

Content Rubric

Criteria	10 – Powerful	8 – Strong	6 – Developing	4 – Emerging	2 – Minimal
Authentic Voice/Style	Personal, unique, and unmistakably genuine; reader <i>feels</i> the writer.	Writer’s voice is clear and engaging.	Voice is present but not fully developed.	Voice is faint or inconsistent.	Lacks a personal voice or perspective.
Emotional Impact	Deeply moving, powerful, or inspiring; stays with the reader.	Evokes emotion or strong interest.	Has moments of depth; somewhat engaging.	Emotion or connection is weak or forced.	Little or no emotional impact.
Creativity & Perspective	Unique angle, surprising insight, or creative storytelling.	Fresh and interesting ideas; some originality.	Reasonable ideas but predictable or safe.	Lacks originality or personal insight.	Unoriginal, generic, or cliché.
Connection to Prompt	Fully explores the chosen prompt with rich personal relevance.	Clearly relates to the prompt with good development.	Generally on topic with some personal connection.	Loosely connected; underdeveloped	Off-topic or missing meaningful connection.
Effort	Clearly crafted with effort; stands out.	Shows strong effort.	Shows decent effort.	Minimal effort.	Very rushed or superficial.

*Category 2 submissions must include an English version and a native-language version of the same (or similar) essay. Only the English version will be judged.