Student Scoring Rubric for a Well-developed Paragraph

Score of 5
The student has mastered the skill of writing a well developed paragraph, and the reader can easily identify the purpose of the paragraph.

- The student is able to effectively identify and support a topic using specific and accurate details from the text.
- The student has chosen an order that works well in presenting the topic and details and allows the reader to predict what's coming in the paragraph.
- The student's vocabulary includes active verbs, vivid adjectives and adverbs, and each word seems just right.
- The sentences are natural sounding, and the way they are put together varies; they clearly show how ideas connect.
- There are very few, if any, errors in grammar or usage: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar are used correctly.

Score of 4
The student has adequate mastery of writing a well developed paragraph with an occasional error in one or more of the following traits:

- The student is able to effectively identify and support a topic with details from the text.
- The order in which information in the paragraph is presented generally works well.
- The student's vocabulary gets the ideas across with some active verbs, vivid adjectives, and adverbs.
- Sentences for the most part are clear, but lack variety; sentence beginnings are more the same than different.
- There may be more than one or two errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or grammar.

Score of 3
The student is almost able to compose a well developed paragraph; some parts are very good, but some are not so well written.

- The student's writing is sometimes quite clear, but at other times details are not strong enough or do not support the topic clearly enough.
- The order of presentation of details and information is smooth in most parts, but sometimes it is not clear how the details connect to the main idea.
- The vocabulary gets the ideas across to the reader but needs more imagination to create a picture for the reader.
- Most of the sentences are clear, but some may be awkward, too long, too short, or may not connect to the overall topic of the paragraph.
- There are enough errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or grammar to make the reader stop to think about what the writer is trying to say.

Score of 2
The student shows some mastery in selecting a topic to write about but has weaknesses in one or more of the following traits:

- The student’s topic is not as clear as it could be to the reader and needs more detail and explanation to make it understandable.
- The organization is confusing, and it is not easy for the reader to follow the writer’s train of thought.
- Vocabulary used is okay, but is missing any excitement and lacks specific words that describe exactly what the student is trying to say; may have overused phrases or words.
- Sentences are overly simple, lack variety, are incomplete, or all three; errors make it hard to understand some sentences.
- There are too many errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or grammar that make the reader stop to think about what the writer is trying to say.

Score of 1
The student cannot write a paragraph that a reader can understand.

- The student is having difficulty telling what his/her topic is, and the details are not clear or accurate.
- The ideas seem to be put together randomly; sentences do not seem to fit together in a way that makes sense.
- The paragraph is missing an introductory sentence, elaboration, a concluding sentence, or all three.
- Confusing, misused words and phrases are everywhere; sometimes the same words are used over and over.
- It is difficult to read the sentences because of so many errors; words may be left out; sentences may be incomplete; subjects and/or verbs are missing, or the sentences just don’t make sense.
- The paragraph contains many or all of the following: spelling errors in common words, poor punctuation, and serious errors in grammar making the paragraph very difficult to understand.