

# Teacher-Friendly Scoring Guide for the Conventions Trait

The conventions trait reflects mechanical correctness of the piece. Correct use of conventions (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing, and grammar and usage) guides the reader through text easily.

## 6 EXCEPTIONAL

- A. **Spelling Well:** The writer spells high-frequency words correctly and other types of words phonetically (“ardvrk”). The spelling doesn’t impede the reader.
- B. **Capitalizing Correctly:** The writer applies basic capitalization rules with consistency, such as beginning sentences and proper names with a capital letter and always capitalizing the pronoun “I.”
- C. **Punctuating Powerfully:** The writer uses punctuation marks correctly to guide the reader. He or she may also try to use them creatively to emphasize points and enhance fluency.
- D. **Applying Basic Grammar:** The writer shows control over basic standard English grammar. He or she applies usage rules consistently and accurately.

## 5 STRONG

## 4 REFINING

- A. **Spelling Well:** The writer spells simple high-frequency words correctly or phonetically (such as “ktn,” “sed,” and “wnt”), making them easy to read. More sophisticated words present a challenge, however.
- B. **Capitalizing Correctly:** The writer is unpredictable when it comes to capitalization. He or she may begin some sentences with a capital, for instance, or only occasionally capitalize the pronoun “I.”
- C. **Punctuating Powerfully:** The writer uses end punctuation marks at most. There is little evidence in the piece of control over punctuation.
- D. **Applying Basic Grammar:** The writer uses standard English grammar inconsistently. He or she attempts to apply rules correctly but misses the mark as many times as he or she hits it.

## 3 DEVELOPING

## 2 EMERGING

- A. **Spelling Well:** The writer uses letter strings and pre-phonetic spelling (such as “gGmkRt.”) The words are not spelled correctly.
- B. **Capitalizing Correctly:** The writer shows no control over the use of capitals. Capital letters are randomly placed throughout the piece.
- C. **Punctuating Powerfully:** The writer rarely uses punctuation. When he or she does use it, it’s applied incorrectly.
- D. **Applying Basic Grammar:** The writer generates so little text that it is difficult to determine what he or she knows about grammar and usage. When the writer reads the piece aloud, however, grammar and usage issues reveal themselves.

## 1 RUDIMENTARY