

Grade 7 Essay Rubric

At the end of most Amplify units, students take a few days to dig in and write a longer, more developed essay. These essays cover a range of topics and are written in response to a variety of different types of source texts. In each unit during the school year, and in each year of middle school, students focus on developing new skills. The sequence of units encourages students to master foundational skills and then shift their focus to learning something new. Amplify teachers assess this progression by scoring each essay for a different subset of skills.

Rubrics

Focus

1 Needs Improvement	2 Developing Proficiency	3 Proficient	4 Exceeds Expectations
Almost none of the sentences develop one overall idea.	Some sentences develop one overall idea.	Most sentences develop one overall idea.	All sentences develop one overall idea.

Use of Evidence: Describing

1 Needs Improvement	2 Developing Proficiency	3 Proficient	4 Exceeds Expectations
The student does not describe what s/he notices in textual evidence.	The student describes what s/he notices in some pieces of textual evidence.	The student describes what s/he notices in most pieces of textual evidence.	The student describes what s/he notices in all pieces of textual evidence.

Use of Evidence: Explaining

1 Needs Improvement	2 Developing Proficiency	3 Proficient	4 Exceeds Expectations
The student does not explain the connection between the evidence and the overall idea.	The student explains the connection between some of the evidence and the overall idea.	The student explains the connection between most of the evidence and the overall idea.	The student explains the connection between all of the evidence and the overall idea.

Logical Structure: Paragraphs

1 Needs Improvement	2 Developing Proficiency	3 Proficient	4 Exceeds Expectations
Almost none of the paragraphs focus on a clearly defined topic or idea.	Some paragraphs focus on a clearly defined topic or idea.	All paragraphs focus on a clearly defined topic or idea.	All paragraphs focus on a clearly defined topic or idea AND build on or refer to the ideas in other paragraphs.

Logical Structure: Introduction

1 Needs Improvement	2 Developing Proficiency	3 Proficient	4 Exceeds Expectations
<p>The introduction does not include an engaging lead that is connected to the overall idea.</p> <p>The student has not written a claim statement that articulates one overall idea.</p>	<p>The introduction includes a lead that is somewhat connected to the overall idea.</p> <p>The student has written a claim statement that somewhat articulates one overall idea.</p>	<p>The introduction includes a lead that is connected to the overall idea.</p> <p>The student has written a claim statement that articulates one overall idea.</p>	<p>The introduction includes an engaging lead that is closely connected to the overall idea.</p> <p>The student has written a claim statement that skillfully articulates one overall idea.</p>

Logical Structure: Conclusion

1 Needs Improvement	2 Developing Proficiency	3 Proficient	4 Exceeds Expectations
<p>The conclusion does not follow from the overall idea.</p> <p>The conclusion does not include a final thought.</p>	<p>The conclusion somewhat follows from the overall idea and includes a final thought.</p>	<p>The conclusion follows from the overall idea and includes a final thought.</p>	<p>The conclusion clearly follows from the overall idea and includes a final thought.</p>

Conventions: Sentence Completion and Punctuation

1 Needs Improvement	2 Developing Proficiency	3 Proficient	4 Exceeds Expectations
<p>There are many fragments and/or run-ons that prevent the reader from understanding the writing.</p>	<p>Most sentences are complete. Errors DO impede the reader's ability to understand the writing.</p>	<p>Most sentences are complete and punctuated correctly. Errors might distract the reader but do not impede the reader's ability to understand the writing.</p>	<p>Almost all sentences are complete and punctuated correctly.</p>

Conventions: Punctuation and Citation of Direct Quotes

1 Needs Improvement	2 Developing Proficiency	3 Proficient	4 Exceeds Expectations
<p>Quotes are not punctuated and cited according to the Guidelines for Punctuating and Citing a Direct Quote.</p>	<p>Some quotes are punctuated and cited according to the Guidelines for Punctuating and Citing a Direct Quote.</p>	<p>Most quotes are punctuated and cited according to the Guidelines for Punctuating and Citing a Direct Quote.</p>	<p>All quotes are punctuated and cited according to the Guidelines for Punctuating and Citing a Direct Quote.</p>

Unit ▼	Skills ▶	Focus	Use of Evidence: Describing	Use of Evidence: Explaining	Logical Structure: Paragraphs	Logical Structure: Introduction	Logical Structure: Conclusion	Conventions: Sentence Completion and Punctuation	Conventions: Punctuation and Citation of Direct Quotes	Essay Type	
Red Scarf Girl & Narrative		x	x	x		x		Choose one		Argument	
Character & Conflict		x	x	x	x	x		Choose one		Informational	
Brain Science		x	x	x	x	x		Choose one		Student selects: Informational or Argument	
Poetry & Poe		x	x	x	x	x	x	Choose one		Argument	
Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet		x	x	x	x	x	x	Choose one		Argument	
The Gold Rush Collection		x	x	x	x	x	x	Choose one		Student selects: Informational or Argument	
Intermediate Story Writing		See Story Writing Teacher Guide for Rubrics for: Character Development, Sensory Details, Narrator's Voice, Varying Sentence Style, Logical Structure									Narrative Writing

Essay progression within grade 7

- The initial essay unit focuses on the essay body because students develop this section using the skills they have practiced most: focus on a moment in text and use of evidence.
- As students gain additional practice with staking and developing one claim, the essays require a more developed introduction, a clearly stated claim, and an overall focus on one idea. In later essays, students work on writing conclusions and—for those ready for a challenge—developing counterarguments.
- The essay task becomes more complex as the year progresses. The texts become more complex, students work with more than one text, or apply more complex reasoning to address the prompt.
- The research essay in the final unit asks students to choose and complete an informational or argumentative essay. Students complete the research and writing for this essay largely independently.

How does student work progress in essays from grade 6 to grade 8?

At each successive grade level:

- Students write more essays that require synthesis of multiple texts.
- Students write about texts that are more complex.
- Students respond to Writing Prompts about literature that become more complex:
 - » Grade 6: Describe the development of the character or theme
 - » Grade 7: Analyze how character and theme interact
 - » Grade 8: Analyze character and theme with close attention to the author's technique
- Students respond to Writing Prompts about non-fiction that become more complex:
 - » Grade 6: Accurately present and synthesize the information in multiple texts
 - » Grade 7: Use evidence from multiple texts persuasively
 - » Grade 8: Analyze author's point of view and techniques
- Teachers should expect students to develop their evidence and reasoning more completely, including analyzing with greater nuance the significance of individual words and phrases.