

Scoring Guide: Organization

The internal structure of the piece—the thread of logic, the pattern of meaning.

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EXCEPTIONAL

- A. **Creating the Lead:** The writer grabs the reader's attention from the start and leads him or her into the piece naturally. He or she entices the reader, providing a tantalizing glimpse of what is to come.
- B. **Using Sequence Words and Transition Words:** The writer includes a variety of carefully selected sequence words (such as *later*, *then*, and *meanwhile*) and transition words (such as *however*, *also*, and *clearly*), which are placed wisely to guide the reader through the piece by showing how ideas progress, relate, and/or diverge.
- C. **Structuring the Body:** The writer creates a piece that is easy to follow by fitting details together logically. He or she slows down to spotlight important points or events, and speeds up when he or she needs to move the reader along.
- D. **Ending With a Sense of Resolution:** The writer sums up his or her thinking in a natural, thoughtful, and convincing way. He or she anticipates and answers any lingering questions the reader may have, providing a strong sense of closure.

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STRONG

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REFINING

- A. **Creating the Lead:** The writer presents an introduction, although it may not be original or thought-provoking. Instead, it may be a simple restatement of the topic and, therefore, does not create a sense of anticipation about what is to come.
- B. **Using Sequence Words and Transition Words:** The writer uses sequence words to show the logical order of details, but they feel obvious or canned. The use of transition words is spotty and rarely creates coherence.
- C. **Structuring the Body:** The writer sequences events and important points logically, for the most part. However, the reader may wish to move a few things around to create a more sensible flow. He or she may also feel the urge to speed up or slow down for more satisfying pacing.
- D. **Ending With a Sense of Resolution:** The writer ends the piece on a familiar note: "Thank you for reading..." "Now you know all about..." or "They lived happily ever after." He or she needs to tie up loose ends to leave the reader with a sense of satisfaction or closure.

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DEVELOPING

2

EMERGING

- A. **Creating the Lead:** The writer does not give the reader any clue about what is to come. The opening point feels as if it were chosen randomly.
- B. **Using Sequence Words and Transition Words:** The writer does not provide sequence and/or transition words between sections or provides words that are so confusing the reader is unable to sort one section from another.
- C. **Structuring the Body:** The writer does not show clearly what comes first, next, and last, making it difficult to understand how sections fit together. The writer slows down when he or she should speed up, and speeds up when he or she should slow down.
- D. **Ending With a Sense of Resolution:** The writer ends the piece with no conclusion at all—or nothing more than "The End" or something equally bland. There is no sense of resolution, no sense of completion.

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RUDIMENTARY

HIGH

MIDDLE

LOW