SIX-TRAITS RUBRIC
High School

IDEAS & CONTENT	ORGANIZATION	VOICE
5 Strong Paper is clear and focused. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme. ❑ Topic is narrow and manageable. ❑ Relevant, telling, quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable. ❑ Reasonably accurate details are present to support the main ideas. ❑ Writer seems to be writing from knowledge or experience, ideas are fresh and original. ❑ Reader's questions are anticipated and answered.	**5 Strong** The organization enhances and showcases the central idea or theme and is compelling and moves the reader through the text. ❑ An inviting introduction draws the reader in; a satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of closure and resolution. ❑ Thoughtful transitions clearly show how ideas connect. ❑ Details seem to fit where they're placed; sequencing is logical and effective. ❑ Pacing is well controlled; the writer knows when to slow down and elaborate, and when to pick up the pace and move on. ❑ Organization flows so smoothly the reader hardly thinks about it; the choice of structure matches the purpose and audience.	**5 Strong** The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individual, compelling and engaging and crafts the writing with an awareness and respect for the audience and the purpose for writing. ❑ The tone of the writing adds interest to the message and is appropriate for the purpose and audience. ❑ The writer takes a risk by revealing who he or she is consistently throughout the piece. ❑ Expository or persuasive writing reflects a strong commitment to the topic by showing why the reader needs to know this and why he or she should care. ❑ Narrative writing is honest, personal, and engaging and makes the reader think about and react to the author's ideas and point of view.
3 Developing The writer is beginning to define the topic, even though development is still basic or general. ❑ Topic is fairly broad; however, you can see where the writer is headed. Writer not yet focused topic beyond the obvious. ❑ Ideas are reasonably clear, though they may not be detailed, personalized, accurate, or expanded enough to show in depth understanding or strong sense of purpose. ❑ Writer seems to be drawing on knowledge or experience, but has difficulty going from general observations to specifics. ❑ Reader is left with questions. More information needed to "fill in the blanks."	**3 Developing** The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion. ❑ The paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The introduction may not create a strong sense of anticipation; the conclusion may not tie-up all loose ends. ❑ Transitions often work well; at other times, connections between ideas are fuzzy. ❑ Sequencing shows some logic, but not under control enough that it consistently supports the ideas, or it is so predictable and rehearsed that the structure takes attention away from the content. ❑ Pacing is fairly well controlled, though the writer sometimes lunges ahead too quickly or spends too much time on details that do not matter. ❑ The organization sometimes supports the main point or storyline; at other times, the reader feels an urge to slip in a transition or move things around.	**3 Developing** The writer seems sincere but not fully engaged or involved making writing pleasant or even personable, but not compelling. ❑ The writer seems aware of an audience but discards personal insights in favor of obvious generalities. ❑ The writing communicates in an earnest, pleasing, yet safe manner. ❑ Only one or two moments here or there intrigue, delight, or move the reader. ❑ Expository or persuasive writing lacks consistent engagement with the topic to build credibility. ❑ Narrative writing is reasonably sincere, but doesn't reflect unique or individual perspective on the topic.
1 In Progress As yet, the paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme and contains sketchy or missing details. The writing reflects more than one of these problems: ❑ The writer is still in search of a topic, is brainstorming, or has not yet decided what the main idea of the piece will be. ❑ Information is limited or unclear or repetitive or the length is not adequate for development. ❑ Ideas may read like a collection of disconnected, random thoughts with no discernable point.	**1 In Progress** The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details, or events seem strung together in a loose or random fashion; there is no identifiable internal structure. The writing reflects more than one of these problems: ❑ There is no real lead to set-up what follows, no real conclusion to wrap things up. ❑ Connections between ideas are confusing or not even present. ❑ Sequencing needs lots and lots of work. ❑ Pacing feels awkward; the writer slows to a crawl when the reader wants to get on with it, and vice versa. ❑ Problems with organization make it hard for the reader to get a grip on the main point or story line.	**1 In Progress** The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or the audience. As a result, the writing reflects one or more of the following problems: ❑ The writer is not concerned with the audience or is a complete mismatch for the reader. ❑ The writer speaks in a kind of monotone that flattens all potential highs or lows of the message. ❑ The writing is "risk-free" or lifeless or mechanical or may be overly technical or jargonistic. ❑ Development of the topic is so limited that no point of view is present.

WORD CHOICE	SENTENCE FLUENCY	CONVENTIONS
5 Strong Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way and are powerful and engaging. ❑ Words are specific and accurate. It is easy to understand just what the writer means. ❑ Striking words and phrases often catch the reader's eye and linger in the reader's mind. ❑ Language and phrasing is natural, effective, and appropriate for the audience. ❑ Lively verbs add energy while refreshing nouns and modifiers add depth. ❑ Choices in language enhance the meaning and clarify understanding. ❑ Precision is obvious because the writer has taken care to put just the right word or phrase in just the right spot.	**5 Strong** The writing has an easy flow, rhythm, and cadence. Sentences are well built, with strong and varied structure that invites expressive oral reading. ❑ Sentences are constructed in a way that underscores and enhances the meaning. ❑ Sentences vary in length as well as structure. Fragments, if used, add style. Dialogue, if present sounds natural. ❑ Purposeful and varied sentence beginnings add variety and energy. ❑ The use of creative and appropriate connectives between sentences and thoughts shows how each relates to, and builds upon, the one before it. ❑ The writing has cadence; the writer has thought about the sound of the words as well as the meaning	**5 Strong** The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. This paper is ready to publish. ❑ Spelling is generally correct, even on more difficult words. ❑ The punctuation is accurate, even creative, and guides the reader through the text. ❑ A thorough understanding and consistent application of capitalization skills are present. ❑ Grammar and usage are correct and contribute to clarity and style. ❑ Paragraphing tends to be sound and reinforces the organizational structure.
3 Developing The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy. It is easy to figure out the writer's meaning on a general level. ❑ Words are adequate and correct in a general sense, and they support the meaning by not getting in the way. ❑ Familiar words and phrases communicate but rarely capture the reader's imagination. ❑ Attempts at colorful language show a willingness to stretch and grow but sometimes reach beyond the audience (thesaurus overload!). ❑ Despite a few successes, the writing is marked by passive verbs, everyday nouns, and mundane modifiers. ❑ The words may be refined in a couple of places, but the language looks more like the first thing that popped into the writer's mind.	**3 Developing** The text hums along with a steady beat, but tends to be more pleasant or businesslike than musical, more mechanical than fluid. ❑ Although sentences may not seem artfully crafted or musical, they get the job done in a routine fashion. ❑ Sentences are usually constructed correctly; they hang together; they are sound. ❑ Sentence beginnings are not all alike; some variety is attempted. ❑ The reader sometimes has to hunt for clues that show how sentences interrelate (connecting words and phrases like however, therefore, on the other hand, etc.). ❑ Parts of the text invite expressive oral reading; others may be stiff, awkward, choppy, or gangly.	**3 Developing** The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Moderate editing would be required to polish the text for publication. ❑ Spelling is usually correct or reasonably phonetic on common words, but more difficult words are problematic. ❑ End punctuation is usually correct; internal punctuation is sometimes missing/wrong. ❑ Most words are capitalized correctly; control over more sophisticated capitalization skills may be spotty. ❑ Problems with grammar or usage are not serious enough to distort meaning but may not be correct or accurately applied all of the time. ❑ Paragraphing is attempted but may run together or begin in the wrong places.
1 In Progress The writer demonstrates a limited vocabulary or has not searched for words to convey specific meaning. The writing reflects one or more of the following problems: ❑ Words are so nonspecific and distracting that only a very limited meaning comes through. ❑ Audience has not been considered. Language is used incorrectly making the message secondary to the misfires with the words. ❑ Limited vocabulary and/or misused parts of speech seriously impair understanding. ❑ Words and phrases are so unimaginative and lifeless that they detract from the meaning. ❑ Jargon or clichés distract or mislead. Redundancy may distract the reader.	**1 In Progress** The reader has to practice quite a bit in order to give this paper a fair interpretive reading. The writing reflects more than one of the following problems: ❑ Sentences are choppy, incomplete, rambling or awkward. Phrasing does not sound natural. The patterns may create a sing-song rhythm, or a chop-chop cadence that causes the reader to loose interest. ❑ There is little to no "sentence sense" present. ❑ Many sentences begin the same way and may follow the same monotonous pattern (subject-verb-object). ❑ Endless connectives (and, and so, but then, etc.) or a complete lack of connectives create a massive jumble of language. ❑ The text does not invite expressive oral reading.	**1 In Progress** Errors repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. Extensive editing would be required to polish the text for publication. The writing reflects more than one of these problems: ❑ Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words. ❑ Punctuation is often missing or incorrect. ❑ Capitalization is random and only the easiest rules show awareness of correct use. ❑ Errors in grammar or usage are very noticeable, frequent, and affect meaning. ❑ Paragraphing is missing, irregular, or so frequent that it has no relationship to the organizational structure of the text. ❑ The reader must read once to decode, then again for meaning.

COMMENTS: **TOTAL SCORE _____ / 30**