Analytic Rubric for a Persuasive Essay, Grade 8

From a sample action research with invented data on the NASH Reviewer blog (nash.com.ph/blog/action-research-writing-skills). The traits follow the MATATAG English curriculum, Grade 8, Quarter 2 (persuasive text); adapt them to the competencies you teach.

Trait	4	3	2	1
Claim *Does the essay take a clear side on the question and keep it?* EN8INF-II-16	States a clear position on the question in the opening and keeps it to the end; the ending restates it.	States a clear position, but late, or the ending does not return to it.	The position can be worked out but is never stated plainly, or it shifts.	Takes no position on the question, or takes both sides.
Reasons and evidence *Are there reasons for the position, and is each one explained?* EN8INF-II-17, EN8INF-II-6	Three or more reasons, each explained with a fact, an example or an experience that supports it.	Two or more reasons, at least two of them explained.	Reasons are listed, but only one is explained, or the explanations only repeat the reason.	No reason, or reasons that do not support the position.
Counterclaim *Does the essay state the other side's argument and answer it?* EN8INF-II-17, EN8INF-II-6	States an argument of the other side fairly and answers it with a reason or evidence.	States an argument of the other side and answers it, but the answer only contradicts it.	Mentions that others disagree but does not say what they argue, or states it without an answer.	No mention of the other side.
Organization *Do an opening, a body and an ending hold the argument together?* EN8INF-II-2, EN8INF-II-19	An opening that introduces the issue, body ideas in a logical order joined by transitions, and an ending that closes the argument.	Opening, body and ending are present; transitions are few or repetitive.	Some order, but one of the three parts is missing or the ideas jump.	No clear order; a list of sentences.
Language and conventions *Are the sentences, words, grammar, spelling and punctuation correct enough to read without stopping?* EN8INF-II-20, EN8INF-II-21	Varied sentences and precise words; few errors, none that blur the meaning.	Mostly correct sentences and words; errors do not blur the meaning.	Frequent errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation; the meaning is sometimes blurred.	Errors in most sentences; the meaning is often hard to follow.
Total (5 to 20)				

Score each trait alone, against its descriptors and the anchor essays, before you read the next trait. Write a whole number from 1 to 4. **Do not look at another rater's scores.**

Before the study's essays. Train the raters on anchor essays, one for each score point of each trait, written by other learners on a third prompt; score 12 practice essays alone and compare; discuss each disagreement; score 12 more. Begin when the raters agree exactly on at least 70% of trait scores and within one point on at least 95%. Give the raters typed essays that carry only a random code, shuffled across sections and occasions, in a different batch order for each rater.

Rater's Scoring Sheet for One Essay

Essay code: _____ Batch: _____ Rater: _____ Date: _____

Trait	Score (1 to 4)	Note (the words in the essay that decided the score)
Claim		
Reasons and evidence		
Counterclaim		
Organization		
Language and conventions		
Total		

Coordinator's Record (kept with the key; never shown to the raters)

Essay code: _____

Trait	Rater 1	Rater 2	Gap	Third rater (gap of 2+)	Final score
Claim					
Reasons and evidence					
Counterclaim					
Organization					
Language and conventions					
Total					

The resolution rule, set before scoring. A gap of 0 or 1 point: the final score is the mean of the two raters (3 and 2 give 2.5). A gap of 2 or more: a third trained rater scores the trait without seeing the first two scores, and the final score is the mean of the third rater's score and the closer of the first two; when both are equally close, the third rater's score. Compute agreement on the first two raters' scores, before any resolution.