

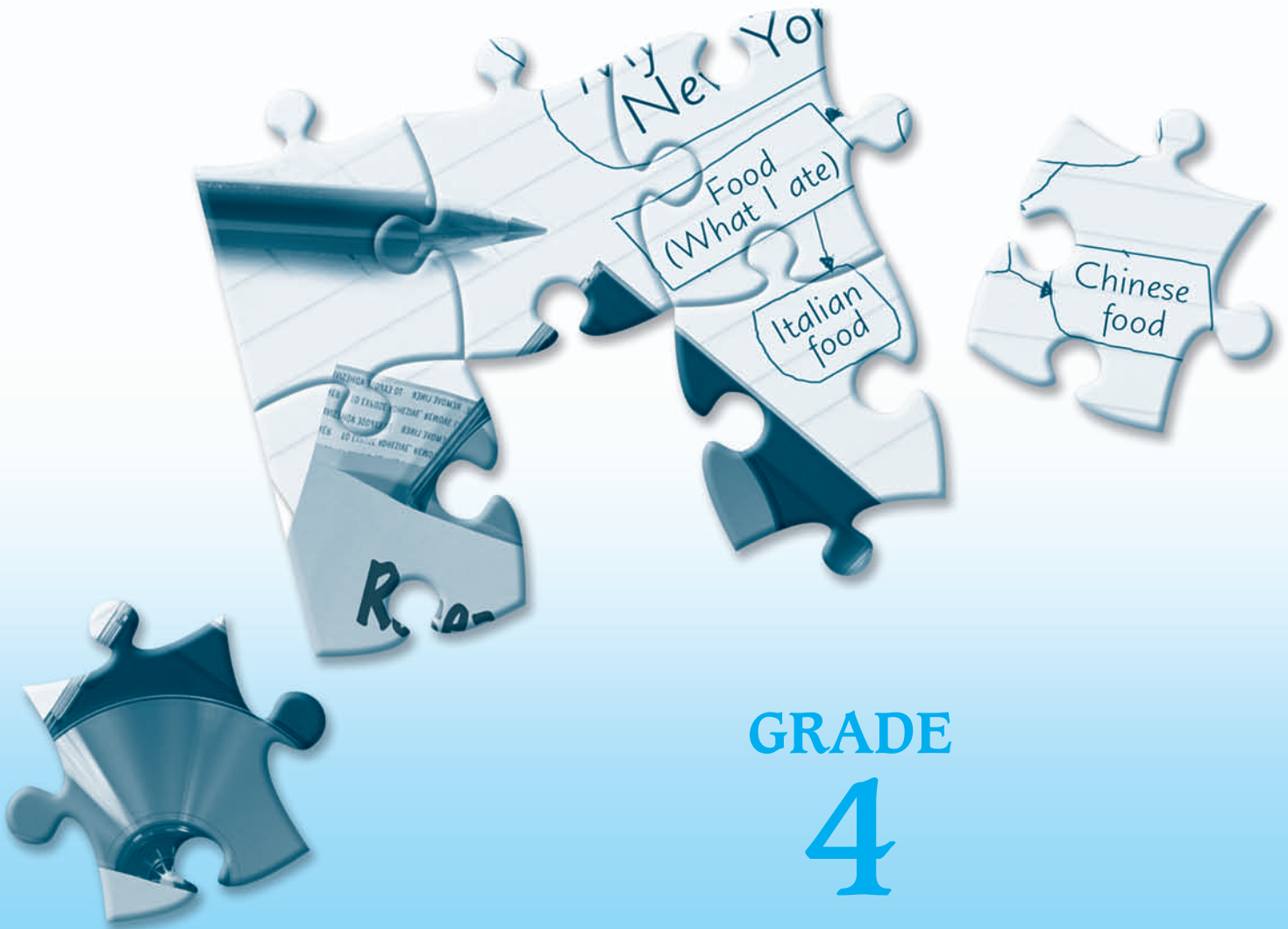
2007

FCAT

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test®

REPORT ON THE
2007 FCAT WRITING+
ASSESSMENT

FLORIDA
Writes!



GRADE

4

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Florida Writes!
Report on the
2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment

Grade 4

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test®

FCAT

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Preface

To improve statewide assessment in Florida and to test students' writing achievement, the 1990 Florida Legislature mandated the assessment of students' writing in Grades 4, 8, and 10. The Florida Writing Assessment Program was established in response to this legislative action.

The development of this assessment began in 1990. The Assessment and School Performance section of the Department of Education (DOE) reviewed the latest advances in writing assessment and conferred with writing and curriculum consultants from Florida and from other states with established writing assessment programs. The DOE, with the assistance of advisory groups of teachers, school and district administrators, and citizens, developed the writing prompts (topics) and the scoring rubric (description of writing at each score point) and selected student responses to represent each score point.

For this assessment, each student is given a prompt and has 45 minutes to read the prompt independently, plan the response, and write the draft. A separate sheet is provided for planning and prewriting activities (e.g., outlining, clustering, mapping, and jotting down ideas). Within each classroom, students are randomly assigned one of two prompts. Fourth grade students respond to a prompt asking them to explain (expository writing) or write a story (narrative writing); eighth and tenth grade students respond to a prompt asking them to explain (expository writing) or persuade (persuasive writing). Students are not allowed to use a dictionary or other writing resources during the assessment. (See Appendix C for examples of the assessment directions, answer book, and planning sheet.)

Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 4 is designed for educators who are involved in developing, implementing, or evaluating curriculum in elementary schools. This publication describes the content and application of the Grade 4 writing performance task and offers suggestions for activities that may be helpful in preparing students for the assessment.

Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 8 and *Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 10* provide information about the writing prompts administered to eighth and tenth grade students in 2007. *Florida Solves! Report on the 2007 FCAT Mathematics Released Items*, *Florida Reads! Report on the 2007 FCAT Reading Released Items*, and *Florida Inquires! Report on the 2007 FCAT Science Released Items* provide information about the mathematics, reading, and science performance tasks featured on the FCAT 2007 student reports. Additional information about FCAT reports can be found in *Understanding FCAT Reports 2007* on the Florida Department of Education website at <http://www.fldoe.org>. (See Appendix H for further information on FCAT Publications and Products.)

If you have questions, please ask your school or district coordinator of assessment for assistance. The Office of Assessment and School Performance is also available to respond to questions concerning the writing assessment and this publication.

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The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test®: FCAT Writing+

Florida's System of School Improvement and Accountability

Florida's writing assessment was designed to assess Standard 2 of Goal 3 from *Florida's System of School Improvement and Accountability*: "Record information in writing; compose and create communications; accurately use language, graphic representations, styles, organizations, and formats appropriate to the language, information, concept, or idea and the subject matter, purpose, and audience; and include supporting documentation and detail." These competencies are integral to all aspects of writing instruction and, with the Sunshine State Standards, describe the writing skills expected of students.

Florida's Writing Assessment

The DOE has supplemented the FCAT Writing+ performance task with multiple-choice items. The first round of multiple-choice items was field tested during the February 2005 administration of FCAT Writing+ (performance task plus multiple-choice items). With the addition of the multiple-choice component, the writing assessment was renamed "FCAT Writing+." Scores for FCAT Writing+ were reported for the first time in May 2006.

FCAT Writing+ includes a performance-based assessment known as demand writing. Demand writing assessment involves assigned topics, timed writing, and scored responses. The demand writing approach is used by many teachers during classroom instruction, by some employers during the job interview process, and in large-scale assessments, such as the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP); the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT); the American College Testing Program (ACT); and the Florida College-Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST). The strength of a large-scale assessment is that all student papers can be judged against a common standard. The result is a source of statewide information that can be used to characterize writing performance on a consistent basis.

The FCAT Writing+ assessment has adopted demand writing as an efficient and effective method of assessing fourth graders. Students are expected to produce a focused, organized, well-supported draft in response to an assigned topic within a 45-minute time period.

Effective Writing

How can teachers affect dramatic improvements in their students' writing? First, teachers must recognize instructional practices that have not produced quality writing for the majority of Florida's students.

Teachers must recognize the limitations of presenting, and accepting as correct, one organizational plan over all others. While a formula may be useful for beginning or novice writers who need guidance in organizational techniques and in developing elaboration, it should not be an outcome expectation for student writers at any grade level.

Additionally, rote memorization of an essay component, such as an introduction or lead paragraph, is a practice that lends itself to the production of dull or confusing content. Using another writer's work in an

FCAT Writing+ response may be considered a violation of test administration rules. An explicit requirement of FCAT Writing+ is that the work must be the student's original writing.

According to the FCAT Writing+ scoring rubric, the student should be engaged with the writing, and the response should reflect the student's insight into the writing situation and demonstrate a mature command of language. Modeling the sentence styles and techniques of excellent writers may help a student achieve the characteristics demonstrated in purposeful, high-quality writing.

A skillful writer incorporates elements of composition in such a way that a reader can experience the writer's intended meaning, understand the writer's premise, and accept or reject the writer's point of view. Effective writing exhibits such traits as

- a clear focus on the topic;
- detailed presentation of relevant information;
- an organized structure, including a beginning, a middle, and an end;
- appropriate transitional devices that enable the reader to follow the flow of ideas;
- elaborated support that incorporates details, examples, vivid language, and mature word choice;
- demonstrated knowledge of conventions of standard written English in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and usage; and
- varied sentence structure.

The best way to teach writing is to engage students in a recursive writing process that includes planning, writing, revising, editing, and publishing. A curriculum that consistently emphasizes reading and the use of spoken and written language in all subject areas and at all grade levels affords students the opportunity to write for a variety of purposes, thereby enhancing a student's success in writing.

Design of FCAT Writing+

Descriptions of the Writing Prompts

Each student taking the FCAT Writing+ assessment is given a booklet in which the topic for writing, called a prompt, is printed. The prompt serves as a stimulus for writing by presenting the topic and by suggesting that the student think about some aspect of the topic's central theme. The prompt does not contain directives concerning the organizational structure or the development of support.

Prompts are designed to elicit writing for specific purposes. For instance, expository prompts ask students to explain why or how, while narrative prompts direct students to tell a story or write about something that happened. Prompts have two basic components: the writing situation and the directions for writing. The writing situation orients students to the subject, and the directions for writing set the parameters, such as identifying the audience to whom the writing is directed.

The prompts for the FCAT Writing+ assessment are selected to ensure that the subject matter is appropriate for fourth grade students. In addition, prompts are reviewed for offensive or biased language relating to religion, gender, and racial or ethnic backgrounds. All prompts are reviewed by members of the Fourth Grade Writing Assessment Advisory Committee and are pilot tested on a small group of students, then field tested on 1,000 students statewide. The DOE annually writes, reviews, pilot tests, and field tests prompts for potential use. (See Appendix D for further information on the procedures used to write and review prompts.)

Example of an Expository Prompt

Below is an example of an expository prompt. The first component presents the topic: classroom pets. The second component suggests that the student think about various types of classroom pets and write about the reasons he or she would choose a particular classroom pet.

Writing Situation:

Suppose you could have any animal in the world for a classroom pet.

Directions for Writing:

Think about what animal you would like to have for a classroom pet.

Now write to explain why this animal should be your classroom pet.

Example of a Narrative Prompt

In the prompt below, the first component (the topic) focuses on an unforgettable experience. The second component of the prompt suggests that the student think about an unforgettable experience and write about it.

Writing Situation:

Everyone has done something that he or she will always remember.

Directions for Writing:

Think about a time you did something special that you will always remember.

Now write a story about the time you did something special that you will always remember.

Scoring Method and Rubric

Holistic Scoring

The scoring method used to score the FCAT Writing+ essay is called holistic scoring. Trained scorers judge the total piece of writing in terms of predefined criteria. Holistic scoring assumes that the skills that make up the ability to write are closely interrelated. Scorers do not grade the response by enumerating its mechanical, grammatical, or linguistic weaknesses. Scorers for FCAT Writing+ consider the integration of four writing elements: focus, organization, support, and conventions. This scoring method results in greater attention to the writer's message, staying closer to what is essential in realistic communication.

Focus refers to how clearly the paper presents and maintains a main idea, theme, or unifying point.

- Papers receiving low and middle scores may contain information that is loosely related, extraneous, or both.
- Papers receiving high scores demonstrate a consistent awareness of the topic and avoid loosely related or extraneous information.

Organization refers to the structure or plan of development (beginning, middle, and end) and the relationship of one point to another. Organization refers to the use of transitional devices to signal both the relationship of the supporting ideas to the main idea, theme, or unifying point, and the connections between and among sentences.

- Papers receiving low scores may lack or misuse an organizational plan or transitional devices.
- Papers receiving high scores demonstrate an effective organizational pattern.

Support refers to the quality of details used to explain, clarify, or define. The quality of the support depends on word choice, specificity, depth, relevance, and thoroughness.

- Papers receiving low scores may contain little, if any, development of support, such as a bare list of events or reasons, or support that is extended by a detail.
- Papers receiving high scores generally provide elaborated examples, and the relationship between the supporting ideas and the topic is clear.

Conventions refer to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, usage, and sentence structure.

- Papers receiving low scores may contain frequent or blatant errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and usage and may have little variation in sentence structure.
- Papers receiving high scores generally follow the basic conventions of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and usage, and various sentence structures are used.

Score Points in Rubric

The rubric provides a scoring description for each score point. The rubric used to score papers is shown below. Appendix F contains instructional implications for each score point.

6 Points The writing is focused on the topic, has a logical organizational pattern (including a beginning, middle, conclusion, and transitional devices), and has ample development of the supporting ideas. The paper demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language including precision in word choice. Subject/verb agreement and verb and noun forms are generally correct. With few exceptions, the sentences are complete, except when fragments are used purposefully. Various sentence structures are used.

5 Points The writing is focused on the topic with adequate development of the supporting ideas. There is an organizational pattern, although a few lapses may occur. The paper demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness. Word choice is adequate but may lack precision. Most sentences are complete, although a few fragments may occur. There may be occasional errors in subject/verb agreement and in standard forms of verbs and nouns, but not enough to impede communication. The conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are generally followed. Various sentence structures are used.

4 Points The writing is generally focused on the topic, although it may contain some extraneous or loosely related information. An organizational pattern is evident, although lapses may occur. The paper demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness. In some areas of the response, the supporting ideas may contain specifics and details, while in other areas, the supporting ideas may not be developed. Word choice is generally adequate. Knowledge of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization is demonstrated, and commonly used words are usually spelled correctly. There has been an attempt to use a variety of sentence structures, although most are simple constructions.

3 Points The writing is generally focused on the topic, although it may contain some extraneous or loosely related information. Although an organizational pattern has been attempted and some transitional devices have been used, lapses may occur. The paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Some of the supporting ideas may not be developed with specifics and details. Word choice is adequate but limited, predictable, and occasionally vague. Knowledge of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization is demonstrated, and commonly used words are usually spelled correctly. There has been an attempt to use a variety of sentence structures, although most are simple constructions.

2 Points The writing may be slightly related to the topic or may offer little relevant information and few supporting ideas or examples. The writing that is relevant to the topic exhibits little evidence of an organizational pattern or use of transitional devices. Development of the supporting ideas may be inadequate or illogical. Word choice may be limited or immature. Frequent errors may occur in basic punctuation and capitalization, and commonly used words may frequently be misspelled. The sentence structure may be limited to simple constructions.

1 Point The writing may only minimally address the topic because there is little, if any, development of supporting ideas, and unrelated information may be included. The writing that is relevant to the topic does not exhibit an organizational pattern; few, if any, transitional devices are used to signal movement in the text. Supporting ideas may be sparse, and they are usually provided through lists, clichés, and limited or immature word choice. Frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure may impede communication. The sentence structure may be limited to simple constructions.

Unscorable The paper is unscorable because

- the response is not related to what the prompt requested the student to do;
- the response is simply a rewording of the prompt;
- the response is a copy of a published work;
- the student refused to write;
- the response is written in a foreign language;
- the response is illegible;
- the response is incomprehensible (words are arranged in such a way that no meaning is conveyed);
- the response contains an insufficient amount of writing to determine if the student was attempting to address the prompt; or
- the writing folder is blank.

Examples of unscorable student responses do not appear in this report.

Scoring of the Assessment

Student papers are scored following administration of the FCAT Writing+ assessment each February. Prior to each scoring session, members of the Writing Rangefinder Committee (comprised of Florida educators) read student responses and select papers to represent the established standards for each score point. The scoring contractor uses these papers to train the scorers to score FCAT Writing+ essays. A scoring guide (or anchor set) containing the rubric and example papers for each score point provides the basis for developing a common understanding of the standards recommended by the committee. A skilled scoring director and team leaders are responsible for training, assisting, and monitoring readers throughout the training and scoring process. All scoring is monitored by Florida Department of Education staff.

Scorer candidates are required to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a field related to the content area being scored or those with a bachelor's degree (or higher) who have successfully completed a scoring project in the content area being scored. Potential scorers for FCAT Writing+ must write an essay as part of the screening process and must complete intensive training and demonstrate mastery of the scoring method by accurately assigning scores to the sample responses in a series of qualifying exams. (See Appendix E for the bias issues discussed with the scorers.)

During scoring, scoring directors and team leaders verify the scores assigned to papers and answer questions about unusual or unscorable papers. Additional methods are used to ensure that all scorers are adhering to scoring standards. These include having at least two scorers score each student response and having scorers score sets of papers prescored by the Writing Rangefinder Committee.

Suggestions for Preparing Students for the FCAT Writing+ Performance Task

The assessment of writing, by its nature, incorporates the assessment of higher-order thinking skills because students are required to generate and develop ideas that form the basis of their written responses. Instructional programs that emphasize higher-order thinking skills in all subjects and grade levels will have a positive influence on a student's writing proficiency.

A strong relationship exists between reading and effective writing. An active reader, one who analyzes passages and makes logical predictions before and during reading, uses the higher-order thinking skills associated with effective writing.

Improvement in writing can be made when students receive feedback or explanations about their writing. For example, if a student is not told that effective writing creates images in a reader's mind, then a student may continue to list rather than elaborate on reasons or events.

Recommendations for District and School Administrators

Administrators have the unique opportunity to influence the establishment and maintenance of high-quality writing programs. Administrators can provide instructional leadership concerning writing programs by

- ensuring that *Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 4* is available to all elementary teachers;
- bringing teachers together to discuss how to use *Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 4*;
- maintaining a literacy program that sets high standards for writing across all subject areas and grade levels;
- bringing teachers together to discuss interdisciplinary approaches and articulation of writing instruction across (and within) all subject areas and grade levels;
- arranging educational and professional growth opportunities for teachers;
- modeling the importance of effective written communications;
- assisting teachers in developing school-level writing expectations and assessment programs, such as portfolio assessment or schoolwide assessment of writing samples;
- scheduling in-service writing instruction and holistic scoring workshops for teachers and parents;
- emphasizing that writing should not be used as punishment;
- providing a print-rich environment in every classroom;
- including reference materials on writing in the schools' professional libraries; and
- encouraging the use of the writing process: planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, and celebrating student writing.

Recommendations for Teachers

Daily contact with students provides teachers with many direct opportunities to influence student attitudes toward writing. Instruction in writing should regularly involve the full writing process, including prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Displaying or publishing student writing completes and authenticates the writing process.

Real-world writing often requires demand writing (writing a response to a topic in a short period of time). As a part of writing instruction, students should work independently to read a topic, plan for writing, and formulate a response within a specified time frame. Analysis of writing that includes constructive feedback for students is a necessary step to enable students to improve their writing skills.

Teachers can prepare students for demand writing through a number of teacher-generated activities that include asking students to

- write responses to questions as an alternative to selecting correct responses on a multiple-choice test;
- read passages and create summary questions;
- write their views on current events before or after the events have been discussed in class;
- critique written pieces (e.g., published works and student writings);
- read and analyze different types of writing (e.g., biographies, science fiction, fantasies, historical accounts, speeches, and news reports);
- write letters to explain views on a particular issue or to refute the views of another person;
- write stories about real or imagined events;
- write descriptions of how things look, smell, taste, sound, and feel;
- write endings for unfinished fictional and nonfictional stories;
- write personal anecdotes and incorporate them into writing that either explains or tells a story;
- maintain subject-area writing portfolios or participate in a long-term writing project; and
- review student responses in *Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 4*.

Recommendations for Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians have an opportunity to be involved with their children's education inside and outside the classroom. Parents and guardians can encourage their children to write by

- discussing what the children have read and written at home and at school;
- having children write letters to friends and relatives;
- writing notes to children with instructions for chores;
- speaking with teachers about children's writing development;
- promoting writing for a variety of purposes in their children's school curriculum;
- displaying stories, essays, or other written work at home on the refrigerator or a bulletin board; and
- demonstrating the value of writing in real-life situations (e.g., letters to the editor of the local newspaper; letters of inquiry, complaint, or application; and letters to family and friends).

Expository Responses from the 2007 Assessment

Definition of Expository Writing

The purpose of expository writing is to inform, clarify, explain, define, or instruct by giving information, explaining why or how, clarifying a process, or defining a concept. Well-written exposition has a clear, central focus developed through a carefully crafted presentation of facts, examples, or definitions that enhance the reader's understanding. These facts, examples, and definitions are objective and not dependent on emotion, although the writing may be lively, engaging, and reflective of the writer's underlying commitment to the topic.

Summary of the Expository Responses Written in 2007

The annotated papers in this section represent responses to a prompt that directed students to choose something that is special to them and explain why it is special. Students responding to this prompt generally selected an object and explained why that object has special meaning to them. A paper was scorable if it focused on the topic and provided support related to why something is considered special by the student. Papers receiving scores in the higher ranges of the scale focused on the topic, displayed an organizational pattern, contained developed support, showed variety in sentence structure, and generally followed the conventions of writing. (See Appendix A for more information about the prompt and the allowable interpretations.)

Suggestions for Use of the Annotated Responses

Teachers may use the responses on the following pages to improve student writing skills and help students understand the scoring criteria. Each response in this publication is annotated to explain why it was assigned a particular score. Personal information has been removed or fictionalized to protect the identity of the writer. Teachers can delete the scores and annotations and make transparencies or copies of the responses. Additional instructional uses of the responses include the following:

- ordering the responses from highest to lowest scores;
- highlighting words and phrases that provide an organizational structure and develop the supporting ideas in a response;
- listing the strengths and weaknesses of a response;
- revising and editing a response based on a student-generated list of the strengths and weaknesses or on the recommendations for improvement provided in the annotation that accompanies the response; and
- using the rubric and skills above to score student responses to similar prompts.

Have you ever had a dog that would make you happy when you are down, or can do the most amazing tricks? My dog, [Carly] can. She does amazing tricks and makes me happy when I am sad. She just looks at me with her eyes when I'm sad and it almost seems like she's saying "what's wrong?"

[Carly] always knows when I'm blue, like when I lost my teddy bear. "I won't be able to see teddy again," I cried to myself. I ran out to our living room and plopped onto the cozy couch. I put my head in my pillow and cried. [Carly] came right over when she heard me cry. She looked at me with her loving eyes and her head cocked to one side and it almost seemed as if she was saying "what's wrong?" I pulled my head out of the pillow and patted her on the head. I smiled through all my tears and patted her head until my arm got tired. [Carly] detects when I am the least bit sad and makes my smile when I see her.

[Carly] can also do awesome tricks, for example, we were giving [Carly] a bath even though she hated them, but she was being a good girl. My sister went inside to get some plain cherrios (which she loved) since she was being such a good girl. My sister came back with the cherrios and handed me some cherrios and I threw one into the air not knowing what [Carly] was going to do. [Carly] sprang up and caught the cherrio right in the air. I was amazed that she could catch it in air with her short legs! "Come here —", I called to my sister who had not been watching. She

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turned around and watched. I threw another
 cherrio into the air and [Carly] caught it again!
 _____ was surprised, too. She threw her Cherrios into
 the air and [Carly] caught all of them in a row! [Carly]
 is an amazing dog who can do amazing tricks.
 [Carly] makes me smile when I am sad,
 she can do asome tricks. I don't know what I
 would do without my beloved dog, [Carly].

SCORE POINT
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This response is clearly focused. The organizational plan includes an inviting introduction, a middle section explaining how “My dog, [Carly] . . . does amazing tricks and makes me happy when I am sad” and a brief conclusion. The writer’s organizational plan, including some effective transitional devices and ample support, contribute to a sense of completeness. Support is developed through descriptive examples, illustrations, and anecdotes. In the third paragraph, the writer vividly illustrates how [Carly] does an amazing trick: “My sister came back with the cherrios and handed me some cherrios and I threw one into the air not knowing what [Carly] was going to do. [Carly] sprang up and cought the cherrio right in the air.” A mature command of language is demonstrated, including precise word choice: “I ran out to our living room and plopped onto the cozy couch,” and “I smiled through all my tears and patted her head untill my arm got tired.” Sentence structure is varied, and conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: To enhance the reader’s understanding, the writer could include another example or anecdote with specific details to illustrate how [Carly] senses when someone is sad. A more effective conclusion could be added. Correction of convention errors would also strengthen this response.

What's really special to you? (A cheerleading trophy (B) mom's jewelry box (C) toy truck. Well if you chose (B) your mom's jewelry box then your correct! Your mom's jewelry box is the best because you might have a matching one, and because it could be the only thing left of her.

Receiving V.I.P passes to _____ doesn't even compare to your mom naming you a jewelry box that matches her's. It doesn't matter how old you are, if your ten or eighteen it's still as special as can be to having a matching jewelry box. If you want to you can put every thing that's small and special to you in your jewelry box. Even if it doesn't have alot of space in it you can still have alot of stuff in it. I remember when my mom gave me my first jewelry box like it was yesterday. One time, when I was about six years old, I was at the doctors office sitting on the cold cushioned seat in the waiting room with a sore throat. The nurse finally called me in and weighed me, and she took my temperature. She said as wich was close to normal. After that she took me in the doctors room and said "wait here Dr. R. _____ will be right in." After about five minutes Dr. R. _____ came in and said "another sore throat!" I replied yes. He checked my throat with the little flashlight thing and said it was all red. He walked out of the room and came back in and told my mom a secret. We walked out, all three of us and that's when my mom told me the secret!. She told me that I had to get my tonsils removed! I cried and screamed "no!" "No!" We came into a room. That's all I remember seeing because I got put to

GO ON 

sleep I woke up at home, and my mom said to me it's time to give you this. she reached into her drawer and pulled out a chocolate brown jewelry box. I said you have one that looks exactly like this.

Another reason why my jewelry box is special is because it might be the only thing left of your mom. One time, when I was four years old we were driving in our car. A water fell from the truck in front of us and hit our car! Our car went out of control. we ran off the side of the road. The next thing I knew I was lying in the hospital bed with my daddy lying down next to me he saw my eyes open. I asked what happened and all he told me was we were in a car accident. After that I asked him "where's mommy?" He told me that she passed away this morning. And I only have my jewelry box that my mom gave me.

that's why CB. mom's jewelry box is the answer to my most special position in the world.

SCORE POINT
6

The response is focused on why a jewelry box is special. An organizational pattern is apparent, and transitional devices are used effectively. An imaginative introduction invites the reader to choose something special from a list: "(A. cheerleading trophy (B. mom's jewelry box (C. toy truck." Some examples of effective transitioning can be found in the second paragraph: "If you want to," "Even if," "I remember," and "After about five minutes." Support is ample and elaborated by examples, illustrations, and anecdotes. The writer's involvement with and interest in the topic is demonstrated through personal anecdotes that fully explain how she got the jewelry box and why it is special: "my mom said to me it's time to give you this. she reached into her drawer and pulled a chocolate brown jewelry box . . . I asked what happened and all he told me was we were in a car accident. After that I asked him 'where's mommy?' He told me that she passed away this morning. And I only have my jewelry box that my mom gave me." Word choice is sometimes precise, and sentence structures are varied. Conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: More specific supporting details are needed to enhance the reader's understanding. For example, the writer could include more information about the time between receiving the special gift and the mom's death. Did the writer put the box in a special place? What memories or treasures did the box hold? The writer could provide more information in the conclusion. More precise word choice and better control of conventions would also strengthen this response.

Toys, books, awards, games. Everyone has some thing in their life that is very special to them mine is my new puppy [Nico].

To begin with, [Nico] is very special to me. she is a very good watch dog, most people say that Shih-tzus are really good at watching out for their owners. Last Saturday when my brother, [Nico], and I were left alone at the house so that my mom and dad could run some adult arrons x____ my brother was cranking up the volume every second on his stereo [Nico] and I were in the kitchen playing fetch when suddenly someone started to bang on the door screaming, "Let me in!" [Nico] ran to the door and barked so loud that the person trying to get into the house thought [Nico] was crazy and would jump out of her dog door and chase him away, but she didn't need to even do that because from all the loud barking that [Nico] had done he had chased his own self away screaming "Ahhhh", boy was that funny.

In addition, [Nico] is very special to me when I come home from school she jumps up onto the gate that closes her kitchen space and when I open the gate to let her out her tail starts to wag about 100 miles per second she is always happy

GO ON 

to see me. One Thursday afternoon when I was coming home from chours at 3:00 pm She sprang up onto the gate and got out before I could even open it and licked me all over then she pounced right onto me and knocked us both over that was hildarious.

In conclusion, [Nico] is very special to me in many ways, and Tam glad that she is my puppy.

EXPOSITORY STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
5

This response is focused on the student’s new puppy, [Nico]. The organizational plan provides for a progression of ideas, but the writer sometimes fails to provide effective transitions to logically connect those ideas. A sense of completeness is conveyed through the organizational plan and ample support. The use of consistently elaborated personal anecdotes illustrates the special bond between the writer and the puppy: “One Thursday afternoon when I was coming home from chours at 3:00 pm She sprang up onto the gate and got out before I could even open it and licked me all over. then she pounced right onto me and knocked us both over that was hilarious.” Word choice is adequate and occasionally precise. Although sentence structure variation is attempted, run-on sentences occur: “Last, Saturday when my brother, [Nico], and I where left alone at the house so that my mom and dad could run some audult arrons & ____ my brother was cranking up the volume every second on his stereo [Nico] and I were in the kitchen playing fetch when suddenly someone started to bang on the door screaming, ‘Let me in’.” Knowledge of basic conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could use transitions more effectively, and include more information in the brief introduction and abrupt conclusion. For example, the student could have provided facts and examples about [Nico]. Was [Nico] a gift? The writer could have described [Nico’s] appearance or explained how she gets along with other family members or pets. In the “good watch dog” anecdote, the student could explain more about what happened when the person tried to get into the house. What happened after the person ran away? Did [Nico] get a reward? More precise word choice and better control of conventions would enhance the reader’s understanding. Correcting run-on sentences would also strengthen this response.

When something's special to you, there usually is a list of reasons you like it. If I had to pick one thing that's very special to me, I would pick [Pudding], the pony. I can't name every reason I like him, but here are a few of them.

Well, to start, [Pudding] loves his food. When I first saw him, last summer, he nudged my pockets like crazy, obviously looking for a carrot. I laughed so hard, I almost fell down ([Pudding] didn't stop)!

If you're lazy, you probably don't express being lazy like [Pudding] does! On a Thursday morning, when I was riding [Pudding], one of the other ponies was outside the arena. [Pudding] walked me out, thinking it was time to go in. Talk about lazy!

[Pudding]'s manners don't apply to an everyday pony's usual behavior. Before a show, last summer, the other riders and I were "decorating" the ponies. A little (and I mean little) dog licked [Pudding] on the nose several times. When that happened, [Pudding] would peel his lips away from his teeth and work his head in a circle, as if saying, "That dog licked me and set my lips on fire!"

That's only a few reasons I like [Pudding], but if I were to say them all, you'd

GO ON 

Waa!Waa! Is the sound coming out of my mouth when I was first born. Then my daddy came with a brand new blanket it was blue and had not bin taken out of the clear plastic, zippered bag yet. As soon as that soft blanket touched my skin I stoppea crying. I have had that blanket nine whole years and it is special to me because I have had Blue Blankey, what I named it, sense I was born, I just plain love it, and it is with me twenty four-seven.

To begin with, if you have something that you have had ever sense you where born it is definatly special to you. I have had Blue Blankey sense I was an infant. Sense I was a toddeler and of course now. No one wants to take it away from me ether.

Also, I just love Blue Blankey. For example once my mom and I flew to Geoga and on the plain it was my pillow. It gos everywhere with me. Now after nine years there is a bolder size hole in Blue Blankey that I put my head through. It acts as a dress draping down my body.

Finally, it is with me twentyfour-seven. When I am asleep I grip it really tite and never let go. Befor I go to bed I tie it, doble-not around my waste.

In concluetion, Blue Blankey is special to me because I have had it sense I was born, I love it, and

SCORE POINT
4

This response is focused on why the writer’s baby blanket is special, and an organizational plan is apparent. Reasons for liking the blanket are provided in the introduction: “because I have had Blue Blankey, what I named it, sense I was born, I just plain love it, and it is with me twenty four-seven.” The development of the support is uneven and somewhat repetitive. The “love” and “twenty four-seven” reasons contain some specific examples and anecdotes: “Also, I just love Blue Blankey. For example once my mom and I flew to Geoga and on the plain it was my pillow. It gos everywhere with me. Now after nine years there is a bolder size hole in Blue Blankey that I put my head through. It acts as a dress draping down my body.” Word choice is sometimes precise: “clear plastic, zippered bag,” “infant . . . toddeler,” and “doble-not around my waste.” Although sentence structure varies, errors occur in basic sentence structure. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could select an organizational plan with more effective transitional devices. Fully elaborated support could be provided. For example, the writer should pause to explain more about what happens when someone tries to take the blanket away. Personal anecdotes about the hole in the blanket and the double-knotting nighttime ritual would further explain the writer’s fondness for “Blue Blankey.” Precise word choice and correcting basic convention and sentence structure errors would also strengthen this response.

My cat is special to me because cats are my favorite animals. I have someone to talk to when my sister is taking a shower, and when my mom and step dad are gone for a hour or two. My cat is also special by she loves treats and to be brushed. She is cute and purry and soft.

[Kooky] likes to play with her mouse and roll in catnip. [Kooky] looks cute and I wanted a cute cat like her. She is mostly fun and more special when she listens to me or anybody else who lives with me. She purrs when anybody pets her and I like to hear pets purr. I like my cat [Kooky].

[Kooky] is not an outside cat. Since she is special to me, I don't like her to get lost and not run away like other cats. She doesn't have

GO ON 

babies, so I wouldn't have
 to feed a lot of cats. These
 reason are all why my cat
 [Kooky] is special to me.

SCORE POINT
4

This response is generally focused on the topic. The organizational plan consists of a one-sentence introduction, a middle part with list-like development, and an abrupt conclusion. Although support for why “[Kooky] looks cute” is elaborated, the organization of those supporting details is somewhat haphazard: “[Kooky] likes to play with her mouse and roll in catnip. [Kooky] looks cute and I wanted a cute cat like her. She is mostly fun and more special when she listens to me or anybody else who lives with me. She purrs when anybody pets her and I like to hear pets purr like my cat [Kooky].” Word choice is generally adequate, and sentence structure variation is attempted. Errors in sentence structure and basic conventions do not interfere with the reader’s understanding.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could employ effective transitional devices to provide logical connections between and among the ideas. More fully elaborated support could be provided. For example, the student could move beyond a list of supporting details to more specific facts, examples, or anecdotes. The writer could pause to explain more about what makes [Kooky] cute, fun, and special. Personal anecdotes about the student talking to [Kooky], watching her play, or feeding her treats would enhance the readers’ understanding. Corrected and more varied sentence structure, more precise word choice, and better control of conventions would also strengthen this response.

Have you ever had a toy or a book that was special to you? I do and it is my blanky. My very own blanket is special to me because I have^{had} it since I was a baby and it is very silky. Now let me explain to you why it is so special to me.

To begin with, my blanky is special to me because I have had it since I was a baby, I still have my blanket today because it is in good shape. My mom bought it for me. I love my blanky. This is my first reason why I adore my blanket.

Next, my blanket is special to me because it is silky. I go to sleep with it because it is so silky. I also love^{it} when I rub it against my warm sweaty face. Also I like it because I have more than one. This is my second reason why I enjoy my blanky.

As you can see, my blanket is special and I adore it because I had it since I was a baby and it is silky.

SCORE POINT
3

This response is generally focused on why a blanket is the student's special possession. The predictable organizational pattern includes a brief introduction, two reasons for why the "blanky" is special: "I have had it since I was a baby and it is very silky," and a brief, repetitive conclusion. The development of support is mostly vague and list-like: "it is in good shape. My mom bought it for me . . . I go to sleep with it . . . I rub it against my warm sweaty face . . . I have more than one." The writer fails to pause to elaborate the ideas. Word choice is adequate, and sentence structure variation is attempted. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: Effective transitioning is needed to provide logical connections between the ideas. Each reason could be elaborated with facts, examples, illustrations, or anecdotes. For example, the student could further explain why this particular blanket remains special, why and when Mom bought the blanket, and what is meant by the word "silky." Precise word choice, better control of basic conventions, and more variation in sentence structure would also strengthen this response.

Many people something special to them. I do, its my game boy. I am going to explain 3 reasons why my game boy is special to me.

One reason why my game boy is special to me is it stops me from being board when theirs nonething to do. If theirs nonething look at on talavishon I have my game boy to play.

My next reason why my game boy is special to me is, that its portable so I can take it with me any where. Unlike my other games they need wyirs, and and a t.v. My game boy is wyirless andi don't need a t.v because it have a screen in the middle. And do not have to hook it up. and it don't need contors.

Finally my last reason why my game boy is special to me is because it from my mom, it was one of my christmas giftt from her. That is the main reason why my game boy is special to me.

There you have it that is why my game boy is special to me. Because it port

SCORE POINT
3

This response is focused, and an organizational pattern is attempted; however, the writer fails to transition effectively between the ideas. Supporting details are provided for each reason, but the writer fails to provide enough information to fully explain why a “game boy is special to me.” The “stops me from being board” and the “from my mom” reasons are simply extended with little bits of vague information. The “portable” reason appears to include more support, but the supporting details are repetitive: “Unlike my other games they need wyirs, and and a t.v. . My game boy is wyirless and it don’t need a t.v because it have a screen in the middle. And do not have to hook it up. and it don’t need contors.” More information is needed to enhance the reader’s understanding. Word choice is adequate, but errors in sentence structure and basic conventions cause the reader to pause.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should employ effective transitional devices to provide logical connections between and among the ideas. Relevant supporting details for each reason would enhance reader understanding. For example, the student could have used specific details or anecdotes to explain why playing the Game Boy is preferable to watching television. The writer could pause to better explain how the Game Boy works without wires and a television screen. Was the writer surprised by the Christmas gift from Mom? Why was this game system such a special gift? Precise word choice, better sentence structure, and improved conventions would also strengthen this response.

A book is special to me because my friend gave it to me, the book is special because it has a picture of my friend and me when we were at the beach. And my friend wrote stories about me and her, she wrote what we did and where we went. she put pictures too. On the first page she wrote "Best Friends." My friend gave it to me when it was Christmas.

SCORE POINT
2

The writer generally focuses on the topic. Although organization is attempted, the writer fails to include transitional devices that would provide logical connections between and among the ideas. Support is undeveloped and consists of a list of reasons that a book is special: “my friend gave it to me . . . it has a picture of my friend and me . . . my friend wrote stories about me and her . . . On the first page she wrote ‘Best Friends.’ My friend gave it to me when it was Christmas.” Some additional vague information is provided for the “stories” reason: “she wrote what we did and where we went. she put pictures too.” Word choice is limited and immature. There are errors in sentence structure and basic conventions.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should employ an organizational plan with effective transitional devices. All reasons could be consistently extended or elaborated with supporting details. For example, the student could further explain why this particular trip to the beach was special, where the girls went on the beach, and what happened during some of those times spent at the beach. Was the writer surprised by this Christmas gift from her friend? Words should be more precise, and sentence structure should be improved and more varied. Correction of convention errors would also strengthen this response.

Do you have something special? Well I do. It's my piano trophie.
 I got it for participating in a recital. I played the "Hiccup Song." I had messed up, but I kept going. I never thought I'd get a trophie until May twelve two thousand four. I was so happy at the end. I only had trophie for 7 months. Then I'm going to have another one.
 I have told you what is special to me my piano trophie.

SCORE POINT
2

This rambling response attempts to explain why a piano trophy is special. An organizational pattern is attempted, including a vague beginning, a rambling middle, and a one-sentence conclusion; however, the writer fails to provide effective transitioning between and among the ideas. Support is provided through a list of three ideas: "I got it for participating in a recital . . . I never thought I'd get a trophie until May twelve two thousand four . . . I only had trophie for 7 months." The "recital" reason is extended with a little bit of information: "I played the 'Hiccup Song.' I had messed up, but I kept going." Word choice is limited and immature, but knowledge of basic conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could provide effective transitional devices to connect the ideas. Facts, examples, anecdotes, or illustrations would enhance the reader's understanding. For example, how did the writer "mess up" on the "Hiccup Song"? Was the writer embarrassed by the mistakes? Did the writer feel proud that he or she finished playing the song? Is the writer going to play in another recital? Have the writer's skills improved since 2004? More precise word choice, variation of sentence structures, and improvement of basic conventions would also strengthen this response.

my pillow is special to me because my
 mom gave it to me when I was a baby and
 I sleep with it this very day, I love my
 pillow very much it is blue with a face on
 it my mom sewd it on it is my favorite
 things

SCORE POINT
1

This writing addresses the topic, but the response does not exhibit an organizational pattern. The writer fails to employ effective transitional devices to logically connect the ideas. The writer provides one reason for liking a special pillow: “because my mom gave it to me when I was a baby and I sleep with it this very day.” The development of support for this reason is list-like and vague: “I love my pillow very much it is blue with a face on it my mom sewd it on.” Word choice is limited and predictable. Errors in sentence structure and the lack of punctuation do not impede meaning.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should provide an organizational pattern with effective transitional devices. Each of the supporting details could be elaborated with facts, examples, anecdotes, or illustrations. For example, the writer could describe some personal experiences. Did the writer ever lose the pillow? Does the writer take the pillow when traveling or spending the night with a friend? Did Mom sew pillows for other children in the family? Why has this particular pillow become so important in this writer’s life? More precise word choice, more varied sentence structure, and improved basic conventions would enhance the reader’s understanding.

My special thing I like is a
 play station 2 because I never got one.
 The other thing I like about the
 play station 2 is it can play game's and
 DVD's. I like the play station 2 because
 there cool and the play station 2 has
 my favrote color black.

SCORE POINT
1

This sparse response minimally explains why the writer’s special thing is a Play Station 2, and there is little evidence of an organizational plan. Supporting ideas are sparse and consist of a list of four things the writer likes about the Play Station 2: “because I never got one . . . it can play Game’s and DVD’s . . . there cool . . . has my favrote color black.” Word choice is limited, but errors in basic conventions do not interfere with understanding.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should provide an organizational pattern with effective transitional devices. Support should be developed with more details. For example, the writer could further explain about the games he or she could play, why the Play Station 2 is “cool,” and provide examples, illustrations, or anecdotes to enhance the reader’s understanding. Has the writer played games on a Play Station 2 at a friend’s house or in a store? Word choice could be more precise, and sentence structures could be more varied. Correcting sentence structure and convention errors would also strengthen this response.

Narrative Responses from the 2007 Assessment

Definition of Narrative Writing

The purpose of narrative writing is to recount a personal or fictional experience or to tell a story based on a real or imagined event. In well-written narration, a writer uses insight, creativity, drama, suspense, humor, or fantasy to create a central theme or impression. The details work together to develop an identifiable story line that is easy to follow and paraphrase.

Summary of the Narrative Responses Written in 2007

The annotated papers in this section represent responses to a prompt that directed students to write a story about what happens on a field trip to a special place. Students responding to this prompt generally wrote a story about participating in a field trip to a special place. A paper was scorable if it focused on the topic and provided details related to going on a field trip to a place considered special by the student. Papers receiving scores in the higher ranges of the scale focused on the topic, displayed an organizational pattern, contained developed support, showed variety in sentence structure, and generally followed the conventions of writing. (See Appendix A for more information about the prompt and the allowable interpretations.)

Suggestions for Use of the Annotated Responses

Teachers may use the responses on the following pages to improve student writing skills and help students understand the scoring criteria. Each response in this publication is annotated to explain why it was assigned a particular score. Personal information has been removed or fictionalized to protect the identity of the writer. Teachers can delete the scores and annotations and make transparencies or copies of the responses. Additional instructional uses of the responses include the following:

- ordering the responses from highest to lowest scores;
- highlighting words and phrases that provide an organizational structure and develop the supporting ideas in a response;
- listing the strengths and weaknesses of a response;
- revising and editing a response based on a student-generated list of the strengths and weaknesses or on the recommendations for improvement provided in the annotation that accompanies the response; and
- using the rubric and skills above to score student responses to similar prompts.

One hot Summer evening, me and my cub Scouts friends went on a field trip to a special place. Me, ———, and my two best friends in the whole wide world, [Austin], and [Tyler] think its going to be the worst field trip ever. Our cub scout leader says its going to be a blast going to a place called Mr. Mines Mines. I just hope we dont die of bordom.

On the bus to Mr. Mines Mines Me, [Austin], and [Tyler] sat in the same seat and talked about the only things that would be fun like roasting marshmallows and telling spooky stories after dark. When we finally got to the Camp site we all scrambled out of the bus to get some air. Our tour gide and said "Everybody listen up," every body shushed up. "As you all know this is a camp site, but what most of you dont know is that this camp site used to be a Mining area but nobody ever found much gold. Over the years though, people from the camp sites here have found peices of gold, so if you ever find any come strate to me you got that? Tomorrow will be a long day so get some sleep.

GO ON 

You will find your cabins behind a big red building. Remember ten o'clock, its "lights out". After that long pep talk I just wanted to get to the cabin and when we did I slept like a rock.

The next day me and my best buds woke up early to go hiking on the side of a big mountain near by. We packed a lot. We packed up a first aid kit, canteens filled with water, breakfast, lunch, a few snacks and our swim suits. There is a small river were we can swim in, if its not too deep, running along beside the orchard. We started hiking when we stoped by a big flat rock set for our own private breakfast. After breakfast we kept on walking until we came upon a huge cave. We went inside and found gold. lots of it. We got so excited that we ran back to camp to tell the tour guide.

At the end of our feild trip we actually had a great time. Me and my friends all got a reward for finding the gold. We got an equall share of the gold. I learned never to judge things when you dont know anything about it.

SCORE POINT
6

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

This imaginative response is focused on a story about the writer finding gold on a Cub Scout field trip. Effective transitional devices move the story through time. The organizational plan and ample support convey a sense of completeness. The writer's frustration with a potentially boring field trip is presented in the introduction: "[Austin] and [Tyler] think its going to be the worst field trip ever . . . I just hope we don't die of bordom." Each event is elaborated with illustrations or anecdotes. The conclusion includes a reference to the writer's initial feelings about the field trip: "At the end of our feild trip we actually had a great time . . . I learned never to judge things when you dont know anything about it." A mature command of language enhances the response. Sentence structure varies, and conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could have further explained what happened when they found the gold, when they told the others about the gold, and when they discovered they would share the gold. Better control of conventions would also strengthen this response.

Once, there were kids that were preparing at _____, a school in _____, to go to Washington D.C. for the coolest field-trip ever to meet the president of the U.S.A. Their names were [Suzy], [Tyrone], [Julio], [Chester], and Laura. They all got to go because they got the best report cards. They got on the bus at 10:38 to leave for the airport. Their plane flight was at 11:15 so they had to hurry!

They got to the airport at 10:52 and checked out their luggage as quick as possible. "I hope we make the flight," said _____. "I do too. If we don't, we won't get to meet the president," agreed _____. "Don't worry a bit about it," said Miss D_____ (the teacher) cheerfully. Feeling very optimistic, they headed for the departure place. "I'm hungry," complained [Julio]. "Too bad," said everyone, "you'll just have to wait 'til they serve snacks on the plane." Finally, they were in the air.

2 hours later... They arrived at the airport and were very excited. "I can't wait to meet the president!" said [Suzy]. "I'm looking forward to meeting the first lady," answered Laura. They rang the doorbell. The butler came to open the door. "Hello," he said politely, "come in." So they did. "This is huge!" exclaimed [Chester]. They sat down at the table with the first lady and her husband. "My name is [Bob], and this is my wife Laura," said the President. "Laura, that's my name!" exclaimed Laura. "Nice to meet you," said the first lady, Laura.

Shortly afterwards, lunch was served. [Julio] ate like a pig. He swung his elbow and it hit _____'s soup and it spilled across the table on Laura, the first lady's clothes. "What a pig!" she screeched. "Get out right now. Out of here!" They left with their heads hung low, looking madly at [Julio]. "Sorry kids," said Miss D_____. They slept over at the hotel that they rented with a pool, hot tub, and free buffet. It was

GO ON 

very cozy there.

The next day, the gang decided to try again so they went back to the White House. "We are very sorry about yesterday," said [Julio]. "Apology accepted," answered Laura. So, they went downstairs to the basement for a game of bowling. A few hours later they had to go back to _____ but Laura and _____ promised that they could come back whenever they wanted while they were there. After that, they said their good-byes and lived happily ever after.

SCORE POINT
6

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

This imaginative response is clearly focused. The narrative organizational plan includes effective transitional devices: "2 hours later" "Shortly afterwards," and "A few hours later." The organization of events and development of support contribute to a sense of completeness. The writer uses examples, illustrations, and anecdotes to elaborate each event. Conversation among the main characters moves the story through time: "They got to the airport at 10:52 and checked out their luggage as quick as possible. 'I hope we make the flight,' said _____. 'I do too. If we don't, we won't get to meet the president,' agreed _____. 'Don't worry a bit about it.' Said Miss D_____ . . ." A mature command of language is demonstrated: "lunch was served," "ate like a pig," "heads hung low," and "very cozy." Word choice is sometimes precise, and sentence structure is varied. Although errors occur, basic conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: More supporting details could be added to enhance the reader's understanding. For example, the writer could more fully elaborate the events surrounding meeting and having dinner with the President and First Lady. [Julio's] dining blunder and the First Lady's surprising response could be further explained. Why were the students invited to meet the President? Correction of the few convention errors would also strengthen this response.

AWSommm! We had just arrived at the oceanographic center where there's a lot of neat stuff. While we were there a tour guide took us around the place.

Initially the tour guide took us on a trail. We got to see a lot of things like different kinds of bark brown trees that the Indians used them as houses. Also on the trail we saw grass green leaves that the Indians used to make food. The trail led us to the exquisite Indian river lagoon. On the way by we also saw the kinds of trees they use for materials when they got hurt and we saw ancient rocks.

Awhile after that we went to pet the sting rays and they were very soft and gooey. When I touched the sting ray its tail was sort of spiny. One of the sting rays I touched was a baby one and its back was as hard as a rock. Also in the tank was two gigantic sting rays and some babies. Some of the sting ray buried the selves into the sand because they were scared of us and some just loved the attention.

Then we went to the petting tank and I picked up a hand full of cloud white sand fleas and they felt weird like crabs walking on your hand. Also in the petting tank were hermit crabs and I saw one of them

GO ON 

Moving into another shell because that one was getting to small for him to handle. Then when the hermit crab got in its new shell it fit perfect and the Hermit Crab fell fast asleep. Also in the petting tank were sea cucumbers and they felt and looked like pickles you can eat. They were the color spinach green and I do not like spinach. I picked up the sea cucumber and it moved as slow as a slug in my hand.

I will never forget that special memory of when I had the best time of my life at the oceanographic center. The oceanographic center was the best feild trip ive ever been on and I will never forget this special day of my life.

SCORE POINT
5

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

This narrative response is focused on the story of a field trip to an oceanographic center. The organizational plan provides for a logical progression of events, and the writer’s attempt to transition between the ideas is sometimes effective. Support is adequate and consistently developed, and a sense of completeness is demonstrated. The writer pauses to tell about the plants and animals that the students observe during the tour: “we went to pet the sting rays and they were very soft and gooshy. When I touched the sting ray its tail was sort of spiny. . . Some of the sting ray burried the selves into the sand because the were scared of us and some just loved the atention.” Word choice is adequate and sometimes precise: “fell fast asleep” and “moved as slow as a slug in my hand.” Errors occur in sentence structure and basic conventions, but these errors do not impede meaning.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: Effective transitioning between the events could be employed. More fully elaborated support for each event could be provided. For example, the student could have included specific details or anecdotes about why he or she thought this was the “best feild trip ive ever been on.” Why was the lagoon “exquiste”? How did the Native Americans use leaves to make food and materials to heal the sick? What is the connection between the Native American exhibits and the oceanographic center? Word choice could be more precise. Correction of sentence structure and basic convention errors would also strengthen this response.

One day while we were at school my teacher said that we are having a special field trip. I asked the teacher where we are going. CandyLand said the teacher. Then our teacher said that we should get in groups of five. The people in my group was: Me, [Nate], [Jason], [Katie], and [Brit].

My teacher said that we should all line up. While we were getting on the bus the School Bus Driver turned on the radio. He put "95.1 The Beat" on. My friends and I went all the way to the back. The driver turned the radio up and we heard: Naggin, by the Ying Yang Twins.

As we were leaving the back of the bus started to bounce. Boom Boom. The bus started to go up in the sky. Everyone asked: Why are we flying? The teacher said: Were flying because CandyLand is above the clouds.

Do you know what it is like at CandyLand asked a girl named [Mary]? No I don't said the teacher. Were here said the driver. That was quick I said. Then everyone looked out of the window. Everybody was flabbergasted.

There was Blow Pops that were growing in the ground. Everyone got out of the bus.

GO ON 

Me and my friends went to a tree. [Nate]
 licked a leaf. Mmm he said. What do
 they taste like I asked?
 They taste like Strawberrys.
 Then we went to a place called: "The
 Candy Factory" it was full of different
 candy such as: Lollypops, Gummi Bears, and so
 on. My teacher said: Lets go everybody.
 But we just got here said [Brit]
 No we didn't it is already 1:30 we
 got here at 8:30.
 Gosh, said [Jason]. We all got
 back on the bus and we waved
 goodbye to all the people that worked
 there. When we got back we went to
 the class and packed up. Ringgg!! Everbody
 rushed out the door. The End.

SCORE POINT
5

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

This writer tells a story about an imaginary field trip to “Candy Land.” The response is organized, and effective transitional devices are sometimes used. The narrative organizational plan, adequately developed support, and consistently elaborated events convey a sense of completeness to the response. Sometimes the story line seems hurried because the writer does not stop to fully elaborate the events: “Were here said the driver. That was quick I said. Then everyone looked out of the window. Everybody was flabbergasted.” The writer fails to fully explain the group’s reaction to seeing Candy Land for the first time. Word choice is adequate. The conclusion needs further explanation: “When we got back we went to the class and packed up. Ringgg!! Everybody rushed out the door. The End.” Sentence structure is varied, and conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could provide more specific facts, examples, or illustrations to support the story line. For example, the student could have paused to fully describe Candy Land and tell about the group’s experiences in Candy Land. Who made the candy in the Candy Factory? Why was the writer so surprised when the teacher said it was “already 1:30”? A more fully elaborated conclusion and better control of conventions would also enhance the reader’s understanding.

By, By, thats all the moms and dads saying because were going to _____ our biggest field trip of the year so far were going to go on a charter bus boat ride and were going to go eat at the Golden Coral Camp. Now lets go and have some fun and eat some grub.

Early one morning my class mates and I were at school at seven thirty in the morning to go on the charter bus to _____ the bus had t.v's. so that we can watch videos first we wathed Santa Clayse two it was all about santa getting married before Christmas after the movie was over I listened to some music I blasted it that the across from me can hear it.

After that we went on a Boat ride alot of people were getting sick every body was laying down on the seats like if it was a waiting room at the hospital for sick peoplz. Some people were also getting sprayed by the water some people were so wet that they had to wait to get back inside the boat.

GO ON 

Then a little while later we went to the Golden Coral to eat some grub. I got some macaronic and cheese with some hot fresh from the oven juicy ribs.

In conclusion that is my favorite fieldtrip of the year, because we got to go on a ~~the~~ boat ride go on a charter bus and eat some grub at the Golden Coral hope you have fun and if you go to the golden coral don't eat to much take it from me,

SCORE POINT
4

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

This writer tells a story about a field trip involving a charter bus and a boat ride. A narrative organizational plan is evident in the middle section of the response, along with some effective transitional devices to move the story along. Support is unevenly developed. While the Golden Corral event is simply extended with little bits of information, the bus and boat trips are elaborated. Word choice is sometimes precise: “blasted,” “like if it was a waiting room at the hospital for sick people,” and “hot fresh from the oven juicy ribs.” Although errors in sentence structure occur, an attempt to vary sentence structure is apparent. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: Fully elaborated support with more precise word choice could be provided. For example, the writer could use specific examples or anecdotes to describe how the students enjoyed the bus ride and the movie. How long did the students have to wait before getting back inside the boat? Were some of the students too sick to eat at Golden Corral? Avoiding expository elements in the conclusion would strengthen the story. Precision of word choice and correction of basic conventions and sentence structure would also strengthen this response.

Alha, I woke up at 7:30 because I have school today. Also all 4th grade has a field trip today. So I got dressed and went down stairs. I ate my flap jacks and got on my bike and went to school.

When I got to school I parked my bike and went to my class room. When I got to my class room I saw [Kyle], [James] [Luis], and [Kenny]. I said hi to everyone and then sat down. When the bell rang we all went in and sat down at our seats. After about an hour and a half we went on the bus to go to pizza conastion and the _____ library.

When we got to the library we all sat down a waited. After a few minutes a larpie came and inderdosed her self. She also read a book to us. When she was don we got a free book and a gummy worm.

When we were don at the library we went to the park to eat our pizza from pizza conastion. When everyone was don everyone was playing. People we swinging, sliding, and climbing. We also had to be careful because little kids had a field trip there too. We played there for like

GO ON 

Two hours it seem but it was only about
 an hour and a half.
 After we were don we went
 back to school and did math, writing
 and clear time. That shet was a
 great feild trip.

The End

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
4

This response is focused on a field trip to the library, a pizza parlor, and a park. The narrative organizational plan includes some effective transitional devices to move the story along, but the story line seems rushed at times. The writer abruptly moves from one idea to another without pausing to provide details that would enhance reader understanding. The development of supporting details is uneven. Although each event is extended with list-like information, the “eating pizza at the park” event contains some elaborated details: “People we swinging, sliding, and climbing. We also had to be careful because little kids had a field trip there too. We played there for like two hours it seem but it was only about an hour and a half.” Word choice is adequate, and sentence structures are varied. Errors occur in basic conventions and spelling.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could employ more effective transitional devices to provide logical connections between and among the events. The writer could pause to provide more support through examples, illustrations, and anecdotes. For example, the writer could tell more about what happened at the library. What book did the lady read to the class? What free book did the writer choose and why was this particular book chosen? How did the class play carefully around the little kids in the park? More varied sentence structure, more precise word choice, and better control of conventions, including spelling, would also strengthen this response.

One day my teacher said that I could pick where to go on a feild trip. I picked of course Disney World. We got to eat lunch at a hotel. Then we all drove to the magic Kingdom. The kids had to go on every ride I wanted to go on. Soon it was getting dark. It's time, I said. Time for what asked my school mates. You'll see I said. I then told the kids to get into groupes of three. I then lead them to the ride called "Haunted Mansion". Some of the kids didn't want to go but miss, C_____ said they had to. So soon every child was in their seat whether they liked it or not. I was riding with [Amber] and [Tyler]. After the ride was over I took everyone to "Space Mountian". We had a blast on that ride. Miss, C_____ said we had to go back to the hotel. She also said I could pick two people for tomorow. I picked [Chelsea] and [Marco]. Disney World is a very special place.

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
3

The writing generally focuses on a field trip to Disney World. A narrative organizational pattern is employed, but some lapses occur. Development of the support is adequate. List-like extensions and abrupt transitions between the events make the story line seem rushed and somewhat confusing: "After the ride was over I took everyone to 'Space Mountian.' We had a blast on that ride. Miss. C_____ said we had to go back to the hotel. She also said I could pick two people for tomorow. I picked [Chelsea] and [Marco]. Disney World is a very special place." Word choice is adequate, and sentence structure variation is attempted. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could provide effective transitioning between each event to logically connect the ideas. The student could pause to elaborate each event with facts, examples, illustrations, or anecdotes. For example, the student could further explain why he or she was chosen to select and plan the field trip. Why did the writer choose Disney World? Why did the author need to choose two students for the next day? More precise word choice and better control of basic conventions and sentence structure would also strengthen this response.

One Friday morning I got up to go on a field trip. On the bus ride up to NASA we saw a lisose plate from Canada. We also saw fifteen dead posems. So we had to put up the windoes. If we didn't every one would scream "eww".

When we got to NASA everyone screamed "yeaaaa". But when we got inside we were as quite as a mouse. They gave us koolade, but we just wanted more. At NASA we saw a 3-D space movie, and when wind would gush by on the screen you could feel it. After the movie we saw the Sautern IV the biggest rocket in the world.

On the way home the bus stopped, and we all got a cheese burger from McDondes. The rest of the way home everyone was busy eating. Then all of a sudden bang sssssssss the engine blew "said the bus driver. So we got a new bus and road safe and sound home.

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
3

This student tells about a field trip to NASA. A narrative organizational pattern is attempted, and some predictable transitional devices are used effectively. The story line seems rushed because the writer does not pause to provide enough details about the events. The most developed events are the bus rides to and from NASA: "we saw a lisose plate from Canada. We also saw fifteen dead posems. So we had to put up the windoes. If we didn't every one would scream 'eww'!" The bus trip home from NASA is very briefly narrated as the writer switches abruptly from getting "a cheese burger from McDondes" to "the engine blew." Word choice is adequate, and some sentence structure variation is attempted. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should employ effective transitional devices to provide logical connections between and among the events. The writer should pause to elaborate on each event. Examples, illustrations, and anecdotes could be used to enhance the reader's understanding. For example, the student could have used specific details or anecdotes to tell about what happened when the class saw the Saturn IV rocket. Better sentence structure and improved conventions would also strengthen this response.

A lot of kids dream of going to a special field trip. Well today that is what I'm going to tell you. A special field trip is to the mall and Rapids. I'm going to tell you what will happen at the field trip.

First we'll go to the Rapids. Next I'll put the radio and put sunblock on. Then I'll jump in the pool and go on the water slide. Then we'll eat lunch. Finally we'll leave. Now I'll tell you what I'll do.

First I'll do get off the bus. Then I'll go to the toy store and bratz doll.

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
2

This response is focused on the topic, and a narrative organizational pattern is attempted. The writer fails to move beyond the introduction and does not elaborate events. The writer fails to employ effective transitional devices to provide logical connections between and among the events. Most of the support is list-like and somewhat confusing. The writer seems to concentrate more on setting up the order of events than on telling a story about what happens when the class took a field trip to the “Mall and Rapids.” Vague details are provided: “First I’ll get off the bus. Then I’ll go to the toy store and bratz doll.” Word choice is adequate. Errors in sentence structure and basic conventions do not impede understanding.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should employ a consistently narrative story line with effective transitional devices. The writer should pause to provide logical connections between the events and to elaborate on the events with relevant supporting details. For example, the student could tell more about what happened at the pool, the water slide, and the mall. How are the mall and the rapids connected? Are the rapids inside or near the mall? Sentence structure should be improved and more varied. Correction of convention errors would also strengthen this response.

Super! All of us are going on a field trip. Beginning, We finally got to the zoo. It looked like a animal world. In the Middle, We saw lots and lots of Bears. We saw this big fat bear playing with a teddy bear. Then we saw a little small bear cry because he miss his mother. In the end, We went back to school and had a snack and are snack was a Party. It was joyful to see those bears living like that. And a big animal Kingdom.

SCORE POINT
2

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

This response focuses on a time when the writer’s class took a field trip to the zoo. The attempt to organize includes a brief introduction, some list-like support, and a vague conclusion. The writer’s attempt to provide effective transitional devices does not logically connect the events: “Beginning, We finally got to the zoo,” and “In the Middle, We saw lots and lots of Bears.” The writer rushes through the story line and does not pause to provide adequate supporting details, and the conclusion is rambling: “In the end, We went back to school and had a snack and are snack was a Party. It was joyful to see those bears living like that. And a big animal Kingdom.” Word choice is limited and predictable, and sentence structure variation is attempted. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could employ more effective transitional devices to connect the events. Facts, examples, anecdotes, or illustrations would enhance the reader’s understanding. For example, the student could recall more details about the events. How was the big bear playing with a teddy bear? How did the students know the small bear was crying because he missed his mother? Did the students share their zoo experiences at the snack party? More precise word choice, variation of sentence structures, and improvement of basic conventions would also strengthen this response.

The best place in the world to be is _____
 _____ I went there over a million times last year
 with my camp the best ride of all is the tornado
 The best part of it is the loop-de-loop. The next
 best part of the tornado is the waterslide it
 huge big

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
1

This brief response minimally addresses the topic. A hierarchical organizational plan is attempted, including the use of one transitional device: “The best place in the world” followed by “the best ride of all” leading to “The best part of it” and “The next best part.” Development of support for each event is limited, vague, and moves too quickly through time: “the best ride of all is the tornado The best part of it is the loop-de-loop. The next best part of the tornado is the waterslide it huge big.” Word choice is limited and immature. Errors in sentence structure and basic conventions do not impede understanding.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer’s narrative organizational plan needs more effective transitional devices to effectively link the events. The writer should pause to elaborate on the supporting details with facts, examples, anecdotes, or illustrations. For example, the writer could tell more about the good times he or she had at Busch Gardens with the camp friends. What happened on the loop-de-loop and the waterslide? More precise word choice, more varied sentence structure, and improved basic conventions would enhance the reader’s understanding.

One day the fourth and fifth grades went on a field trip. Ms. F _____ and Ms. S _____ class stayed together. _____ creped up behind me and went Boo I jumped. She scared me a lot. She saw me jump and started to laugh. She laugh so hard

SCORE POINT
1

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

The writer minimally addresses the topic in this brief response. There is little, if any, attempt to develop a narrative organizational plan. The writer shifts abruptly from one event to another. Supporting ideas are sparse and somewhat confusing: “Ms. F _____ and Ms. S _____ class stayed together. _____ creped up behind me and went Boo I jumped.” The writer offers some vague details about this experience with _____, but no additional support is given for what happened on this field trip to a special place. Although errors occur in basic conventions, sentence structure and word choice are adequate.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should provide a narrative organizational pattern with effective transitional devices. For example, the writer’s story line should more logically connect the trip to the incident with _____. Did _____ scare the author before the trip, during the trip, or after the trip? Support should be developed with more details. For example, the writer could include examples or anecdotes to tell more about the special place and what happened on this field trip. Word choice could be more precise, sentence structure could be more varied, and basic conventions could be better used.

Appendix A

Prompt and Allowable Interpretations

Grade 4 Expository Prompt

Writing Situation:

Many people have something special to them, like a toy, a book, or an award.

Directions for Writing:

Think about something that is special to you and what makes it special.

Now write about something that is special, and explain why it is special to you.

The prompt serves as a stimulus for writing. The purpose of the prompt is to elicit writing from fourth grade students statewide. Responses are scored when a connection exists between the prompt and the response although the connection may be tenuous or out of the ordinary.

Allowable Interpretations

Allowable interpretations describe acceptable ways of responding to the prompt. The allowable interpretations serve as a scoring tool that assists scorers in distinguishing scorable from unscorable responses.

- The student is allowed considerable latitude in his/her interpretation of the prompt; therefore, the words in the prompt may be broadly defined.
- The explanation may be fact or fantasy.
- The student may provide a reason or reasons to support what **is** or what **is not** special.
- The student may write about one “thing” or more than one “thing” that is special.
- The student may present information as “factual” even if the information is not based on fact.
- The student may provide one or more reasons something is special, and/or the student may explain multiple aspects (positive and/or negative) of “something special.” “Special” may be implied rather than explicitly stated.
- Narration, description, and persuasion “work” if they provide explanatory information related to the prompt.

Grade 4 Narrative Prompt*Writing Situation:*

Imagine a field trip to a special place.

Directions for Writing:

Think about what might happen on a field trip to a special place.

Now write a story about a field trip to a special place.

The prompt serves as a stimulus for writing. The purpose of the prompt is to elicit writing from fourth grade students statewide. Responses are scored when a connection exists between the prompt and the response although the connection may be tenuous or out of the ordinary.

Allowable Interpretations

Allowable interpretations describe acceptable ways of responding to the prompt. The allowable interpretations serve as a scoring tool that assists scorers in distinguishing scorable from unscorable responses.

- The writer is allowed considerable latitude in his/her interpretation of the prompt; therefore, the words in the prompt may be broadly defined.
- The story may be fact or fantasy.
- The student may present information as “factual” even if the information is not based on fact.
- The story may include or be limited to the time period before, during, or after the event(s).
- The writer may cite one or more things that happened during the event(s) suggested by the prompt. The writer may write about all the things that happened or may write about only one aspect.
- The writer may tell about the negative or positive aspects of the time/event, the consequences of the time/event, and/or reactions to the time/event.
- Exposition and description “work” if they provide information about the event or events.
- The writer may include any number and/or types of characters.

Appendix B

Glossary

Allowable Interpretations – a scoring tool that assists scorers in distinguishing scorable from unscorable responses

Census Writing Assessment – testing of all students in a particular grade level to measure the writing proficiency of students and schools

Conventions – commonly accepted rules of edited American English (e.g., spelling, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure)

Draft – preliminary version of a piece of writing that may need revision of details, organization, and conventions

Expository Writing – writing that gives information, explains why or how, clarifies a process, or defines a concept

Field Test – testing a representative sample of the state’s student population to determine the effectiveness of an assessment instrument

Focus – relationship of supporting details to the main idea, theme, or unifying point

Loosely Related – only slightly related

Extraneous – not related

Holistic Scoring – method by which trained readers evaluate the overall quality of a piece of writing according to predefined criteria

Narrative Writing – writing that recounts a personal or fictional experience or tells a story based on a real or imagined event

Organization – structure or plan of development (beginning, middle, and end) and the transitional devices used to arrange ideas

Transitional Devices – words, terms, phrases, and sentence variations used to arrange and signal the movement of ideas. For example, “next, and then, in the end, another reason, after that we went, another way to look at” are transitional devices.

Performance Task – test item (prompt) that requires a student to write a response instead of choosing one from several choices

Persuasive Writing – writing that attempts to convince the reader that a point of view is valid or that the reader should take a specific action

Prompt – writing assignment that states the writer’s task, including the topic and purpose of the writing

Rangefinders – student responses used to illustrate score points on the rubric

Response – writing that is stimulated by a prompt

Rubric – scoring description for each score point of the scale

Scorer – person trained to score student responses

Support – quality of details illustrating or explaining the central theme

Bare – use of a detail or a simple list that focuses on events or reasons. For example, “I like to go to school because it is fun.”

Extended – use of information that begins to clarify meaning. For example, “I like to go to school because it is fun when the teacher allows us to do experiments with frogs.”

Layered – use of a series of informational statements that collectively help to clarify meaning. For example, “I like to go to school because it is fun when the teacher allows us to do experiments with frogs. We learned what kinds of foods frogs like to eat by offering them flies, worms, and seeds. We observed the frogs during the morning and afternoon to determine when they were more active. We also compared frogs to other amphibians to see what characteristics they share.”

Elaborated – use of additional details, anecdotes, illustrations, and examples that further clarify meaning. Information that answers the question, “What do you mean?” For example, “I like to go to school because it is fun when the teacher allows us to do experiments with frogs instead of just reading about frogs in books. Experiments allow us to have the fun of discovering for ourselves how far and how fast frogs can jump and what kinds of foods frogs like to eat.” The elaboration could also provide a detailed description of the experiments.

Writing Process – recursive steps of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, evaluating, and sharing used in the development of a piece of writing

Appendix C

FCAT Writing+ Performance Task Assessment Directions, Answer Book, and Planning Sheet

Assessment Directions

The following is a synopsis of the directions test administrators read to students for the essay portion of the assessment:

Today you are going to complete a writing exercise, and it is important for you to do as well as you can. Your scored response will be returned to your school as part of your school record.

The prompt on page 2 of your answer book explains what you are going to write about and gives you some ideas for planning your writing. You may use the planning sheet for jotting down ideas and planning and organizing what you will write.

After planning what you will write, begin the writing that will be scored on page 3. You may continue your writing on page 4. You do not have to fill up both of these pages, but you should respond completely to the prompt.

The writing should be easy to read and show that you can organize and express your thoughts clearly and completely.

Your writing may be about something real or make-believe, but remember you are to write ONLY about the prompt on page 2 of your folder.

You may give your writing a title if you would like, but you do not have to title your writing.

You may NOT use a dictionary. If you do not know how to spell a word, sound the word out and do the best you can.

You may either print or write in cursive. It is important to write neatly.

Remember, you must first read your prompt and then plan what you will write. I cannot read your prompt to you or help you plan what to write. You must read and plan yourself.

You have a total of 45 minutes to read, plan, and respond to your prompt. I will let you know when you have 10 minutes left.

If you finish early, check your work and make corrections to improve your writing.

PROMPT



SAMPLE

DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAGE.

Appendix D

FCAT Writing+ Prompt Specifications and Prompt Evaluation Form

Specification for Expository Writing Prompts

The purpose of prompt specification is to ensure that the prompt tells the students the subject (topic) and purpose of writing. Prompts are developed to elicit writing for a desired purpose. One such purpose is exposition. Exposition is writing that gives information, explains how or why, clarifies a process, or defines a concept. Though objective and not dependent on emotion, expository writing may be lively, engaging, and reflective of the writer's underlying commitment to the topic. The unmistakable purpose of expository writing is to inform, clarify, explain, define, and/or instruct.

Cue words that may be used in expository prompts are *why*, *how*, and *what*.

Prompts contain two types of statements: Writing Situation and Directions for Writing. Each element of the prompt may be one or several sentences long.

Writing Situation The writing situation introduces a topic through key words or phrases. This topic serves as the central theme of the student's written response. The statement may provide examples or definitions to clarify the topic. The intent is to provide a common understanding of the topic by expanding, restating, or clarifying it for the students. The intent is not to preclude the student's narrowing or restating of the topic to suit his or her own plan.

Example:

Suppose you could have any animal in the world for a classroom pet.

Directions for Writing The directions for writing include a statement that provides a strategy for approaching the topic.

Example:

Think about what animal you would like to have for a classroom pet.

Now write to explain why this animal should be your classroom pet.

Specification for Narrative Writing Prompts

The purpose of prompt specification is to ensure that the prompt tells the student the subject (topic) and purpose of writing. Prompts are developed to elicit writing for a desired purpose. One such purpose is narration. Narration is writing that recounts a personal or fictional experience or tells a story based on a real or imagined event. Narrative writing is characterized, as appropriate, by insight, creativity, drama, suspense, humor, and/or fantasy. The unmistakable purpose of narrative writing is to create a central theme or impression in the reader's mind.

Cue words that may be used in narrative prompts are *tell about*, *tell what happened*, or *write a story*. Narrative prompts should avoid the term *why* because it tends to elicit expository writing.

Prompts contain two types of statements: Writing Situation and Directions for Writing. Each element of the prompt may be one or several sentences long.

Writing Situation The writing situation introduces a topic through key words or phrases. This topic serves as the central theme of the student's written response. The statement may provide examples or definitions to clarify the topic. The intent is to provide a common understanding of the topic by expanding, restating, or clarifying it for the students. The intent is not to preclude the student's narrowing or restating of the topic to suit his or her own plan.

Example:

Everyone has done something that he or she will always remember.

Directions for Writing The directions for writing include a statement that provides a strategy for approaching the topic.

Example:

Think about a time you did something special that you will always remember.

Now tell a story about the time you did something special that you will always remember.

FCAT Writing+ Prompt Evaluation Form

Prompt ID _____ **Grade Level** _____ **Date** _____

INTEREST LEVEL

Yes No

1. Will the topic be of interest to students at this grade level?

Comments

BIAS

Yes No

2. Is the topic free of bias?

Yes No

3. Is the wording free of bias?

Yes No

4. Is the topic general enough to be readily accessible to students at this grade level?
(Would most students know something about the topic?)

Yes No

5. Will students be able to respond without becoming overly emotional or upset?

Comments

PURPOSE OF WRITING

Yes No

6. Is the prompt well-suited for the desired purpose?

Comments

WORDING OF PROMPT

Yes No

7. Is the wording of the prompt clear?

Yes No

8. Is the readability appropriate for the majority of students?

Yes No

9. Are components, such as the writing situation and the directions for writing, compatible?

Comments

ORGANIZATION OF RESPONSE

Yes No

10. Does the prompt allow for student preference in the choice of an organizational plan?

Comments

DEPTH OF SUPPORT

Yes No

11. Will the prompt discourage list-like support?

Yes No

12. Is the prompt manageable within the 45-minute testing period?

Yes No

13. Will the prompt allow for substantial development of the topic?

Comments

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Yes No

14. Should the prompt be used as it is written?

Comments

Reviewer's Signature _____

Appendix E

Scorer Bias

Scorer bias refers to factors that have no basis in the scoring criteria or rubric but have an effect on a scorer's perception of a student response. Scorers are trained to avoid these biases because research indicates that biases can interfere with consistent application of the scoring rubric.

- 1. Reactions to Writing Criteria from Other Assessments, Previous Experience with Writing Instruction, or the Use of the Test or Test Scores.** Do you prefer the scoring criteria of another project, state, or grade level? Do you have an issue with writing instruction, the appropriateness of the rubric, or the soundness of the administration or use of the assessment? Do you have expectations about the kind of writing students should be doing? Your role is to score the responses according to the scoring standards rather than to react to the scoring criteria, administration procedures, or the use of the assessment.
- 2. Appearance of Response.** How does the paper look at first glance? How long is the response? Length and quality of writing are not the same things. You should not be influenced by handwriting, neatness, and margins. Handwriting ability and writing ability are not the same things. Length and neatness are not scoring criteria; therefore, you may not consider these aspects of "writing" in the evaluation of a student's writing ability. The quality of the response, rather than the appearance of the response, is part of Florida's scoring criteria.
- 3. Knowledge of Topic.** Are you knowledgeable about the topic? When evaluating student responses, you should consistently adhere to the scoring standards, regardless of your expertise (or lack of expertise) about the topic.
- 4. Reactions to Style.** Does the student begin sentences with "And" or "But"; use an informal tone; use first person; use clichés; place the thesis statement in the conclusion rather than in the introduction; use one-sentence paragraphs; or choose a formulaic, a traditional, or a nontraditional organizational structure? Does the use of a particular stylistic or organizational method prejudice your scoring? Are you unduly influenced by the use of one well-turned phrase in what otherwise is a nonillustrative response? Florida's scoring criteria do not mandate a particular style or organizational structure.
- 5. Reactions to Content.** Has the student used vulgar or violent content? Is the response mundane? Does the student include information that either subtly or directly identifies the student's culture, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual preference, or exceptionalism? Does the student come across as brash, shy, cute, honest, willing to take a chance, or being like (or unlike) you were at that age? Your views about any of the preceding should never influence your scoring. You should judge the student's ability to communicate, not the student's personality or voice. All scores must reflect the scoring standards.
- 6. Transference in Scoring.** Have many responses looked a great deal alike? Is your scoring prejudiced by previously scored responses? In spite of the sameness or uniqueness of responses, an individual student wrote each response. You are responsible for applying the scoring criteria to each response as if it is the only response. Your judgment of a paper should never be influenced by the characteristics and quality of a previously scored paper.
- 7. Well-being of Scorer.** Is your physical or mental state impeding your scoring accuracy? Each student's score must reflect the scoring standards and not your state of mind, state of health, or state of rest.

Appendix F

Instructional Implications for Each Score Point

Grade 4

6 Points According to the rubric, the writing is tightly focused, logically organized, and amply developed. It demonstrates a mature command of language, including precision in word choice. Sentences vary in structure, and conventions are generally correct.

A score of 6 does not mean that the paper is perfect. In most cases, the writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes use of the writing process and

- effective planning, drafting, revising, and editing;
- organizing internal elements (using a beginning, middle, and end for each idea and not just for the total paper);
- elaborating on supporting ideas using precise language;
- correcting convention errors; and
- achieving the intended purpose for writing.

5 Points According to the rubric, the writing is focused, and supporting ideas are adequately developed. However, lapses in organization may occur. Word choice is adequate. Sentences vary in structure, and conventions are generally correct. In most cases, the writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes use of the writing process and

- effective planning, drafting, revising, and editing;
- strengthening the organizational pattern to ensure that no lapses occur and that transitional devices move the reader from one sentence, event, or explanation to the next;
- elaborating on the supporting ideas;
- improving word choice;
- increasing sentence variety;
- correcting convention errors; and
- achieving the intended purpose for writing.

4 Points According to the rubric, the writing is focused but may contain extraneous information, may lack internal organization, and may include weak support or examples. Word choice is adequate. Sentences vary in construction, and conventions are generally correct. In most cases, the writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes use of the writing process and

- effective planning, drafting, revising, and editing;
- removing extraneous information;
- strengthening the organizational pattern to ensure that no lapses occur and that transitional devices move the reader from one sentence, event, or explanation to the next;
- developing the supporting ideas through extensions, elaborations, or both;
- improving word choice;
- increasing sentence variety;
- correcting convention errors; and
- presenting and maintaining the intended purpose for writing.

3 Points According to the rubric, the writing is generally focused but may contain extraneous information, a simplistic organizational pattern, and undeveloped details or examples. Word choice is adequate. Most sentences are simple constructions, and convention errors may occur. In most cases, the writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes use of the writing process and

- effective planning, drafting, revising, and editing;
- removing extraneous information;
- strengthening the organizational pattern to include transitional devices and a logical progression of ideas;
- developing the supporting ideas through extensions, elaborations, or both;
- improving word choice;
- increasing sentence variety; and
- targeting the intended purpose for writing.

2 Points According to the rubric, the writing may show little relationship to the topic, little evidence of an organizational pattern, and little relevant support. Word choice is limited. Most sentences are simple constructions, and convention errors may occur. In most cases, the writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes use of the writing process and

- effective planning, drafting, revising, and editing;
- focusing on the assigned topic;
- developing an organizational pattern that includes a beginning, middle, end, and transitional devices;
- extending supporting ideas;
- improving word choice;
- increasing sentence variety;
- correcting spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure errors; and
- identifying and addressing the writing purpose.

1 Point According to the rubric, the writing minimally addresses the topic. There is no organizational pattern and little or no support. Word choice is limited. Most sentences are simple constructions, and convention errors may occur. In most cases, the writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes use of the writing process and

- effective planning, drafting, revising, and editing;
- focusing on the assigned topic;
- developing an organizational pattern that includes a beginning, middle, and end;
- extending supporting ideas;
- improving word choice;
- increasing sentence variety;
- correcting spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure errors; and
- identifying and addressing the writing purpose.

Unscorable: Insufficient Response or Response Not Related to Assigned Topic According to the rubric, the writing addressing the topic was insufficient or did not address the assigned topic. The writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes use of the writing process and

- familiarizing students with the structure of the prompt;
- identifying the purpose for writing as stated in the prompt;
- planning effectively and efficiently;
- establishing a beginning, a middle, and an end; and
- developing support.

Unscorable: No Response or Unreadable Response According to the rubric, the writing folder is blank, or the response is illegible. The writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes use of the writing process and

- writing legibly;
- arranging words so meaning is conveyed;
- reviewing the basic writing elements; and
- developing support.

Appendix G

Recommended Readings

Anderson, Jeff. *Mechanically Inclined*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2005.

Mechanically Inclined is the culmination of years of experimentation that merges the best of writer's workshop elements with relevant theory about how and why skills should be taught. It connects theory about using grammar in context with practical instructional strategies, explains why kids often don't understand or apply grammar and mechanics correctly, focuses on attending to the "high payoff," or most common errors in student writing, and shows how to carefully construct a workshop environment that can best support grammar and mechanics concepts.

Burke, Jim. *The English Teacher's Companion: A Complete Guide to Classroom, Curriculum, and the Profession*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Heinemann, 1999.

This book strives to help teachers create a classroom community infused with real-life conversations among students and offers ways to organize the curriculum around these essential conversations. It also provides practical methods to create the necessary intellectual and emotional environments which allow important discussions to take place.

Burke, Jim. *Writing Reminders: Tools, Tips, and Techniques*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.

This book is designed for educators to read at any time: between periods, while planning, even while teaching, to make every minute count in the classroom, and to help educators work smarter and more effectively.

Calkins, Lucy McCormick and Shelly Harwayne. *Living Between the Lines*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1990.

This is an invitation to bring new life into reading-writing workshops. This book weaves insights, practical suggestions, references, and anecdotes into an inspirational story.

Carnicelli, Thomas. *Words Work*. With a foreword by Jim Burke. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 2001.

The premise of this book is that students would read, write, and perhaps even think better if they knew more about words. With this in mind, this text, successfully tested in middle and high schools, contains activities which allow students to explore words and develop their language arts and thinking skills.

Clark, Roy Peter. *Free to Write: A Journalist Teaches Young Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1987.

This book offers hundreds of practical ideas on how to turn elementary and middle school students into better writers and learners.

Cole, Ardith Davis. *Better Answers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2005.

Better Answers is an outgrowth of Cole's work with students who have not met state standards in English language arts. Cole has developed an easy-to-implement, step-by-step protocol, the "Better Answer" formula, which helps students focus on the task at hand. It is a process that begins with teacher modeling, invites increasing amounts of student participation, and eventually moves students into independent response writing.

Cunningham, Patricia M., Sharon Arthur Moore, James W. Cunningham, and David W. Moore. *Reading and Writing in Elementary Classrooms*. New York City, NY: Addison Wesley Longman, 2000.

The four authors of this book have created a resource offering teachers new strategies and observations regarding elementary reading and writing. The book features prereading, during reading, and postreading activities.

Davis, Judy and Sharon Hill. *The No-Nonsense Guide to Teaching Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.

The authors of this book describe the organization of a successful year-long writing workshop, including an abundance of specific how-to details.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing With Power*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Through a broad spectrum of ingenious ideas, this book shows how to develop students' natural writing ability.

Fiderer, Adele. *Mini-Lessons for Teaching Writing*. Jefferson City, MO: Scholastic, 1997.

Using excerpts from favorite children's authors' work, this book, aimed at Grades 3–6, takes its reader through the essentials of good writing. The succinct mini-lessons address elements such as choosing meaningful topics, organizing ideas, punctuating dialogue, and much more.

Fletcher, Ralph and JoAnn Portalupi. *Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.

This book was written primarily for new teachers and others who are unfamiliar with the writing workshop. It is a practical guide providing all of the elements a teacher needs to develop and implement a writing workshop—and to empower young writers.

Fountas, Irene C. and Gay Su Pinnell. *Guiding Readers and Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.

This resource book explores all the essential components of a quality upper elementary literacy program (Grades 3–6).

Hansen, Jane. *When Writers Read*. Second Edition. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.

When Writers Read is about what students can do to become better evaluators of themselves as writers and readers, and how their teachers can help. The book is organized around five concepts that are central to an effective writing-reading program: voices, decisions, time, response, and self-discipline.

Harris, Karen and Steve Graham. *Making the Writing Process Work: Strategies for Composition and Self-Regulation*. With a foreword by Donald Meichenbaum. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books, 1999.

This book focuses on strategies to help students think about and organize their writing while they manage overall writing content and organization. The methods introduced in this book are particularly appropriate for struggling writers.

Jenson, Eric. *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998.

This innovative book balances psychological research of brain functioning (related to such things as emotion, memory, and recall) with practical, easy-to-understand concepts regarding learning and the brain. It also offers successful tips and techniques for using that information in classrooms, producing an invaluable tool which can allow educators to better reach students.

Johnson, Bea. *Never Too Early to Write: Adventures in the K-1 Writing Workshop*. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House Publishing, Inc., 1999.

This book shows teachers, administrators, and parents how to have a successful year-long writing program. It demonstrates that a very valuable literacy tool is not expensive. It utilizes reading-readiness materials already in use and requires no special teaching aids.

Jorgensen, Karen. *The Whole Story: Crafting Fiction in the Upper Elementary Grades*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.

The author takes you inside her classroom, demonstrating how she gives lessons, conducts conferences, and facilitates sharing to help writers develop and refine stories.

Kropp, Paul and Lori Jamison Rog. *The Write Genre*. Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishing, 2005.

Build a foundation for writing with effective lessons that are the key to powerful writing workshops. These practical lessons explore the main elements of writing, with explicit strategies for teaching the major styles: informational writing, poetry and personal writing, and narrative. The authors also provide more than 30 effective tools that are ready to copy and use in the classroom—writing checklists, rubrics for assessment, graphic organizers, tips for proofing, and much more.

McCarrier, Andrea, Gay Su Pinnell, and Irene C. Fountas. *Interactive Writing: How Language & Literacy Come Together, K-2*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000.

This guide offers a powerful teaching method designed to accelerate and support children's critical understanding of the writing process. *Interactive Writing* is specifically focused on the early phases of writing and has special relevance to pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and Grade 1 and 2 teachers.

Moats, Louisa Cook. *Speech to Print*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 2001.

The language essentials offered in this book will enable teachers to identify, understand, and solve the problems students with or without disabilities may encounter when learning to read and write.

Muschla, Gary Robert. *The Writing Teacher's Book of Lists: With Ready-To-Use Activities and Worksheets*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1991.

This book is divided into six sections containing a total of seventy-four lists. The teaching suggestions that accompany each list provide valuable information, methods, and techniques for teaching writing, while the activities enable students to improve their writing skills as they apply the knowledge gained from the lists.

Noguchi, Rei R. *Grammar and the Teaching of Writing*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1991.

Some research indicates the formal study of grammar does not improve student writing and, in fact, takes time away from writing activities. To make more time available for writing activities, the author suggests reducing the length and breadth of formal grammar instruction and instead introduces the concept of a streamlined “writer’s grammar.”

Overmeyer, Mark. *When Writing Workshop Isn't Working*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2005.

When Writing Workshop Isn't Working provides practical advice to overcome common problems and get your writing workshop back on track. Acknowledging the process-based nature of the writing workshop, the author does not offer formulaic, program-based, one-size-fits-all answers; rather, he presents multiple suggestions based on what works in real classrooms.

Ray, Katie Wood. *The Writing Workshop: Working through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts)*. With Lester L. Laminack. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2001.

In this book, Katie Wood Ray offers a practical and comprehensive guide about the writing workshop for both new and experienced teachers. She offers chapters on all challenging aspects of the writing workshop, including day-to-day instruction, classroom management, and many other topics.

Ray, Katie Wood. *Wondrous Words: Writers and Writing in the Elementary Classroom*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1999.

Drawing on stories from classrooms, examples of student writing, and illustrations, Katie Wood Ray explains in practical terms the theoretical underpinnings of how elementary and middle school students learn to write from reading.

Reid, Janine and Jann Wells. *Writing Anchors*. Peterborough, NH: Crystal Springs Books, 2005.

This comprehensive handbook shows how to build a foundation for writing with effective lessons that are key to powerful writing workshops. It provides information about creating a supportive classroom, modeling writing experiences, and generating enthusiasm for writing among students. Includes explicit strategies for teaching these major forms of writing: informational writing, poetry and personal writing, and narrative writing.

Strong, William. *Coaching Writing*. With a foreword by Tom Romano. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.

This book presents a “coaching approach” to writing instruction: an approach that centers on working smarter, not harder, to reduce the risk of teacher burnout. Chapters in the book offer a variety of educator resources ranging from Strong’s own experiences with basic writers to successfully managing the paper load.

Wollman-Bonilla, Julie. *Family Message Journals: Teaching Writing through Family Involvement*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2000.

This book follows the development of emergent and beginning writers as they explore the power and joy of written communication. Wollman-Bonilla’s analysis of how two primary grade teachers implement *Family Message Journals* in their classrooms illustrates that the journals are a workable, realistic, and effective strategy for literacy and content-area learning.

Worsham, Sandra. *Essential Ingredients: Recipes for Teaching Writing*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001.

This book shows that the kind of writing that successful writers do is the kind of writing we should be teaching in school. It details the characteristics of effective writing and implications for use in the classroom.

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well, 25th Anniversary Edition*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2001.

This is a helpful and readable guide to writing. With more than a million copies sold, this book has stood the test of time and continues to be a valuable tool for writers and would-be writers.

Appendix H

FCAT Publications and Products

The Department of Education (DOE) produces many materials to help educators, students, and parents better understand the FCAT program. A list of FCAT-related publications and products is provided below. Additional information about the FCAT program is available on the FCAT home page of the DOE website at <http://www.fldoe.org>.

About the FCAT Web Brochure

This web-based brochure is found on the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/aboutfcat/english/>. English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole brochures provide information about FCAT Reading, Writing+, Mathematics, and Science for Grades 3–11 and link the reader to other helpful DOE web resources.

Assessment & Accountability Briefing Book

This book provides an overview of Florida's assessment, school accountability, and teacher certification programs. FCAT topics include frequently asked questions, content assessed by the FCAT, reliability, and validity. This booklet can be downloaded from the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatpub1.htm>.

FCAT Handbook—A Resource for Educators

This publication provides the first comprehensive look at the FCAT including history, test content, test format, test development and construction, test administration, and test scoring and reporting. Educator involvement is emphasized, demonstrating how Florida teachers and administrators participate in reviewing test items, determining how standards should be assessed, finding ranges of scores, and providing input on aspects of the test administration process. The PDF version is available on the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/handbk/fcathandbook.html>.

FCAT Myths vs. Facts

By providing factual information about the FCAT program, this brochure addresses common concerns about the FCAT that are based on myths. It is also available in Spanish and can be downloaded from the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatpub3.htm>.

FCAT Performance Task Scoring—Practice for Educators (publications and software)

These materials are designed to help teachers learn to score FCAT Reading, Writing, and Mathematics performance tasks at Grades 4, 5, 8, and 10. *A Trainer's Guide* includes instructions for using the scoring publications and software in teacher education seminars and workshops. The publications mirror the scorer training experiences by presenting samples of student work for teachers to score.

FCAT Posters

Elementary, middle, and high school FCAT Reading, Writing+, Science, and Mathematics posters have an instructional focus. Two additional posters provide information about achievement levels and which FCAT tests are given at each grade. A high school poster reminds students about the graduation requirement to pass the FCAT Reading and Mathematics tests and the multiple opportunities available to retake the tests. Posters were delivered to Florida school districts in 2005; limited numbers of these posters are still available from the DOE Assessment office.

FCAT Released Tests

Reading, Grades 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10

Mathematics, Grades 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10

The DOE released FCAT Reading and FCAT Mathematics previously used full tests for Grades 4, 8, and 10 in 2005 and for Grades 3, 7, 9, and 10 in 2006. This web-based release included not only the tests, but also several other important documents including interactive test books, answer keys, "How to Use the FCAT Released Tests," "How to Score the FCAT Released Tests," and "Frequently Asked Questions about the FCAT Released Tests." These supplemental materials provide many details about the FCAT, especially the range of correct answers and points needed for each achievement level. All materials are available on the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcatrelease.html>. In 2007 the DOE plans to release FCAT Reading and FCAT Mathematics tests for Grades 5 and 6.

FCAT Results Folder: A Guide for Parents and Guardians

This folder is designed for parents and guardians of students in Grades 3–11. It provides information about FCAT student results and allows parents to store student reports for future reference. Spanish and Haitian Creole versions are available. Delivery coincides with spring delivery of student reports.

*FCAT Test Item Specifications**Reading, Grades 3–5, 6–8, and 9–10**Mathematics, Grades 3–5, 6–8, and 9–10**Science, Grades 5, 8, and 10/11**Writing+ draft versions, Grades 4, 8, and 10*

Defining both the content and the format of the FCAT test questions, the *Specifications* primarily serve as guidelines for item writers and reviewers, but also contain information for educators and the general public. The *Specifications* are designed to be broad enough to ensure test items are developed in several formats to measure the concepts presented in each benchmark. These materials can be downloaded from the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatis01.htm>.

*Florida Reads! Report on the 2007 FCAT Reading Released Items (Grades 4, 8 & 10)**Florida Solves! Report on the 2007 FCAT Mathematics Released Items (Grades 5, 8 & 10)**Florida Inquires! Report on the 2007 FCAT Science Released Items (Grades 5, 8 & 11)*

These reports provide information about the scoring of the FCAT Reading, Mathematics, and Science performance tasks displayed on the 2007 student reports. *Florida Reads!* combines Grades 4, 8, and 10 in one document; *Florida Solves!* covers Grades 5, 8, and 10; and *Florida Inquires!* includes Grades 5, 8, and 11. The reports are distributed each May and are also posted to the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatflwrites.html>.

*Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 4**Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 8**Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 10*

Each grade-level publication describes the content and application of the FCAT Writing+ tests and offers suggestions for activities that may be helpful in preparing students for the assessments. The reports are distributed each May and are also posted to the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatflwrites.html>.

Frequently Asked Questions About FCAT

This brochure provides answers to frequently asked questions about the FCAT program and is available on the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatpub3.htm>.

Keys to FCAT, Grades 3–5, 6–8, and 9–11

These booklets are distributed each January and contain information for parents and students preparing for FCAT Reading, Writing+, Mathematics, and Science. *Keys to FCAT* are translated into Spanish and Haitian Creole and are available, along with the English version, on the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatkeys.htm>.

Lessons Learned—FCAT, Sunshine State Standards and Instructional Implications

This document provides an analysis of previous years' FCAT results and contains analyses of FCAT Reading, Writing, and Mathematics state-level data through 2000. The PDF version is available on the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fclesn02.htm>. The DOE is currently working on the next version of *Lessons Learned* for FCAT Reading and Mathematics that will analyze data from 2001 through 2005. The planned release in print and on the DOE website is Fall 2007.

Sample Test Materials for the FCAT

Reading and Mathematics, Grades 3–10

Science, Grades 5, 8, and 11

Writing+, Grades 4, 8, and 10

These materials are produced and distributed each fall for teachers to use with students. The student's test booklet contains practice questions and hints for answering them. The teacher's answer key provides the correct answer, an explanation for the correct answer, and also indicates the assessed SSS benchmark. These booklets are available in PDF format on the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatsmpl.htm>.

The New FCAT NRT: Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (SAT10)

This brochure outlines differences between the previous FCAT NRT (SAT9) and the current FCAT NRT (SAT10). It is available in PDF format on the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatpub2.htm>.

Understanding FCAT Reports

This booklet provides information about the FCAT student, school, and district reports for the recent test administration. Samples of reports, explanations about the reports, and a glossary of technical terms are included. Distribution to districts is scheduled to coincide with the delivery of student reports each May. The booklet can be downloaded from the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatpub2.htm>.

What every teacher should know about FCAT

This document provides suggestions for all subject-area teachers to use in helping their students be successful on the FCAT. It can be downloaded from the DOE website at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatpub2.htm>.



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