

The General Language Arts Rubric

Because there are so many “shades of gray” when it comes to language arts assignments, there is a universal rubric that I use that is based on degrees of correctness. All answers are not equal. The more explanation and clarification that a student adds to an answer, the more quality that answer will have and the more “correct” it will be. Be careful here, though. Just writing *a lot* is no guarantee of a good grade. If the explanation for an answer goes on too long and includes a lot of extraneous information, that is almost as bad as having an answer that leaves out critical information. Why? Because all of the extra verbiage clutters the correct answer and makes it difficult to find. It’s the equivalent of having a rose garden that is choked with weeds. The good stuff is in there (the roses) but there are so many undesirable plants (the weeds) that it’s hard to appreciate the garden. Same thing here. The best LA answers will be:

- **Factually accurate** - The **evidence** provided is correct and it’s the *best evidence* available for that answer.
- **Nicely explained** – The evidence is only half of the battle! The elaboration, or the explanation of why that evidence is important, is absolutely critical to a good answer.
- **Nicely edited** - Answers must have enough evidence and elaboration (E&E) but not be too long or too short.
- **Very clear** – Use *very specific language* when responding to any and all LA prompts. The two biggest score killers 8th graders face are answers that begin with **pronouns with no antecedents** and answers that **begin with the word “because.”**
- **Complete sentences** – Unless otherwise specified by the teacher, all answers you provide this year need to be complete sentence answers that restate the question. From here on out in your school career, answers that are not complete sentences will cost you points. The sooner you wrap your head around that concept, the better off you (and your grade!) will be.

100-90%	89-75%	74-50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers are factually accurate. • Elaborations (explanations) are appropriate and informative. • Answers do not contain unnecessary passages. • Very specific language is used throughout. • Answers are in complete sentence format; questions are restated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers are mostly accurate but lack some important info. • Elaborations (explanations) are good but are not as accurate as they need to be. • Answers contain a passage or two that detract from the actual answer. • Language used is mostly effective but could be clearer in certain instances. • Answers are mostly in complete sentence format and the questions are restated, but there are gaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers lack accuracy and important critical details are missing. • Elaborations (explanations) are weak or have not been included at all. • Answers contain too much extraneous information – correct answer may not have even been given. • Language used is inaccurate or is unclear. • Answers are not in complete sentences and the questions have not been restated.