

## How does a sliding-scale rubric work?

A sliding scale rubric is a rubric whose proficiency expectations change over time. We will use an Argumentative Writing rubric as an example. Notice how the rubric requires less mastery during 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> terms (there are two sections of the rubric in which a student can earn a 4):

1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> Term	4		3	2	Incomplete
3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Term	4	3	2	1	Incomplete
<b>Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I provided a <b>strong</b> and precise claim or claims.</li> <li>I distinguished, in detail, my claims from alternate or opposing claims.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I provided a <b>precise</b> claim or claims.</li> <li>I distinguished, <b>in general</b>, my claims from alternate or opposing claims.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I provided a <b>general</b> claim.</li> <li>I <b>acknowledged the possibility</b> of alternate or opposing claims.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I <b>did not provide</b> a claim that my reader could identify.</li> <li>I <b>did not reference</b> an alternate or opposing claim.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient</li> <li>Missing</li> </ul>
<b>Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I created a <b>seamless and creative</b> organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), opposing claims, reasons, and evidence.</li> <li>I provided a <b>sophisticated or creative</b> concluding statement/section.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I created a <b>general</b> organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), opposing claims, reasons, and evidence.</li> <li>I provided an <b>appropriate</b> concluding statement/section.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I created an <b>inconsistent</b> organization that established <b>vague</b> relationships among claim(s), opposing claims, reasons, and evidence.</li> <li>I provided a <b>weak</b> concluding statement/section.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I <b>did not organize</b> reasons and evidence in a logical or effective manner.</li> <li>I <b>did not provide</b> a logical concluding statement/section.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient</li> <li>Missing</li> </ul>

Now notice (below) how the expectation for writing will increase to a final, grade-level proficiency expectation by the beginning of 3<sup>rd</sup> term (there is only one column of the rubric in which a student can earn a 4). If a student's writing did not move from that third column for Focus and/or Organization, the students would earn a 2.

1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> Term	4		3	2	Incomplete
3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Term	4	3	2	1	Incomplete
<b>Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I provided a <b>strong</b> and precise claim or claims.</li> <li>I distinguished, in detail, my claims from alternate or opposing claims.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I provided a <b>precise</b> claim or claims.</li> <li>I distinguished, <b>in general</b>, my claims from alternate or opposing claims.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I provided a <b>general</b> claim.</li> <li>I <b>acknowledged the possibility</b> of alternate or opposing claims.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I <b>did not provide</b> a claim that my reader could identify.</li> <li>I <b>did not reference</b> an alternate or opposing claim.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient</li> <li>Missing</li> </ul>
<b>Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I created a <b>seamless and creative</b> organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), opposing claims, reasons, and evidence.</li> <li>I provided a <b>sophisticated or creative</b> concluding statement/section.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I created a <b>general</b> organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), opposing claims, reasons, and evidence.</li> <li>I provided an <b>appropriate</b> concluding statement/section.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I created an <b>inconsistent</b> organization that established <b>vague</b> relationships among claim(s), opposing claims, reasons, and evidence.</li> <li>I provided a <b>weak</b> concluding statement/section.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I <b>did not organize</b> reasons and evidence in a logical or effective manner.</li> <li>I <b>did not provide</b> a logical concluding statement/section.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient</li> <li>Missing</li> </ul>

## Why do we use a sliding scale?

The purpose of a sliding-scale rubric is to provide a fair measure and opportunity to earn desired scores in writing for each term. We cannot expect students to be writing at a level 4 if they have only been introduced to the grade-level standards recently. We can, however, expect student writing to progress throughout the year. It is the same with all classroom grading – performance expectations increase each term as students receive more instruction of standards and concepts.

## How can I help my child with these rubrics?

- Remind your child often that the expectations for performance will increase each at the beginning of 3<sup>rd</sup> Term.
- When looking at the rubric with your child, focus on what is attainable for that term. Then, as we approach the next term, begin focusing on the next highest category in order to show improvement. This will help ease some of the anxiety about writing that many students experience.
- Ask your child's English teacher where the rubrics are posted and be sure that your child looks at them frequently.
- Always ask teachers for clarification.