

## ALIGNMENT

# ***Step Up to Writing* and the 6+1 Traits<sup>®</sup> Scoring Model**

The *Step Up to Writing* program provides effective, multisensory writing strategies to improve students' overall literacy skills. This flexible, strategy-based program connects reading and writing to build a common language of literacy and increase proficiency across grade levels and content areas.

Extensive modeling, guided practice, and independent application improve student writing, reading comprehension, vocabulary, note-taking, and critical-thinking skills. Students learn to read, write, listen, speak, and view with skill and confidence.

Because these critical 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy skills are also reflected in the 6+1 Traits Scoring Model, the comprehensive *Step Up to Writing* program is a natural fit for improving overall K-12 student writing across the curriculum. 6+1 Traits offers descriptions for assessing writing; *Step Up to Writing* offers the "how to" – the methods, the tools, the concrete strategies for helping all students reach the highest level on the 6+1 Traits scoring guide or other rubrics designed for classroom, district, and state assessments.

*Step Up to Writing* can be used alone or with the 6+1 Traits Scoring Model. Many teachers, schools, and school districts have successfully combined *Step Up to Writing* strategies with the 6+1 Traits Scoring Model. *Step Up to Writing* strategies also work well with scoring guides or rubrics designed by classroom teachers, schools, school districts, state, and other professional groups. *Step Up to Writing* scoring guides (Section 10\*\*) can be used to prepare students for assessments based on 6+1 Traits.

"*Step Up to Writing* supports and teaches the writing skills used with Six Traits assessments. With *Step Up*, students learn many strategies for organization that help with idea development. They build strong vocabulary skills, which help with word choice and voice. They also learn and frequently practice different sentence structures. This knowledge empowers them to write with the kind of sentence variety that Six Traits suggests. When student writers combine good sentence variety with careful word choice, they begin to develop a style and voice of their own. Finally, *Step Up* teaches students proper conventions for editing and revising their work to make it the best it can be."

— *Step Up to Writing*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

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\*\* All Section references refer to Step Up to Writing, Third Edition (2008). The program also applies to the content, tools, and strategies found in the First and Second Editions.

## ORGANIZATION

### **Step Up to Writing**

Provides students with samples and direct instruction for writing organized expository paragraphs, essays and reports as well as stories and personal narratives.

A number of tools and strategies help students master these skills:

- Section 1: Writing to improve reading and listening comprehension (e.g. making connections; teaching response strategies: sticky notes, agree/disagree, quotations, two-column guided response, quick sketches; marking the text; strategies for taking notes: two-column notes, research note cards, mapping and webbing; summarizing and retelling; using and creating bookmarks)
- Section 3: Sentence mastery (e.g. carefully selecting sentence structures, kinds of sentences, sentence variety, and content for leads, endings, conclusions; considering purpose, audience)
- Section 4: Information/expository paragraphs (e.g. recognizing two kinds of writing; planning with an informal outline; building accordion paragraphs; playing the organization game; defining topic sentences and thesis statements; writing with sentence variety; using transitions accurately and effectively to build cohesion; connecting conclusions to a topic sentence)
- Section 5: Accordion essays and reports (e.g. using informal outlines; blocking out essays and reports; developing plans for elaboration of detail, reasons, and facts; using transitions to build cohesion; writing successful conclusions; practice with framed essays/reports; stretching the writing – not stacking; writing documented essays/reports)
- Section 6: Story and narrative writing (e.g. learning story elements and text structures; creating story maps, quick sketches and quick note planning; planning and developing characters; sequencing events; using a variety of narrative transitions; writing an interesting and successful beginning and ending; tips for revising, editing and proofreading)
- Section 7: Personal Narratives (e.g. composing, preparing, practicing, sharing, and publishing personal narratives)
- Section 8: Speeches (e.g. recognizing components of a good speech; organizing and planning a speech; blocking out a speech; including stories/anecdotes; giving speeches)
- Section 9: Specific writing assignments (e.g. creating assignments such as persuasive writing, descriptive writing, writing in math, technical writing, poetry)
- Section 10: Assessment and high standards (e.g. setting high standards and clear expectations; using helpful, detailed scoring guides; reviewing and analyzing writing samples; implementing checklists for revision; conducting peer review; editing with CUPS – capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling)

### **6+1 Traits Scoring Model**

#### ① ORGANIZATION

- Internal structure
- Skeleton and glue
- Purposeful and engaging lead
- Thought-provoking close
- Links each detail or new development to larger picture
- Builds a turning point or key revelation
- Strong transitions form a “safety net”
- Reader never feels lost
- Organized from beginning to end
- Parts fit together
- Ideas in the best order

*“By using [6 Traits], you teach students how to see what is working well in their writing, and what still needs work.”*

*— Ruth Culham, *6+1 Traits of Writing, the Complete Guide**

*“While 6 Traits gives students a way to assess and think about their writing, Step Up to Writing provides the skills, tools, and strategies students need to become proficient, independent writers.”*

*— Maureen Auman, *Step Up to Writing**

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## **CONTENT**

## ***Step Up to Writing***

Empowers writers to share information and ideas in creative, accurate, and interesting ways.

Practical strategies and useful tools help students collect, analyze, and use information to create a variety of interesting texts:

- Section 1: Writing to improve reading and listening comprehension (e.g. marking the text; taking notes; summarizing/retelling; asking and answering questions)
  - Section 2: Vocabulary (e.g. writing meaningful vocabulary word sentences; creating vocabulary word and concept maps; personification of abstract nouns)
  - Section 3: Sentence mastery (e.g. carefully selecting sentence structures, kinds of sentences, sentence variety, and content for leads, endings, and conclusions; adding quotations; considering purpose and audience)
  - Section 4: Information/expository paragraphs (e.g. writing topic sentences, thesis statements, and leads; using effective transitions; selecting reasons, details, and facts to support the thesis; elaborating on ideas; connecting conclusions to topic sentence or thesis statement)
  - Section 5: Accordion essays and reports (e.g. writing topic sentences, thesis statements, and leads; using effective transitions; selecting reasons, details, and facts to support the thesis; elaborating on ideas; connecting conclusions to topic sentence or thesis statement; writing successful conclusions; writing documented essays and reports)
  - Section 6: Story and narrative writing (e.g. planning and organizing writing; creating interesting beginnings; developing characters; writing dialogue; using narrative transitions; writing a successful ending)
  - Section 7: Personal Narratives (e.g. composing personal narratives; preparing, practicing, sharing personal narratives)
  - Section 8: Speeches (e.g. organizing and planning a speech; blocking out a speech; including stories/anecdotes; giving speeches)
  - Section 9: Specific writing assignments (e.g. supporting opinion with facts; writing to compare/contrast; creating biographical and autobiographical sketches; RAFTS: writing from a different point of view; writing a skit; writing in math and science; personal writing)
  - Section 10: Assessment and high standards (e.g. improving word choice with the ABC Activity; editing with CUPS; quick check lists for self-evaluation; practical scoring guides)

Students need direct instruction for reading comprehension; good comprehension means students are ready to summarize, analyze, critique, evaluate, and share opinions.

## ***6+1 Traits Scoring Model***

## ② IDEA DEVELOPMENT

- Heart of the message; “my” message
  - The main thesis
  - Impression
  - Story line
  - Document support
  - Elaboration
  - Anecdotes and juicy details
  - Images
  - Carefully selected details
  - Builds understanding
  - Holds reader’s attention
  - It all makes sense
  - Really clear

## My notes

## SENTENCE MASTERY

### ***Step Up to Writing***

Helps students master sentence writing through modeling, practice, and enrichment activities.

Students need specific instructions, demonstrations, and support as they learn about sentences:

- Section 2: Vocabulary (e.g. teaching tips; breaking down definitions; correct pronunciation of content-area vocabulary; writing meaningful vocabulary sentences)
- Section 3: Sentence mastery (e.g. writing better sentences; using a variety of sentence structures – simple, compound, complex, compound/complex; understanding the kinds of sentences; writing with sentence variety; recognizing parts of speech; using sentence fragments effectively; eliminating run-ons; playing with language; learning parts of sentences with diagrams; adding quotations; considering purpose and audience)
- Section 4: Information/expository writing (e.g. writing topic sentences, thesis statement, and leads; using transitions effectively and accurately)
- Section 5: Accordion essays and reports (e.g. creating two-sentence introductions; incorporating transition topic sentences; using transitions effectively; elaborating with quotations and citations; writing successful conclusions)
- Section 6: Story and narrative writing (e.g. writing content that “paints a picture”; creating interesting beginnings; developing characters; writing dialogue; using narrative transitions; moving from *telling* to *showing*; writing a successful ending)
- Section 7: Personal narrative (e.g. practicing, publishing, and sharing personal narratives)
- Section 9: Specific writing assignments (e.g. creating new assignments such as writing to compare/contrast, responding to literature, RAFTS: writing from a different point of view, writing letters, applying for a job, technical writing, writing in math and science)
- Section 10: Assessment and high standards (e.g. printing and cursive writing; improving word choice with the ABC Activity; editing with CUPS – capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling; quick checks for self-evaluation; practical, effective scoring guides)

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### ***6+1 Traits Scoring Model***

#### ③ SENTENCE FLUENCY

- Finely crafted construction
- Sense of rhythm and grace
- Achieved by: logic, creative phrasing, parallel construction, alliteration, absence of redundancy, varied sentence length & structure
- Purposeful sentence beginnings
- Cries to be spoken aloud

When students master sentence writing, they become fluent writers, able to share their ideas in a variety of sentence lengths and structures.

*Step Up to Writing* promotes the effective use of sentences by providing students with practical strategies that can be used during all stages of the writing process.

# VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

## ***Step Up to Writing***

Helps students develop a rich vocabulary in all subject areas; pushes students to use these words in their everyday writing assignments as well as in special writing activities across the curriculum

- Section 2: Vocabulary (e.g. teaching tips; reading and understanding dictionary definitions; breaking down definitions; pronouncing vocabulary words; writing meaningful vocabulary sentences; creating detailed vocabulary word maps and webs; creating and using concept maps; understanding abstract nouns and vivid verbs; homonyms, homophones, and homographs; using strong vocabulary in writing across the curriculum)
  - Section 3: Sentence mastery (e.g. writing better sentences; recognizing parts of speech; playing with language; adding quotations; considering purpose and audience)
  - Section 6: Story and narrative writing (e.g. defining mood, tone, and vivid language)
  - Section 9: Specific writing assignments (e.g. writing for a variety of purposes and audiences; choosing appropriate and effective vocabulary; demonstrating mastery of content area vocabulary through good word choice)
  - Section 10: Assessment and high standards (e.g. checklists for revision; improving word choice with the ABC Activity; editing with CUPS – capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling; quick check for self-evaluation; practical, effective scoring guides)

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- ## ***6+1 Traits Scoring Model***

## ④ WORD CHOICE

- Precision in the use of words
  - Precise, vivid, natural language
  - Love of language; passion for words
  - Skill in choosing words
  - Words create mood, impression, word pictures
  - Lively, energetic verbs
  - Promotes connections, memories, reflective thoughts
  - Right words in the right places
  - Extremely clear, visual, and accurate language

Students learn most of their vocabulary through reading and during family and friends' social events. New words, however, can be learned in class lessons, through direction instruction, during school activities, or by completing class assignments. Students like (and need) to learn new words each day.

*Step Up to Writing* strategies make learning, remembering, and using new words fun and effective.

*Step Up* promotes students writing about subject-area content. This gives students opportunities to write, and it also gives students a place to demonstrate their knowledge of content vocabulary.

## STYLE

### ***Step Up to Writing***

Provides samples and techniques to help students develop a repertoire of appropriate writing styles.

Students learn about active and passive voice as well as voice/style for writers.

- **Section 2: Vocabulary** (e.g. teaching tips; reading and understanding dictionary definitions; breaking down definitions; writing meaningful vocabulary sentences; creating detailed vocabulary word maps and webs; creating and using concept maps; understanding abstract nouns and vivid verbs; homonyms, homophones, and homographs; using strong vocabulary in writing across the curriculum)
- **Section 3: Sentence mastery** (e.g. understanding active and passive voice; writing better sentences; using a variety of sentence structures; understanding the kinds of sentences; writing with sentence variety; recognizing parts of speech; using sentence fragments effectively; playing with language; adding quotations; writing headlines and sentences; considering purpose and audience)
- **Section 4: Information/expository paragraphs** (e.g. two kinds of writing; writing in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> person; using transitions effectively and accurately; elaborating on ideas)
- **Section 5: Accordion essays and paragraphs** (e.g. elaborating on ideas; using quotations and citations; writing successful introductions/leads and conclusions; “stretch, don’t stack” practice; revising and editing strategies)
- **Section 6: Story and narrative writing** (e.g. Alphabet Soup and other ideas; creating and developing strong characters; showing, not telling; ways to begin a story; writing effective dialogue; revising and editing strategies)
- **Section 7: Personal narratives** (e.g. preparing to writing; practicing personal narratives; sharing/publishing the writing)
- **Section 8: Speeches** (e.g. components of a good speech; focusing on the audience; including stories/anecdotes; speaking with a purpose; convincing)
- **Section 9: Specific writing assignments** (e.g. recognizing the need for different styles; practicing different genres; persuasive writing; RAFTS: writing from a different point of view; descriptive writing; writing in math and science; technical writing; poetry; writing a skit; personal writing)
- **Section 10: Assessment and high standards** (e.g. checklists for revision; improving word choice: ABC Activity; editing with CUPS – capitalization, usage, punctuation, spelling; quick check for self-evaluation; practical scoring guides)

When students use *Step Up to Writing*, they learn to select appropriate styles for writing and understand that some writing situations call for strong personal voice and some do not. They learn that all writing is dependent upon the audience, purpose, message, context, and occasion.

### ***6+1 Traits Scoring Model***

#### ⑤ VOICE

- Presence of writer on page
- Strong passion for the topic
- Strong concern for the audience
- Tone and flavor of piece fits topic, purpose, and audience
- Text dances with life and energy
- Individual, expressive, and engaging
- Putting what I think, “myself,” into the writing
- “Writing to be read”
- Reader feels strong connection with writing and writer

#### “Voice

[5] I have put my personal, recognizable stamp on this paper...you can hear my voice boomerang through..."

— Vicki Spandel, *Creating Writers*

“Write in a way that draws the reader’s attention to the sense of substance of the writing, rather than to the mood and temper of the author.”

— Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*

“Perhaps you have heard it said that the best technical writing style is no style at all. This means simply that the reader should not be aware of your presence as a writer.”

— Mike Markel, *Technical Communication*

## HIGH EXPECTATIONS: CUPS (Capitalization, Usage, Punctuation, Spelling)

### **Step Up to Writing**

Empowers students to complete final drafts free of mistakes.  
Provides tools to help students learn and apply conventions – sets high standards for all written work.

- Section 2: Vocabulary mastery (e.g. teaching tips, breaking down definitions, correct pronunciation of words, writing meaningful vocabulary sentences; vocabulary development across the curriculum)
- Section 3: Sentence mastery (e.g. better sentences; sentence structures; kinds of sentences; sentence variety; parts of speech; playing with language; adding quotations)
- Sections 4-9 (e.g. application, practice, and ongoing assessment of skills with CUPS – capitalizations, usage, punctuations, and spelling; application of “neat paper rules” and scoring guides)
- Section 10: Assessment and high standards (e.g. printing and cursive writing; improving word choice with the ABC Activity; editing with CUPS – capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling; using quick checks for self-evaluation; practical, effective scoring guides)

*Step Up to Writing* “neat paper rules,” “CUPS” strategies, check lists, tools, and practical scoring guides support the 6+1 Traits Scoring Model which promotes “correctness” - the “spit and polish” phase. The “perfect three sentence paragraphs” and “ticket out” strategies help students practice and help teachers check for progress or mastery.

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### **6+1 Traits Scoring Model**

#### ⑥ CONVENTIONS

- The “spit-and-polish” phase
- Editorial correctness: punctuation, spelling, grammar and usage, capitalization, paragraphing
- Good grammar adds to style
- “Clean copy”
- Ready to share and publish
- Promote good writing in all subject areas

## PRESENTATION

### **Step Up to Writing**

Empowers writers to present writing that effectively conveys a message to the audience; to incorporate technology as a means of writing and presenting.

- Section 2: Vocabulary mastery (e.g. teaching strategies for vocabulary development and use across the curriculum)
- Section 3: Sentence mastery (e.g. writing headlines and sentences; purpose and audience considerations; adding quotations; playing with language)
- Section 4: Information/expository paragraphs (e.g. two kinds of writing, the writing process and organization)
- Section 5: Accordion essays and reports (e.g. planning, writing, and revising; writing documented essays and reports)
- Section 6: Story and narrative writing (e.g. writing drafting and revising, editing and proofreading)
- Section 7: Personal narratives (e.g. preparing and writing personal narratives; sharing and publishing personal writing)
- Section 8: Speeches (e.g. giving speeches, focusing on the audience)
- Section 9: specific writing assignments (e.g. supporting an opinion with facts; writing letters; writing in math and science; technical writing; writing a skit; news writing)
- Section 10: Assessment and high standards (e.g. neat paper rules; printing and cursive writing; improving word choice with the ABC Activity; editing with CUPS – capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling; using a checklist for revision; conducting peer review; using a quick check for self-evaluation; practical and effective scoring guides)

Students using *Step Up to Writing* build confidence on a daily basis as they learn to improve the organization, content, style, and grammar/mechanics in their writing. This improvement inspires them to present their writing in the best way possible.

### **6+1 Traits Scoring Model**

#### +① PRESENTATION

- Combine visual and verbal elements
- “Exhibit” the message on paper
- Easy to read
- Everything right
- Shows pride in work

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## REFERENCES

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