

6 Paragraph provides a confident and well-argued response to the topic and maintains a central focus. Ideas are expressed appropriately and in a sophisticated manner. A clear, well-organized pattern of development is present from beginning to end. The writer supports assertions with explanations and illustrations, and vocabulary is well-suited to the context. Sentences reflect an overall command of standard written English—syntax, grammar, punctuation and spelling are correct.

5 Paragraph provides a fairly well-organized response to the topic. Thoughts are expressed in clear language most of the time. The writer develops ideas and usually signals relationships within the paragraph. Vocabulary is appropriate for the essay topic and avoids oversimplifications or distortions. Sentences are generally correct although some errors may be present when sentence structure is more complex. With few exceptions, syntax, punctuation, and spelling are correct.

4 Paragraph shows a basic understanding of the principals of organization, but there may be some digressions. Development of ideas is incomplete, but a logical structure is mostly apparent. Vocabulary is appropriate but at times oversimplified. Sentences reflect an adequate command of standard written English to ensure reasonable clarity, although forms of agreement and grammar are not always correct. The writer generally demonstrates an understanding of sentence control through punctuation, and by including subjects and verbs. Words are spelled with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

3 Paragraph responds to the topic and shows *some* formal structure. A main idea is apparent and even somewhat developed, not just merely repeated. The writer sometime uses informal or conversational speech, and although relationships between ideas are properly signaled, vocabulary usage is limited, syntax is rudimentary or lacking in variety, and common words are occasionally misspelled. The writer does not demonstrate a consistent understanding of where and how to begin and end sentences.

2 Paragraph starts with a response to the topic but does not develop that response. Ideas are repeated frequently, or are presented randomly, or both. The writer often uses informal language and conversational speech patterns. Words are sometimes misused, and vocabulary is very limited. Syntax is often tangled and unclear or confusing. Errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling occur often.

1 Paragraph suffers from general incoherence and has no apparent pattern of organization. It displays a high frequency of mistakes in the regular features of standard written English: persistent errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar and syntax often frustrate the reader. Or, the paragraph is so brief that any reasonably accurate judgment of the writer's competence is not possible.