

# Student Writing Sample Rubric

## Exam High School Admissions

	0	2	4	6	Admissions Essay Guiding Questions
<b>Voice</b>	<b>No discernible personal voice.</b> Writing is vague, generic or feels copied. Lacks authenticity or reflection.	Limited personal voice. Writing feels <b>formulaic or overly generic</b> , with little evidence of personal reflection. Relies on clichés or broad statements, giving no clear sense of the student as an individual.	Some personal reflection and depth. Writing is generally <b>clear and authentic</b> , though it may still use familiar expressions or generalities. The reader has a sense of who the student is but motivations and individuality are not fully developed.	Strong, authentic personal voice. Writing demonstrates <b>deep reflection, individuality, and motivation for challenge</b> . Specific details and personal examples make the essay feel unique. The reader gets a clear and genuine picture of who the student is and what motivates them.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tell us about yourself. Who are you both in and outside of school?</li> <li>2. Why do you want to attend an exam high school?</li> <li>3. What skills, qualities, or strengths do you have that will help you succeed in an exam school? Give examples or experiences that show those qualities in action.</li> <li>4. What are your future goals and how will being admitted help you achieve those goals?</li> </ol>
	0	1	2	3	
<b>Argument</b>	<b>No argument</b> about why the student should be admitted. Speaks only to their desire to attend.	Makes a <b>minimal or generic argument</b> for admission. Cites some qualifications, but they are not exceptional.	Makes a <b>compelling case</b> for admission. They provide several examples and give clear rationales. The student is a good candidate.	Makes a <b>unique and compelling case</b> for admission. They provide several examples and give clear rationales. The students' <b>qualifications are exceptional</b> .	
	0	2	4	6	8
<b>Content</b>	<b>No response</b> or response is <b>off topic</b> . Does not address qualities, strengths or goals.	Provides <b>generic skills, qualities and strengths</b> . Goals are overly broad. Does not provide any examples of why the student has the attributes they identify.	Provides a <b>good introduction</b> . Mentions <b>some goals</b> , but they are vague. Provides a <b>minimal or generic connection</b> to why an exam high school matters (e.g., "It's a good school.") Shows limited awareness of the unique opportunities and academic rigor of an exam school.	Provides a <b>solid and informative introduction</b> with some personal details. Shares <b>clear goals</b> , though they may be somewhat general. Connects admission to their goals and shows understanding of what an exam high school offers. Shows motivation and interest in rigor. A strong essay but the examples are not exceptional.	Thoroughly addresses each prompt to provide a <b>clear, thoughtful and detailed self-introduction</b> . Examples and experiences shared demonstrate the student's <b>excellence, grit or other characteristics</b> that make them exceptional. States <b>specific and meaningful goals</b> (academic, personal, and/or career). Provides <b>specific details</b> why an <b>exam high school is the right fit</b> , linking its rigor, opportunities, or environment directly to their goals.
	0	1	2	3	
<b>Grammar &amp; Style</b>	Frequent grammar, spelling errors make writing hard to follow. Sentences may be incomplete, transitions are missing or formatting is not essay-like.	Writing is understandable but uneven. Some grammar or spelling errors distract the reader. Organization may be loose and transitions weak.	Writing is mostly clear and organized. Errors are minor and do not interfere with meaning. Paragraphing and transitions generally support readability.	Writing is polished, cohesive and easy to follow. Grammar and spelling are correct, and style enhances clarity. Transitions and sentence variety create strong flow.	

