6 + 1 Traits of Writing
Academic Writing Program

Teachers do not need to address all 6 + 1 traits each time a writing task is delivered. We recommend addressing one or two traits at a time. Select the trait/s that you have identified require most attention and start with unpacking the cognitive verb and then brainstorm prior to writing.

Trait pairings and example of context or task:

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<th>Traits</th>
<th>Example task or question. (NB. These are not the only instances these traits are useful)</th>
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<td>Ideas &amp; Organisation</td>
<td>Students are asked to define or identify</td>
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<td>Voice &amp; Word Choice</td>
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<td>Sentence Fluency &amp; Writing Conventions</td>
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**IDEAS**

Developing and recording ideas is a crucial step of successful writing. Students often skip over this step but the physical recording of ideas must be the first step in the writing process. Any format possible; list, web, flow chart, etc.

**ORGANISATION**

This trait is about students organising their ideas by selecting the best or most effective ideas from their brainstorm. Each response must reflect a particular style or format. At MCA, students use the PEEEL structure when appropriate. Students can access draft or planning templates in the Writing and Citing eBook. This can be downloaded via the Library website.

**VOICE**

Students need to develop unique and individual responses to complex questions; therefore, developing a writing identity in the younger years must be encouraged. This comes through in their style, tone, mood and word choice. Below are examples students may select from to help craft their voice. There are many more options.

**Situation:**
- Informal
- Formal

**Tone:** the author’s attitude toward the topic
- Positive
  - Compassionate
  - Celebratory
  - Light-hearted
- Neutral
  - Informative
  - Questioning
  - Scholarly
- Negative
  - Apprehensive
  - Sarcastic
  - Harsh

**Mood:** how the reader will feel
- Determined
- Optimistic
- Frustrated
- Sombre
WORD CHOICE

Students should make use of key subject vocabulary, as well as incorporate a variety of words that engage, clarify and expand the students’ ideas. Students must consider how their word choice affects their voice and the message they wish to communicate.

SENTENCE FLUENCY

Sentence fluency requires students to be cognisant of how their writing sounds and flows. Students should incorporate a variety of connectives, sentence structures and lengths to craft an engaging piece of text. Have your students read their work aloud or listen to it using text-to-speech.

WRITING CONVENTIONS

Writing conventions are the mechanics of writing – spelling, grammar, capitalisation, paragraphing and punctuation. Proof-reading for convention correctness is a crucial part of the editing process. Conventions are not critical while developing ideas and planning. Instead, conventions can be added and amended during the editing process. A simple editing checklist can be helpful for students.

PRESENTATION

This trait is to prompt students to consider the formatting of their final piece. Will it be an essay? A story? A brochure? A letter? A folio? A newspaper article? Each of these formats require specific elements including visuals, columns, drop-caps, and so on. The Presentation trait is not expected to be assessed for every writing task. Most classroom writing tasks will not be required to be polished pieces.