NJSLA-A Writing Student Checklist

Name _____ Date _____

How your essay is scored

Two holistic scores: **Composition** and **Conventions**. Grades 3–5 are scored 1–4; grade 6 and up, 1–5.

Score	Composition
5	Focused; clear understanding of the task
4	Mostly focused; general understanding
3	Basic; some understanding
2	Limited; partial understanding
1	Minimal

Name the genre first

You won't know it in advance. Before you plan, decide: **narrative**, **informative/explanatory**, or **opinion** (grades 4–5) / **argument** (grade 6 and up)?

Scorers look for the best fit, not a checklist, and treat your essay as a first draft.

Ideas and focus

- [ ] I understood the task and purpose, and I stayed focused on it.
- [ ] **Argument:** my claim clearly introduces the issue.
- [ ] **Argument:** my evidence from the texts is relevant and accurate, and my reasoning is logical.
- [ ] **Argument, grade 7:** I acknowledged an opposing claim. **Grade 8 and up:** I also showed how my claim differs from it.
- [ ] **Informative:** I developed the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details and evidence from the text.
- [ ] **Narrative:** my story builds on the story starter or scenario I was given.

Organization, expression and word choice

- [ ] My ideas are organized, and each paragraph has a clear job.
- [ ] My words are precise and fit the genre.

Conventions

- [ ] I checked grammar, punctuation and spelling for my grade.

My plan

Genre + my claim or topic	**Evidence or details from the text**	**Opposing claim** (argument)

Student summary based on NJDOE's Writing Rubrics for the NJSLA-A and NJGPA-A (grades 6–8 argument wording shown); not an official NJDOE document.