

GLOSSARY OF WRITING TERMINOLOGY FOR THE KANSAS WRITING ASSESSMENT

analytic scoring—a process where trained readers rate a piece of writing by considering a set number of components and providing a separate score for each of those components, thus compelling readers to consider ideas they might otherwise ignore.

appeals to emotion—manipulating the emotions, rather than the reason or logic, of an audience in order to convince readers of a point of view or a course of action. See also **appeals to reason/logic**.

appeals to reason/logic—reasons and evidence aimed at the audience’s logic, common sense, and ability to think. Appeals to reason/logic typically involve providing examples, precedents, and narratives; citing authorities and testimonies; establishing causes and effects; and using inductive and deductive reasoning. See also **appeals to emotion**.

audience—the intended readers of a particular piece of writing.

audience awareness—the degree to which the writer is aware of his or her audience and their particular characteristics and needs.

balance—the arrangement of words, phrases, or ideas so that two or more concepts are given equal emphasis.

bias—a preference or an inclination, especially one that inhibits impartial judgment; an unfair act or policy stemming from prejudice. +

body—the middle portion of an essay often made up of one or more paragraphs. Each body paragraph typically includes a topic sentence; development (in the form of facts, statistics, examples, illustrations, anecdotes, charts, graphs, etc.) that supports the topic sentence, central idea, or theme; and a transition sentence at the end to ease the reader into the ideas of the next paragraph.

brainstorming—see **prewriting**.

conclusion—the end portion of an essay where the writer supplies a good sense of closure by including specific elements: a creative re-statement of the thesis statement, central idea, or theme; a brief review of the main points of the essay; and a good closing statement.

context—the social or cultural situation in which a written message occurs. √

conventions—the mechanical correctness of the piece—spelling, grammar and usage, paragraphing (indenting at the appropriate spots), use of capitals, and punctuation. ^

development—the specific details, examples, anecdotes, etc. that are added to a paragraph or essay to develop its main idea(s), reveal the writer’s depth of understanding, and offer insight to readers. Common patterns of development include the following techniques: narration, description, definition, example, division, classification, comparison and contrast, analogy, cause and effect, and process. #

diction—the careful choice of words in speaking or writing in order to communicate clearly. √

draft—preliminary version of a piece of writing that may need additional revision of details and/or organization and additional editing of conventions.

drafting—the stage of a writing process where the writer translates the ideas that were generated and organized in the prewriting (brainstorming) stage into complete sentences and paragraphs and begins to identify areas for large-scale revision.

editing (proofreading)—the correction of mechanical features of writing, such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc. √ See also **revising**.

equitable language—language that is fair, just, and reasonable and that is used conscientiously in the presentation of the various sides of or positions on an issue.

expository writing—writing that gives information, explains why or how, clarifies a process, or defines a concept.

figurative language—language enriched by word images and figures of speech.

focus—relationship of supporting details to the main idea(s), theme, or unifying point.

formulaic writing—a type of writing that fits into an easily recognizable standard structure and in which the writer merely places information in certain slots of that pre-described structure. *

holistic scoring—often referred to as “impressionistic” scoring because it involves trained readers assigning each piece of writing a single score based upon an overall impression. Individual features or dimensions of the writing (e.g., grammar, organization, spelling, diction, level of insight, etc.) are not considered as separate entities but rather as aspects of the whole piece.

ideas and content—the heart of the message of a piece of writing, the content of the piece, the main theme, together with all the details that enrich and develop that theme. The ideas are strong when the message is clear. The writer chooses details that are interesting, important, and informative—often the kinds of details the reader would not normally anticipate or predict. Successful writers notice and seek out the extraordinary, the unusual, the bits and pieces of life that others might overlook. ^

imagery—the use of language to create sensory impressions.

insight—the capacity to discern the true nature of a situation; a grasping of the inward or hidden nature of things or of perceiving in an intuitive manner. +

introduction—the beginning portion of an essay where the writer captures the readers’ attention, provides background information about the topic, and motivates readers to continue reading. For more formal essays, the introduction also often contains the thesis statement.

inventing (invention)—the first phase of the prewriting (brainstorming) stage of a writing process when the writer is generating as many ideas as possible for potential use in a piece of writing. See also **shaping (planning)**.

mode—a categorization of types of writing generally centered upon the writer’s purpose. Kansas curricular standards for reading and writing focus on four modes: narrative (to describe/express/entertain), expository (to inform/explain), persuasive (to argue/convince), and technical.

narrative writing—writing that recounts a personal or fictional experience or tells a story based on a real or imagined event.

organization—the internal structure of a piece of writing, the thread of central meaning, the pattern that fits the central idea. When the organization is strong, the piece begins meaningfully and creates in the writer a sense of anticipation that is, ultimately, systematically fulfilled. Events proceed logically; information is given to the reader in the right doses at the right times so that the reader never loses interest. ^

pacing—the rate at which main ideas and development are presented in a piece of writing. ✓

persuasive writing—writing that attempts to convince the reader that a point of view is valid or that the reader should take a specific action.

polishing—the stage of a writing process involving reviewing and improving a previous draft, ensuring that the essay meets the needs of the audience, has included all necessary information, and that the presentation of ideas is clear and effective. Although the essay may need some additional small-scale revision and further editing, it is generally “one draft away” from the publishing stage.

presentation copy—the version of a paper shared publicly or submitted for final assessment, grading, or publication; a “final copy.”

prewriting (brainstorming)—the initial creative stage of writing, prior to drafting, in which the writer formulates ideas, gathers information, and considers ways to organize them. ✓ See also **inventing (invention)** and **shaping (planning)**.

prompt—a writing assignment that serves as a springboard for the writer’s task, including the identification of a topic, a purpose, and an audience for the writing.

publishing—the final stage of a writing process where a piece of writing has reached its goal and potential and is ready to be shared publicly or submitted for publication.

purpose—the reason or reasons why a person composes a particular piece of writing. The eleven different types of purpose include the following: *to express, to describe, to explore/learn, to entertain, to inform, to explain, to argue, to persuade, to evaluate, to problem solve, and to mediate*. However, it should also be emphasized that writers often *combine purposes* in a single piece of writing.

recursive process—moving back and forth among the planning, drafting, and revising stages of writing. ✓

refutation—addressing opposing arguments in such a manner as to prove them to be false or erroneous or to challenge their accuracy. +

response—writing that is stimulated by a prompt.

revising—making structural and content changes to a draft.√ See also **editing (proofreading)**.

scoring rubric—a matrix that describes the various score points of an assessment scale.

sensory detail—specific details relative to sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste working together in harmony to create concrete images and strengthen writing.

sentence fluency—the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear, not just to the eye. Fluent writing has cadence, power, rhythm, and movement. It is free of awkward word patterns that slow the reader's progress. Sentences vary in length and style, and are so well crafted that the writer moves through the piece with ease. ^

sequencing—the arrangement or ordering of ideas and content in a piece of writing. Common approaches to sequencing are chronological, hierarchical, developmental, easy to difficult, part to whole, simple to complex, thematic, and whole to part. √

shaping (planning)—the second phase of the prewriting (brainstorming) stage of a writing process. After the writer has generated a comprehensive list of potential ideas, he or she begins to select specific ideas and organize and connect them (in a rough manner) into what will become sentences and paragraphs.

show don't tell—writing in a manner that allows the reader to experience the story through the description of actions, thoughts, senses, and feelings rather than through exposition or summarization.

structure—the organization of ideas and content within a piece of writing at the sentence, paragraph or essay level.

support—the quality of details and examples either illustrating, explaining, or defending the central theme, idea, or thesis statement.

thesis statement—a statement that clearly delineates the argument or central idea that will be explored in a piece of writing. The thesis statement serves as a promise to readers of what will be discussed in the essay.

tone—the author's attitude toward a topic as reflected in his or her writing.

topic—the subject matter with which a writer is working in a particular piece of writing.

transitions—words, terms, phrases, and sentence variations used to arrange and signal movement of ideas. For example, *next*, *and then*, *in the end*, *another reasons*, *after that we went*, *on the other hand* are all transitions.

voice—the personality of the writer coming through the words, the sense that a real person is speaking to readers and cares about the message. When the writer is engaged personally with the

topic and imparts a personal tone and flavor to the piece that is unmistakably his/hers alone. ^

word choice—the use of rich, colorful, precise language that communicates not just in a functional way, but in a way that moves and enlightens the reader. Strong word choice can clarify and expand ideas and/or move the reader to a new vision of things. Strong word choice is characterized not so much by an exceptional vocabulary that impresses the reader, but more by the skill to use everyday words well. ^

writing process—the many aspects of the complex, idiosyncratic act of producing a written communication; specifically, planning or prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. √

References

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