

What are the advantages to using 6 + 1 Traits?

- ▶ It gives teachers and students a common language to talk about writing.
- ▶ It breaks down the complex process of writing into manageable “chunks.”
- ▶ It helps students define quality and know what the expectations are.
- ▶ It gives teachers a model for responding to student writing.
- ▶ It establishes consistency from year to year and teacher to teacher.
- ▶ It provides a solid foundation for revision and editing.
- ▶ It encourages writers to become more independent; it empowers them to evaluate and assess their own writing.
- ▶ It gives teachers and students valuable feedback about student performance.
- ▶ It challenges students to think of writing in new ways.
- ▶ It provides opportunities to monitor progress over time.

What can parents do to encourage student writing?

- ▶ Encourage even the youngest writers to “read” their writing aloud whether it is scribbles, drawings, or strings of letters. Talk about the story.
- ▶ Look first for what is done well in the writing and offer praise. Writing is a challenging task. Children need encouragement to be successful.
- ▶ When working with your child, focus on ideas and content first. Save editing until the ideas are clear, complete, and focused.
- ▶ Listen attentively as your child reads writing to you.
- ▶ Read aloud to your children—no matter the age. Discuss good examples of writing from newspapers, magazines, poetry, descriptions from travel brochures, and instructions of toys, games. Read from fiction and non-fiction.
- ▶ Let your child SEE you write.
- ▶ Share your own writing with your children. Ask for their feedback on your effort.
- ▶ Turn off the TV.
- ▶ Visit the library.
- ▶ Read, read, read! Better readers make better writers!
- ▶ Provide opportunities for your child to present their writing to an audience.

Six Traits to Writing



**Texoma
Christian
School**

Dear Parent,

Writing is an integral part of your child's education. The process begins in kindergarten and continues through life. The following information will help you understand how writing will be taught and graded in your child's classroom using the Six Traits writing and assessment model. This model will be used in grades 2-12 at Texoma Christian School this year. The information provided will give you some basic information about Six Traits and ways to support writing at home.

What is the Six Traits Model? It is an instruction and assessment model to support and improve writing performance. It was first developed at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) and has been implemented in many schools throughout the country.

What is a trait?

A trait is a specific characteristic of successful performance. The components of writing have been broken down into six traits. The traits of good writing are *Ideas*, *Organization*, *Voice*, *Word Choice*, *Sentence Fluency*, and *Conventions*.



Six Traits Definitions

Ideas

Ideas are the heart of the message. They are the thoughts, the main point, the content, or the main story line of the piece.

Organization

Organization is the framework of the writing piece. Organization is what holds the ideas together to convey meaning. Each writing piece has a beginning, middle, and end—that is organization!

Voice

Voice is many things: personal words, ideas, tone, and style. Voice has the power to hold a reader's attention and make the reading more enjoyable. Voice is used purposefully to enhance meaning.

Word Choice

In order for the reader to get the idea or point, the writer must choose "just the right" words or phrases to get the message across to the reader.

Sentence Fluency

When a piece of writing is easy to read aloud, it has sentence fluency. Sentences make sense, and phrasing and word choice make them easy to read and understand.

Conventions

Conventions are spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar and usage, and paragraph indentation. This is the work of a copy editor.

How will my child's paper be scored?

The Six Traits Model uses a scoring guide called a rubric to assess writing performance. The rubric describes varying levels of performance for each trait. The rubric is designed based on age appropriateness. Your child will be given a rubric in advance as a means of knowing what is expected from the writing.

Example Rubric for Young Writers Grades 3-5

Trait of Ideas

- | | |
|---|---|
| 6 | WOW, ideas are crystal clear; you know your topic inside and out; your details are so interesting-not just things everyone knows. |
| 5 | Very strong; ideas are clear and make sense; important details to support ideas |
| 4 | Many strengths; most of the ideas are clear or stated; some great details, but need more |
| 3 | Some strengths; ideas may not be stated well; some details but need a lot more information. |
| 2 | Promising-BUT ideas are confusing and rambling; not sure what main idea is; few details; needs much revision |
| 1 | It's a start!; just notes or thoughts, trying to think about what to write; one or two details; Need HELP! |

Rubrics are powerful tools for motivating students to work toward a high-level of performance. A rubric identifies what your child is able to do, and tells you and your child what needs to be done to reach the next level of success.