# Middle School Standards of Learning Writing Rubric

## Composing

### 4 = Consistent Control
Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of composing features
- Full elaboration focuses at both sentence level and throughout entire piece
- Purposeful examples, illustrations, anecdotes, or details
- Strong organizational plan apparent
- Narrative organization intact, in other modes, *minor lapses may occur*
- Appropriate transitions
- Consistent point of view, e.g. not switching from “I” to “you”
- Lack of digressions
- Strong lead and closure; not just repetition of statements

### 3 = Reasonable Control
Reasonable, but not consistent, control of composing features
- Some features may exhibit more control than others
- Purposeful elaboration focuses central idea at sentence level and throughout entire piece
- Some thinness or unevenness may occur
- Organizational plan is apparent with few digressions
- Narrative organization generally intact
- Lapses of organization do not significantly detract
- Purposeful transitions
- Introduction and closure present but not sophisticated

### 2 = Inconsistent Control
Inconsistent control of several features indicating significant weakness in composing domain
- Ideas often compete with no one idea central
- Even if single idea dominates, writing may be a few brief details, a list of general, underdeveloped statements, or a skeletal plot
- Very little organization
- Contrived or trite opening/closure may be present
- Inconsistent control of transitions or lack of logically elaborated central idea prevents unity

### 1 = Little or No Control
Little or no control of domain’s features
- Focus of paper is lacking, or the elaboration is so sparse that the focus is insufficient
- Bare statement is the norm
- May jump from point to point with no logic or transitions
- Sentences can be rearranged without changing meaning
- Writing is haphazard
- No purposeful elaboration even if several pages long

## Written Expression

### 4 = Consistent Control
Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of written expression domain
- Purposefully crafted ideas
- Memorable for reader because precise information and vocabulary resonate with reader
- Highly specific word choice and information create purposeful tone and enhance writer’s voice
- Figures of speech, if present, are purposeful
- Sentences varied for effect
- Appropriately subordinates ideas and embeds modifiers to create rhythm

### 3 = Reasonable Control
Reasonable, but not consistent, control of domain
- Specific word choice and information create a clear message
- Some figurative language may be present
- A few general statements or vague words may flatten tone somewhat
- Effective use of normal word order and competent variation in sentence length and complexity
- Occasional awkward construction may diminish rhythm

### 2 = Inconsistent Control
Inconsistent control of several features, indicating significant weakness in written expression domain
- Generally written in imprecise, bland language.
- Writer’s voice rarely emerges
- Selection of information uneven and/or consists of attempts to tell everything writer knows
- Lack of sentence variety makes reading monotonous
- Occasional awkward constructions distract from meaning
- Overall sense of rhythm not present

### 1 = Little or No Control
Little or no control of most of the features of the written domain
- General, vague, bland, or repetitive word choice and information
- Lack of sentence variety makes paper monotonous
- Existence of several very awkward constructions
- Lack of control of vocabulary and information prevents both tone and voice from emerging

## Usage and Mechanics

### 4 = Consistent Control
Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of domain’s features
- Thorough understanding of usage and mechanics as found in VA K-8 SOLs
- Uses standard principles for spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation
- A few errors may be present but the control of the domain’s many features is too strong to let these errors detract from the performance

### 3 = Reasonable Control
Reasonable, but not consistent, control of most of the domain’s features
- Basic understanding of usage and mechanics as specified in VA K-8 SOLs
- Appropriately applies rules of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation expected of 8th graders

### 2 = Inconsistent Control
Inconsistent control of several features, indicating significant weakness in the domain of usage and mechanics
- Frequent errors appear along with evidence of writer’s knowledge of domain features
- Inconsistently applies rules of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation as specified in VA K-8 SOLs
- Density of errors outweighs the feature control present in paper

### 1 = Little or No Control
Little or no control of most of the domain’s features
- Frequent and severe errors in mechanics and usage as specified in VA K-8 SOLs distract reader and limit meaning
- Even if meaning not significantly affected, density of errors overwhelms paper to keep it from meeting minimum standards of competence