**YES! Magazine National Student Writing Competition**
**Evaluation Rubric**

**Basic guidelines:**
- Must respond to the article and writing prompt provided by YES!
- Must reference the article. Personal examples and insights encouraged.
- No more than 600 words.
- Must be original, unpublished work.

**In addition, we are evaluating essays for:**
- Grammar
- Organization
- Strong style and personal voice
- Originality and clarity of content and ideas

**How to use the rubric:**
Please use this rubric as a measure of what we will be looking for when selecting winning essays. This rubric should provide guidelines, not an unreasonable or rigid standard.

You have probably encountered a rubric before, but here’s a quick guide to using this one:
- Along the left side of the rubric grid are the criteria for evaluating students’ essays.
- Along the top of the grid, we have scores from 4 (outstanding) to 1 (poor).
- For each criterion, match the essay with the description that best fits it and assign a score.
- Once you have scored the essay on all the criteria, take the average of those seven numbers. That is the score for the essay.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on topic</td>
<td>There is one clear, well-focused topic. Main idea is supported by detailed information.</td>
<td>Main idea is clear, but the general.</td>
<td>Main idea is somewhat clear, but there is need for more supporting evidence.</td>
<td>Main idea is not clear. There is a seemingly random collection of information.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>Details are placed in a logical order and the way they are presented effectively keeps the reader’s interest.</td>
<td>Details are placed in a logical order, but the way they are presented sometimes make the writing less interesting.</td>
<td>Some details are not in a logical or expected order, and this distracts the reader.</td>
<td>There is no clear introduction of the main topic or structure of the paper.</td>
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<td>Originality and strength of ideas</td>
<td>Formulates a thought-provoking, well-developed, and fairly original position on an issue.</td>
<td>Writer takes a clear position on an issue, though it is not developed fully.</td>
<td>Writer’s position is evident, though it is vague.</td>
<td>Fails to take a clear position, or writer contradicts herself.</td>
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<td>Evidence and/or reasoning</td>
<td>Provides specific reasons and/or evidence that demonstrate understanding and insight.</td>
<td>Offers adequate – though perhaps vague or incomplete – supporting reasons and/or evidence</td>
<td>Provides less than adequate or contradictory reasons or evidence to support position.</td>
<td>Offers only general reasons or evidence or none, or offers evidence contradictory to the writer’s thesis or main idea.</td>
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<td>Command of grammar and conventions</td>
<td>Command of conventions exhibited. Creative word choice and varied sentence structure.</td>
<td>Correct use of grammar and conventions (for the most part).</td>
<td>Weak control of grammar and conventions. Errors distracting.</td>
<td>Use of grammar and conventions interferes with understanding.</td>
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<td>Voice</td>
<td>Author’s voice is strong and engaging. Draws reader in.</td>
<td>Writing attracts reader’s interest. Author’s voice shows engagement with the topic.</td>
<td>Technically well written; however, author’s voice is weak.</td>
<td>Writing fails to engage the reader. Does not demonstrate writer’s interest in topic.</td>
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Adapted from Rubric for Editorial – Commentary Essay from LAEP.org and the 6+1 Traits of Writing Rubric from Readwritethink.org