**Topeka Rubric-Based Feedback Bank**

Providing feedback to students can be a time-consuming process. Oftentimes, multiple students would benefit from the same types of feedback. In order to reduce your workload, you can use the feedback bank below as a root for your comments to students. As you use the feedback bank, make sure to

* individualize comments to students;
* try to create a feedback sandwich that starts and ends on a positive note (consider starting with a piece of positive feedback before including constructive feedback and add a positive endnote that is specific to the student); and
* add your own comments and feedback to your personal feedback bank to include the types of feedback you frequently give.

The feedback bank is divided into the different rubric domains. Use data about the domain your student needs the most support in to decide which feedback to use (see [Planning from Data with Topeka](https://projecttopeka.com/-/media/Topeka/Resources/Resource-Materials/Data/PlanningFromData.pdf)). Remember: when giving feedback, it is helpful to focus on a single domain at a time and only on the most egregious errors that students are making so as not to overwhelm them with feedback.

**To easily access the feedback that you need, use the quick links below:**

[**Positive Feedback**](#_tcfats401po)

[**Claim and Focus**](#_qm7qx8fqjfgs)

[**Support and Evidence**](#_lbouep30bqtr)

[**Organization**](#_ge59xh3zkhzf)

[**Language and Style**](#_sxhj0uj1d7n8)

[**Constructive Feedback**](#_a43sunqw6oju)

[**Claim and Focus**](#_ihgdg1t2f8fe)

[**Support and Evidence**](#_5si5jbn19af9)

[**Organization**](#_nwrdyq583na9)

[**Language and Style**](#_e3yg5pklfnkj)

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## Positive Feedback

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| Claim and Focus | |
| The student’s **claim**... | Potential Feedback |
| is clear based on the student’s writing as a whole, but is not identified in a clear claim statement. | *I can clearly identify the argument that you are making with your writing.* |
| is written as a claim statement identifying just their side of the argument. | *Great job including a claim statement within your essay that defines your side of the argument.* |
| includes both their side of the argument and the reasons to be presented in the essay. | *Your claim statement very clearly identifies your side of the argument as well as the reasons that you will cover within your writing.* |
| The **focus** of the students’ writing... | Potential Feedback |
| is clear throughout the essay. | *You did a great job of maintaining focus throughout your essay.* |
| frequently ties back to the students’ claim statement. | *The focus in your essay is very clear due to your frequent connections back to your claim statement and the main argument of your essay.* |
| does not present the students’ bias. | *Your essay does a good job of presenting your claim and maintaining focus without presenting your opinions or biases.* |

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| Support and Evidence | |
| The **evidence** in the essay… | Potential Feedback |
| supports the reasons laid out by the student. | *Excellent job selecting evidence to support the reasons laid out in your claim. Each piece of evidence you include is well-aligned to the reason and supports your overall claim.* |
| is taken from the provided sources. | *Good job selecting evidence from the sources to include in your essay. Selecting the strongest evidence strengthens your argument.* |
| is cited to the source of the information. | *It is always important to give authors credit for their work. Great job using citations to credit the evidence that you used back to the original sources.* |
| The **support** provided in the essay… | Potential Feedback |
| is consistently presented with a reasoning sentence connecting the evidence to the reasoning and the claim. | *Your essay is greatly strengthened by the inclusion of reasoning sentences connecting each piece of evidence that you include to your claim and reasoning. This helps to make your essay more convincing to the reader, and allows your argument to be easily followed.* |
| goes beyond summarizing sources with a good blend of quotations, summary, and reasoning. | *Your essay has a great balance of quotations and summaries of sources accompanied by reasoning. This blend of ways to present your evidence makes your writing more interesting.* |
| The **counterclaims** in the essay… | Potential Feedback |
| are clearly presented in a way that supports the student’s claim. | *Your essay uses counterclaims well to present the other side of the argument in a way that supports, rather than detracts, from your claims.* |
| are fully fleshed out with details rather than being mentioned only briefly. | *While it can be tempting to only include passing references to counter claims because they are not in support of your claim, you do a great job of including details about these counterclaims that make your writing more interesting, acknowledge counter arguments, and refute them.* |

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| Organization | |
| The **organization** of the essay… | Potential Feedback |
| follows a clear structure beginning with an introduction, claim, presenting reasoning with evidence, and ending with a conclusion. | *Your essay has a very clear organizational structure that begins with an introduction, presents a claim and the evidence and reasoning for that claim, and ends with a conclusion. This structure will help your essay to be well-understood by the audience.* |
| utilizes transitions well to show connections or relationships between ideas. | *Your use of transition words helps to show connections between the ideas within your writing. These transitions help with the flow of your writing and help the clarity of your argument.* |
| includes a clear introduction and conclusion. | *Excellent job building out a strong introduction and conclusion within your writing. While the evidence and reasoning are important to argumentative writing, the introduction and conclusion are responsible for drawing the reader into the piece and clearly summarizing the main points of the argument. You did really well writing these important parts of the essay.* |
| presents only one topic per paragraph. | *Your paragraphs are very clear because you only include one topic per paragraph. This ensures your reader is clear about each reason you are presenting in your essay, and the evidence that aligns with each reason.* |
| uses an ideal order of paragraphs based on strength of the arguments made. | *The organization of your essay highlights the most important reasons first. The logical order of your ideas strengthens the overall argument.* |
| includes a strong hook that will be of interest to the broader audience reading the essay. | *One of the most important parts of a strong essay is capturing the attention of the reader from the beginning to ensure they are interested and read through your essay. Your essay has a great hook that draws in the specific audience you are writing to, and encourages them to read your work.* |

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| Language and Style | |
| The **language** used in the essay… | Potential Feedback |
| is largely free from errors in conventions. | *Excellent job checking your essay for grammar errors. Your essay was easy to read because it had few (or no) errors in conventions.* |
| uses strong word choice. | *The word choice within your essay is superb. Your selection of vocabulary adds to your argument and helps to strengthen your writing.* |
| utilizes varied sentence structure. | *You have done a good job of varying the sentence structure within your essay. By combining simple and complex sentence structures, you create a more interesting essay to read.* |
| utilizes active voice rather than passive voice. | *Great job paying attention to the use of active voice within your essay. Make sure that you write with an active construction that clearly shows who is responsible for the actions within each sentence.* |
| is clear to the audience. | *Your writing is very clear and presents the ideas to your audience well.* |
| The **style** of the essay… | Potential Feedback |
| is formal and appropriate for argumentative writing. | *One strength of your essay is the formal tone that you use throughout your writing. Given the audience, your tone is very appropriate.* |
| is consistent throughout the essay. | *You did an excellent job of maintaining a single tone that unifies your writing from beginning to end. This can be a difficult task, especially when maintaining a formal tone that you don’t speak in daily.* |

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## Constructive Feedback

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| Claim and Focus | |
| The student’s **claim**... | Potential Feedback |
| does not match the prompt or is ambiguous. | *Your writing would be strengthened by identifying and maintaining a strong claim and right now, your claim does not fully answer the prompt. Highlight your claim in your writing, then re-read the prompt and identify the main idea of the prompt; usually, this is in the form of a question. Turn that question into a claim statement that states your opinion.* |
| is not maintained throughout the essay. | *The beginning of your essay has a clear claim, but as your writing continues, your argument doesn’t relate back to your claim. Try to maintain a strong argument by adding “because” and your reasons to the end of your claim statement. As you are writing, make sure your evidence and reasons align to what you added to your claim.* |
| does not identify reasons for the stance. | *The beginning of your essay has a clear claim, but your claim could be strengthened by previewing the reasons you are going to present in your claim. Consider adding “because” and your reasons to the end of your claim statement, and make sure to keep it all in one sentence.* |
| is not preceded by context or an introduction. | *Good job developing your claim into a claim statement to direct your writing. You have a clear claim that aligns with the prompt. You could strengthen your writing by giving more context to the claim or adding more introduction. Consider using a sentence stem such as, “On the one hand\_\_\_\_, on the other hand \_\_\_” before your claim.* |
| is stated in the form of an opinion with “I think…” or “I believe...” rather than as a statement. | *Remember that the goal of this essay is to present a formal, argumentative stance on the issue. Right now, your claim is stated as an opinion rather than a statement. Remove the “I” statement from your claim to make it a stronger, more formal statement.* |
| The **focus** of the students’ writing... | Potential Feedback |
| is not maintained throughout the essay and does not highlight a purpose or task. | *You did a great job identifying your claim and presenting it in your claim statement. The next step is to ensure that you maintain focus on that claim throughout your writing. One thing that can help is to identify your reasons in your claim statement and then look through your essay to determine exactly where each reason is used. Make sure that each use of evidence includes reasoning that ties it back to your claim.* |
| does not remain objective. | *You have a very clear and passionate claim, but because of your word choice, your writing does not always remain objective. Argumentative writing uses a formal style, so look through your writing to determine if there are places that your language does not fairly represent other viewpoints, or where informal language (such as slang) is used.* |
| is not consistent. At times the writing strays off topic and introduces the writer’s bias, making it difficult to follow the central claim. | *Your claim does a nice job of identifying your focus, but your focus does not remain strong throughout your entire piece of writing. Try adding words from your claim into the supporting sentences that introduce or explain evidence. As you are doing this, check to make sure that you do not have words that are unfairly describing other viewpoints and, if you do, remove them.* |
| is not evenly maintained throughout the essay. | *Your claim does a nice job of identifying your focus, but your focus does not remain strong throughout your entire piece of writing. In each of your paragraphs, add a specific reference to your claim within the topic sentence, and make sure your evidence ties back to the claim in your reasons. Make sure that the connections you are making are really clear.* |

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| Support and Evidence | |
| The **evidence** in the essay… | Potential Feedback |
| is not relevant to the claim. | *You have identified a clear claim in your essay, but your evidence does not support the claim. Identify your claim and each piece of evidence in your essay. Make sure that the evidence aligns with the claim you are making and replace the evidence that does not align with your claim.* |
| is not from the provided sources and sources are unclear. | *While your essay has some facts or evidence, they are not from the provided sources and the source of your evidence is not clear. Make sure that all of your evidence in argumentative writing can be tied back to a source.* |
| is not cited back to the sources of that information. | *While your essay has evidence that appears to be from the provided source, you have not cited the source of each piece of evidence. Identify the evidence within your writing and make sure that it has a source cited. This can be accomplished by starting your sentence with, “According to…” or “In….”* |
| is copied directly from a source. | *Remember that copying text directly from a source or someone else’s writing is plagiarism. When you are incorporating evidence into your essay, you need to use quotation marks to show that it is a direct quote and cite the source. Alternatively, you can put the evidence in your own words. Look at each piece of evidence in your writing and compare it to the source, and make sure that your wording is not the same as the wording from the source.* |
| is present, but there is no explanation of how the evidence supports the claim. | *You have included evidence to support your claim and reasons, but you have not made a clear connection between your evidence and your claim within your writing. Highlight all the evidence you have included. First, check to make sure each piece of evidence is introduced, and then make sure a reasoning statement is provided linking the evidence to the specific reason it is supporting. Finally, make sure the reasoning is linked to the claim.* |
| is present, but could be replaced with stronger evidence. | *You have done a good job of identifying evidence and tying it to your claim and reasons, but there are places your evidence could be stronger. Review the provided sources and use the* [*Evidence Checklist*](https://projecttopeka.com/-/media/Topeka/Resources/Student-Materials/EvidenceSelectionChecklist.docx) *to ensure that you have selected the strongest pieces.* |
| The **support** provided in the essay… | Potential Feedback |
| does not demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text(s). | *Reread both the prompt and your claim and make sure that you have identified at least two reasons to support the claim. If you have not, identify the two reasons now. Then go back to the sources and find at least one piece of evidence that supports each reason. Add one reasoning sentence after each piece of evidence to link it back to your reason and overall claim.* |
| includes reasons that are superficial and not well connected to the claim. | *Reread the prompt, the sources, and your claim, and then write down at least two reasons supporting your claim. Then, go back to the sources and find at least one piece of evidence supporting each reason and add the reasons and evidence to your writing. Finally, add a one-sentence reasoning statement linking the evidence to the reason and your overall claim.* |
| relies only on summaries of sources. | *While it is possible to overuse quotes from sources, it is also possible to not use them enough. Your argument relies heavily on summary, so review your evidence and reasoning and identify a few direct quotations that could be added to your writing. Try to find a balance between quotes and summaries.* |
| The **counter claims** in the essay… | Potential Feedback |
| are not present or clear. | *While you have presented your side of the argument, your current writing does not present a counterclaim. Find at least one place within your essay to add a counterclaim; this could be in the introduction or in the body of your essay. Consider using a statement like, “On the one hand, \_\_\_\_\_\_; on the other hand \_\_\_\_\_\_.” or “Even through many people believe \_\_\_\_\_,”* |
| cannot be distinguished easily from the essay’s central claim. | *You mention a counterclaim, but it is not easy to tell the difference between your counterclaim and your evidence for your claim. Try to make the counterclaim clearer by adding more detail to it. Then refute the counterclaim by using evidence supporting your central claim.* |
| do not have enough explanation. | *You mention a counterclaim, but it could be strengthened by adding more details and information. Expand your discussion of your counterclaim by adding further explanation of the issues at hand and refuting the counterclaim using evidence supporting your central claim.* |

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| Organization | |
| The **organization** of the essay… | Potential Feedback |
| is unclear and does not follow an organizational structure. | *On a separate piece of paper, create an outline of your essay. If you already have an outline, make sure it has each of the necessary elements and that your essay follows the outline structure. Skip a few lines on your page, then write your claim. Leaving space between each, write your reasons (at least two) that support your claim in full sentences. Under each reason, add the evidence that you will use to support your reason (new or from your first draft) and a clear reasoning statement that links the evidence to your claim. Once you have this outline, rearrange your essay to follow the outline adding any additional information that is needed.* |
| offers a series of ideas without any clear transitions or connections showing relationship between ideas. | *Your essay would benefit from clear transitions and connections between paragraphs. Start by reviewing the first and last sentences of each paragraph. Look for places where you can make connections between the last sentence of one paragraph and the beginning of the next paragraph. You should also consider where you can add transition words. Once you have looked at transitions in your paragraphs, look at each piece of evidence and make sure that there is a sentence introducing the evidence and providing a transition between ideas within paragraphs.* |
| does not have a clear beginning and ending. | *Your essay includes a lot of information, but it does not have a clear beginning or ending to guide the flow of information. Try to add at least one sentence before the claim statement that introduces the topic and explains why the issues in this topic are important. After the body of the essay, add a conclusion statement that summarizes the main points of your argument. Consider adding a final call to action or thought about why this topic is important.* |
| does not include an introduction and/or a conclusion. | *In order to introduce readers to your topic, add an introduction before your claim statement. In one or two sentences, explain why the issue is important and acknowledge the counterargument. After the body of the essay, add a conclusion statement that summarizes the main points of your argument. Your conclusion should bring together your ideas and restate your claim and reasons. Consider adding a final call to action or thought about why this topic is important.* |
| does not include all parts of argumentative writing (claim, evidence, reasons, counterargument). | *Look through your essay to identify each part of your argument (claim, evidence, reasoning, counterargument). If you can, highlight each part of your essay in a different color so that you can confirm that you have included each part of argumentative writing. Look to see which parts of the argument are missing or limited, and add to your essay to ensure you have a claim, evidence, reasoning, and acknowledge the counterargument.* |
| follows a basic organizational structure, but paragraphs include multiple topics. | *Label the topic of each paragraph to see how your ideas are organized. Make sure that each paragraph only has one main topic; if it has more than one, split the paragraph into two separate paragraphs, each with its own main topic.* |
| is clear, but paragraph order could be adjusted to strengthen the essay. | *Label the topic of each paragraph to see how your ideas are organized. Ensure that each paragraph has at least one piece of textual evidence and reasoning to link the evidence back to the reason it supports and to the claim. Then look at the topic of each paragraph and ask yourself the following questions to determine if you could strengthen the essay by changing the order of your paragraphs:*   * *Have you arranged the reasons in the most powerful order?* * *What would happen if you moved these paragraphs into a different order?* * *Are transitional words used to link the paragraphs and indicate the relationship between each part of your essay?* |
| could be strengthened by adding a stronger hook and/or significance to the essay. | *Your essay is well organized and has an introduction and conclusion, but it could be strengthened by developing your introduction and conclusion to add interest and significance to the argument. Find the issues within your essay that most likely appeal to the broader audience, and include an attention-getter that hooks the reader. In your conclusion, provide a call to action or final insights that may be of special interest to the audience you are writing for.* |

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| Language and Style | |
| The **language** used in the essay… | Potential Feedback |
| contains pervasive errors in conventions. | *Copy and paste your essay from Topeka into a word processing program like Google Docs or Microsoft Word and use their spelling and grammar check. If there are a lot of errors to be fixed, select one area of focus (for example, capitalization, run-on sentences, fragments, comma splices, or subject-verb agreement) and correct those errors. Try to start by focusing on fixing the proofreading errors that make it hard to understand your writing, especially run-on sentences, fragments, and spelling. When you are finished fixing the errors, make sure to copy your essay back into Topeka.* |
| includes poor or uninteresting word choice. | *Every word within your writing is important. With your audience in mind, reread your essay paragraph by paragraph. In each paragraph, try to find at least three words that can be replaced with stronger word choice. Remove “tired” words such as “nice,” “good,” “bad,” “happy,” “sad,” “said,” and “big.”* |
| includes simplistic, unvaried sentence structures. | *Writing is most interesting when the sentence structure is varied. Writing that has all very long sentences is hard to read, but writing that only has short sentences can feel broken apart. Review your paragraphs for sentences that could be combined (these are usually sentences that share the same subject). Use conjunctions in your sentences to help combine multiple sentences together.* |
| includes good, but not great word choice. | *It is clear that you have started to think about word choice within your writing, and are using varied wording and spectacular word choice to make your writing more interesting and informative to your reader. Word choice allows you to be more exact and can help better provide information to your reader. Review your essay and try to find two to three words per paragraph that you can transform with better word choice. Consider changing the words that will have the most effect on the reader and using word choice that best presents the topic and your claim.* |
| uses passive voice construction. | *One way to strengthen your writing is to avoid passive construction, where no one is responsible for actions. An example of passive voice is, “The pizza was eaten.” This is confusing and can be boring to read. Instead, use an active voice to keep your sentences lively and engaging. You could change the example above to, “The children ate the pizza.”* |
| is unclear and confusing. | *Read the essay aloud and imagine a person of authority as the only reader of your essay. Ask yourself if there are places where adding words or sentences would help that particular reader make better sense of your ideas. Where you hear errors in the phrasing or confusion caused by missing words or sentences, rewrite those parts to make your ideas clear.* |
| The **style** of the essay… | Potential Feedback |
| is not formal in style or consistent with the readers’ interests. | *Remember that the audience of your essay is someone in authority. Review each sentence for the use of slang words and other words that authorities, such as school leaders, might not understand or might find offensive.* |
| demonstrates inconsistent or uneven voice. | *It is important to use a consistent, formal style throughout your essay. Reread your essay aloud to ensure that you have avoided confusing or vague language with regard to your claim and voice on the subject. Work on creating a balance between your commitment to a specific position and your passion with your need to appeal to your audience.* |

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