Scoring Guide: Sentence Fluency

The way the words and phrases flow through the piece. It is the auditory trait because it's "read" with the ear as much as the eye.

HIGH

6 Exceptional

5 Strong

A. Crafting Well-Built Sentences: The writer carefully and creatively constructs sentences for maximum impact. Transition words such as *but*, *and*, and *so* are used successfully to join sentences and sentence parts.

B. Varying Sentence Types: The writer uses various types of sentences (simple, compound, and/or complex) to enhance the central theme or story line. The piece is made up of an effective mix of long, complex sentences and short, simple ones.

C. Capturing Smooth and Rhythmic Flow: The writer thinks about how the sentences sound. He or she uses phrasing that is almost musical. If the piece were read aloud, it would be easy on the ear.

D. Breaking the "Rules" to Create Fluency: The writer diverges from standard English to create interest and impact. For example, he or she may use a sentence fragment, such as "All alone in the forest," or a single word, such as "Bam!" to accent a particular moment or action. He or she might begin with informal words such as *well*, *and*, or *but* to create a conversational tone, or he or she might break rules intentionally to make dialogue sound authentic.

MIDDLE

4 Refining

3 Developing

A. Crafting Well-Built Sentences: The writer offers simple sentences that are sound, but no long, complex ones. He or she attempts to vary the beginnings and lengths of sentences.

B. Varying Sentence Types: The writer exhibits basic sentence sense and offers some sentence variety. He or she attempts to use different types of sentences, but in doing so creates an uneven flow rather than a smooth, seamless one.

C. Capturing Smooth and Rhythmic Flow: The writer has produced a text that is uneven. Many sentences read smoothly, whereas others are choppy or awkward.

D. Breaking the "Rules" to Create Fluency: The writer includes fragments, but they seem more accidental than intentional. He or she uses informal words, such as *well*, *and*, or *but*, inappropriately to start sentences, and pays little attention to making dialogue sound authentic.

LOW

2 Emerging

1 Rudimentary

A. Crafting Well-Built Sentences: The writer's sentences, even simple ones, are often flawed. Sentence beginnings are repetitive and uninspired.

B. Varying Sentence Types: The writer uses a single, repetitive sentence pattern throughout or connects sentence parts with an endless string of transition words, such as *and*, *but*, *or*, *because*, and so on, which distracts the reader.

C. Capturing Smooth and Rhythmic Flow: The writer has created a text that is a challenge to read aloud since the sentences are incomplete, choppy, stilted, rambling, and/or awkward.

D. Breaking the "Rules" to Create Fluency: The writer offers few or no simple, well-built sentences, making it impossible to determine whether he or she has done anything out of the ordinary. Global revision is necessary before sentences can be revised for stylistic and creative purposes.