Technical Writing Rubric
(First six items from Kansas State Dept. of Education rubric)

1. Ideas/Content (Development)

Rating of 5 (Strong):
The writing is clearly focused which leads to achieving a well-defined goal.

- The purpose is clearly defined.
- The writing supports the purpose with concise, logical details that meet the reader’s informational needs.
- Sources, if used, are acknowledged.

Rating of 3 (Developing):
The writing addresses an identifiable goal by offering the reader general basic information. The development is limited, sketchy, and/or general.

- The purpose can be identified.
- The writing sometimes supports the purpose with concise, logical details that meet the reader’s informational needs.
- Sources, if used, are sometimes acknowledged.

Rating of 1 (Beginning):
The writing has not clarified the selected goal. The text has no clear sense of purpose.

- The purpose is not identifiable.
- The writer does not support the purpose with concise, logical details that meet the reader’s information needs.
- Sources, if used, are not acknowledged.
2. Organization

Rating of 5 (Strong):
The organization enhances and showcases the purpose. The sequence, structure, and presentation are compelling and move the reader through the text.

- Information is arranged in a format that is logical and effective and meets the reader’s needs.
- The writing is a comprehensive piece with a constructive introduction, a body that provides relevant information, and a suitable conclusion that reinforces the purpose and leaves the reader with a sense of completion.
- Transitions are appropriate and connect the ideas.
- Information is organized within each section, paragraph, list, or graphic in a logical and effective sequence to meet the reader’s needs.

Rating of 3 (Developing):
The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader from point to point without undue confusion.

- Information is sometimes arranged in a format that is logical and effective, which does not always meet the reader’s needs.
- The writing is beginning to develop as a comprehensive piece that includes a functional introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Transitions are usually appropriate.
- Information is sometimes organized within each section, paragraph, list, or graphic in a logical and effective sequence to meet the reader’s needs.

Rating of 1 (Beginning):
The text lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas and details seem strung together in a random fashion.

- Information is not arranged in a format that is logical and effective.
- The writing is not comprehensive and does not include a clear introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Transitions are not used.
- Information in each section, paragraph, list, or graphic is not organized in a logical or effective sequence.
3. Voice

Rating of 5 (Strong):
The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individualized, expressive, and engaging. Clearly, the writer is involved in the text and is writing for an audience.

- The text and/or graphics are appropriate for the audience and purpose. (e.g. letter, complex reports, directions, brochures, electronic presentations, newsletters, memos, e-mails, fliers, web pages, charts, maps, tables, pictorials, and resumes)
- Writes with authority so the voice is not distracting.

Rating of 3 (Developing):
The writing seems sincere, but not genuinely engaged, committed, or involved. The result is pleasant and sometime even personable, but short of compelling.

- The text and/or graphics sometimes are appropriate for the audience and purpose. (e.g. letter, complex reports, directions, brochures, electronic presentations, newsletters, memos, e-mails, fliers, web pages, charts, maps, tables, pictorials, and resumes)
- Writes with authority but sometimes voice is distracting.
- Rating of 1 (Beginning): The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or audience.

Rating of 1 (Beginning):
The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or audience.

- The text and/or graphics are not appropriate for the audience and purpose. (e.g. letter, complex reports, directions, brochures, PowerPoint®, newsletters, memos, e-mails, fliers, web pages, charts, maps, tables, pictorials, and resumes)
- Writes without authority and the voice is distracting.
4. Word Choice

Rating of 5 (Strong):
Words convey the intended message in an accurate and concise manner that increases the reader’s understanding.

- Words are clear, precise, and professional.
- The meaning of technical terms or professional jargon is defined or can be determined by the context.
- The vocabulary suits the purpose, subject, and audience.

Rating of 3 (Developing):
The language is functional but sometimes lacks interest. The words do not get the message across.

- Sometimes words are clear, precise, and professional.
- The meaning of technical terms or professional jargon is sometimes defined or can be determined by the context.
- The vocabulary sometimes suits the purpose, subject, and audience.

Rating of 1 (Beginning):
The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary and searches for words to convey meaning. The words do not get the message across.

- Words are not clear, precise, and professional.
- The meaning of technical terms or professional jargon is not defined or can not be determined by the context.
- The vocabulary does not suit the purpose, subject, and audience.
5. Sentence Fluency

Rating of 5 (Strong):
The text flows easily with a variety of sentence structures and lengths.

- Compact sentences or phrases make the point clear.
- The text reflects logic and sense and helps show how ideas relate.
- Fragments, if used, work well.
- Dialogue, if used, is natural and convincing.

Rating of 3 (Developing):
The text flows efficiently but lacks variety in sentence structure.

- Sometimes compact sentences or phrases make the point clear but some sentences are wordy.
- The text reflects logic and sense and helps show how some ideas relate.
- Fragments, if used, distract from the flow of the text.
- Dialogue, if used, is contrived yet convincing.

Rating of 1 (Beginning):
The text uses sentences that tend to be choppy, incomplete, rambling, or awkward. The text is difficult to follow.

- Wordy sentences detract from the purpose.
- The text tends to obscure meaning, rather than showing the reader how ideas relate.
- Fragments, if used, are ineffective.
- Dialogue, if used is not convincing.
6. Conventions

Rating of 5 (Strong):
The writer demonstrates control of standard writing conventions and uses them effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few and minor the reader can easily skim right over them.

- Paragraph division is sound and reinforces the organizational structure.
- Grammar and usage are correct and contribute to clarity and style.
- Punctuation is smooth and guides the reader through the text.
- Spelling is generally correct even on more difficult words.
- Only light editing would be required to polish the text for publication.
- Graphic devices, when used, are clear, helpful, visually appealing and supportive of the text.
- The writer may manipulate conventions, particularly grammar, for stylistic effect.

Rating of 3 (Developing):
The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Errors are numerous or serious enough to be somewhat distracting, but the writer handles some conventions well.

- Paragraph divisions are attempted but paragraphs sometimes run together or begin in the wrong places.
- Problems with grammar and usage are not serious enough to distort meaning.
- Terminal (end-of-sentence) punctuation is almost always correct; internal punctuation (commas, apostrophes, semicolons) may be incorrect or missing.
- Spelling is usually correct on common words.
- Moderate editing would be required to polish the text for publication.
- Graphic devices, when used, are sometimes clear, helpful, visually appealing and supportive of the text.

Rating of 1 (Beginning):
Errors in spelling, punctuation, usage and grammar, capitalization, and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. The reader must read once to decode, then again for meaning.

- Paragraph divisions are missing, irregular, or so frequent (e.g. every sentence) that it does not relate to the organization of the text.
- Errors in grammar and usage are very noticeable and may affect meaning.
- Punctuation is often missing or incorrect.
- Spelling errors are frequent even on common words.
- Extensive editing would be required to polish the text for publication.
- Graphic devices, when used, are not clear, helpful, visually appealing or supportive of the text.
7. Introduction

Rating of 5 (Strong):

- Presents a clear and concise lead-in to the remainder of the report
- Appropriate background information (including references) presented in organized fashion.
- Problem is well developed. Hypotheses, if appropriate, are clearly stated.
- Outline of the remaining report present and easily understandable

Rating of 3 (Developing):

- Some background information is given but there is no real organization or detail to its presentation
- Too much information is given, much of which is not related to the problem at hand
- Have idea of what the problem is and its importance but not exactly clear
- Outline for remaining report is sketchy or missing

Rating of 1 (Beginning):

- No or very limited background information
- Very hard to grasp what the problem is and why the research is important
- No outline for remaining report is given. No idea what to expect in the remainder of the report
8. Materials and Methods

Rating of 5 (Strong):

- Presents a clear, concise description of the data and statistical methods used in the report
- Important aspects of experiment and data set are adequately explained
- Clear description of experimental design without too much elaboration
- Summary tables (if presented) are understandable and self-contained

Rating of 3 (Developing):

- Some issues related to the design are omitted or not well explained
- Not exactly clear what the analytic methods are or spends too much time discussing the details behind the methods
- Summary tables (if presented) are hard to understand or somewhat inappropriate

Rating of 1 (Beginning):

- Far too brief or vague in the description of the experiment and/or analytic methods
- No emphasis put on the description of the data set and/or key aspects associated with the data. May be no apparent link between experiment and analytic method.
9. Analysis

Rating of 5 (Strong):

- Clear, concise description of what was found and how it was found
- Results are presented in an easy to understand way with only the necessary pieces of information presented.
- Results are interpreted and linked back to the problem at hand
- Tables and figures are easy to understand and self-contained

Rating of 3 (Developing):

- Description of the analysis is mostly clear but it too brief or too long
- Presentation of results is choppy making it hard to follow
- Little interpretation of results is done

Rating of 1 (Beginning):

- Very little description of what was found or far too much extraneous information presented.
- Summary tables and/or results are difficult to read and/or understand
- Presentation of results is incomplete and there is no organization
- No interpretation of the results relative to the problem is given
10. Analytic Methods

Rating of 5 (Strong):

- Utilizes statistically sound methods to address the problem
- Methods are not too complicated or simple for the problem at hand
- Possibly questionable underlying assumptions are explained and/or checked

Rating of 3 (Developing):

- Methods appear sound but there are some lingering doubts
- It is not clear all underlying assumptions were assessed or would be reasonable
- May be a more straightforward, concise approach to address question at hand

Rating of 1 (Beginning):

- Methods incorrect and/or very poorly implemented
- Incorrect use of methods or using methods that address a different question
- Clear violation of assumptions
- Key aspects of the data set and/or experimental design are ignored
11. Conclusions

Rating of 5 (Strong):

- Section satisfactorily rehashes the problem
- The results are adequately summarized
- Interpretation and impact of results on the problem are clearly explained
- Recommendations for future experiments/studies are understandable and well thought out

Rating of 3 (Developing):

- Links between the results and the problem leave too much to the reader
- Section is either too brief or too wordy. May or may not be well organized
- Very little thought as to the impact of these results is described

Rating of 1 (Beginning):

- Completely illogical explanation of the findings and/or how they impact the problem

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