Sample Rubric for Scoring Student Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Idea</td>
<td>The prompt is addressed and fully developed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>The reasons why this idea is meaningful.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>The necessary background information which supports the main idea.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>The clear organization of the writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice/Style</td>
<td>The techniques used to show personality/originality.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>The spelling punctuation, paragraphing, and sentence construction</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nine Grammar Rules You Need To Know

Basic Sentence Structure
In its most basic form, a sentence needs a noun (a person, place, or thing) and a verb (an action word). While this rule might seem elementary, even the best writers can mistakenly introduce fragmented sentences, or incomplete thoughts that are missing a crucial element, especially in long documents. If something doesn’t sound right upon re-reading it, your sentence is probably missing one of these essential ingredients, resulting in a confusing phrase.

Correct Usage of Commas with Adjectives
The general rule is that you should use a comma to separate two or more adjectives that modify one noun. For example: “We’re looking for a driven, detail-oriented, and organized candidate for the position.”

Proper Usage of Semicolons
Semicolons often cause confusion and should be used sparingly; however, if you use these comma-period hybrids correctly you can enhance the meaning of your words. Use semicolons anywhere you could use you a period, but want to suggest a strong connection between two independent statements.

Proper Usage of Colons
It's best to stay away from colons when commas would suffice, but when you're forced to introduce new thoughts, a colon can be helpful. For example: “The gist of the meeting was this: Managers need to stimulate innovation by enacting a rewards program for big ideas.”

Its versus It’s (and all other apostrophes)
According to a copy editing instructor for California-based copy editing service provider Edicetera, confusing “its” and “it’s” is the most common error in the English language. That one minute apostrophe (or lack thereof) drastically changes the meaning of the entire sentence. “It’s” is a contraction of “it is,” whereas “its” refers to possession. Also, watch out for “your” versus “you’re.”

Farther versus Further
While both words refer to distance, grammarians distinguish “farther” as physical distance and “further” as metaphorical distance. You can dive further into a project, for instance, or you can dive farther into the ocean.

Their versus There versus They’re
OK, once and for all: “Their” is possessive; “there” refers to distance; and “they’re” is a contraction of “they are.”

Than versus Then
“Than” refers to a comparison, while “then” refers to a subsequent event. Example: Six is more than five; after five then comes six, for instance.

Who versus Whom
The rule is pretty simple: Use “who” when you’re referring to the subject of the sentence, and use “whom” when you’re referring to an object. For example: “Whom do you love?” is correct because you’re asking who is the object of your (the subject) love. Conversely, “Who loves you?” is correct because “who” is the subject and “you” is the object. This pesky distinction trips people up probably because they are unclear of the difference between a subject and object. Need a quick way to distinguish? A subject does the action while an object receives the action.