



2009 FCAT Writing Fact Sheet

General Information

- Florida has administered a writing assessment for the past 17 years.
- FCAT Writing is given to students in grades four, eight and 10.
- Students are randomly assigned one of two topics (prompt) in every school and asked to write a response.
 - Fourth-grade students receive either a narrative or expository prompt.
 - Eighth-grade students receive either an expository or persuasive prompt.
 - Tenth-grade students receive either an expository or persuasive prompt.
- Essays are graded on a six-point scale (<http://fcat.fldoe.org/rubrcpag.asp>).
- The essay score of 3.5, used for the purpose of school grading, became effective in 2005. Students who achieve this score are considered to be writing on grade level.
- FCAT Writing essay scores are not used for graduation purposes.
- This year's results indicate the percent of students scoring 3.5 and above increased in grades 4 and 8 and slightly decreased for grade 10.
- Writing+, the multiple-choice component of the FCAT writing assessment, was added in 2006 but was eliminated last year primarily due to budget constraints.
- The Legislature passed Senate Bill 1908 last year which reintroduces the multiple-choice component of the FCAT Writing exam in 2012-2013.

Fourth Grade Essay Results

- The average grade 4 writing essay score increased from 3.8 last year to 4.0 this year.
- This year, 85 percent of grade 4 students scored 3.5 and above, representing an increase of eight percentage points compared to last year.
- Since 1999, the percentage of grade 4 students scoring 3.5 and above has increased from 34 percent to 85 percent, reflecting a positive 10-year data trend.

Eighth Grade Essay Results

- The average grade 8 writing essay score increased from 4.2 last year to 4.3 this year.
- This year, 90 percent of grade 8 students scored 3.5 and above, representing a two percentage point increase compared to last year.
- Since 1999, the percentage of grade 8 students scoring 3.5 and above has increased from 51 percent to 90 percent, reflecting a positive 10-year data trend.

Tenth Grade Essay Results

- The average grade 10 writing essay score slightly decreased from 3.9 last year to 3.8 this year.
- This year, 77 percent of grade 10 students scored 3.5 and above, representing a one percentage point decrease compared to last year.
- Since 1999, the percentage of grade 10 students scoring 3.5 and above has increased from 60 percent to 77 percent, reflecting a positive 10-year data trend.