



2021 Creative Writing Contest Rubric

For our student authors and contest judges

A rubric is a scoring tool that teachers often use to grade student work. It offers a way to grade or judge the work in a consistent manner.

Teachers give the scoring tool to students ahead of time so the students know what level of quality their work needs to meet in order to earn a certain score.

Our Creative Writing Contest Rubric provides the same kind of useful tool.

We designed it to help student authors evaluate their own work before they submit it. This also helps them to accept responsibility for their work.

Attached are separate rubrics for each grade grouping used in the contest: Grades 1-2; Grades 3-5; Grades 6-8 and Grades 9-12.

The rubric also makes it easier for our judges to evaluate an author's work. It will also make it easier for judges to explain why authors got the score they did and what they might do to improve.

For student writers looking for more inspiration, please visit our website at friendslittleton.org. There, on our blog, you'll find tons of creative writing tips and a list of last year's winners. Contest rules and a digital entry form are also online.

Please note: This contest is sponsored, and managed, solely by the nonprofit Friends of the Littleton Library and Museum. Bemis Public Library staff has no involvement in setting rules or judging. Questions? Please email us at friendscreativewritingcontest@gmail.com.

2021 Creative Writing Contest Rubric for Grades 1-2

Element	Excellent 4	Strong 3	Fair 2	Developing 1
Story Structure	Logical communication of the topic	All sentences are about the same topic	Ideas are random without single topic	Ideas are unclear
Characters and Settings	Characters and/or settings are developed	Characters and/or settings are known	Characters and/or settings are indicated	No indication of characters or settings
Word Choice	Many colorful adjectives, action verbs and interesting phrases	A few interesting word choices are used	General or common words are used	Simple words using a minimal vocabulary are used
Idea	Ideas are well developed	Most ideas are developed	Some ideas are developed	Ideas are random
Voice	Word choices and organization create a clear voice identity	Voice identity is somewhat developed	Voice identity is not always clear	No identified voice to the writing
Sentences and Paragraphs*	Writes paragraphs of 5-6 complete sentences	Writes paragraphs of 3-4 complete sentences	Writes paragraphs 1 or 2 complete sentences	Paragraphs have no complete sentences
Spelling	Known words are spelled correctly. A few words use phonetic spelling	Spells most known words correctly. Many words are spelled phonetically	4 or more known spelling words missed	Most words misspelled or spelled phonetically
Mechanics (Grammar and Punctuation)	Uses nouns and verbs correctly. Starts all sentences with capitals. Uses periods, question marks and exclamation marks correctly	Misuses difficult or plural nouns and verb tenses. Most sentences start with capitals and end with a period	Does not correctly use plurals or proper nouns, and/or verb tenses	Uses nouns and verbs incorrectly
Overall Presentation	Legible. Neat. Grade appropriate length	Writing is sometimes not legible or neat. Length is appropriate for grade level	Work is messy. Length may not be appropriate for grade level	Unable to read.

*Grade level appropriate

Total Score _____ (9-36 points)

Word Count (if short story) _____

2021 Creative Writing Contest Rubric for Grades 3-5

Element	Excellent 4	Strong 3	Fair 2	Developing 1
Story Structure	Logical communication of the topic	All sentences are about the same topic	Ideas are random without single topic	Ideas are unclear
Characters and Settings	Characters and/or settings are developed with details and action	Characters and/or settings are made known through details	Characters and/or settings are indicated	No indication of characters or settings
Sentences and Paragraphs*	Writes several paragraphs of 5- 6 complete sentences. Complex and compound sentences are used without run-ons or fragments	5-6 complete sentences in two or more paragraphs. A few run-ons or fragments are evident in compound sentences	5-6 complete sentences. Several run-ons or fragments are evident in compound sentences	3-4 complete sentences. Compound or complex sentences may not be evident
Word Choice	Many colorful adjectives, action verbs, and interesting phrases	A few interesting word choices are used	General or common words are used	Simple words using a minimal vocabulary are used
Spelling	Few or no spelling errors	A few errors in each paragraph	4 or more errors per paragraph	Many words misspelled
Idea	Ideas are well developed	Most ideas are developed	Some ideas are developed	Ideas are not developed
Voice	Word choices and organization create a clear voice identity	Voice identity is somewhat developed	Voice identity is not always clear	No identified voice to the writing
Mechanics (Grammar and Punctuation)	Uses nouns and verbs correctly. Starts all sentences with capitals. Uses punctuation correctly	Misuses difficult and plural nouns, and verb tenses. Most sentences start with capitals and end with a period	Does not correctly use plurals, proper nouns, and/or verb tenses. Punctuation and capitalization used inconsistently	Uses nouns and verbs incorrectly. Little or no punctuation or capitalization
Overall Presentation	Legible. Neat. Grade appropriate length	Writing is sometimes not legible or neat. Length is appropriate for grade.	Work is messy. Length may not be appropriate for grade level	Unable to read.

*Grade level appropriate length, from 5-6 sentences to several paragraphs.

Total Score _____ (9-36 points)

Word Count (if short story) _____

2021 Creative Writing Contest Rubric for Grades 6-8

Element	Excellent - 4	Strong - 3	Fair - 2	Developing - 1
Development and Organization: the extent to which ideas are elaborated, using specific and relevant detail and organization to engage the reader.				
Story Structure	Establishes strong plot/setting/characters/point of view	Establishes plot/setting/characters/point of view	Some elements of story structure, little blending of dialogue and narration	Few/no story structure elements present
Characterization	Develops complex characters through dialogue, narration and action	Develops characters through dialogue, narration and action	Some character development	Characters are not developed
Ideas /Settings	Develops ideas and settings clearly and fully. Uses a wide range of relevant details to engage and orient the reader.	Develops ideas clearly; uses relevant details to engage the reader.	Develops ideas briefly; uses some detail to attempt to engage the reader.	Uses incomplete or undeveloped details. Does not engage the reader.
Organization/ Sequence of Events	Clear, purposeful sequence of events that unfold naturally. Uses appropriate transitions	Clear sequence of events that unfold naturally with appropriate transitions	Attempts to sequence events. The plot is hard to follow in some places	Unclear sequence of events
Overall Presentation/ Impression *	Unique and appropriate title, professional presentation	Appropriate title, neat presentation	Unoriginal title, some attention to presentation detail	Attention to presentation is minimal or does not exist

Total Development/Organization Score (5-20 points) _____

Language Use: the extent to which the writing reveals an awareness of audience and purpose				
Description/ Word Choice	Uses creative, concrete language; uses literary devices and rich sensory detail and precise vocabulary	Uses mostly creative, concrete language and effective word choices, literary devices and sensory detail	Some use of creative, concrete language and effective word choices, literary devices and sensory detail	Little use of concrete language and sensory details. Few effective word choices.
Sentence Variety	Well-varied sentence structure throughout	Good sentence structure and variety	Occasional use of sentence variety	Little sentence variety
Voice/Sense of Audience	Unique voice; strong sense of audience	Evident awareness of voice and audience	Some awareness of voice and audience	Mechanical/unsuitable voice; unaware of audience

Total Language Use Score (3-12 points) _____

Conventions: the extent to which the writing exhibits conventional grammar/spelling/word usage				
Sentence Structure/Variety	Well-varied, correct sentence structures throughout	Good sentence structure and variety	Occasional use of sentence variety. Some errors in sentence structure	Little sentence variety. Several errors in sentence structure appear.
Grammar/ Punctuation	Smooth, fluid error-free punctuation/grammar	Mostly correct grammar; errors do not interfere with communication	Errors occasionally interfere with communication; verb tense errors	Grammatical errors are awkward and interfere with communication
Spelling and Word Usage	Correct spelling; error-free word usage	Mostly correct spelling and word usage	Errors in spelling and word usage	Misspelled and misused words throughout

Total Conventions Score: (3-12 points) _____

Total of all scores (11-44 points): _____

Word Count (if short story) _____

Creative Writing Rubric: for Grades 9 - 12

Element	Excellent - 4 Points	Strong - 3 Points	Fair - 2 Points	Developing - 1 Point
Development and Organization: the extent to which ideas are elaborated, using specific and relevant detail and organization to engage the reader.				
Story Structure	Establishes strong plot/setting/characters/point of view	Establishes plot/setting/characters/point of view	Some elements of story structure, little blending of dialogue and narration	Few/no story structure elements present
Characterization	Develops complex characters through dialogue, narration, action	Develops characters through dialogue, narration, and action	Some character development	Characters are not developed
Ideas/Engaging the Reader	Immediately engages and orients the reader. Develops ideas clearly and fully; uses a wide range of relevant details	Engages and orients the reader. Develops ideas clearly; uses relevant details	Attempts to engage the reader. Develops ideas briefly; uses some detail	Does not engage or orient the reader. Uses incomplete or undeveloped details
Organization	Maintains a clear focus; exhibits a logical, coherent structure through appropriate transitions	Maintains a clear focus; exhibits a logical sequence of ideas through appropriate transitions	Establishes but does not always maintain an appropriate focus; some inconsistencies in sequence of ideas	Lacks an appropriate focus, but suggests some organization
Sequence of Events	Clear, purposeful sequence of events that unfold naturally	Clear sequence of events that unfold naturally.	Attempts to sequence events. The plot is hard to follow in some places	Unclear sequence of events
Overall Presentation/Impression	Unique and appropriate title, professional presentation.	Appropriate Title, neat presentation.	Unoriginal title, some attention to presentation detail	Attention to presentation is minimal or does not exist

Total Development/Organization Score (6-24 points) _____

Language Use: the extent to which the writing reveals an awareness of audience and purpose				
Description	Creative, concrete language; uses literary devices and rich sensory detail	Assignment uses mostly creative concrete language. literary devices and sensory detail	Some use of concrete language, literary devices, and sensory detail in assignment	Little use of concrete language, literary devices or sensory detail in assignment
Word Choice	Uses sophisticated precise vocabulary	Effective word choices	Some effective word choices	Few effective word choices
Sentence Variety	Well-varied sentence structure throughout	Good sentence structure and variety	Occasional use of sentence variety	Little sentence variety
Voice/Sense of Audience	Unique voice; strong sense of audience	Evident awareness of voice and audience	Some awareness of voice and audience	Mechanical/unsuitable voice; unaware of aud.

Total Language Use Score (4-16 points) _____

Conventions: the extent to which the writing exhibits conventional grammar/spelling/word usage				
Sentence Structure/Variety	Well-varied, correct sentence structures throughout	Good sentence structure and variety	Occasional use of sentence variety. Some errors in sentence structure	Little sentence variety. Several errors in sentence structure appear.
Grammar/Punctuation	Smooth, fluid error-free punctuation./grammar	Mostly correct grammar; errors do not interfere with communication	Errors occasionally interfere with communication; verb tense errors	Grammatical errors are awkward and interfere with communication
Spelling and Word Usage	Correct spelling; error-free word usage	Mostly correct spelling and word usage	Errors in spelling and word usage	Misspelled and misused words throughout

Total Conventions Score: (3-12 points) _____

Total of all Scores (13-52 points) _____

Word Count (if short story) _____