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| CATEGORY | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| **Focus on Topic (Content)** | There is one clear, well-focused topic. Main idea stands out and is supported by detailed information. | Main idea is clear but the supporting information is general. | Main idea is somewhat clear but there is a need for more supporting information. | The main idea is not clear. There is a seemingly random collection of information. |
| **Sequencing (Organization)** | Details are placed in a logical order and the way they are presented effectively keeps the interest of the reader. | Details are placed in a logical order, but the way in which they are presented/introduced sometimes makes the writing less interesting. | Some details are not in a logical or expected order, and this distracts the reader. | Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organized. |
| **Commitment (Voice)** | The writer successfully uses several reasons/appeals to try to show why the reader should care or want to know more about the topic. | The writer successfully uses one or two reasons/appeals to try to show why the reader should care or want to know more about the topic. | The writer attempts to make the reader care about the topic, but is not really successful. | The writer made no attempt to make the reader care about the topic. |
| **Word Choice** | Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, and the choice and placement of the words seems accurate, natural and not forced. | Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, but occasionally the words are used inaccurately or seem overdone. | Writer uses words that communicate clearly, but the writing lacks variety, punch or flair. | Writer uses a limited vocabulary that does not communicate strongly or capture the reader's interest. Jargon or clichés may be present and detract from the meaning. |
| **Flow & Rhythm (Sentence Fluency)** | All sentences sound natural and are easy-on-the-ear when read aloud. Each sentence is clear and has an obvious emphasis. | Almost all sentences sound natural and are easy-on-the-ear when read aloud, but 1 or 2 are stiff and awkward or difficult to understand. | Most sentences sound natural and are easy-on-the-ear when read aloud, but several are stiff and awkward or are difficult to understand. | The sentences are difficult to read aloud because they sound awkward, are distractingly repetitive, or difficult to understand. |
| **Grammar & Spelling (Conventions)** | Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. | Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. | Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. | Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. |