

# Traits of Great Writing for Teens

## **Ideas and Content – Your paper is focused, clear, and specific.**

- Choose a topic you know well and care about.
  - Limit the topic to one main idea you can develop fully within the assigned length.
  - Include interesting details that keep your readers' attention and develop the main idea.
  - Show what happens through description and action.
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## **Organization – Your paper has a cohesive and engaging direction.**

- Put your ideas in an order that keeps readers wanting to find out more.
  - Begin your paper with a “hook” that grabs readers' attention and gives them clues about what they can expect to learn.
  - Develop your main idea or story with supporting details that are convincing.
  - Use signal words and phrases to transition smoothly between paragraphs and sentences.
  - Close your paper with a satisfying ending that wraps up your main points clearly.
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## **Voice – Your paper has personality and is appropriate for your readers and occasion.**

- Show readers that only you could have written this paper.
  - Write as if you were talking directly to your readers one on one.
  - Sound knowledgeable, trustworthy, and sincere.
  - Make your readers feel what you are feeling.
  - Use suspense, humor, surprise, or warmth to engage your readers.
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## **Word Choice – Your words are vivid, accurate, and precise.**

- Spend time finding just the right words to express your ideas and feelings.
  - Choose nouns that are concrete and specific. Use verbs that are active and vigorous.
  - Use a few modifiers to create vivid images for the reader.
  - Make every word count. Each one should add to a reader's understanding.
  - Cut out all words and phrases that are not absolutely necessary.
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## **Sentence Fluency – Your sentences are varied and natural.**

- Organize your sentences so they are pleasing to read aloud.
  - Vary the length of your sentences. This helps to create variety and interest.
  - Put important points in short sentences for emphasis.
  - Vary the beginnings of your sentences.
  - Make sure long sentences still have only one main idea and all the details you include are related to it.
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## **Conventions – You have paid careful attention to the standards of written English.**

- Use capitals, periods, commas, exclamation marks, and quotation marks correctly.
- Double-check your spelling.
- Indented your paragraphs to show where new ideas begin.
- Use grammar and word usage consistent with standard written English.
- Keep the reading level appropriate for your audience.