	4 **Advanced** **(Above Grade Level)**	3 **Proficient** **(At Grade Level)**	2 **Basic** **(Approaching Grade Level)**	1 **Below Basic** **(Below Grade Level)**
Focus Introduce and state an opinion on a topic	• Addresses **all aspects** of the claim/position stated through well-chosen sub-topics. • Maintains a **strong controlling point** throughout the paper.	• Addresses all aspects of the claim/position stated and maintains a controlling point.	• Addresses some aspects of the claim/position stated and maintains a general point.	• Lacks a clear point.
Content Clear ideas developed through facts, definitions, concrete examples, explanations, quotations, etc.	• **Acknowledges alternate or opposing claims.** • Support claim with **logical** reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources • Demonstrates an understanding of the topic.	• Uses clear reasons and relevant evidence to support claims • Uses credible sources • Demonstrates an understanding of the topic.	• Uses reasons and evidence to support claims. • Shows an uneven understanding of information.	• Attempts to provide information related to the topic • Demonstrates a lack of understanding • Information may be irrelevant or inaccurate.
Organization: Introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion are clearly written. May include: definitions, classifications, compare/contrast, &/or cause/effect.	• Maintains an organizational structure that intentionally and effectively enhances the claim/position. • Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and effectively clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. • Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from **and supports** the argument statement.	• Maintains an organizational structure that enhances the claim/position. • Uses words, phrases, and clauses to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. • Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument statement.	• Uses an organizational structure inappropriately or inconsistently.	• Attempts to organize ideas, but lacks control of structure.
Style Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of composition.	• Uses precise language that expresses ideas accurately and concisely. • Uses sentences of **varying lengths and complexities**. • Develops and maintains a consistent voice and formal style.	• Varies sentence patterns while using precise language. • Develops and maintains a consistent voice and formal style.	• Inconsistently uses topic-specific vocabulary and word choice • Some sentence variety.	• Attempts to use topic-specific vocabulary and/or • Lacks sentence variety.
Conventions	• Accurately uses punctuation to support sophisticated sentence structure. • Use of conventions enhances the style of writing.	• Demonstrates a grade appropriate command of grammar, usage, capitalization, and spelling.	• Mechanical and usage errors interfere somewhat with writer's message.	• Repeated weakness in mechanics and usage interfere with writer's message.