

Six-Traits Writing Rubric for *Poetry*

36 Points Total

Traits	Poet Laureate	Poet Laureate Jr.	Poet cum laude	Developing Poet	Emerging Poet	Beginning Poet	Pts
Idea & Content ↻ main theme ↻ complementary details	Focused and engaging thesis, strong and artful. 6	Clear thesis, interesting ideas and detail 5	Evident main thesis, well rounded detail 4	Main idea needs vague or too many themes compete 3	Main idea lost in irrelevant detail 2	Lacks central thesis or idea 1	
Organization ↻ structure	Creative - follows poetic style that compliments thesis 6	Strong structure and poetic style 5	Organization is appropriate and conventional 4	Structure detracts from content 3	Structure does not show organization 2	No identifiable structure 1	
Voice ↻ tone ↻ emotion	Well-suited voice supports thesis, strong emotions 6	Voice has consistent tone & emotion 5	Writer shows tone and emotion 4	Emotion and tone vague and needs work 3	Tone is uncertain and not focused 2	No discernible voice or tone, impersonal 1	
Word Choice ↻ rhyme ↻ imagery	Highly crafted for effective word choice, powerful verbs and nouns 6	Phrases and words lead reader on, carefully composed 5	Word choice shows mastery of language 4	Some words weak, some words disrupts rhythm 3	Imprecise language and halting phrases needs fixing 2	Words have no clear message, reader struggles 1	
Sentence Fluency ↻ rhythm ↻ flow	Consistently crafted for perfect flow and/or for poetic license, 6	Smooth phrasing and rhythm enhances reading 5	Occasional transition problems, mostly readable 4	3 or more awkward rhythms affects reading, 3	Confusing flow causes need for re-reading 2	Can be read only by mentally editing 1	
Conventions ↻ spelling ↻ punctuation ↻ grammar	Convention rules followed or bent to reinforce total effect 6	Convention rules understood and followed 5	A couple of spelling or grammar errors 4	Three or more problems with conventions 3	Limited control of Conventions 2	Numerous errors distract from your effort 1	

A - 29 or more points

B - 23 to 28 pts

C - 16 to 22 pts

D - 9 to 15 pts

F - 8 or less pts.

Total Points

Note about this rubric. When I thought about doing this rubric for poetry I could not help but reflect on my posting about how writing rubrics and the 6-trait writing scheme could easily kill original writing. This would be especially true for poetry. I have thought a couple of days about the tradition of poetry breaking the rules. An example is Nikki Giovanni's piece called "Kidnap Poem." In that poem she uses nouns as verbs and breaks capitalization rules. So many other poets mess with our little language. To box them into a rubric used for writing formal English would be a joke. So I tried to adapt Spandel and made allowance for poetic license.

State Standards: (For 9-12 Grades)

Strand: Elements of Composition

Standard: The student will engage in a writing process with attention to audience, organization, focus, quality of ideas, and a purpose.

Sadly, I cannot add any other standards as Minnesota is only concerned with formal writing. There is no mention of learning how to write poetry. All the standards of writing would have caused many poets to be considered failures.