

Ideas

Key Quality: Finding a Topic

THINK ABOUT:

- Have I chosen a topic that I really like?
- Do I have something new to say about this topic?
- Am I writing about what I know and care about?
- Have I gathered enough information about it so that I'm ready to write?

Key Quality: Focusing the Topic

THINK ABOUT:

- Have I zeroed in on one small part of a bigger idea?
- Can I sum up my idea in a simple sentence?
- Have I chosen the information that captures my idea best?
- Have I thought deeply about what the reader will need to know?

Key Quality: Developing the Topic

THINK ABOUT:

- Am I sure my information is right?
- Are my details chock-full of interesting information?
- Have I used details that show new thinking about this idea?
- Will my reader believe what I say about this topic?

Key Quality: Using Details

THINK ABOUT:

- Did I create a picture in the reader's mind?
- Did I use details that draw upon the five senses? (sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing)
- Do my details stay on the main topic?
- Did I stretch for details beyond the obvious?

Organization

Key Quality: Creating the Lead

THINK ABOUT:

- Did I give the reader something interesting to think about right from the start?
- Will the reader want to keep reading?
- Have I tried to get the reader's attention?
- Did I let the reader know what is coming?

Key Quality: Using Sequence Words and Transition Words

THINK ABOUT:

- Have I used sequence words such as *later*, *then*, and *meanwhile*?
- Did I use a variety of transition words such as *however*, *because*, *also*, and *for instance*?
- Have I shown how the ideas connect from sentence to sentence?
- Does my organization make sense from paragraph to paragraph?

Key Quality: Structuring the Body

THINK ABOUT:

- Have I shown the reader where to slow down and where to speed up?
- Do all the details fit where they are placed?
- Will the reader find it easy to follow my ideas?
- Does the organization help the main idea stand out?

Key Quality: Ending With a Sense of Resolution

THINK ABOUT:

- Have I wrapped up all the loose ends?
- Have I ended at the best place?
- Do I have an ending that makes my writing feel finished?
- Did I leave the reader with something to think about?

Voice

Key Quality: Establishing a Tone

THINK ABOUT:

- Can I name the primary tone of my writing? (For example, happy, frustrated, knowledgeable, scared, convincing)
- Have I varied the tone from the beginning to the end?
- Have I been expressive?
- Did I show that I care about this topic?

Key Quality: Conveying the Purpose

THINK ABOUT:

- Is the purpose of my writing clear?
- Does my point of view come through?
- Is this the right tone for this kind of writing?
- Have I used strong voice throughout this piece?

Key Quality: Creating a Connection to the Audience

THINK ABOUT:

- Have I thought about the reader?
- Is this the right voice for the audience?
- Have I shown what matters most to me in this piece?
- Will the reader know how I think and feel about the topic?

Key Quality: Taking Risks to Create Voice

THINK ABOUT:

- Have I used words that are not ordinary?
- Is my writing interesting, fresh, and original?
- Have I tried to make my writing sound like me?
- Have I tried something different from what I've done before?

Word Choice

Key Quality: Applying Strong Verbs

THINK ABOUT:

- Have I used action words?
- Did I stretch to get a better word—*scurry* rather than *run*?
- Do my verbs give my writing punch and pizzazz?
- Did I avoid *is, am, are, was, were, be, being, and been* whenever I could?

Key Quality: Selecting Striking Words and Phrases

THINK ABOUT:

- Did I try to use words that sound *just right*?
- Did I try hyphenating several shorter words to make an interesting-sounding new word?
- Did I try putting words with the same sound together?
- Did I read my piece aloud to find at least one or two moments I love?

Key Quality: Using Specific and Accurate Words

THINK ABOUT:

- Have I used nouns and modifiers that help the reader see a picture?
- Did I avoid using words that might confuse the reader?
- Did I try a new word, and if so, did I check to make sure I used it correctly?
- Are these the best words that can be used?

Key Quality: Choosing Words That Deepen Meaning

THINK ABOUT:

- Did I choose words that show I really thought about them?
- Have I tried to use words without repeating myself?
- Do my words capture the reader's imagination?
- Have I found the best way to express myself?

Sentence Fluency

Key Quality: Crafting Well-Built Sentences

THINK ABOUT:

- Do my sentences begin in different ways?
- Are my sentences of different lengths?
- Are my sentences grammatically correct unless constructed creatively for impact?
- Have I used conjunctions such as *but*, *and*, and *so* to connect parts of sentences?

Key Quality: Varying Sentence Types

THINK ABOUT:

- Do I include different kinds of sentences?
- Are some of my sentences complex?
- Are some of my sentences simple?
- Did I intermingle sentence types, one to the next?

Key Quality: Capturing Smooth and Rhythmic Flow

THINK ABOUT:

- Is reading the entire piece aloud easy?
- Do my sentences flow, one to the next?
- Do individual passages sound smooth when I read them aloud?
- Did I thoughtfully place different sentence types to enhance the main idea?

Key Quality: Breaking the “Rules” to Create Fluency

THINK ABOUT:

- Did I use fragments with style and purpose?
- Do I begin a sentence informally to create a conversational tone?
- Does my dialogue sound authentic?
- Did I try weaving in exclamations and single words to add emphasis?

Conventions

Key Quality: Checking Spelling

THINK ABOUT:

- Have I used standard English spelling unless I chose not to for a good reason?
- Have I checked words with *ie* and *ei*?
- When adding suffixes to words, have I changed *y* to *i*, doubled the final consonant, or dropped the silent *e* when necessary?
- Have I checked my work for words I have trouble spelling?

Key Quality: Punctuating Effectively and Paragraphing Accurately

THINK ABOUT:

- Did I place quotation marks around dialogue and direct quotes?
- Did I punctuate complex sentences correctly?
- Did I use apostrophes to show possessives and contractions?
- Did I begin new paragraphs in the appropriate places?

Key Quality: Capitalizing Correctly

THINK ABOUT:

- Did I capitalize proper nouns for people, places, and things?
- Did I capitalize dialogue correctly?
- Did I capitalize abbreviations, acronyms, and people's titles correctly?
- Did I capitalize the title and/or other headings?

Key Quality: Applying Grammar and Usage

THINK ABOUT:

- Did I use special words such as homophones, synonyms, and antonyms correctly?
- Did I check my sentences for subject-verb agreement?
- Did I use verb tense (past, present, future) consistently throughout my piece?
- Did I make sure pronouns and their antecedents (the words they stand for) agree?

Presentation

Key Quality: Applying Handwriting Skills

THINK ABOUT:

- Is my handwriting neat and legible?
- Did I take time to form each letter clearly?
- Do my letters slant in the same direction throughout?
- Does my spacing between words enhance readability?

Key Quality: Using Word Processing Effectively

THINK ABOUT:

- Is my choice of font style easy to read and appropriate for the audience?
- Is the font size appropriate?
- Did I use formatting such as boldfacing, underlining, and italicizing effectively?
- Does color enhance the look and feel of my piece—or does it weaken them?

Key Quality: Making Good Use of White Space

THINK ABOUT:

- Do my margins frame the text evenly on all four sides?
- Did I leave enough white space between letters, words, and lines to make the piece easy to read?
- Did I avoid cross-outs, smudges, and tears?
- Did I create a nice balance of text, text features, illustrations, photographs, and white space?

Key Quality: Refining Text Features

THINK ABOUT:

- Do my illustrations and photographs help make the piece easy to understand?
- Did I include my name, date, title, page numbers, and headers and footers?
- Are text features such as bulleted lists, sidebars, and timelines clear, well positioned, and effective in guiding the reader and enhancing meaning?
- Are charts, graphs, and tables easy to read and understand?