

# Sample Scoring for Youth and Teen Stories

To score your stories written by Michigan youth and teen authors, we highly recommend using a weighted score, giving emphasis to criteria such as engagement, characters, chain of events and sentence structure. The rubric below describes each of these criteria and more. On the last page is a tracking sheet to help you calculate the final score using a weighted average.

	Sample Scoring		
	10	5	1
<p><b>Engagement</b></p> <p>The reader is drawn into the story and is entertained. The reader wants to cheer for the hero and warn the victim because the story deals with real emotions to which the reader reacts. Also, the writing shows personality and “voice” – the author comes through in that the work does not sound like an impersonal report.</p>	<p>The story is appealing and engages the reader compellingly. It brings us along on the character’s journey.</p>	<p>The writing is good; it may be stiff in places and it may not be a topic or subject we care about and have not been drawn in to care, but it’s a good job.</p>	<p>My emotional engagement with this story is irritation. I read it because I had to. The author didn’t put enough effort into this task.</p>
<p><b>Characters</b></p> <p>No matter whether they are human, animal or alien, the characters should be important to the story. Their traits, both physical and personal, should have a purpose in the story. They should add emotional depth to the story.</p>	<p>The main characters are well named and clearly described. A variety of techniques are used, such as dialogue, internal thinking, physical gestures and interactions, different kinds of movement and dress that fits both the setting and the status of the character, etc. Reader is shown this, not told about it.</p>	<p>Characters are not deeply developed through detail or dialogue. At times the author reverts to “telling” you about the character as opposed to “showing” the character through detail, action and dialogue.</p>	<p>Characters are undeveloped puppets going through the motions and either do not change or change without motivation. Some may be stereotypes and either all good or all bad.</p>

	Sample Scoring		
	10	5	1
<p><b>Chain of Events</b></p> <p>There should be an initial event or conflict that causes the story to take place, and every action or character’s decision should come directly and logically from the preceding, not just in time, but as cause and effect. The reader may not expect the sequence, but we can understand it. All the events in the story should be leading to one purpose. Is the conflict solved?</p>	<p>The story is well organized; ideas are told well and one scene follows another in a logical sequence. There are clear transitions. Tension can build as problems mount. The events are creative!</p>	<p>The story is fairly well organized; one idea or scene may be out of place or synch. Transitions are used, but not quite often enough. The actions may be repetitive.</p>	<p>Ideas and scenes seem to be randomly arranged, and have no solid purpose in the story. Characters pop up anywhere. No evidence of planning or purpose.</p>
<p><b>Writing Quality – Sentence Structure</b></p> <p>Writing should flow, with sentences of varying length and different beginnings.</p>	<p>Author uses a high degree of sentence variety, including simple, compound, complex and compound-complex structures. Sentences show the writer knows when to make short, abrupt statements and when to make long, flowing ones.</p>	<p>Good craftsmanship in sentences, but the easy flow may be missing due to a predominance of short sentences. Writer may rely on one style or type sentence more than others, but the story still works.</p>	<p>Simple, choppy sentences or run-ons that actually impede the reader’s enjoyment of the ideas in the story. No or little variety.</p>
<p><b>Writing Quality – Word Choice</b></p> <p>The author uses a broad range of creative and accurate terms. The verbs are active and precise and not overly repetitive.</p>	<p>There is a great variety in descriptive words and in active verbs. Mood and color words are evocative and action words are precise and accurate. Little repetition. Unexpectedly good vocabulary.</p>	<p>Language is acceptable and effective, but does not dazzle. Characters fall, not plummet. Verbs repeat.</p>	<p>Words are simple or used incorrectly or they do not vary. Sing-song.</p>

	Sample Scoring		
	10	5	1
<p><b>Mechanics or Conventions</b></p> <p>Not every student has been taught how to format dialogue, or where to break into paragraphs. Therefore, format is the least important convention. Of more importance is tense, changes in point of view (like switching from the character's voice to the author's voice to give information), and serious errors of punctuation and spelling that make the story hard to understand. <b>Vocabulary is separate from mechanics.</b></p>	<p>The format is perfect, or close enough. The story is told in a consistent tense, preferably past tense, but consistent. The point of view is constant. Dialogue is clear. Grammar is consistent with the characters and the story. Errors may be present, but not bothersome.</p>	<p>There might be a slip-up in spelling or tense, but it does not impede understanding. However, if the piece is only one paragraph, yet is over 200 words, it should not receive higher than this 5.</p>	<p>So many errors; few capitals, no sense of commas.</p>
<p><b>Point, Purpose or Theme</b></p> <p>Ideally, the story has something to say besides having lots of action or adventure.</p>	<p>The story has something to say about important personal qualities or issues, and this message comes out in the characters and the situation. It may be the entire thrust of the story, or more subtle, but it gives the story some depth of meaning.</p>	<p>The point is dealt with in a heavy-handed way. Or, like the moral at the end of a fable, tacked on at the end.</p>	<p>There is no real point or purpose to the story except to entertain the writer. There is no meaning to it.</p>
<p><b>Setting and Atmosphere</b></p> <p>The writer uses strong visual descriptive details for the important scenes and characters. The words should enhance the reader's understanding of the characters and the mood.</p>	<p>There are sensory images and compelling descriptions that enhance the mood of the setting and the characters. This mood intensifies as the story continues. The writer chooses what is important to describe, not just everything.</p>	<p>The story conveys an adequate sense of place, but the setting is not an integral part of the story. The setting could be changed without changing the story.</p>	<p>There are very few descriptive details so that you have little sense of time and place. Conversely, the author gives too much description to unimportant things that mislead the reader.</p>

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Notes
1	Engagement											
2	Characters											
3	Chain of Events											
4	Writing Quality – Sentence Structure											
5	Writing Quality – Word Choice											
6	Mechanics or Convention											
7	Point, Purpose or Theme											
8	Setting and Atmosphere											

Total Score (1-4): \_\_\_\_\_ x2 = \_\_\_\_\_

Total Score (5-8): \_\_\_\_\_ x1 = \_\_\_\_\_

New Total =

Average (divide by 12): \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Notes
1	Engagement											
2	Characters											
3	Chain of Events											
4	Writing Quality – Sentence Structure											
5	Writing Quality – Word Choice											
6	Mechanics or Convention											
7	Point, Purpose or Theme											
8	Setting or Atmosphere											

Total Score (1-4): \_\_\_\_\_ x2 = \_\_\_\_\_

Total Score (5-8): \_\_\_\_\_ x1 = \_\_\_\_\_

New Total =

Average (divide by 12): \_\_\_\_\_