

Ana McDonald's TAKS Essay Rubric

		A – 4 points	B – 3 points	C – 2 points	D – 1 point
Development of Ideas	Depth	Very deep, thoughtful, insightful.	Some depth, some thought.	Little thought.	Shallow .
	Development of each idea	Thorough & specific. Each idea is explained thoroughly.	Some points are more thorough & specific than others.	Lists ideas with brief explanations. General, inconsistent, contrived.	Lists ideas with vague or missing explanation. Doesn't makes sense.
	Completeness	Totally complete. You've covered the subject completely.	Mostly complete. There's very little I could add to this.	Some gaps, but I still understand.	Big gaps, hard to understand.
	Risk-taking	Unusual perspective, interesting connections, unique experiences or point of view make important writing.	Safe. You haven't pushed yourself to write important ideas.	Predictable. Anyone could have written this.	Very predictable. Anyone could have written this and it doesn't add to the academic conversation at all.
Focus & Coherence	Meaning	Clear and important meaning. Most or all of essay contributes to the meaning.	Clear and important meaning. Much of the essay contributes to the meaning.	Clear or important meaning. Some of the essay contributes.	Little or none of the essay has a clear meaning.
	Completeness	Very complete. Intro & Conclusion belong.	Mostly complete. Intro and Conclusion add some depth.	Somewhat complete. Superficial Intro and Conclusion.	Incomplete. Intro & Conclusion off topic or missing.
	Focus	Clear & Sustained. No digressions. Every idea and every word contributes to your meaning.	Mostly clear, mostly sustained. Few digressions. Most of your ideas contribute to your meaning.	Somewhat focused. Shifts a bit but still clear how ideas are related. Several digressions interrupt the focus.	Unfocused. Abrupt shifts between ideas, hard to understand relationships.
Organization	Progression of Thought	Smooth & controlled flow of ideas. Each idea flows into the next.	Mostly smooth & controlled. Most ideas flow into the next.	Much is smooth & controlled. Many ideas flow into the next.	Choppy & sloppy. Ideas are disconnected.
	Logical Links between ideas	Everything logical. Begins and ends logically. Everything makes sense.	Mostly logical. Everything makes sense.	Not completely logical. Beginning, middle, or ending doesn't make sense.	Illogical. I don't understand why you put these ideas together.
	Organizational Strategy	Enhances the message.	Generally effective.	Doesn't contribute to meaning.	Random, haphazard, hard to read.
	Transitions	Meaningful. Each one works well.	Mostly meaningful. Most work.	Weak or confusing. Some don't work.	None or illogical. Few work well.
	Wordiness	Nice, tight, every word contributes.	Appropriate number of words.	Too many or not quite enough words.	Way too many or too few words.
Voice	Relationship with reader	Sustained and engaging. You read exactly like you sound.	Engaging, mostly sustained You lose me sometimes.	Engaging, not sustained I can't quite make the connection.	No connection made.
	Honesty	Authentic & original. You've told me your true ideas, opinions, experiences.	Mostly authentic & original. Much of this demonstrates who you really are.	Some parts authentic. I get glimpses of your true self.	Inauthentic. You've told me what you think I want to hear, or nothing at all!
	Individual & Unique perspective	Yes. No one but you could have written this!	Yes. You have an interesting way of putting things.	Hard to find. Anyone could have written this.	Missing. Anyone could have written this.
Conventions	Basics	Excellent spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing.	Good spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing.	Sloppy spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing.	So bad it's hard to read.
	Agreement	Excellent.	Good.	Sloppy.	So bad it's hard to read.
	Sentence Structure	Complex sentences convey complex ideas, enhance meaning.	Minor errors don't disrupt meaning.	Errors disrupt meaning.	Hard to read. Your sentences often don't make sense.
	Word Choice	Enhances meaning. You have a good vocabulary and use it well.	Contributes to meaning. You have a good vocabulary.	Wrong words create odd meanings.	Missing or misused words make this hard to read
	Fluency	Consistently fluent. When I read it aloud, it sounds like music that perfectly matches the mood.	Mostly fluent. Most of your writing sounds like music that matches the mood of your essay.	Not very fluent. You need to read it aloud and make corrections to the written copy to make the words flow.	Hard to read. Choppy, sloppy, garbled, etc. Read it aloud, making corrections as you go.

Essays that don't answer the question receive a zero.

—Adapted from the TAKS Essay Rubric. This version © 2004, Ana McDonald, All Rights Reserved