewer easily through the work. | The artwork tends to be mechanical with little attention to style. Overall composition seems confusing. | The artwork is confusing and shows no awareness of style. |
| **Conventions** Craftsmanship | The artist has strong control of materials and tools. Quality craftsmanship reinforces the organization and clarifies visual presentation. | The artist has reasonable control of materials and tools. Lack of media technique does not detract from the meaning of the artwork. | The artist has limited control of materials and tools. Poor craftsmanship limits the success of the artwork. | The artist has a lack of control of materials and tools. Craftsmanship shows no focus or organization. |

Based on the work of the Vancouver, Washington School District.

VISUAL ARTS RUBRIC

# MUSIC RUBRIC

| Music Composition Scoring Guide Summary (Grade 5) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SIX TRAITS** | **4 points** | **3 points** | **2 points** | **1 point** |
| **Ideas & Content** Clarity Use of Details | The idea and content of the composition are clear and compelling. Details and ideas go beyond the obvious or predictable. | The composition is clear, focused, and easily understood by the listener. Music elements are present although they may be predictable or contrived. | The ideas and content of the composition are undeveloped. The composition is simple or incomplete. | The composition is unclear, unfocused, and incomplete. The composition lacks a main idea or theme. |
| **Organization** (Structure) | The composition has a clear beginning, middle, and end. The form is recognizable. | The composition is clear and logical. A structure is present. | The composition shows an attempt at organization, but is inconsistent or incomplete. Beginnings and endings need clarification. | The composition lacks organization, without a clear beginning, middle, or end. |
| **Voice** Personal style/voice Audience/ purpose | The composer's voice clearly acknowledges and communicates with the intended audience. A sense of personal style and purpose is present. | The composer's voice is present. The composition interests the audience. | The composer's voice emerges at times. The commitment to the composition is inconsistent. The composition attempts to engage the audience. | The composer's voice is absent. There is little commitment to the composition. The composition does not hold the audience's attention. |
| **Choice of Arts Elements** Materials | The composition is enhanced by the instrumentation. The choice of tonality and key enhance the tone color of the composition. The student has chosen instrumentation appropriate for the composition. | The composition uses appropriate instrumentation. | Compositional choices are limited and unorganized. The key is unclear or inconsistent. | Inappropriate choice of instrumentation is distracting and the composition lacks discernable tonality. |
| **Fluency** Transitions Flow | The composition is rhythmic, with patterns that are natural. The melody is unified, fluid, and moves through transitions smoothly and effectively. Stylistic control is evident. The audience is able to follow the performance with ease. | The composition is rhythmic. The melody is unified with few interruptions in the flow of the performance. | The composition does not always flow and the choice of intervals may at times be uncomfortable. The piece is not always rhythmic. | The composition shows uncomfortable intervals and rhythms are difficult to perform. |
| **Conventions** Craftsmanship | The score shows attention to musical rules. Bar lines are placed correctly and the meter enhances the overall work. | The score shows attention to musical rules. The song is easily read, but may include some errors. | The score shows limited understanding of musical rules. The errors begin to impede reading the score. | The score shows a lack of understanding of musical rules. The large number of errors in placing notes on the staff and of rhythm and meter make it difficult to read the song. |

Based on the work of the Vancouver, Washington School District.

| Drama Composition Scoring Guide Summary (Grade 5) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SIX TRAITS** | **4 Points** | **3 Points** | **2 Points** | **1 Point** |
| **Ideas & Content** Clarity Use of Details | A scene offers a clear sense of characters, setting, relationships, conflict, and emotions. A clear central idea builds from character relationships. | A scene contains characters, a setting, and conflict, but with little emotion. The action is simple, but evocative of a central idea. | A scene offers some sense of character, setting, and event but lacks conflict or emotion. | A scene lacks any sense of characters, a setting, or central event. There is no central idea to the scene. |
| **Organization** (Structure) | A scene has a definite beginning, middle, and end, each part smoothly building on the last, rising to a satisfying conclusion. | A scene has a clear beginning and end. | A scene has a beginning, but falls off before reaching a definite end to the idea. | A scene is static and lacks forward motion. |
| **Voice** Personal style/voice Audience/Purpose | A scene is full of surprises and engaging ideas that reveal imaginative insights into characters, relationships and conflict. Participants communicate effectively with the audience. | A scene contains inventive ideas, with participants building on each other's contributions. Participants are aware of the audience, but focused on the scene. | A scene is predictable but built from the participants' own idea. Participants are aware of the audience and withdraw from them. | A scene is predictable and imitative. The action happens out of view of the audience. Participants are self-conscious, afraid of audience reaction. |
| **Choice of Arts Elements** Materials | A dynamic and imaginative blend of bodies and voices clearly communicate the action/purpose of a scene or character. Participants work well together, focused on achieving a common goal. | Characters, action, and purpose are conveyed clearly through dynamic use of whole bodies and strong voices. Participants work well together. | Characters, action, and purpose are suggested by bodies but lack dynamism. Participants speak clearly, but too softly. Participants are aware of partners' contributions, but may not build on them. | Bodies give no sense of character, purpose, or action. Action may be done entirely with the hands. Participants cannot be heard. Participants are focused on their own ideas. |
| **Fluency** Transitions Flow | A scene moves smoothly from moment to moment with participants expanding on and exploring ideas. Participants are clearly focused, committed to the emotion, purpose, and reason. | The action of a scene contains emotion, purpose, and reason in a logical sequence. Participants sustain the scene, but may be distracted by outside viewers and mistakes. | The action of a scene is clear, but lacks emotion, purpose, or reason. Participant focus fades in and out in a scene. Participants are unprepared for each new event in a sequence. | The action of a scene or image is unclear, unfocused, or rushed. Participants are unaware of action from moment to moment. Participants may laugh, mumble, or direct others. |
| **Conventions** Craftsmanship | Characters in a scene have clear, strong objectives in conflict with each other. Dialogue and action evolve naturally from the objectives and conflict. | A scene contains conflict, but character action needs to be stronger and more urgent, with a particular goal. | A scene contains dialogue and/or action but with little connection to characters, relationships or events. | Characters, relationships, and events are unclear due to lack of action and dialogue. Participants falter with dialogue, or say nothing. |

Created by Daniel A. Kelin, II

DRAMA RUBRIC

| Dance Composition Scoring Guide Summary  (Grade 5) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **SIX TRAITS** | **4 points** | **3 points** | **2 points** | **1 point** |
| **Ideas & Content** Clarity Use of Details | The topic, theme, purpose, or message of the dance is captivating and focused, moving and affecting the audience. | The composition is clear, focused, and easily understood by the audience.  The dance holds the attention of the audience. | The ideas and content of the composition are undeveloped.  The composition is simple or incomplete. | The composition is unclear and unfocused. The idea or theme is unclear. |
| **Organization** (Structure) | The dance has a clear beginning, middle, and end.  The organization and sequence enhance the purpose of the dance. | The dance has a beginning, middle, and end.  The organization is generally clear and logical. | The composition shows an attempt at organization, but is inconsistent or incomplete. Beginnings and endings need clarification. | The composition lacks organization, without a clear beginning, middle or end. |
| **Voice** Personal style/voice Audience/ purpose | The composition compels the audience to watch. The work expresses originality and personal style. | The choreographer's voice is present.  The composition is of interest to the audience. | The choreographer's voice emerges at times. The composition engages the audience sporadically. | The choreographer's voice is absent.  It is hard to sense the purpose behind the work. |
| **Choice of Arts Elements** Materials | The dance includes diverse choices of space, time, and energy that substantially support the ideas and purpose of the dance. | Space, time, and energy choices, while appropriate to the purpose of the dance, may be conventional and predictable. | Movement choices of space, time, and energy are limited and predictable. | The dance makes little use of space, time, or energy elements. Choices are arbitrary and have little or no apparent connection to purpose. |
| **Fluency** Transitions Flow | The dance is unified, fluid, and moves through phrases smoothly and effectively.  The audience can follow the performance with ease. | Transitions are present. The dance is unified with few interruptions in the flow of the performance. | Transitions are abrupt. Changes between phrases are awkward with many stops and starts.  Movements are repetitive. | The dance is disjointed and lacks a sense of unity.  There is no apparent connection between movements. |
| **Conventions** Craftsmanship | The dance includes inventive and purposeful punctuation (dynamic choices such as stops or explosions). Entrances and exits enhance the purpose of the dance. | The dance includes basic use of dynamics; entrance and exit are used appropriately. | There is some use of dynamics throughout the dance.  Entrances and exits may not be appropriate to the purpose of the dance or audience. | There is no dynamic progression throughout the dance.  The dance may seem "flat" or monotonous. Entrances and exits are either absent or used inappropriately. |

Based on the work of the Vancouver, Washington School District