4-Point
Informative-Explanatory Essay
Writing Rubric (Grades 6-8)

Score	Statement of Purpose/Focus and Organization	Evidence/Elaboration	Conventions (2-point rubric begins at scorepoint 2)
4	The response is fully sustained and consistently and purposefully focused: • controlling idea or main idea of a topic is focused, clearly stated, and strongly maintained • controlling idea or main idea of a topic is introduced and communicated clearly within the purpose, audience, and task The response has a clear and effective organizational structure creating unity and completeness: • effective, consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies between and among ideas • logical progression of ideas from beginning to end • effective introduction and conclusion for audience and purpose • strong connections among ideas, with some syntactic variety	The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response achieves substantial depth that is specific and relevant: • use of evidence from sources is smoothly integrated, comprehensive, relevant, and concrete • effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques The response clearly and effectively expresses ideas, using precise, language: • use of academic and domain-specific vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose	

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3	The response is adequately sustained and generally focused: • focus is clear and for the most part maintained, though some loosely related material may be present • some context for the controlling idea or main idea of the topic is adequate within the purpose, audience, and task The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected: • adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety between and among ideas • adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end • adequate introduction and conclusion • adequate, if slightly inconsistent, connection among ideas	The response provides adequate support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the use of sources, facts, and details: • some evidence from sources is integrated, though citations may be general or imprecise • adequate use of some elaborative techniques The response adequately expresses ideas, employing a mix of precise with more general language : • use of domain-specific vocabulary is generally appropriate for the audience and purpose	

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2	The response is somewhat sustained and may have a minor drift in focus: • may be clearly focused on the controlling or main idea, but is insufficiently sustained • controlling idea or main idea may be unclear and somewhat unfocused The response has an inconsistent organizational structure, and flaws are evident: • inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety • uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end • conclusion and introduction, if present, are weak • weak connection among ideas	The response provides uneven, cursory support/ evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes partial or uneven use of sources, facts, and details: • evidence from sources is weakly integrated, and citations, if present, are uneven • weak or uneven use of elaborative techniques The response expresses Ideas unevenly, using simplistic language: • use of domain-specific vocabulary may at times be inappropriate for the audience and purpose	The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions: • some errors in usage and sentence formation are present, but no systematic pattern of errors is displayed • adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

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1	The response may be related to the topic but may provide little or no focus: • may be very brief • may have a major drift • focus may be confusing or ambiguous The response has little or no discernible organizational structure: • few or no transitional strategies are evident • frequent extraneous ideas may intrude	The response provides minimal support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes little or no use of sources, facts, and details: • use of evidence from sources is minimal, absent, in error, or irrelevant The response expression of ideas is vague, lacks clarity, or is confusing: • uses limited language or domain-specific vocabulary • may have little sense of audience and purpose	The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions: • errors in usage may obscure meaning • inconsistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
0			The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions: • errors are frequent and severe and meaning is often obscure
NS	Insufficient, illegible, foreign language, incoherent, off-topic, or off-purpose writing		

References and Citations

When referring to evidence and information from passages, students should use paraphrasing and short quotations. To credit sources, students should use informal, in-text citations (e.g., MLA author or title tags).