Writing Analysis Tool

The Writing Analysis Tool was designed as a formative assessment tool for teachers and students to use to examine the ***language* *and content*** of student writing. While it was developed for use in grades 6-8, it may be adapted for use in lower or upper grades as well. Additionally, while the tool was originally developed to formatively assess informational-expository writing, it also may be appropriate for some types of persuasive or argumentative writing, such as literary analysis, with minor adaptations as needed.

CCSS Writing Standard 4: *Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.*

DIMENSION 1: FOCUS

**Strong Evidence** A topic, thesis, or argument is clearly articulated near the beginning and remains prominent and consistent throughout the text.

**Inconsistent Evidence** A topic, thesis, or argument is either partially articulated, (e.g. too vague, too detailed, etc.), introduced sometime after the beginning of the text, and/or not prominent throughout the text

**Evidence of Attempt** An attempt is made to articulate a topic, thesis, or argument somewhere in the text, but it is muddled, confusing, or multiple foci are present

**No Evidence** No attempt is made to articulate or introduce a topic, thesis, or argument

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| **Dimension 1: Focus** |
| *Evidence Description* (e.g. strong evidence, etc.) |
| *Rationale*  |

DIMENSION 2: SUPPORT

**Strong Evidence** The writer uses the **language of the discipline**[[1]](#footnote-1) to support the focal idea with relevant evidence, such as facts, definitions, textual references, examples, or details

**Inconsistent Evidence** The writer, at times, uses clear language, ideally the language of the discipline, to support the focal idea with some relevant evidence

**Evidence of Attempt** The writer attempts to use language to support the focal idea with evidence, but the writing may be confusing or unclear

**No Attempt** There is no indication that the writer attempted to use language and/or evidence to support the focal idea

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| **Dimension 2: Support** |
| *Evidence Description*  |
| *Rationale*  |

DIMENSION 3: ORGANIZATION

**Strong Evidence** The writer uses the language of the discipline and **linguistic markers[[2]](#footnote-2)** to create appropriate **textual frameworks[[3]](#footnote-3)** that make the information clear, organize the presentation of the topic and details, tie paragraphs together, and highlight relationships among key ideas

**Inconsistent Evidence** The writer,at times*,* uses coherent language to create frameworks that organize the presentation of the topic and details; linguistic markers are also used to tie sentences or paragraphs together, but may be used inconsistently or occasionally

**Evidence of Attempt** While the writer attempts to use language to create organizing frameworks, the language and/or frameworks do not make information clear; linguistic markers are present some of the time, but may be used erroneously

**No Attempt** There is no evidence that the writer attempts to use language to make information clear, organize the presentation of topic and details, or tie sentences or paragraphs together

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| **Dimension 3: Organization** |
| *Evidence Description*  |
| *Rationale*  |

1. “Language of the discipline” could refer to any of the following: language from text consulted during research for the essay, content-specific vocabulary or word types specific to the discipline (nominalization for science, descriptors for narratives, etc.), “academic” vocabulary, or “mortar words.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Linguistic markers* are used to tie sentences or paragraphs together in a manner that highlights the key relationships among the ideas. Examples of linguistic markersinclude *because, on the other hand, however, in order to, for these reasons, etc.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Textual frameworks set up structured relationships, such as compare-contrast, cause-effect, sequence of steps or events, problem-solution. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)