**jWhy the 6 + 1 Trait Writing Model is important for every content area:**

■It provides a common language for teachers and students to communicate about the characteristics of writing and establishes a clear vision of what good writing looks like.

■It establishes consistency from year to year and teacher to teacher.

■It encourages writers to become more independent because students are empowered to evaluate and assess their own writing.

■It challenges students to think of writing in new ways.

**6+1 Trait® Definitions**

The 6+1 Trait® Writing analytical model for assessing and teaching writing is made up of 6+1 key qualities that define strong writing. These are:

1. **Ideas** The ideas are the heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme, together with the details that enrich and develop that theme.

2. **Organization** Organization is the internal structure of a piece of writing, the thread of central meaning, the logical and sometimes intriguing pattern of the ideas.

3. **Voice** The voice is the heart and soul, the magic, the wit, along with the feeling and conviction of the individual writer coming out through the words.

4. **Word Choice** Word choice is the vocabulary a writer chooses to convey meaning.

5. **Sentence Fluency** Sentence fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear--not just to the eye.

6. **Conventions** Conventions are the mechanical correctness of the piece, spelling, grammar and usage, paragraphing, use of capitals, and punctuation. Many of our students know this as CUPS (capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling).

**IDEAS**

The Ideas are the main message, the content of the piece, the main theme, together with all the supporting details that enrich and develop that theme. The ideas are strong when the message is clear. The writer chooses details that are interesting, important, and informative–often the kinds of details the reader would not normally anticipate or predict. Successful writers do not "tell" readers things they already know; e.g., "It was a sunny day, and the sky was blue, the clouds were fluffy white …" Successful writers "show" readers that which is normally overlooked.

**ORGANIZATION**

Organization is the internal structure of a piece of writing, the thread of central meaning, the pattern and sequence, so long as it fits the central idea. Organizational structure can be based on comparison-contrast, deductive logic, point-by-point analysis, development of a central theme, chronological history of an

event, or any of a dozen other identifiable patterns. When the organization is strong, the piece begins meaningfully and creates in the writer a sense of anticipation that is, ultimately, systematically fulfilled. Events proceed logically; information is given to the reader in the right doses at the right times so that the reader never loses interest. Connections are strong, which is another way of saying that bridges from one idea to the next hold up.

**VOICE** Voice is the writer coming through the words, the sense that a real person is speaking to us and cares about the message. It is the heart and soul of the writing, the magic, the wit, the feeling, the life and breath. When the writer is engaged personally with the topic, he/she imparts a personal tone and flavor to the piece that is unmistakably his/hers alone. And it is that individual something–different from the mark of all other writers–that we call Voice.

**WORD CHOICE**

Word Choice is the use of rich, colorful, precise language that communicates not just in a functional way, but in a way that moves and enlightens the reader. In descriptive writing, strong word choice resulting in imagery, especially sensory, show-me writing, clarifies and expands ideas. In persuasive writing, purposeful word choice moves the reader to a new vision of ideas. In all modes of writing figurative language such as metaphors, similes and analogies articulate, enhance, and enrich the content. Strong word choice is characterized not so much by an exceptional vocabulary chosen to impress the reader, but more by the skill to use everyday words well.

**SENTENCE FLUENCY**

Sentence Fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear, not just to the eye. How does it sound when read aloud? That's the test. Fluent writing has power, rhythm, and movement. It is free of awkward word patterns that slow the reader's progress. Sentences vary in length, beginnings, structure, and style, and are so well crafted that the writer moves through the piece with ease.

**CONVENTIONS**

The Conventions Trait is the mechanical correctness of the piece and includes five elements: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar/usage, and paragraphing. Writing that is strong in Conventions has been proofread and edited with care.