



## Length Bias

It is easy to get the impression that the longer the essay, the higher the score. This is actually somewhat true. There must be sufficient writing to effectively demonstrate the writer's skill. With minimal development, organization and style are difficult to recognize.

Sufficiency is also important because it demonstrates the ability of the writer to maintain a high level of skill in each of the characteristics. A student may be able to write an excellent multi-sentence summary of a book's plot but be unable to maintain that control over a longer essay.

The same is true for the scores for Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions. The shorter the response the more difficult it is to determine whether the student really does have a strong command of conventions or can use words in a precise and sophisticated way to enhance the topic.

It is important to keep in mind that no matter the length of an essay, the writer must demonstrate strong skill in all six characteristics throughout the entire piece to receive an optimal score. For more information about this topic, see the [Utah Compose Rubrics](#).