

Scoring Guide: Word Choice

- 5.** Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way. The words are powerful and engaging.
- A. Words are specific and accurate. It is easy to understand just what the writer means.
 - B. Striking words and phrases often catch the reader's eye and linger in the reader's mind.
 - C. Language and phrasing is natural, effective, and appropriate for the audience.
 - D. Lively verbs add energy while specific nouns and modifiers add depth.
 - E. Choices in language enhance the meaning and clarify understanding.
 - F. Precision is obvious. The writer has taken care to put just the right word or phrase in just the right spot.
- 3.** The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy. It is easy to figure out the writer's meaning on a general level.
- A. Words are adequate and correct in a general sense, and they support the meaning by not getting in the way.
 - B. Familiar words and phrases communicate but rarely capture the reader's imagination.
 - C. Attempts at colorful language show a willingness to stretch and grow, but sometimes reach beyond the audience (thesaurus overload!).
 - D. Despite a few successes, the writing is marked by passive verbs, everyday nouns, and mundane modifiers.
 - E. The words and phrases are functional with only one or two fine moments.
 - F. The words may be refined in a couple of places, but the language looks more like the first thing that popped into the writer's mind.
- 1.** The writer demonstrates a limited vocabulary or has not searched for words to convey specific meaning.
- A. Words are so nonspecific and distracting that only a very limited meaning comes through.
 - B. Problems with language leave the reader wondering. Many of the words just don't work in this piece.
 - C. Audience has not been considered. Language is used incorrectly, making the message secondary to the misfires with the words.
 - D. Limited vocabulary and/or misused parts of speech seriously impair understanding.
 - E. Words and phrases are so unimaginative and lifeless that they detract from the meaning.
 - F. Jargon or clichés distract or mislead. Redundancy may distract the reader.