

Student-to-Family Letters

Ideas

Dear _____,

In writing class, we are working on the trait of **Ideas** (a piece's content—its central message and the details that support that message). Would you help me become a better writer by listening to me read my paper and then answering the following questions?

Thanks.

1. What is the main idea or topic of this piece?
2. Can you suggest a way I could focus or narrow the topic to make it clearer?
3. What questions about this topic would you like answered in my next draft?
4. What interesting details did I include that taught you something new?

Organization

Dear _____,

In writing class, we are working on the trait of **Organization** (the internal structure of a piece). Would you help me become a better writer by listening to me read my paper and then answering the following questions?

Thanks.

1. Did my lead capture your interest and make you want to keep listening?
2. Will you please point out any sequence words or transition words, such as *finally* and *however*, that show connections between sentences or paragraphs?
3. How was my pacing? Should I have sped up or slowed down at any point?
4. Did I give you something interesting to think about at the end? If so, what?



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Voice

Dear _____,

In writing class, we are working on the trait of **Voice** (the tone of a piece—the personal stamp of the writer). Would you help me become a better writer by listening to me read my paper aloud and then answering the following questions?

Thanks.

1. Can you name the tone of the writing (happy, sad, thoughtful, wise, and so on)?
2. Is this the right tone for the piece?
3. Do my thoughts and feelings about my topic come through?
4. Is my writing interesting, fresh, and original? Show me the places where you notice this.

Word Choice

Dear _____,

In writing class, we are working on the trait of **Word Choice** (the vocabulary a writer uses to convey meaning and enlighten the reader). Would you help me become a better writer by listening to me read my paper aloud and then answering the following questions?

Thanks.

1. Did I use strong, action-packed verbs? Tell me a few that you heard.
2. Do you think I used the right words in just the right places? If so, where? If not, where should I have done so?
3. Did any of my words or phrases confuse you?
4. What is your favorite word or phrase I used?



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Sentence Fluency

Dear _____,

In writing class, we are working on the trait of **Sentence Fluency** (the way words and phrases flow through a piece). Would you help me become a better writer by listening to me read my paper and then answering the following questions?

Thanks.

1. Did I add energy by varying the beginnings and lengths of my sentences?
2. Did I use different types of sentences?
3. Do you think the writing flowed smoothly? Was it easy for you to listen to me read it aloud?
4. Can you identify a sentence where I tried something challenging or surprising?

Conventions

Dear _____,

In writing class, we are working on the trait of **Conventions** (spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, capitalization, and grammar and usage). Would you help me become a better writer by following along as I read my paper aloud and then answering the following questions?

Thanks.

1. Did you find any spelling mistakes?
2. Is my punctuation correct?
3. Did I capitalize in all the right places?
4. Do my grammar and usage follow the rules of standard English?



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Presentation

Dear _____,

In writing class, we are working on the trait of **Presentation** (the physical appearance of a piece). Would you help me become a better writer by following along as I read my paper aloud and then answering the following questions?

Thanks.

1. Is my handwriting easy to read?
2. If I used a word processor to create the piece, is my choice of font style and size consistent and appropriate?
3. Does the page's white space allow you to focus on the text, or is it distracting?
4. Do headers, page numbers, graphics, and/or bullets make it easy to find information? Have I effectively integrated any charts, graphs, maps, tables, or illustrations into the text?

Traits of Writing

Dear _____,

In writing class, we are working on all the **traits of writing**. Would you help me become a better writer by following along as I read my paper aloud and then answering the following questions?

Thanks.

1. Which trait(s) have I applied best in this paper?

Ideas

Organization

Voice

Word Choice

Sentence Fluency

Conventions

Presentation

2. If I could work on one trait to improve this piece, which one should it be?
3. If you could rate this paper on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 6 (highest), what score would you give it?
4. Where do you think my writing shows the most improvement?