

## **Holistic Scoring**

Holistic scoring is based on the belief that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Teachers who use holistic scoring for essays consider how all of the parts work together to create meaning. It is most useful as a quick overall assessment of writing—not as a determiner of specific writing skills.

Holistic scoring is valuable in determining which students need more help in writing processes and which would do better with more challenging assignments.

Holistic scoring is not valuable in diagnosing writing skills.

### **Two types of holistic scoring**

#### **Focused Holistic Scoring:**

When teachers use explicit criteria to evaluate student writing it is considered focused holistic scoring. Students are given the criteria prior to writing. Teachers use this type of holistic scoring most often.

#### **General Impression Scoring:**

This is used when raters (trained evaluators) assign scores by matching students' papers to exemplars (or anchor papers). Many standardized tests use this type of holistic scoring.

Teachers must be aware of holistic scoring, the ways it is used most effectively, and when to use holistic scoring in their classrooms. Generally, holistic scoring is used at the beginning of a writing course to evaluate the general abilities of students. It is also used to help students choose which piece to continue through writing processes to publication.