

# Expository Rubrics

The following rubrics provide a scale of 1-4 (with 4 being the highest) for scoring each of the six specific skills for Expository writing. These rubrics can be used successfully to assess any piece of expository writing. Use each skill rubric individually or combine each skill rubric for a total score - maximum score of 24; minimum score of 6.

## **Organization:**

1	The response shows no organizational strategy, with information presented in a random fashion, making it hard to follow. There is no clear focus to the response due to lack of main ideas and related supporting details.
2	The response shows a beginning, middle and end, but the body of the piece presents information in random order. Main ideas may be vague or overlap and the supporting details may not be in the appropriate paragraph, resulting in a lack of focus in the response. Connections and linking words between supporting details are not apparent.
3	The response includes an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion that exemplifies the expository pillar structure. The main ideas are distinct and there are a number of supporting details, providing a clear focus throughout the response. There may be some connections and linking words between supporting details, but the use is inconsistent. ( <i>and, but, more...</i> )
4	The response includes an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion that exemplifies the expository pillar structure. The main ideas are distinct and presented in a logical sequence that is easy to follow, with powerful supporting details, providing a clear focus throughout the response. Strong connections and linking words between supporting details enhance the response. ( <i>another, for example, in addition</i> )

## **Introduction:**

1	The response lacks a clear introduction. It may be very brief and didactic. ( <i>This is my report about...</i> )
2	The student attempts to name the topic, but the introduction lacks a compelling lead. The main ideas are vague, unclear, and/or unstated. ( <i>Hi, this is me writing a report about the desert.</i> )
3	The response includes an adequate lead and a topic sentence that names the topic and adequately states the main ideas. ( <i>Have you ever been to the desert? The weather is hot, there are many animals, and a dry landscape.</i> )
4	The response includes a compelling lead. The topic is clearly stated and the main ideas are skillfully identified in the topic sentence(s). ( <i>Imagine living in an area where the temperature ranges from 120 degrees during the day and then swings wildly to 20 degrees at night. This kind of extreme weather is characteristic of the desert. Learn about the unusual wildlife and discover the plants that make up the landscape of this amazing environment. The desert is a unique habitat.</i> )

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## Main Ideas:

1	<p>The response does not include a number of broad yet distinct main ideas that define each paragraph. The reader is left wondering what the piece is all about.</p>
2	<p>The response provides overly general main ideas that might overlap. The main ideas might be stated in a redundant fashion. (<i>The first thing...The next thing.</i>)</p> <p><i>Main Idea #1 - The first thing I'll tell you is that the desert is weird.</i></p> <p><i>Main Idea #2 - The second thing I'll tell you is that the desert is pretty.</i></p> <p><i>Main Idea #3 - The third thing I'll tell you is that the desert is wild.</i></p>
3	<p>The response includes a collection of broad yet distinct main ideas that are clearly stated. There is some evidence of interesting word choice and sentence variety. The reader understands what the piece is about and it can be summarized.</p> <p><i>Main Idea #1 - Amazing weather happens daily.</i></p> <p><i>Main Idea #2 - There are plenty of animals if you look closely.</i></p> <p><i>Main Idea #3 - The plants are unusual in the desert.</i></p>
4	<p>The response provides multiple broad yet distinct main ideas that are clearly stated. The author uses interesting word choice and sentence variety to build understanding of the information presented.</p> <p><i>Main Idea #1 - The extreme temperature fluctuations make the desert a unique habitat.</i></p> <p><i>Main Idea #2 - Wildlife is abundant in this seemingly barren landscape.</i></p> <p><i>Main Idea #3 - Vegetation sprouts up in the most unlikely places in this harsh environment.</i></p>

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## Supporting Details:

1	The response includes a few general details that may or may not be linked to the topic. No evidence of research. ( <i>The desert has animals. There are flowers and it's hot all the time.</i> )
2	The response includes some general details that are focused on the topic. The details are stated as facts but not developed using the productive questions: What does it look like? Why is it important? No evidence of research based facts. ( <i>There are animals in the desert that live inside of holes. Flowers grow and so do some plants like cactus. It is hot outside.</i> )
3	The response includes a mix of general and specific relevant details that are focused on the topic. The details are elaborated using the productive questions: What does it look like? Why is it important? There is some evidence of research such as amazing facts, quotes, or statistics. ( <i>The air is hot. It even gets to 120 degrees during the day. The animals that live in the desert have to be able to live in the hot weather. Rattlesnakes are common. They make a rattling sound when you get too close to them to warn you to stay away. Some red and purple flowers grow on the side of the cactus. These cactus have spines that protect it from animals who want to eat it. The spines also hold water because it doesn't rain very much.</i> )
4	<p>The response includes specific, powerful details that are clearly focused on the topic. The details are elaborated fully using the productive questions: What does it look like? Why is it important? There is clear evidence of research - amazing facts, quotes, and statistics.</p> <p><i>The weather is so extreme in the desert that it can go from 120 degrees during the day to 20 degrees at night. In addition, there is very little rainfall. The air is dry and wind storms are common. These temperature variations make the desert a challenging environment to live in.</i></p> <p><i>Animals must have adaptive features to survive in the desert. The black-tailed jack rabbit grows from 18-25 inches tall. The most distinguishing feature is a black tip on the ears and a stripe of black on the tail. The jack rabbit is active during the cool of the night, and during the day it can be found curled up with its ears flattened under a clump of weeds or grass. These features make it hard to see the animal and protect it from enemies.</i></p> <p><i>Cactus plants are abundant in the desert. In fact there are over 100 varieties. They are easily recognized by their protective spines. These spines shade the cactus from the intense sun and they also protect it from animals or humans. The shade that these spines offer help to lower the temperature of the cactus and reduce the amount of water that is lost.</i></p>

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## **Conclusion:**

1	The response lacks a conclusion or provides a vague, overly general concluding sentence. ( <i>I hope you enjoyed reading this report.</i> )
2	The response comes to an abrupt end with minimal attempt to restate the main ideas. The main ideas may be redundantly stated. ( <i>I hope you enjoyed reading my report about the desert. You learned all about animals and plants. Come back again soon.</i> )
3	The response includes a conclusion paragraph with the main ideas restated. ( <i>The desert has temperature changes, many different kinds of animals, and some unusual plant life. It is an amazing place.</i> )
4	The response includes a conclusion paragraph with the main ideas creatively restated using a variety of techniques, such as hypothetical anecdote, informative verbs, and/or definitive words or phrases. ( <i>Grab your binoculars and water canteen when traveling to the desert. Remember to be prepared for the harsh weather conditions. Certainly, take some time to discover the profusion of creatures big and small and study the plant life that grows in this dry landscape. The desert is truly a biome of distinction.</i> )

## **Vocabulary, Fluency, English Language Mechanics:**

1	Use of vocabulary is vague and inappropriate. The response demonstrates a lack of facility with grade appropriate English language mechanics, showing frequent errors in spelling, capitalization or usage. Sentences are simplistic. The errors affect the readability of the response making it difficult to read and understand.
2	Use of vocabulary is simplistic and general. The response demonstrates an incomplete understanding of grade appropriate English language mechanics with frequent errors in spelling, punctuation or usage. Student primarily uses simple sentences and redundant structure and word choice. The errors affect the readability of the response.
3	Use of vocabulary is adequate. The response demonstrates average grade appropriate understanding of English language mechanics, showing adequate spelling, punctuation, capitalization or usage skills. Student uses at least one complex and compound sentence per paragraph. The errors do not interfere with the readability of the response.
4	Use of vocabulary is precise and appropriate. The response demonstrates a thorough understanding of grade appropriate English language mechanics with few, if any, errors in spelling, usage, punctuation or capitalization. Student uses a variety of simple, complex and compound sentences. The response is fluent.