

SCENARIO WRITING EVALUATION GUIDELINES

For Coaches

USE OF RUBRIC

Evaluators will use the rubric to score all scenarios. They will read all scenarios and form a preliminary opinion as to the ranking of the sample.

Evaluators will:

- Use the Rubric with each scenario
- Begin with the middle score (3 or 5-6).
- If criterion is met, move up to next higher score.
- Repeat and assign highest score that fits the scenario.
- If criterion is not met, move down to the next lowest score.
- Repeat and assign the score that best fits the scenario.
- Rate each criterion independent of the others.

RUBRIC DESCRIPTORS

Although each criteria of the rubric is explained on the scoresheet and the Scenario Writer's Guide, it may be helpful to look more closely at each one. A different more detailed description of each is provided below.

Mechanics/Structure: Not only must an evaluator consider punctuation, capitalization, and grammar for this criteria, but must also look at the following elements of structure.

- Composition of the sentences (good sentence variety and complexity depending on grade level)
- Use of transitional phrases and elements to help the reader follow the development of the plot (organization)
- Appropriate rising action/conflict leading to resolution/dénouement is present
– *Note: Resolution does NOT necessarily mean a solution.*

Audience: It is obvious that the intended audience for scenario writers is the well educated adult who reads the scenarios. In addition, a wider audience of students and adults may be reading the scenario if it is a winner and published at the affiliate or international level. Students should bear the following in mind when considering their audience and, therefore, evaluators should look for the following:

- Appropriate language for general population
- Avoidance of derogatory terms or offensive phrases
- Appropriate diction (neither too frivolous or serious for the situation)
- Colorful language but not overly elaborated/sycophantic
- Emotional response elicited, and/or reader given much to think about

Purpose: When evaluating purpose, the scoresheet descriptors are helpful. However evaluators might also score lower if the scenario includes the following construction:

- Rambling thoughts having little to do with the story line (conflicts/resolution)
- Elaborate descriptions of details not advancing the plot
- Lack of organization that confuses the reader

Style: The tone of the scenario should entertain, inform or persuade without being overly “haughty” or “chummy.” A writer’s anger should not seep through the scenario except as a reflection of a character’s thoughts and emotions. Scenarios should avoid overused adverbs and adjectives, use colorful verbs, and include words that convey feeling. In addition, a mixture of some of the following elements of style should be evidenced throughout the scenario.

Simile/Metaphor – Idioms - Sensory Detail – Symbolism - Allusion
Understatement/Exaggeration – Personification – Foreshadowing

Idea Development: Purpose and Idea Development have some common elements, but keep these things in mind when evaluating Idea Development.

- Use of research to elaborate ideas
- Strong, positive social/cultural aspects
- Logical connection to the topic and explanations that are believable
- Consequences/impact of ideas on situation posed
- Reflections

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Character Development: Look for a central/main character developed (animate or inanimate) throughout the scenario. Some more mature writers may include a second “main” character or a subordinate character that is also well developed. Save the scores of 1 for scenarios that narrate without advancing a character through the action. When evaluating a well developed character, consider the following:

- The characters personality is evident
- The character shows emotional responses to situations and dialogue
- The character analyzes, reflects, or shows insight to ideas, issues, or concepts
- The character undergoes a change (however slight) as a result of the “rising action” of the story

Creative Thinking: Look for fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration when scoring creative thinking. Using creativity in a variety of ways also advances this score.

Futuristic Thinking: Look for consistent futuristic thinking throughout the scenario – not just one or two places where futuristic “gadgets” were described. Also ask these questions:

- Did the writer base ideas on current trends/research?
- Are the ideas believable?
- Are the futuristic ideas relevant to the story and/or the topic?

REMINDERS

1. **Consider Age of Writer** - FPS students may sound like they are in graduate school, but don't forget their youth. Although a similar amount of effort, thought, and time may have gone into both a junior and a senior scenario, a world of difference exists between the two finished products. Junior and some middle writers may not have yet developed their own personal style and may have had limited knowledge of how real people behave in complex situations. Junior writers also have a much more limited understanding of how economic, government, and educational institutions really operate. Even for senior writers, research alone may not replace the real world knowledge that they simply have not yet experienced. Understanding the students is a key to providing effective feedback.
2. **Leave out Personal Biases and Beliefs** – FPS scenario writers come from a variety of religious, cultural, and political backgrounds. It is not your job as an evaluator to change a writer's perspective on life, convince them of a different viewpoint, or impose your beliefs on them. Your comments and scoring should reflect the clarity and effectiveness of their writing regardless of your ideas on the subject. As scenario writers, they are encouraged to make their audience think about their purpose, not necessarily to persuade.
3. **Use the Rubric** – Once again, please work the rubric as instructed above in order to ensure more consistency in scoring. Students and coaches can then better evaluate ways to improve for the next time.

None of the suggested techniques for providing effective feedback should be misinterpreted as saying that you should set low expectations. In fact, the opposite is true. Scenario writers will continually amaze you with their breadth of knowledge, creativity, and insight. Furthermore, high expectations often produce better results. Evaluators should set their expectations high and remember that students with limited life experience and great potential for growth write sophisticated FPS scenarios. Set your expectations realistically high, offer feedback in a positive manner, and encourage writers to reach their full potential.

RANKING

Each evaluator receives a sample of randomly distributed scenarios. The top scoring booklet in each evaluator's sample is awarded a rank of “1. The second highest scenario receives a “2,” and so on. Multiple evaluations determine the top scenario. Using a ranking system, the toughness or leniency of evaluators is less significant. The important factor is how a scenario is scored with the others in a sample.