

Guidelines to Applying the Writing Prompt Rubric

The following statements are intended to clarify how the ISTEP+ 6-point Writing Rubric and 4-point Grammar and Usage Rubric are applied during scoring.

1. Writing rubrics are applied holistically. Categorical statements should not be used as a checklist. Therefore, any categorical statements which may appear in the rubrics must be regarded as descriptions of what can be expected in most papers at that particular score point, but they should not be interpreted to mean that holistic scoring no longer applies.

- For example, “Writer does not go off on tangents,” is in the Writing Rubric for the 6 score point. If a paper is clearly a 6 when scored holistically (taking all points of the rubric into consideration) and it contains numerous attributes that mark it as a 6, to score it as a 5 or 4 because of one attribute is to elevate that attribute above all others and is a failure to score the paper holistically.

2. When a paper is scored using the 6-point Writing Rubric, it is read as if it contains no spelling, grammatical, punctuation, or other mechanical errors. These are evaluated with the Grammar and Usage Rubric.

3. Poor handwriting does not affect the scores assigned. Handwriting is not a part of any rubric. If an evaluator is unable to read a paper, another evaluator or the supervisor reads it. If no one is able to decipher the handwriting, then —and only then— is it assigned the condition code for illegible.

4. Length is not part of the Writing Rubric. Even though there may often be a correlation between length and score, quality is what is considered for scoring. Papers can be many pages in length and still be weak papers (e.g., rambling, repetitive). Similarly, briefer papers may be written succinctly and with precision and receive high scores.

5. Any student writing that has been erased or otherwise marked out will not be scored.

6. Titles are not considered in scoring, even if errors appear in the title a student has included.

Guidelines to Applying the ELA 2-point Constructed-Response Rubric

The following statements are intended to clarify how the ISTEP+ ELA 2-point Constructed Response Rubric is applied during scoring.

- 1.** The rubric is applied holistically. “The task” referenced in the rubric is question-specific. If the response sufficiently answers the question and is supported with relevant text-based details, the response receives full credit.
- 2.** When a response is scored using the ELA 2-point Constructed-Response Rubric, it is read as if it contains no spelling, grammatical, punctuation, or other mechanical errors. **ONLY** reading comprehension is assessed through these questions.
- 3.** Poor handwriting does not affect the scores assigned. Handwriting is not a part of any rubric. If an evaluator is unable to read a response, another evaluator or the supervisor reads it. If no one is able to decipher the handwriting, then —and only then— is it assigned the condition code for illegible.
- 4.** Restating the question is not a requirement of the task or addressed in the rubric, so it does not contribute to the score.
- 5.** Any student writing that has been erased or otherwise marked out will not be scored.