



Formative Single-Point Rubric

Argument Writing
Kindergarten ELA

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Ellen E. Weaver
State Superintendent of Education

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Introduction

To better support elementary teachers with assessing writing at the classroom level, the Office of Assessment and Standards, along with ELA content experts, teachers, and literacy leaders from across the state, has created grade-level writing rubrics for each mode of writing in the *2024 SC CCR ELA Standards*. These rubrics will provide teachers with common writing goals for their students and a common tool to evaluate student writing.

Overarching Expectation 6 (ELA.OE.6) in the 2024 ELA Standards notes that students should “create quality work by adhering to an accepted format.” Using rubrics to assess writing provides students with expectations and an accepted format for various types of writing assignments. While rubrics communicate learning goals to students, they also support teachers by providing a tool for quick, targeted feedback and promoting collaboration and conversations between teachers.

The formative rubrics created for South Carolina elementary teachers are single-point rubrics. These rubrics list the criteria for proficiency in the different modes of writing at each grade level and allow teachers to identify where students approach proficiency and exceed proficiency.

Single-point rubrics are formative and instructional because they allow teachers to provide students with feedback for improvement. This differs from the holistic Text-Dependent Writing (TDW) scoring rubrics, which are summative and do not allow explicit feedback for improvement. Another advantage of the single-point rubric for classroom use is that teachers can use only the parts of the rubric they want to focus on at that time. This allows for more targeted feedback and remediation. This also allows for more variety in the format of student writing.

We would like to thank all the ELA content experts, teachers, and literacy leaders who assisted us in the creation of the ELA formative rubrics.

How to Use a Single-Point Rubric

Single-point rubrics allow teachers to focus on one or two areas of weakness instead of focusing on all elements in a student’s written work. Using single-point rubrics also provides teachers with the ability to provide targeted feedback and instruction to each student based on his or her individual needs.

Example: Transitional Words and Phrases

Suggestions	Criteria	Strengths
	Transitional Words and Phrases: The student uses a variety of transitional strategies to link and structure ideas. The transitions support the organization of the written work.	

In the table above, the criterion to be targeted through feedback and revision is “*transitional words and phrases*.” The criterion is outlined in the middle section of the table. The left-hand side of the table provides space for a teacher to provide suggestions for improvement on the targeted criterion—transitional words and phrases. The box on the right-hand side of the table provides space for a teacher to note any strengths in the student’s use of transitional words and phrases. Teachers may choose to leave feedback in both categories or in one category.

Student Sample: Figure 1

I do not like naps. Naps are not fun. Schools should not require naps during the school day.
A nap at school could make our day longer. We might lose recess.

Figure 1 contains an excerpt of student writing that does not use transitional words and phrases to link ideas.

Example: Providing Suggestions and Noting Strengths

Suggestions	Criteria	Strengths
In the first sentence, you say you do not like naps. In the second sentence, you say why you don't like naps. Is there a word or phrase you can put between these two sentences to show how the two ideas connect?	Transitional Words and Phrases: The student uses a variety of transitional strategies to link and structure ideas. The transitions support the organization of the written work.	

In the sample, the student does not use transitions to connect ideas. In the “suggestions” column of the rubric, the teacher’s feedback focuses only on the first two sentences and asks the student to choose a word or phrase that shows the relationship between the two ideas.

Steps for Using a Single-Point Rubric

This is a suggested list of steps, not a prescribed list.

1. The argumentative writing criteria for “meeting expectations” are provided within the rubric. These criteria are aligned to the grade-level indicators for ELA.C.1.1, ELA.C.4.1, and ELA.C.5.1. The criteria presented in the single-point rubric are clear, specific, and measurable.
2. Familiarize yourself with the rubric and then introduce it to your students. Ensure that students understand the criteria and that you may choose to focus on one criterion or multiple when assessing their writing.
3. As you assess student writing, check the criteria outlined in the rubric. You may also wish to refer to the additional support provided for each criterion.
4. Provide suggestions for improvement and revision in the left-handed column of the rubric. Use the right-hand column to highlight any areas where the student exceeds expectations.
5. Once you have identified an area(s) of weakness for the student, determine appropriate instructional support to help the student improve his or her writing and meet the expectations of that criterion. The document provides suggestions for each criterion in the rubric.
6. After additional instructional support or remediation, allow the student to revise the written work. Some students may have to revise the work several times, focusing on different criteria with each revision.

Argumentative Elements for Kindergarten

The following definitions are based on the definitions provided in the *2024 SC CCR ELA Standards* Glossary of Terms. The Glossary applies to K-12 instruction. The language of the following definitions has been adapted to suit Kindergarten ELA instruction.

Texts

Before a student can write an opinion piece, the student must have a text that provides information on a topic. Students will use this text(s) to learn about the topic before writing.

Topic

The *topic* is what the written response will be about. The student writer should stay on topic from the beginning to the end of the written response. To help the student writer better understand the topic, the teacher should allow him or her time to discuss the text and topic with other students before the writing process begins.

Opinion

In grades K-4, the student writer will provide an *opinion* about the topic. The purpose of the opinion is to allow the student an opportunity to reveal his or her thoughts on a topic.

Reason(s)

A *reason* is a statement or explanation showing why the student thinks what they state in their opinion. Using reasons allows the student writer to support his or her opinion.

Language and Vocabulary

The student should use vocabulary that is relevant to the topic. For example, if a student is writing about a farm, he or she should use specific words related to a farm. Opportunities to talk, ask questions, see images, and read or hear about a specific topic will support a student's vocabulary development and build background knowledge.

Grammar, Capitalization, Punctuation, and Sentence Structure

For specific information about the grade-level expectations, teachers should refer to ELA.C.4.1.

Kindergarten Single-Point Rubric

Each targeted criterion of Kindergarten opinion writing can be addressed singularly or in groups, depending on the instructional focus and the individual student's strengths and weaknesses.

Suggestions	Criteria	Strengths
	Topic: The student states a topic and stays on topic throughout the response.	
	Opinion: The student states a clear opinion on the topic.	
	Reasons: The student provides a reason that explains why he or she thinks a certain way about the topic.	
	Language and Vocabulary: The student chooses vocabulary that supports the topic.	
	Sentence Structure: The student writes complete simple sentences.	
	Punctuation: The student correctly uses punctuation.	
	Capitalization: The student correctly uses capitalization.	

Element: Topic

Criterion: The student states a topic and stays on topic throughout the response.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for topic.

A student who is on target will

- introduce the topic at the beginning of the response.
- stay on topic throughout the written work.
- make it clear to the reader that the student understands the topic.

A student who needs support may

- mention the topic and then move to another topic. Sometimes the student may return to the original topic at the end of the written response.
- not share enough about the topic for the reader to understand.
- not understand the topic.

Student 1

After listening to *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywall, students were asked to pick which crayon should quit and why. Students were asked to write a response answering the question. To help the students organize their thoughts and stay on topic, the teacher provided sentence stems. A space to draw was also provided (not included).

I think the white crayon should quit because the page is white.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

A sentence stem is a scaffold and should only be used for a short period of time. Some students will need the scaffold longer than others. Using a sentence stem helps the students understand what a complete sentence is. Sentence stems provide students with practice using structures and vocabulary.

What might an off-topic response look like?

Example: I like the white crayon.

The example shows the student may not understand the task.

Element: Opinion

Criterion: The student states a clear opinion on the topic.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for opinion.

A student who is on target will

- state an opinion that makes clear to the reader how the student thinks or feels about the topic.
- carry his or her opinion through the written response.

A student who needs support may

- not make it clear to the reader how the student thinks or feels about the topic.
- state a fact instead of an opinion.
- explore the topic in a different structure, such as compare and contrast.

Student 1

After listening to *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywall, students were asked to pick which crayon should quit and why. Students were asked to write a response answering the question. A space to draw was also provided (not included).

I think the **pink** crayon should quit because **Duncan never uses it.**

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

This student makes it clear to the reader which crayon should quit.

A sentence stem is a scaffold and should only be used for a short period of time. Some students will need the scaffold longer than others.

What might a response without an opinion look like?

Example: The yellow crayon said he is mad at orange.

This is a statement of fact from the story. It does not tell the reader how the student writer feels about which crayon should quit.

Element: Reasons

Criterion: The student provides a reason(s) that explains why he or she thinks a certain way about the topic.

Below are examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for *reasons*.

A student who is on target will

- provide at least one reason.
- use the reason to provide a “why” or “because” for his or her opinion.

A student who needs support may

- not provide a reason.
- include a reason, but it does not support his or her opinion.

Student 1

After listening to *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywall, students were asked to pick which crayon should quit and why. Students were asked to write a response answering the question. A space to draw was also provided (not included).

This time, the sentence scaffold was not provided until after the students wrote a response.

The blue crayon should quit. Blue is used to color water.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

This student provides an opinion and provides a reason, but the reason does not match the opinion. To support this student, the teacher should review the letter from the blue crayon to Duncan and ask the student why the blue crayon should quit. After discussing reasons why, the teacher can then provide the student with a sentence stem to complete.

Example: The blue crayon should quit because it needs a break.

Element: Language and Vocabulary

Criterion: The student chooses vocabulary that supports the topic.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for *language and vocabulary*. The K-3 student should use vocabulary that is related to the topic. A student's use of language contributes to his or her style and voice.

A student who is on target will

- use words specific to the topic and purpose.
- use words to aid the reader's understanding.

A student who needs support may

- use vague words, leaving the reader to determine what it "could mean".
- use words that are unrelated to the topic and detract from the reader's understanding.

Student 1

After listening to *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywall, students were asked to pick which crayon should quit and why. Students were asked to write a response answering the question. A space to draw was also provided (not included).

This time, the sentence stem was not provided.

I think red should quit he needs a rest.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

This student does not use words specific to the topic, such as "crayon." Although transition words do not appear in the argumentative writing indicators until first grade, exposing students to transitional words will help them learn how transitions function in writing. To help the student improve, the teacher provided him or her with a sentence scaffold and a word bank. The word bank included the word "crayon" and the word "because." The student was then able to revise the sentence using vocabulary that is specific to the topic.

Element: Sentence Structure

Criterion: The student uses a variety of grammatically correct sentences.

*By the end of Kindergarten, students should be able to “form and use complete simple sentences” (ELA.K.C.4.1) . Because this element is more discrete than the other elements in the rubric, it will be presented differently here. Students must understand basic features such as capital letters, punctuation marks, nouns, and verbs before writing **complete simple sentences**.*

As appropriate to the written work, a student who is on target will correctly

- write one or more grammatically correct complete sentences.
- use common singular noun(s).
- use common plural noun(s).
- use a period to end a sentence(s).
- use an action verb.

A student who needs support may

- write one or more incomplete sentences.
- incorrectly place or not use a period at the end of a sentence.
- incorrectly use a common singular noun(s).
- incorrectly use a common plural noun(s).
- not include a verb to show action.
- incorrectly use or place a descriptive adjective(s).

Student 1

After listening to *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywall, students were asked to pick which crayon should quit and why. Students were asked to write a response answering the question. A space to draw was also provided (not included).

This time, the sentence stem was not provided.

the red crayon should quit he works hard

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

This student sample contains multiple errors. To model the formative use of the single-point rubric, the focus is on supporting the student through one rubric criterion at a time.

This student needs support using a period to indicate the end of a sentence. He or she also needs support capitalizing the first word in a sentence. The first focus of revision should be helping the student form complete simple sentences. Using mentor texts to show and discuss complete simple sentences with the student will allow the student to ask questions to build an understanding.

While the parts of a sentence are not named in the Kindergarten standards, the teacher can create three sets of cards, one set containing subjects, one set containing predicates, and one set containing end punctuation marks. The student can put together the cards to form complete simple sentences. This also allows the teacher to do a quick formative check and make adjustments as needed.

Element: Punctuation

Criterion: The student correctly uses punctuation.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for punctuation.

As appropriate to the written work, a student who is on target will correctly

- use a period to mark the end of a sentence(s).

In Kindergarten, the grade-level indicator states that students identify and name exclamation points and question marks. Kindergarten teachers may include using those types of punctuation as part of classroom instruction and formative assessment.

A student who needs support may

- not use a period to mark the end of a sentence.
- inconsistently use a period to mark the end of sentences.

Student 1

After listening to *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywall, students were asked to pick which crayon should quit and why. Students were asked to write a response answering the question. A space to draw was also provided (not included).

This time, the sentence stem was not provided.

the red crayon should quit he works hard

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Reusing the last student sample provides support for teachers as they target different criteria of the single-point rubric during the revision process. By layering the revision process instead of targeting multiple criteria at once, the teacher allows the student to learn and correct one piece at a time. Asking the student to make all the corrections at the same time may be overwhelming to the student.

The teacher can support this student by using a mentor text to show how a writer uses periods. While reading, the teacher should point out examples to the student. Later, the teacher should ask the student to point out examples. This will help the teacher quickly determine if the student is beginning to understand.

A second strategy is to use the card sort activity described in the sentence structure section of this document. Once the student has ordered the cards correctly, including a punctuation card, the teacher could ask the student to then write each sentence. This will allow the

student to focus on sentence structure, punctuation, and capitalization without the additional cognitive load of composing new sentences.

Element: Capitalization

Criterion: The student correctly uses capitalization.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for capitalization.

As appropriate to the written work, a student who is on target will correctly

- capitalize the first letter of the first word in a sentence.
- capitalize the pronoun I.

A student who needs support may

- not capitalize the first word in a sentence.
- inconsistently capitalize the first word in a sentence.
- not capitalize the pronoun I.
- inconsistently capitalize the pronoun I.

Student 1

After listening to *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywall, students were asked to pick which crayon should quit and why. Students were asked to write a response answering the question. A space to draw was also provided (not included).

This time, the sentence stem was not provided.

the red crayon should quit he works hard

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Students must have frequent opportunities to practice capitalization skills. Frequent retrieval of and practice with capitalization will allow the student to store the rules of capitalization in his or her long-term memory, decreasing the cognitive load of writing.

Present the student with a short text. Highlight the capital letters. Discuss with the student which letters are capitalized and why. Then, provide the student with a copy of a different short text where everything is in lowercase letters. Ask the student to correct the capitalization errors.

Use a variety of mentor texts to show real-life examples. Provide the student opportunities to explain why an author capitalizes certain words.