Six Traits of Writing at a Glance

Ideas: the piece’s content; its central message and details that support the message

Key Qualities: Finding a Topic, Focusing the Topic, Developing the Topic, Using Details

Organization: the internal structure of the piece; the thread of logic, the pattern of meaning

Key Qualities: Creating the Lead, Using Sequence and Transition Words, Structuring the Body,

Ending with a Sense of Resolution

Voice: the tone and tenor of the piece; the personal stamp of the writer, which is achieved through a

Strong understanding of purpose and audience

Key Qualities: Establishing a Tone, Conveying the Purpose, Creating a Connection to the

Audience, Taking Risks to Create Voice

Word Choice: the specific vocabulary the writer uses to convey meaning and enlighten the reader

Key Qualities: Using Strong Verbs, Using Striking Words and Phrases, Using Specific and Accurate

Words, Choosing Words that Deepen Meaning

Sentence Fluency: the way words and phrases flow through the piece; it is the auditory trait and is

“read” with the ear as much as the eye

Key Qualities: Crafting Well-Built Sentences, Varying Sentence Types, Capturing Smooth and

Rhythmic Flow, Breaking the Rules to Create Fluency

Conventions: the mechanical correctness of the piece; correct use of conventions guide the reader

through the text easily

Evaluation Criteria for Children’s Literature

Examine the personal traits of characters, role of various characters, diversity of presentation in text and illustrations, and experience of the author and illustrator. Determine if the cultural references are stereotypes.

Look for richness of detail concerning the groups depicted, an approach that celebrates diversity and the common bonds of humanity, an in-depth treatment of issues, authentic interaction among characters, and thought-provoking content that invites reflection, analysis, and response.