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ABSTRACT

This report provides suggestions on how a language arts writing skills assessment program could be structured to ensure that school districts in Oregon carry out the intent of state standards. The report includes: (1) a list of common curriculum goals that relate to writing; (2) general implications for assessment; (3) criteria for differentiating among insufficient, acceptable and ideal assessment practices at the classroom and district levels; (4) a bibliography of writing assessment resources available in Oregon; and (5) sample writing assessment tools and procedures. (RS)

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Verne A. Duncan  
State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction

September 1988

# ASSESSMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS COMMON CURRICULUM GOALS

## Report 1: Writing Skills

School districts in Oregon are required in Standards for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools 581-22-602 and -606 to use student assessment information on the Common Curriculum Goals to assist in making decisions about instruction of individual students and effectiveness of instructional programs. The standards suggest that a broad range of information is required to profile student and program progress and needs. There is also the assumption that instructional programs in schools have a clear alignment among the goals for instruction, the activities in the classroom, and the assessment of students' knowledge and skill.

This report provides suggestions on how a language arts writing assessment program might be structured to ensure that districts carry out the intent of the state Standards.

The suggestions offered within this report are based on what current research indicates works best in measuring writing. Clearly, there may be differences in writing assessment district to district, and even classroom to classroom within the same building. To the extent that classroom or program assessment approaches differ from what is suggested here, those differences should nevertheless reflect a sound research base.

The report includes

1. A list of the Common Curriculum Goals that relate to writing (keyed to Essential Learning Skills, as appropriate).
2. General implications for assessment.
3. Criteria for differentiating among insufficient, acceptable and ideal assessment practices at the classroom and district levels.
4. Bibliography of writing assessment sources.
5. Sample writing assessment tools and procedures.

### COMMON CURRICULUM GOALS RELATED TO WRITING

The following Common Curriculum Goals, which relate directly to writing skills, may be assessed through procedures suggested later in this report. Other Common Curriculum Goals may also be assessed through writing (note particularly CCG 2.6, 2.16, 2.20, 2.21). However, in order to avoid repetition in these reports, each Common Curriculum Goal appears only once in the area where it is most frequently and easily assessed. Where appropriate, the goals are keyed to relevant Essential Learning Skills, which cut across curriculum areas.

Some procedures and resources are included later in this report which may be helpful in assessing writing skills. It is NOT necessary that these Common Curriculum Goals be individually assessed, nor assessed separately within different content areas. For example, a well-structured direct assessment of writing skills might well meet the assessment requirements for all the Common Curriculum Goals listed here.

Further, districts that are focusing on the Essential Learning Skills may find creative ways to structure assessments which measure skills in more than one curriculum area: writing and reading, for example, or writing and science. This integrative approach is encouraged to the extent that districts find it a natural and logical outgrowth of their preferred assessment procedures; however, it is also perfectly acceptable for districts to assess different curriculum areas separately.

### Common Curriculum Goals (Relevant to Writing)

Students will:

- 2.4 Use a variety of techniques to generate writing and speaking topics (prewriting) (ELS 5.1).
- 2.5 Organize ideas in understandable format in planning written and oral presentations (ELS 5.2).
- 2.7 Select appropriate forms of writing based on audience and purpose in prewriting and planning (ELS 5.3).
- 2.8 Present ideas in understandable sequence on the topic selected in planning and drafting written and oral communications (ELS 5.4).
- 2.10 Recognize, construct and draw inferences concerning relationships among things and ideas in planning and drafting written and oral communications (ELS 6.1).
- 2.11 Evaluate and revise own writing for meaning, clarity and comprehensiveness (ELS 5.6).
- 2.12 Apply the conventions of writing to produce effective communication when editing and proofreading (ELS 5.7).

### IMPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT

The act of writing involves a complex process that can be learned. As students become more skilled in the process, the results of their writing become more polished and sophisticated. It follows that the assessment of student skill in writing ought to focus on both the process of writing and the outcome or product of writing. (For more information about writing as a process, see references in the bibliography.)

For the purpose of assessing student skill in applying the writing process, three stages of writing will be examined--prewriting, drafting, and editing/proofreading. Some authors have identified additional stages; however, these three seem to work well for assessment purposes. In the prewriting stage the focus is on generating (CCG 2.4) and organizing ideas (CCG 2.5). Teachers can assess student ability in these two areas by reviewing students' idea sheets, outlines or idea clusters. Teachers often provide feedback to students prior to engaging in the development of rough drafts. Teachers also assess student ability in this area by observing students as they work alone or in small groups.

In the drafting stage teachers can assess the refinement and organization of ideas (CCG 2.5); the use of an appropriate form of writing based on the audience (CCG 2.7); whether the ideas are presented in an understandable sequence (CCG 2.8); and, where appropriate, the ability to draw inferences about relationships among objects or ideas (CCG 2.10). Teachers can focus on these areas by reviewing the rough drafts and providing frequent written and/or oral feedback when conferencing with a student.

After the editing and proofreading stage the teacher can judge the student's ability to evaluate and revise his/her own writing for meaning, clarity and comprehensiveness (CCG 2.11) and for the conventions of writing (CCG 2.12) by looking at the differences between the rough draft and the final version.

Teachers typically will not review all aspects of a student's writing for each writing assignment. One exercise may focus heavily on organization and sequencing of ideas, whereas the next assignment may focus more heavily on editing conventions. Teacher assessment may also be supplemented with peer- and self-evaluations, especially in the earlier stages of writing. Editing checklists (see appendices) are particularly helpful.

At times only the product of the students' writing will be assessed. When only a product is evaluated, some of the process goals will not be assessed directly (e.g., CCG 2.4 and CCG 2.11). However, if an appropriate system for evaluating the writing is used (see analytical and holistic models in appendix) the other goals can be assessed by examining the final product. A holistic method can be used to assess the papers if it incorporates in the criteria appropriate elements of the Common Curriculum Goals. Similarly, the traits used in an analytical method should be closely aligned to the goals.

## CLASSROOM LEVEL WRITING ASSESSMENT

### Guidelines for Insufficient/Acceptable/Ideal Assessment Practices

The following examples are intended to be illustrative of the procedures and practices teachers might follow in assessing students' writing skills to help make instructional decisions. Note that at the first (INSUFFICIENT) level, the practices followed, while not necessarily inherently wrong, are insufficient to ensure compliance with Standard 602. At the second (ACCEPTABLE) level, the practices extend beyond what is described as INSUFFICIENT, and—though not ideal—are likely to ensure minimal compliance with Standard 602. At the third (IDEAL) level, the practices described are likely to exceed the minimal requirements for compliance, but still be within reach of districts that want the most effective and thorough possible assessment of their students' writing skills. It is hoped that this IDEAL level will serve as a goal for which most districts will aim in practice.

**INSUFFICIENT** Teachers assess writing and writing-related skills through objective tests and short response tests and provide a summary grade which is sent home to parents at the end of the term.

\* \* \* \* \*

**ACCEPTABLE** Teachers assess writing and writing-related skills by reviewing student writing throughout the writing process. Feedback is given to students by the teacher and at times may include self- and

peer-evaluations. Sometimes the feedback may be given on selected aspects of writing rather than the whole piece of writing. Students write in a variety of contexts for a variety of purposes. Although not all student writing needs to be evaluated, students should receive feedback at least eight to ten times a semester.

Teachers grade written exercises, record grades, and provide summary grades which are related to appropriate Common Curriculum Goals and which are sent home to parents at the end of the term.

\* \* \* \* \*

## IDEAL

Teachers regularly review and assess student writing across a variety of topics (many of students' own choosing), intended audiences, genres and purposes; provide oral and written feedback to students based on explicit, well-defined criteria that relate to both process and product; maintain an ongoing profile of student progress (e.g., through a writing folder containing samples of assessed writing); and share results of students' progress in conference with students and parents. In addition, teachers design effective means of integrating assessment and grading which ensure that assessment of writing samples will not provide the sole basis for grades (e.g., participation in classroom activities related to writing may also be critical).

Writing assessment is sometimes integrated with the assessment of reading and speaking skills. Writing and reading are particularly closely integrated, so that reading sometimes serves as a stimulus for writing and skills in both areas can be assessed simultaneously (e.g., by asking students to make predictions, write summaries); and speaking is sometimes used to help assess writing skills (e.g., by asking students to do an oral critique of a written passage).

Assessment includes self-evaluation, and teachers assess not only writing skills per se, but also the various metacognitive strategies which students use in the writing process. Through questionnaires, interviews or other means, teachers also assess students' attitudes about writing, and attempt to determine the extent and nature of writing that students do outside the classroom.

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION

### Guidelines for Insufficient/Acceptable/Ideal Assessment Practices

When evaluating a program, one of the sources of information is student achievement data. In addition, the program philosophy, goals, materials and other characteristics should be reviewed and evaluated. The student achievement data will help to identify where strengths and weaknesses might exist in the current program. The following examples are intended to be illustrative of the procedures and practices districts might follow in assessing student achievement for program evaluation. At the first

(INSUFFICIENT) level, the practices followed, while not necessarily inherently wrong, are insufficient to meet the Standards. At the second (ACCEPTABLE) level, the practices would ensure at least minimal compliance with the Standards. The third level (IDEAL) exceeds minimum compliance but should still be in reach of districts.

**INSUFFICIENT**      The district gives an objective language achievement test, typically part of a standardized achievement battery, for assessment of the district's writing program at specific grade levels.

\* \* \* \* \*

**ACCEPTABLE**      The district administers a direct writing assessment to a sample of students at specified grade levels. While not all students at all grades may be assessed, the sampling is part of a regular assessment cycle in which at least several grade levels participate. Writing samples are scored using an approach (e.g., analytical trait scoring, holistic scoring) which is based on explicit, written performance criteria that aligns with the Common Curriculum Goals. Writing samples are scored by raters who are well-trained in scoring procedures, and the training and scoring are conducted and supervised by qualified personnel. The district may also administer an objective language test to obtain additional data on writing conventions, usage, spelling, etc.

Within reasonable time constraints the assessment procedures reflect a process approach, so that student writers have opportunities to reflect upon writing topics, prewrite, draft, revise and edit final copy.

\* \* \* \* \*

**IDEAL**      The district conducts direct assessment of writing on a regular cycle, in accordance with procedures outlined above (under the Acceptable level). They may also administer an objective language test to obtain additional data on writing conventions, usage, spelling, etc. The results of the direct writing assessment and the language subskills test are correlated to identify discrepancies between the two measures.

The raters who score writing samples are generally classroom teachers, who are trained in the scoring criteria which aligns with the Common Curriculum Goals. The assessment thus not only produces performance data which reflect strengths and weaknesses in students' writing across the district, but also affords teachers the benefits gained through participation as members of an interpretive community.

Assessment procedures reflect a process approach, so that student writers have opportunities to reflect upon writing topics, prewrite, draft, revise, and edit final copy. Students may be given choices among a few topics, and the topics allow for some freedom in developing ideas.

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APPENDIX A  
WRITING ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

## WRITING ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

The following districts and education service districts have been conducting writing assessments and can provide phone consultations and limited written material.

### Analytical Scoring Systems

Beaverton School District  
Carol Meyer (649-0449)

Corvallis School District  
Bill Auty (757-5855)

Lane County ESD  
Marilyn Olson (689-6500)

Multnomah County ESD  
Thelda Bevens (251-7418)

Portland Public Schools  
Evelyn Brzezinski (249-2000)

### Holistic Scoring Systems

Coos County ESD  
Kim Thompson (269-1611)

Douglas County ESD  
Bonnie Nalley (440-4756)

Estacada School District  
Jan Jaqua (630-6871)

Lincoln County School District  
Kathleen Kollasch (265-9211)

Salem-Keizer School District  
Gay Masters (399-3073)

Valley Education Consortium  
Glen Fielding (838-1220 x391)

Washington County ESD  
Greg Thomas (645-4242)  
(Also available as a scoring service)

## INDEPENDENT CONSULTANTS

Thelda Bevens  
12345 SW 121st  
Tigard, OR 97223  
639-8712

Thelda provides training in writing assessment (especially analytical) and use in the classroom and manages Multnomah County's Writing Assessment Program.

Don Blanchard  
Sunset High School  
Beaverton School District  
PO Box 200  
Beaverton, OR 97075  
591-4690

Don provides training in classroom writing assessment, especially using an analytical assessment model.

Sue Blanchard  
16490 SW Brookman Road  
Sherwood, OR 97140  
625-6095

Sue provides training in writing assessment (primarily analytical) and use of assessment in the classroom.

She has led a number of scoring sessions for ESDs and school districts; has been a head reader for the Oregon Writing Assessment and works part-time for Interwest Applied Research (641-2100), who ran Oregon's 1987 Assessment.

Mary Bothwell  
7335 SE 29th Ave.  
Portland, OR 97202  
774-1219

Mary provides training in writing assessment and in the use of writing assessment in the classroom. She was very active in developing Portland Public School's writing assessment program.

Darlene Clarridge  
10602 SE 94th Place  
Portland, OR 97266  
659-2074

Darlene provides training in writing assessment (analytical and holistic) and use of assessment in the classroom. Darlene was formerly with North Clackamas Schools and Multnomah ESD, and was responsible for organizing their writing assessment programs.

Kent Gill  
PO Box 115  
Camp Sherman, OR 97730  
595-2269

Kent is a retired teacher from Davis, California who has published material on the writing process, was involved in the development of the California Writing Assessment Program and was a table leader during their assessment.

He provides training in writing assessment (especially on assessing different modes of writing), including use in the classroom.

Jocelyn Hoffman  
Terra Linda Elementary School  
Beaverton School District  
PO Box 200  
Beaverton, OR 97075  
591-4536

Jocelyn has conducted workshops on writing assessment techniques used in the classroom, especially for elementary teachers.

Berenice Jolliver  
3515 NW View Road  
Vancouver, WA 98685  
(206) 573-6578

Berenice provides training in writing assessment (both holistic and analytical), including use in the classroom.

She is a trainer for Washington County ESD's holistic scoring and has been an analytical assessment scorer.

Vicki Spandel  
8955 NW Torreyview Court  
Portland, OR 97229  
292-9788

Vicki provides training in writing assessment (analytical, holistic and primary trait), including use in the classroom.

She was lead trainer for Oregon's Statewide Writing Assessment in 1985 and 1987, and has provided training to numerous districts on writing assessment.

Rhonda Woodruff  
West Tualatin View Elementary School  
Beaverton School District  
PO Box 200  
Beaverton, OR 97075

Rhonda has conducted workshops on writing assessment techniques used in the classroom, especially for elementary teachers.

Other Written Material Available from  
Oregon Department of Education

1. Cooper, Charles and Brenneman, Beth. Writing Achievement of California Eighth Graders: A First Look, California State Department, 1988.

Provides scales for scoring papers that are autobiographical incidents, evaluative, problem solving, and reporting information. Single copies are available at no charge from Oregon Department of Education, Information Resource Center, 700 Pringle Parkway SE, Salem, OR 97310-0290.

2. Spandel, Vicki. Issues in Writing Assessment, Northwest Evaluation Association, 1987.

Discusses contemporary issues in writing assessment. Single copies are available at no charge from Oregon Department of Education, Information Resource Center, 700 Pringle Parkway SE, Salem, OR 97310-0290.

3. Bramgart, Diane. Measuring Writing Proficiency. A Registered Holistic Scoring Plan, New Jersey Department of Education, 1984.

Provides an example of focused holistic scoring system combined with analytical scoring system. Single copies are available at no charge from Oregon Department of Education, Information Resource Center, 700 Pringle Parkway SE, Salem, OR 97310-0290.

4. Oregon Statewide Writing Assessment: Results and Analysis. Oregon Department of Education, 1987.

Provides example papers illustrating different levels of the analytical scales used in Oregon's Writing Assessment Program. Single copies are available at no charge from Oregon Department of Education, Information Resource Center, 700 Pringle Parkway SE, Salem, OR 97310-0290.

5. Practical Ideas for Teaching Writing As a Process. California State Department of Education, 1987.

Provides instructional activities and assessment tools for a variety of types of writing at all grade levels. Of particular interest is a section on using holistic scoring in the classroom. Copies are available for check-out and review from Oregon Department of Education, Information Resource Center, 700 Pringle Parkway SE, Salem, OR 97310-0290 or may be purchased for \$6.00 from Publication Sales, California Department of Education, PO Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802-0271 (916/445-1260).

6. Writing Assessment Handbook Grade 8 and Grade 12 (two volumes). California State Department of Education, 1988.

Provides a variety of strategies for assessing several different types of writing. Copies are available for check-out and review from Oregon Department of Education, Information Resource Center, 700 Pringle Parkway SE, Salem, OR 97310-0290 or may be purchased for \$10.00 from Publication Sales, California Department of Education, PO Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802-0271 (916/445-1260).

APPENDIX B  
EVALUATING STUDENT WRITING

## Indicating Errors Without Lengthy Comments?

### MAYBE A CHECKLIST

Using a checklist in evaluation has many advantages for teachers and students. Checklists serve to focus attention on specific writing skills and qualities. They can be made to reflect concepts recently taught. And they provide an organized system for offering feedback.

Checklists, generally, are most effective when developed around a specific type of writing, e.g. a descriptive paragraph, business letter, or narrative essay. They should also reflect the needs of the students who will use them.

In the course of instruction, several different checklists may be used; the insert shows that each is as varied as the individual who designed it.

Once a checklist has been developed, teachers may encourage students to use them for self-assessment. Peer editors and evaluators may also find them useful.

Although checklists do not provide a rating or grade, their usefulness indicating strengths and weaknesses definitely contributes to the evaluation process.

**STUDENT CHECKLIST FOR BETTER THEMES**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OF THEME \_\_\_\_\_

Procedure:

1. Examine your theme for each of the following characteristics.
2. Revise it until you feel you cannot improve it further.
3. Initial each statement which you feel describes your work.
4. If you cannot honestly initial a statement, explain why below.
5. Clip this check list to your paper when you turn it in.

My theme has a definite purpose or point.

My title indicates what this point is.

I had certain readers in mind as I wrote.

I arranged ideas in the best order to help the readers understand.

Every fact or detail I gave relates to the point I was trying to make.

Each paragraph contains a clear topic sentence or idea.

I composed my opening sentence to catch the attention of the reader.

In my last sentence I emphasized my purpose or point.

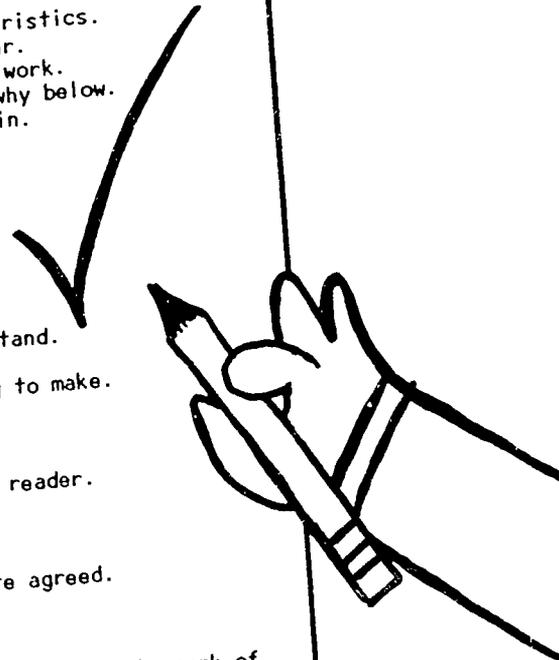
I checked each sentence to see that the subject and predicate agreed.

I provided an unmistakable antecedent for each pronoun.

I began each sentence with a capital letter and ended it with a suitable mark of punctuation.

I can explain why I placed every punctuation mark where I did.

I have read my composition aloud to catch unintentional repetitions and omissions.



## Evening the Odds and Changing the Ration?

### MORE STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Evaluation as it's been discussed so far has been largely teacher-directed and based on a finished product. In order to change the "THEY WRITE - I REACT" 30-1 syndrome to a "THEY REVISE - IT'S IMPROVED - THEN I REACT" plan of operation some of the following strategies might be encouraged.

#### WRITING GROUPS AND HELPING CIRCLES

Writing groups are particularly useful because they provide the writer with a varied audience. Using a peer reaction approach, students write, then share what they've written with a small group. Group members then make comments on total impression or they may react to specifics. Student involvement is encouraged and lines of communication are opened. Frequently, writing in general improves, because comments on one piece of writing may be relevant to other selections. Importantly, students are given an opportunity for rewriting and they have suggestions for doing it.

Groups can be organized in many ways: natural selection, interest or special ability.

They may function with little direction or they can be given specific instruction in critiquing skills (see insert).

Always they should be reminded to be: kind, truthful, attentive and positive as much as possible.

Teachers planning to use groups should be prepared to help them develop. They should also provide time for them to need on a regular basis.

#### TIPS FOR WRITING GROUPS

1. Start with a general reaction, especially if it's positive. Tell why you like it and what's particularly good. Later, you can talk about small points like word choices and phrasing.
2. Don't argue - just discuss. Remember, you can't make change happen - your job is to suggest.
3. Don't talk too much - but don't talk too little. Say what you really feel, but concentrate on your strongest feelings.
4. Be serious in trying to help. Remember, you're a writer too and need good opinions yourself.
5. Listen carefully to the one reading the sample. You can't respond if you haven't really heard.
6. Maybe you should consult a writing checklist to remind you of specific items worth discussing.

#### SELF-EVALUATE

Self-evaluation is important because it asks the writer to consider what he's written before he considers it finished.

But sometimes when we re-read we SEE WHAT WE THINK WE'VE SAID; therefore it's useful if students' attention is focused on specific content or structure.

In general, self-assessment is most successful if the following practices are built-in.

#### Sample Checklist for evaluation of descriptive paragraphs

	YES	NO
1. I describe the way things look, sound smell, taste and feel in my sentences.		
2. I have read my paragraph to someone and he/she knows what I'm describing.		
3. I'm careful not to put too many descriptions into one sentence.		

This type of checklist can be used by both teachers and students after instruction in a specific skill area.

1. Allow for a time lag between the time a student writes and when he self-assesses.
2. Provide a limited checklist of items to be considered (See page 6).
3. Make checklist items as specific as possible.
4. Involve the student in developing the checklist.

Although students will probably never be able to identify all errors themselves, self-assessment is necessary for real change to take place.

#### VERTICAL SHARING

With this approach, older students are paired with younger ones; e.g. fifth graders and first graders.

The pairs work together for an allotted period of time each week with older students serving as tutors, recorders or encouragers.

Generally, younger children like this system because they get to write and read their writing on a regular basis. Naturally, older children enjoy their role as teacher.

#### SHARING PAIRS

Teaming students to work together may be the middle ground between groups and self-assessment.

Pairs may be combined in several ways.

#### PENCIL PALS

Pencil Pal pairs are established to stimulate writing as well as critiquing /rewriting skills. With this approach, two

students of reasonably like ability are paired. They are responsible for exchanging one piece of writing each week.

In order to respond, a student may consult a checklist, follow other criteria or rely on his own feelings.

Once the response is given, the original student writing is revised, taking the "pal's" suggestions into consideration.

#### TEACHER TALK

In addition to formalized methods of reaction, the use of "teacher talk" can be very helpful.

Two easy-to-do activities are:

1. Teacher taped reactions to student's writing--such reaction should be as specific or general as the instructor feels is appropriate.
2. Individual student/teacher conferences, which may; be done at the pre-writing, writing, revising or final evaluation stage.

The final means for reacting to writings which are offered are not so much methods as process suggestions. Perhaps their inclusions with previously mentioned approaches will be valuable.

#### WRITING FOLDERS

Continuous collection and organization of student writings serves many purposes for comprehensive evaluation as well as specific reaction. Both students and teachers may be interested in seeing samples of student work covering a lengthy span of time and effort. Likewise, individual pieces of writing may be resurrected for further or different treatment.

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## A SUMMARY

These limited suggestions and brief descriptions may be helpful in resolving some of the "hows and whys" in evaluating writing.

It might also be good to consider the following underlying principles which often help to hold the evaluation process together.

-  Evaluation should be a continuous process, employing several techniques.
-  Students should clearly understand why and how they're measured.
-  Everything that's written needn't be formally evaluated.
-  Study revision and rewriting must be encouraged and required.
-  Students should become actively involved in the evaluation process.

Finally, saving the most important for last, it *should always be remembered that accurate evaluation depends on appropriate assignments.* No one can measure what isn't there.

Plan a program of evaluation around realistic goals, responsible standards and reasonable tasks.

APPENDIX C  
ANALYTICAL TRAIT  
SCORING MODEL

The analytical trait model provided here is used by the Oregon Department of Education and a number of school districts and education service districts. A report with sample eighth grade papers illustrating the different traits is available from the Assessment Section of the Department of Education. Included in this appendix are the following materials:

- Analytical Rating Guide
- Teacher and Student Directions for Oregon's 1987 Writing Assessment
- Directions used with Lane County Assessment
- Editing Checklists that can be used with assessments
- Procedures used by Beaverton School District to evaluate writing assessment results

# Analytical Rating Guide

## IDEAS AND CONTENT

**5** This paper is clear in purpose and conveys ideas in an interesting, original manner that holds the reader's attention. Clear, relevant examples, anecdotes or details develop and enrich the central idea or ideas.

- The writer seems to be writing what he or she knows, often from experience.
- The writer shows insight--a good sense of the world, people, situations.
- The writer selects supportive, relevant details that keep the main idea(s) in focus.
- Primary and secondary ideas are developed in proportion to their significance; the writing has a sense of balance.
- The writer seems in control of the topic and its development throughout.

**3** The writer's purpose is reasonably clear; however, the overall result may not be especially captivating. Support is less than adequate to fully develop the main idea(s).

- The reader may not be convinced of the writer's knowledge of the topic.
- The writer seems to have considered ideas, but not thought things through all the way.
- Ideas, though reasonably clear and comprehensible, may tend toward the mundane; the reader is not sorry to see the paper end.
- Supporting details tend to be skimpy, general, predictable, or repetitive. Some details seem included by chance, not selected through careful discrimination.
- Writing sometimes lacks balance: e.g., too much attention to minor details, insufficient development of main ideas, informational gaps.
- The writer's control of the topic seems inconsistent or uncertain.

**1** This paper lacks a central idea or purpose--or the central idea can be inferred by the reader only because he or she knows the topic (question asked).

- Information is very limited (e.g., restatement of the prompt, heavy reliance on repetition) or simply unclear altogether.
- Insight is limited or lacking (e.g., details that do not ring true; dependence on platitudes or stereotypes).
- Paper lacks balance; development of ideas is minimal, or there may be a list of random thoughts from which no central theme emerges.
- Writing tends to read like a rote response--merely an effort to get something down on paper.
- The writer does not seem in control of the topic; shorter papers tend to go nowhere, longer papers to wander aimlessly.

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# Analytical Rating Guide

## ORGANIZATION

**5** The writer organizes material in a way that enhances the reader's understanding, or that helps to develop a central idea or theme. The order may be conventional or not, but the sequence is effective and moves the reader through the paper.

- Details seem to fit where they're placed, and the reader is not left with the sense that "something is missing."
- The writer provides a clear sense of beginning and ending, with an inviting introduction and a satisfying conclusion ("satisfying" in the sense that the reader feels the paper has ended at the right spot).
- Transitions work well; the writing shows unity and cohesion, both within paragraphs and as a whole.
- Organization flows so smoothly that the reader doesn't have to think about it.

**3** The writer attempts to organize ideas and details cohesively, but the resulting pattern may be somewhat unclear, ineffective, or awkward. Although the reader can generally follow what's being said, the organizational structure may seem at times to be forced, obvious, incomplete or ineffective.

- The writer seems to have a sense of beginning and ending, but the introduction and/or conclusion tend to be less effective than desired.
- The order may not be a graceful fit with the topic (e.g., a forced conventional pattern, or lack of structure).
- The writer may miss some opportunities for transitions, requiring the reader to make assumptions or inferences.
- Placement or relevance of some details may be questionable (e.g., interruptive information; writer gets to the point in roundabout fashion).
- While some portions of the paper may seem unified (e.g., organization within a given paragraph may be acceptable), cohesion of the whole may be weak.

**1** Organization is haphazard and disjointed. The writing shows little or no sense of progression or direction. Examples, details, or events seem unrelated to any central idea, or may be strung together helter-skelter with no apparent pattern.

- There is no clear sense of a beginning or ending.
- Transitions are very weak or absent altogether.
- Arrangement of details is confusing or illogical.
- There are noticeable information "gaps"; the reader is left dangling, or cannot readily see how the writer got from one point to another.
- The paper lacks unity and solidarity.

# Analytical Rating Guide

## VOICE

- 5** The paper bears the unmistakable stamp of the individual writer. The writer speaks directly to the reader, and seems sincere, candid and committed to the topic. The overall effect is individualistic, expressive and engaging; this paper stands out from the others.
- The paper is honest. There is a real effort to communicate, even when it means taking a risk (e.g., an unexpected approach or revealing of self).
  - The writing is natural and compelling.
  - Tone is appropriate and consistently controlled.
  - The writer's own enthusiasm or interest comes through and brings the topic to life.
  - The reader feels an interaction with the writer, and through the writing, gains a sense of what the writer is like.
- 3** The writer makes an honest effort to deal with the topic, but without a strong sense of personal commitment or involvement. The result is often pleasant or acceptable, yet not striking or compelling in a way that draws the reader in.
- Writer may seem self-conscious or unwilling to take a risk--may seem to be writing what he/she thinks the reader wants.
  - Paper lacks individuality, or the ring of conviction.
  - The writing communicates, but only in a routine, predictable fashion that tends to make it blend in with the efforts of others.
  - Voice may be inconsistent; it may emerge strongly on occasion, only to shift or even disappear altogether.
  - The reader has only an occasional or limited sense of interaction with the writer.
- 1** The writer may not have understood the assignment, or may simply have felt indifferent toward the topic. As a result, no clear voice emerges. The result is flat, lifeless, very mechanical and stilted, or possibly inappropriate.
- The writing has virtually no individual personality or character; there is no identifiable voice behind the words.
  - There is little or no evidence of the writer's involvement in the topic.
  - The reader has no sense that this writer was "writing to be read," and experiences virtually no writer-reader interaction.

# Analytical Rating Guide

## EFFECTIVE WORD CHOICE

**5** The writer consistently selects words that convey the intended message in an interesting, precise and natural way. The result is full and rich, yet concise; every word carries its own weight.

- Words are specific, accurate, and suited to the subject. Imagery is strong.
- Lively, powerful verbs give the writing energy, visual appeal, and clarity.
- Vocabulary may be striking, colorful, or unusual--but the language isn't overdone.
- Expression is fresh and appealing, fun to read. The writer uses cliches or slang sparingly, and only for effect.
- The writer may experiment with uncommon words, or use common words in a delightful way.
- Figurative language, if used, is effective.

**3** The writer's word choice is adequate to convey meaning, but the language is quite ordinary. The writer doesn't seem to be reaching for the "best" way to say something, but often settles for the first word or phrase that comes to mind. The result is a sort of "generic paper" that sounds familiar, routine, or commonplace.

- Language communicates, but without a sense of satisfying fullness or power; the reader has the feeling it could have been written better.
- Though the reader can interpret the meaning quite readily, some words lack precision.
- There may be some attempts at the usual, colorful or difficult, but these often seem overdone or calculated to impress; they don't sound natural.
- Though an occasional phrase may catch the reader's eye, cliches, redundancies and hackneyed phrases pop up with disappointing frequency; there are few surprises or enticing twists.
- Imagery may be weakened by overuse of abstract, general language.

**1** The writer is struggling with a limited vocabulary, often groping for words and phrases to convey meaning. Meaning may be difficult to determine (e.g., the writer says one thing but *seems* to mean another), or else the language is so vague and abstract that only the broadest, most general sorts of messages are conveyed.

- Words tend to be consistently dull, colorless and trite. There is virtually no effort to try what's new.
- Writing is often characterized by monotonous repetition, overwhelming reliance on worn, threadbare expressions, or heavy reliance on the prompt (topic) itself for key words and phrases.
- In some instances, word choice may seem careless, imprecise, or just plain wrong.
- Imagery is very weak or absent; the reader lacks sufficient concrete details to construct any mental picture.

# Analytical Rating Guide

## SENTENCE STRUCTURE

**5** The paper is fluid, and reads easily throughout. It has an easy-on-the-ear flow and rhythm when read aloud. Sentences tend to be mature and sophisticated for grade level, with a strong and varied structure that makes reading enjoyable.

- Sentence structure and punctuation work effectively to convey meaning and to show how ideas relate.
- Writing sounds natural and fluent, with effective word patterns, phrases and combinations that enhance style.
- Writing is appropriately concise, not wordy.
- Varied sentence structure and length add interest.
- Fragments, if used at all, are stylistically effective. They seem right.
- Standard English syntax is used when appropriate.

**3** The paper is understandable, but the sentences tend to be mechanical rather than fluid. Standard English syntax is generally used, but while sentence structure is usually correct, it is not characterized by a natural fluency and grace. Occasional minor flaws or awkward constructions may necessitate re-reading.

- Sentence structure and punctuation sometimes clearly convey meaning and relationships between ideas--and sometimes not. Transitions between sentences may be fuzzy or less fluid than desired.
- The writer shows control with simple sentence structure, and variable control when more complex patterns are attempted.
- Sentence variety (length or structure) tends to be the exception, not the rule.
- Fragments (if used) seem the result of oversight rather than an effort at stylistic effectiveness.
- Sentences may lack energy or effectiveness (e.g., penchant for wordiness, passive structure, repetitious beginnings--"I did this," "I did that").
- Structure may seem halting or self-conscious. It makes little real contribution to style.

**1** The paper is often difficult to understand and difficult to read aloud. Sentences tend to be choppy, incomplete, or so rambling and irregular that it may be hard to tell where one should end and the next begin.

- Sentence structure does not function well to convey meaning or show how ideas relate. Meaning may be difficult to decipher without extensive re-reading or concentration.
- Sentences lack both correctness and fluency; they may seem disjointed, awkward, endlessly meandering, or nonsensical.
- Punctuation frequently seems unrelated to the rhetoric of the sentence; it may be sporadic, out of place, or absent altogether.
- Sentences may tend to follow relentlessly monotonous rhythms or patterns (e.g., subject-verb or subject-verb-object over and over).
- Nonstandard English syntax is common.

# Analytical Rating Guide

## WRITING CONVENTIONS

**5** The writer has a good grasp of standard writing conventions (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, paragraphing). There are no glaring errors. In fact, errors tend to be so minor that reader can easily overlook them unless searching for them specifically.

- Sentence structure and paragraphing tend to be sound.
- Agreement is correct.
- Punctuation is smooth and enhances meaning. (Informalities--use of dashes, contractions--are allowed.)
- Spelling is generally correct.

**3** Errors in writing conventions begin to impair readability. Sentence structure is generally correct on simple sentences, though more complicated patterns may contain such problems as faulty parallelism, inconsistent tense, voice shift (e.g., first to second person), dangling modifiers, or vague pronoun reference.

- Errors may reflect hasty writing or careless attention to detail in editing.
- The reader can follow what's being said overall, but errors in conventions may require the reader to pause or re-read on occasion.

**1** There are so many errors in usage, sentence structure, spelling, and/or punctuation that the paper is hard to understand.

- The student shows very limited understanding of or ability to apply conventions.
- Basic punctuation tends to be omitted, haphazard, or just plain wrong.
- Spelling errors are typically frequent, even on common words.
- Fragments, run-ons, and awkward constructions abound.

# Oregon Statewide Assessment TEST ADMINISTRATOR'S MANUAL

## GRADE 8--WRITING

Thank you for assisting in the 1987 Oregon Statewide Assessment in writing. Before you share the topic with students or ask them to begin writing, please familiarize yourself thoroughly with the procedures and directions in this manual, the Student Instructions and the writing sample booklet. You may also wish to review the Analytical Scoring Guide, which lists the traits and criteria on which the papers will be scored. A copy has been sent to your school's Test Coordinator.

### 1. BACKGROUND

The primary purpose of the Oregon Statewide Assessment is to gather information that will inform educators and policymakers about the status of student achievement in selected grades and curriculum areas. If assessment results show that there is an area in which students statewide perform less well than expected, the Department, working with ESD and school district personnel, will develop appropriate instructional improvement strategies. In addition, local school districts will obtain valuable information about the basic skills achievement of their students and will be able to compare their results with state averages.

Approximately 5,000 eighth graders across the state are taking part in the 1987 statewide writing assessment. These students make up a representative sample of eighth graders, chosen through a specially designed random sampling of schools. Students from rural, urban and suburban districts of all sizes and from all areas of the state are represented in the sample.

Each student is asked to submit a 2-3 page sample of writing, which a team of trained, experienced raters will review and score on six traits: ideas and content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence structure, and Conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.). Each paper will be read by at least two raters.

### 2. SCHEDULING THE ASSESSMENT

Students will write their papers during the weeks of February 16 and February 23, 1987. Exact dates of testing are left to the discretion of the school. Two testing sessions (and sometimes part of a third) are required for the writing test. On the day BEFORE the first session, the writing topic should be introduced to students so that they have time to think about the topic overnight and to discuss it with friends or family if they wish.

The first full testing session should allow students 45 minutes of writing time (NOT including time needed to pass out and collect materials). During this first session, students will write a rough draft, using notebook paper and pens or pencils, as they prefer.

The second full testing session should allow students 60 minutes of writing time (NOT including time needed to pass out and collect materials). Some schools may be able to schedule the full 60 minutes on one day; others will need to divide the 60-minute writing time across two days. During this second session, students will revise, edit, recopy and proofread their drafts, using a special student sample booklet and pens (no pencils).

We realize that scheduling can be difficult when class periods do not extend past 45 minutes. We ask your special assistance and cooperation in allowing students as much writing time as possible under these circumstances.

### 3. WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE?

All students should take part in the writing assessment except a student who:

1. has first enrolled in school in the United States during the 1986-87 school year and does not have sufficient mastery of the English language to read the test items and directions;
2. has a severe physical handicap and is not able to respond to the test except as indicated below; or,
3. is not enrolled in eighth grade classes for academic subjects.

List the names of students excluded from testing, along with the reason for exclusion, on the Student Exclusion and Test Adaptation Form provided.

Students who have a physical or language handicap, or who have difficulty reading the instructions, may still participate by having the school adapt some procedures. Possible adaptations include providing assistance in filling out the writing sample, adjusting the length of time to take the test, translating or reading the instructions, using a computer, typewriter or Braille Writer, or any other adaptation the school deems necessary for a student to understand and respond to the test. Students taking an adapted form of the test will be reported as a separate part of the summary for the school.

List the names of the students for whom the test was adapted on the Student Exclusion and Test Adaptation Form, then paper clip the students' writing samples to the form.

### 4. THE MATERIALS YOU'LL NEED

In addition to this Test Administrator's Manual, you should have the following materials:

- STUDENT DIRECTIONS: one sheet for each student you will be testing.
- STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE BOOKLETS: enough for the number of students you will be testing, plus a few extras.
- A CLASSROOM INFORMATION FORM: one sheet to be filled out by you before returning materials.
- A STUDENT EXCLUSION AND TEST ADAPTATION FORM: one form for recording names of students excluded from testing and students for whom the writing sample was adapted.
- A TEACHER SURVEY: to gather data on how you and your students viewed the assessment process.

You will also need:

- A SUPPLY OF PENS, PENCILS AND LINED PAPER. Although students are expected to bring their own pens, pencils and paper on the days of testing, a supply should be on hand for those who have forgotten. Be sure the pencils are sharpened and have usable erasers. Students will have the option of using pencils or pens for the rough draft. The

final draft must be written in pen only. The lined paper is for rough drafts only; final drafts must be written in the Student Writing Sample Booklets provided.

--A STAPLER for stapling multi-page rough drafts.

--AT LEAST ONE DICTIONARY AND ONE THESAURUS for students who wish to use them. A good rule of thumb is to have one dictionary and thesaurus for every ten students. Other references may be used if they are available to students during normal writing assignments.

## 5. PREPARING FOR THE ASSESSMENT

The following procedures will help make the writing assessment a successful experience for you and your class:

1. Count to make sure you have the proper number of Student Directions and Student Writing Sample Booklets. Notify your school Test Coordinator if you need more.
2. Observe test security measures prior to testing. Keep all materials in locked storage until you are ready to distribute them to students.
3. Minimize the possibility of interruptions by posting a "TESTING--PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB" sign on the door while students are writing.
4. Seat students so that each student has enough room to use the writing booklet comfortably.
5. Give students a chance to ask questions before they write. (See the "Common Questions" section at the end of this manual for answers to some of the questions your students may ask.)
6. Organize all materials prior to the writing sessions. Make sure that you have this manual, Student Directions, and copies of the writing booklets readily at hand. You will need them when giving directions to the students.

## 6. ADMINISTERING THE WRITING SAMPLE

Read the Student Directions carefully before introducing the writing topic or discussing the assessment with students. After you have handed out copies of the Student Directions and allowed students sufficient time to read them, summarize the instructions for students--both on Day 1 (when you introduce the topic), and on the two succeeding days. The directions to the student are intended as a supplement; you **MUST** provide oral instructions. Remember that instructions for each day's activities are a little different, and it is easy for students to become confused about when to write in pen or pencil, when to write on every line or every other line, and so on. Here are the writing activities for each day:

**DAY 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC.** Hand out the Student Direction sheets and answer any questions students might have about why the assessment is being given, how the papers will be scored, and so on. Show students a copy of the Writing Sample Booklet, reminding them that this booklet will be used for final copies only. We ask that prewriting activities **NOT** be conducted as a class activity on this or any other day of the assessment. However, students may independently and individually make any notes or do any prewriting activities they wish on Day 2, just prior to writing their rough drafts. While students are free to discuss the topic with friends or at home, they should not be allowed to start their rough draft and then continue it on Day 2. *All* writing is to be done

during the specified testing sessions. When there are no more questions, collect the Student Directions.

**DAY 2: WRITING THE ROUGH DRAFT.** Be sure that students have cleared their desks before the testing period begins. Hand out the Student Directions and review them as necessary to ensure that students understand what they are being asked to do on this day and what they will do on the next day. Remind students that they should write on every other line today. You may, and should, answer questions, but take care not to use up the students' writing time; students should have a full 45 minutes in which to write.

As noted under Day 1 instructions, students may do any prewriting they wish--outlining, clustering, making notes, and so on--so long as they work *independently*. We ask that students NOT brainstorm together, and that teachers NOT lead class discussions or prewriting activities on the topic. Feel free to clarify anything that is unclear to students about the wording of the topic, but please do not offer any suggestions about how or what to write. First, it is important that we have a chance to measure students' writing skills when they are working on their own without any assistance from instructors or peers. And second, our experience shows that very often, students who are coached--contrary to what one might expect--tend not to do as well. When all the papers from a given class begin the same way or take the same approach to a topic, spontaneity and originality suffer.

After students have been writing for 30 minutes, write on the board that 15 minutes remain. Let students know when 5 minutes remain. When time is up, remind students to write their names in the upper right corner of EACH SHEET of their drafts. Staple multi-page responses so that nothing is lost. Collect the drafts and Student Direction sheets and store them overnight in a secure place.

**DAY 3 (AND DAY 4 IF NEEDED): REVISING AND EDITING THE ROUGH DRAFT, AND RECOPYING AND PROOFREADING.** Be sure that students' desks are cleared before handing out the rough drafts and Student Direction sheets. Then pass out the Student Writing Sample Booklets. Watch as students complete the top part of the forms--filling in their names, your name, the school name and whether they are male or female. **YOU WILL NEED TO TELL STUDENTS THE SCHOOL AND CLASS CODE;** this information is found on the Classroom Information Form.

Be sure that students understand they are to edit and recopy today--NOT continue writing first draft material. Remind them that they may make any changes they wish, including correcting their copy, deleting copy, or adding something new to make the writing clear. But they must allow enough time to recopy their writing sample into the testing booklets. Once again, have pens, dictionary and thesaurus available for students.

Let students know that they will have a TOTAL of 60 minutes in which to revise, edit, recopy and proofread. It is up to you how this 60 minutes is scheduled. For example, you may be able to provide the full 60 minutes on Day 3 if normal class scheduling at your school permits that. Or, you may wish to divide it into blocks of 45 minutes one day and 15 the next, or 30 minutes on two consecutive days. However you divide the time, be sure to collect all student writing materials at the end of each session. Also be sure to let students know during each session (by writing on the board) when 15 minutes remain, and when 5 minutes of writing time remain.

Remind students that they **MUST USE INK** when recopying their writing sample into the test booklet, and that they should write their final draft on every line in the booklet. Students should attempt to make final drafts neat and readable. However, neatness per se will not affect scores. Students may, for instance, cross out a word or insert a forgotten word above the line if that is necessary.

Collect the papers at the end of the allotted time or when all students have finished. What if students finish early? All your students may finish the Day 3 activities even before 45 minutes have elapsed. If so, feel free to collect all papers when all students have finished, and go on to other activities. However, if even one student requires the full 60 minutes, he or she should be allowed to work without noise or disruption from others. If some of your writers (but not all) are likely to finish early, it is wise to prepare a short reading assignment or other quiet activity.

## **7. IRREGULARITIES DURING TESTING**

Circumstances over which there is no control (e.g., power failures, fire drills) may disturb the students. If an interruption occurs during testing, note the time and ask students to stop writing. When normal conditions are restored, resume testing. Interruptions should not reduce the total amount of time students are allowed to complete the writing exercise. All interruptions should be described on the Classroom Information Sheet.

Occasionally an irregularity affecting only one or two individual students may occur (e.g., illness, disruptive behavior). If the irregularity is so serious that you think it will invalidate the student's score, please note the problem on the Classroom Information Sheet. (But be sure to turn in that student's writing sample with the others.)

Make sure you have extra writing booklets on hand. If a student discovers during the course of actual test administration that he or she has a defective writing booklet, give the student a new one.

## **8. CHECKING AND COMPLETING THE WRITING SAMPLE BOOKLETS**

Carefully scan each writing sample booklet to ensure that students have correctly entered all requested information. If any information is missing, incorrect, or incomplete, enter the correct data on the answer booklet. Missing school or class codes make it difficult to guarantee that the reports for every student are sent to the correct location.

## **9. COMPLETING THE CLASSROOM INFORMATION SHEET**

Before returning materials to your school Test Coordinator, you must fill out the Classroom Information Sheet--one for each classroom participating in the assessment.

Fill out the Classroom Information Form as follows:

1. Write your name in the space provided.
2. Write your school name in the space provided.
3. Write your district name in the space provided.
4. Note the school and class code numbers. They have been written in for you. **YOU WILL NEED TO TELL THESE CODES TO STUDENTS SO THEY CAN BE ENTERED ON THE STUDENTS' WRITING SAMPLE FORMS.**
5. Enter the total number of students tested using normal procedures in this group.
6. Enter the total number of students with adapted tests.
7. Enter the total number of students who were absent from the test.

8. Enter the total number of students excluded from the test for other reasons.
9. In the Notes and Comments section, describe any irregularities that may have affected the scores of your students (e.g., a fire drill or power failure). If only a few students were affected, identify them by name.

## 10. RETURNING YOUR MATERIALS

When you are certain that all student writing booklets have been completed correctly, and when you have filled out the Classroom Information Sheet and Student Exclusion and Test Adaptation Form (if that form is necessary), submit the following rubber banded or paper-clipped (depending on thickness) packet to your school Test Coordinator:

- a completed Classroom Information Sheet,
- a completed Student Exclusion and Test Adaptation Form, if necessary, and
- a final draft writing booklet for every student tested.

You should also complete the Teacher Survey included with your materials. However, this should be returned directly to the Oregon Department of Education in the preaddressed, postage-paid envelope that accompanied the survey; it should not be sent back with the test materials.

## 11. SOME COMMON QUESTIONS

This section is intended to provide you with some guidelines for answering common questions that may arise when you introduce students to the writing topic or assessment procedures. This information is for you, and is not necessarily meant to be read aloud. There is no need to "overload" students with extra information if these questions do not come up. But in case they do, we hope this information will help you.

### A. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE WORD "OBJECT" IN THE WRITING TOPIC?

The object is intended to be interpreted as a thing, an article, a tangible something or other--anything at all--that holds some meaning or importance for the writer. Students who interpret the word loosely to include animals, people, concepts or ideas will NOT be scored down for this, nor will their papers be marked "off topic." It is our primary purpose to assess the quality of the writing, not to measure students' skill in following directions or interpreting the writing prompt (topic) correctly. The student who writes on something (*whatever* it is) that he or she cares deeply about will stand a good chance of scoring well, regardless of what the "object" may be.

### B. WHY CAN'T STUDENTS WRITE POEMS?

Our Analytical Scoring Guide is designed for use with various prose forms: essays, narratives, letters, and so on. Like drama, poetry is a special form of writing that demands special criteria if it is to be scored fairly. Traits like Organization and Sentence Structure, for example, cannot be reasonably applied to poetry; the scores would simply have no meaning.

### C. IS THIS A TEST?

The answer to this question depends on how you define the word "test." In writing assessment, there are no right or wrong answers. And for this assessment, there is no passing score. So in that sense, this is not a test. But if you define test as any measure that

looks systematically at students' performance, then the answer is yes--the writing assessment is a test in that sense. Remember, the purpose of the assessment is to identify the primary strengths and weaknesses in eighth grade students' writing, and to make that information available to teachers and other educators for their use in designing instruction.

#### D. DOES HANDWRITING COUNT?

We hope that students will write as neatly and legibly as they can, and that their handwriting will be large and dark enough to read easily. Neatness and legible handwriting make the student's paper easier to score, but do not directly affect scores in any way whatsoever. Handwriting is NOT scored under the trait of Conventions or under any other trait. Similarly, a student who misspells a word, crosses it out, and rewrites the word correctly above the original or in the margin will not receive a lower score.

#### E. HOW ARE THE PAPERS SCORED?

Every student writing sample is judged on six important traits: Ideas and Content, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Structure, and Conventions. The criteria for scoring these six traits are outlined on the Analytical Scoring Guide which has been provided to your school's Test Coordinator. Every paper is read twice, by raters who work independently; the second rater has no idea what scores are assigned by the first rater. The raters who score the papers are part of a highly experienced professional team, and receive rigorous training in order to qualify for this task. Their performance is carefully monitored throughout scoring to ensure that it is of consistently high caliber.

Each rater assigns a separate score for each of the six traits; thus a paper receives 12 scores altogether (two raters times six traits). Scores on each of the six traits range from 1(low) to 5 (high) at half point intervals: 1, 1.5, 2, and so on. Papers which receive widely different scores are rerated. The reports you receive from the assessment will provide you with the scores of both raters on each of the six traits.

#### F. DO WE HAVE TO TURN IN ROUGH DRAFTS?

A small number of schools have been asked to submit rough drafts so that sometime in the future, the nature of students' revision can be more thoroughly examined. However, *unless you received special instructions to do so*, you should not turn in any rough drafts, notes, etc.

#### G. HOW DOES LENGTH AFFECT SCORES?

Ideally, we would like to see each participating student write from one to two pages because that amount of copy, we've found from experience, allows a rater to render a fair judgment about performance within a reasonable amount of time that can be allotted to review each paper. At the same time, we do not want length to be the primary consideration for either students or reviewers. What counts is how *well* the student writes--not how much.

A student may write a good deal less than two pages and still receive high scores if he or she handles the material well. *Extremely* short papers (a single sentence, for example) are not scored, however, because there is no way to fairly judge such things as organization, content or sentence structure when raters have only a line or two of writing on which to base their judgment. Such papers are coded as being too short and left unscored. Generally, there are very few papers in a given sample that are so short as to be unscorable.

At the same time, it has been our experience that students who write rather long papers *usually* do not score as highly as students whose writing is more concise and controlled. This is not because length in itself is bad, but rather because only a few students at eighth grade level seem able to sustain high quality, well controlled writing for more than a few pages. Students are certainly not automatically scored down for writing longer pieces, but they should be aware that length in and of itself will not contribute to higher scores. (If students do need additional space to complete their sample, they may write on the unlined back of the Student Writing Sample Booklet.)

**THANK YOU!**

A VERY SPECIAL THANKS to you for your cooperation and assistance. We greatly appreciate your involvement; the quality of the Oregon Statewide Assessment will be better because of it.

# Oregon Statewide Writing Assessment

## STUDENT DIRECTIONS

The following directions tell you how to produce your writing sample for the Oregon Statewide Assessment in writing. Read them carefully, and ask your teacher if you have any questions or find any part of them unclear.

### DAY 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

Starting tomorrow, you will be participating in an activity called a writing assessment. The word "assessment" means that your writing will be reviewed by specially trained teachers who will *assess* the strengths and weaknesses in each paper. There is no "passing" score, and there are no right or wrong answers. We expect each paper to be a little different from the others even though all the eighth graders who take part in the assessment write on the same topic. The scores you get back will tell you what particular writing strengths *your* paper has, and where there is the most need for improvement.

Today, we will give you a writing topic that you can think about overnight. You will do all your writing here in the classroom, but you are free to talk over the topic with friends or family. Here is the topic you will write on tomorrow:

*Write about an object that is important to you, something that has become part of your life or reminds you of a person, place or time that you like to remember.*

You may write your response as a letter, story, essay or any other form of **PROSE** you choose (but **NO POEMS**, please).

Tomorrow, you will be asked to complete a rough draft. On the following day, you will be asked to revise your rough draft, making any changes you wish. You will also be asked to recopy your sample onto a special form and to proofread what you've written. Only the final draft of your paper will be scored.

You do NOT have to study anything to prepare for the writing assessment. But you should spend some time thinking about the topic, and if you wish to discuss it with someone else, that is fine. Because we will be making judgments based on the results of this assessment about the writing skills of all eighth grade students in Oregon, it is important that you do your best writing.

### DAY 2: WRITING THE ROUGH DRAFT

Today you are going to spend 45 minutes writing your rough draft on the topic shown above. You should write in pencil or pen (your choice) on regular notebook paper, on one side of the page only. Please write only on EVERY OTHER LINE of the paper, so that you have room to revise your work later. Put your name in the upper right corner of *each page* of your rough draft.

Keep in mind that one mark of a good writer is the ability to be concise--that is, to express ideas clearly and completely without using unnecessary words. We ask that you do your best to make your FINAL writing sample no longer than two or three pages. Because your rough draft is to be written on every other line, it may be somewhat longer than this. But when you write your final version in the Student Writing Sample Booklet, you'll write on every line and you'll need to make certain the sample will fit in the writing booklet.

Your teacher will show you a copy of the writing booklet so you can see how much space you have to write your final copy.

At the end of the period, your teacher will collect your rough draft. Tomorrow, you will get this draft back, and you will have about sixty minutes to revise, edit and recopy what you have written. For the students in some Oregon schools, this will mean one class period. For others, it may mean one whole class period plus part of another.

### **DAY 3: REVISING AND EDITING THE ROUGH DRAFT, AND RECOPYING AND PROOFREADING THE FINAL DRAFT**

Today you should revise and edit the rough draft that you wrote yesterday. You may use a dictionary or thesaurus whenever you wish. Feel free to use a pen or pencil for revising and editing, and to make as many changes or corrections on your rough copy as you wish. As you revise and edit, be sure that you have

1. Stated your ideas clearly.
2. Stayed on the topic.
3. Chosen the best words and phrases to get your ideas across.
4. Organized your ideas so that they are clear and easy to follow.
5. Developed a good beginning and ending for your paper.
6. Used correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, and capitalization.
7. Written something that really shows *how you think and feel about the topic*.

These seven points will all be looked at in scoring your writing.

Your teacher will give you a Student Writing Sample form at the beginning of the period. You will write your final copy in this booklet. Take time right now to print your name and your teacher's name, check "M" or "F" to show whether you are male or female, and write your grade level (probably 8) in the spaces provided at the top of the test booklet. Your teacher will tell you a "school code" and a "class code"; you should write those in the appropriate boxes as well. Once you've completed the information at the top of the form, you can begin to revise, edit and recopy your sample.

You know how fast you write, so you'll be the one to decide how much time to leave before the period ends to recopy and proofread the revised rough draft. **TRY TO LEAVE TIME TO READ OVER YOUR FINAL COPY AT LEAST ONCE BEFORE YOU HAND IT IN.**

Please use a PEN, not a pencil, to copy your final draft into the writing sample booklet. Remember, unlike when you wrote on every other line for your rough draft, you should write on every line for this final copy

As you are recopying, make any last-minute changes that you wish. Refer to a dictionary or thesaurus as many times as you need to. If necessary, you may cross out or add words on the final copy. But you should **NOT** be adding much new writing to your draft at this time--just copying what you've already written. After you have finished recopying your work, proofread it one last time. Remember, if your class period is less than 60 minutes long, your teacher will give you a little extra time tomorrow (if anyone needs it) to finish recopying.

Your scores on this writing sample will be returned to you before the end of the school year. Thank you for sharing a sample of your writing with us

TOPIC SHEET  
LANE COUNTY WRITING ASSESSMENT  
October 1987

TOPIC: Write about an object that is important to you. It could be an object that you found, that was given to you, that you made, that you bought -any item that you value highly. Explain how this object came into your life and why it is particularly meaningful to you now.

YOUR PAPER MAY BE SELECTED FOR PUBLICATION IN A COLLECTION OF STUDENT WRITING. YOUR PAPER WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION.

Day 2

ROUGH DRAFT

Today, you are going to spend 45 minutes writing your rough draft on the topic given above.

This is the same topic I gave you yesterday. You may write in pencil or pen, on one side of the page only. Please write on every other line of the paper, so that you have room to revise your work later. Remember, you may write as much as you like within the 45-minute period. It is important that you do your best writing.

At the end of 45 minutes, I will collect your rough draft.

Tomorrow, you will have 45 minutes to revise and edit your rough draft.

Please provide the information requested at the bottom of this page. Your ID# will be assigned when you write your final draft.

After you complete the form, you may begin your rough draft.

Day 3

REVISING

Today, you will have 45 minutes to revise and edit your rough draft. You may use pencil or pen, and may make as many marks or corrections on your rough draft as you wish. As you revise, be sure that you have:

1. Stated your ideas clearly.
2. Stayed on the topic.
3. Chosen the best words and phrases to get your ideas across.
4. Organized your ideas well, so your paper is clear and easy to follow.
5. Written complete sentences.
6. Used correct spelling, punctuation, grammar and capitalization.
7. Written something that really shows how you think and feel about the topic.

Day 4

RECOPYING AND PROOFREADING

Today, you will have 45 minutes to recopy and proofread the revised rough draft you worked on yesterday. Please use a pen--not a pencil --to copy your final draft on the paper provided. Write only on one side of the paper. Take your time and work neatly. Make your handwriting or printing as clear and easy to read as you can. As you are copying, you may make last-minute changes if you wish, and you may still refer to the dictionary or thesaurus if you need to. However, do not spend so much time making changes that you do not have time to recopy everything. If necessary, you may cross out a word or words on your final copy.

Do not write your name on the final copy. Please write the ID# that appears on your final draft in the space provided on the form below.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ID# \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE LEVEL \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT \_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## EDITING CHECKLIST

For each comment you AGREE with, put an X in the blank.

### IDEAS AND CONTENT

- Generally, I wrote the paper I wanted to write; I'd rather revise this one than start over.
- My paper makes a point or tells a story.
- I "feel" what I'm writing; I know what I'm talking about.

### ORGANIZATION

- The paper begins in a good spot; it grabs your attention.
- A reader can "picture" what I'm talking about.
- I've linked things together; there are not big "gaps" where I'll have to explain what happened, and no places where things seem out of order.
- The paper ends at the right spot; it doesn't come crashing to a halt; but it doesn't drag on too long, either.

### VOICE

- I like what I've written.
- This sounds like me—or some part of me.
- The way I feel about this topic comes through.
- The paper is convincing.

### WORDS

- I've used strong verbs to give my writing energy: *flail, provoke, squash, roust, meander, tantalize, stash, flout, quiver, mince, sneer, stultify*, and so on—it isn't all *is, are, was were*.
- I've talked about specific things you can picture: *poodle, Volkswagen, cliff, hummingbird, toenail, dagger, daffodil, grin, snowflake, shrew, cowboy, rocking horse, viola . . . etc.*
- My words are direct. I don't hesitate or muddle around. I say it.
- Sometimes I've tried saying something in a new or different way; I've had fun with the writing.

## SENTENCES

- My sentences make sense.
- My sentences aren't all the same length, and they don't all start the same way.
- I've read my paper out loud and I like the way it sounds. It's smooth.

## CONVENTIONS

- This paper would be easy for a total stranger to pick up and read.

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## GUIDE TO REVISION

### IDEAS AND CONTENT

- My paper has a clear purpose or makes a point.
- I use clear, relevant details and examples to help the reader understand my message.
- I stick to the main idea (or ideas) and leave out details that do not matter.
- I have thought about my topic carefully and feel as if I know what I'm talking about.

### ORGANIZATION

- The way I've started my paper is effective; it would make the reader want to keep reading.
- I've told things in an order that makes sense and makes it easy to follow what I'm saying.
- The details in my paper go together or lead up to some bigger idea, main point, or conclusion.
- My paper ends well; it doesn't just stop suddenly, but it doesn't drag on too long either.

### VOICE

- I've written in a way that show how I really think and feel about this topic.
- I like what I've written; it's fun to read.
- I've put something of myself into this paper and it sounds like me--not like someone else.
- I've given some thought to what the reader will think and feel when reading this.

### WORD CHOICE

- It's easy to picture what I'm talking about; the words paint a picture in the reader's mind.
- I wasn't satisfied with words or phrases I've heard many times before; I have tried to find my own way to say things.
- My writing sounds natural; it sounds like me.
- Sometimes I've tried saying something in a new or different way; I've had fun with the language.

## SENTENCES

- ( ) My sentences make sense; the meaning of each one is clear and there are no words left out.
- ( ) My sentences have variety; some are longer than others and they do not all begin the same way.
- ( ) I've read my paper over and I like the way it sounds; it's smooth and easy to read.

## CONVENTIONS

- ( ) I've proofread my paper and corrected any errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar.
- ( ) My paragraphs begin in the right spots.
- ( ) I've used capital letters to begin sentences and on all proper nouns (names of persons, places or things).
- ( ) Correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, capitalization and paragraphing would make this paper easy for anyone to pick up and read out aloud.

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# ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL WRITING ASSESSMENT DATA

## WORKSHEET A IDENTIFICATION OF EXPECTATIONS

The purpose of this worksheet is to generate dialogue between administrators and teachers about their expectations of student performance in the upcoming 1986 Writing Assessment. The principal will select the individuals to be involved, including teachers at the grade level(s) selected to test. The completed worksheet should be retained at the school to be used during the interpretive process which will follow distribution of the Writing Assessment school reports in April. The information recorded below will then permit administrators and teachers to compare their expectations with actual student performance in their school.

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE LEVEL: \_\_\_\_\_

Prior to responding to the questions on this form, carefully read the "Beaverton Analytical Trait Writing Assessment Model" (Revised 12/17/85) to familiarize yourself with the traits and their descriptors. Understanding the traits and the identified criteria for "5," "3," and "1" for each trait is critical for making informed predictions.

- I. For each of the six Beaverton Analytical Traits listed, check the box which best describes the degree of instructional emphasis at the grade level to be tested.

### Degree of Instruction Emphasis

Analytical Traits	No Instruction	Introduction	Emphasis	Maintenance
Ideas/Content				
Organization				
Voice				
Effective Word Choice				
Syntax/Sentence Structure				
Writing Conventions				

over . . .

II. Considering the grade level to be tested, check the box for each trait which best describes your expectations regarding student performance.

Performance Expectations

Analytical Traits	Relatively High for Most Students	Relatively Low for Most Students	Very Mixed Pattern
Ideas/Content			
Organization			
Voice			
Effective Word Choice			
Syntax/Sentence Structure			
Writing Conventions			

III. Based upon the information recorded in the above charts and the criteria for a "3" for each trait, fill in each box with the percentage of students that you predict will score at "3" or above. (Only one topic per school is administered at the elementary level.)

Percentage Predicted to Score at "3" or Above

Analytical Traits	Narrative Topic	Expository Topic
Ideas/Content	%	%
Organization	%	%
Voice	%	%
Effective Word Choice	%	%
Syntax/Sentence Structure	%	%
Writing Conventions	%	%

RETAIN THIS SHEET TO USE DURING THE DATA INTERPRETIVE PROCESS IN APRIL

ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL WRITING ASSESSMENT DATA  
WORKSHEET B  
COMPARISON OF EXPECTATIONS AND PERFORMANCE

Prior to beginning the review process, carefully read the "Beaverton Analytical Trait Writing Assessment Model, Revised 3/4/86" (copy included) to familiarize yourself with the traits and their descriptors. Understanding the traits and the identified criteria for "5," "3," and "1" for each trait is critical for making informed judgments based upon the data.

- I. Complete this step by referring to your completed Worksheet A (Section II) or the alternative form you used. The six Beaverton analytical traits are listed below.
- A. On which traits did you expect relatively higher performance? Place an "H" on the line before each of those traits.
- B. On which traits did you expect relatively lower performance? Place an "L" on the line before each of those traits.

<input type="checkbox"/> Ideas/Content	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective Word Choice
<input type="checkbox"/> Organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Syntax/Sentence Structure
<input type="checkbox"/> Voice	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing Conventions

- II. Review your Aggregated Rating Distribution and Aggregated Writing Averages in the "School Data" section of this notebook. These reports summarize the performance for all classes in your school involved in the assessment at the specified grade level. The averages and the percentages of students receiving each possible rating reveal the relative strengths and weaknesses by trait.

- A. Did the students perform relatively higher on those traits labeled with an "H" in section I. above?

Yes

No     Identify the trait(s) and note possible explanations.

- B. Did the students perform relatively lower on those traits labeled with an "L" in section I. above?

Yes

No     Identify the trait(s) and note possible explanations.

III. Compare the predictions you made in Section III of Worksheet A with the results which appear on your Aggregated Rating Distribution (School Data). Complete the chart below to indicate whether your students' performance matched, exceeded or did not meet your expectations. Place an "X" in the appropriate box for each trait.

ANALYTICAL TRAIT	MATCHED EXPECTATIONS	EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS	DID NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS
1. Ideas/Content			
2. Organization			
3. Voice			
4. Effective Word Choice			
5. Syntax/Sentence Structure			
6. Writing Conventions			

IV. Based upon the traits identified in Section III where performance matched or exceeded your expectations, please respond to the following questions.

A. To what do you attribute performance on these traits?

B. What are your recommendations relative to these traits?

V. Based upon the traits identified in Section III where performance did not meet your expectations, please respond to the following questions.

A. To what do you attribute performance on these traits?

B. What are your recommendations relative to these traits?

## ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL WRITING ASSESSMENT DATA

### WORKSHEET C SCHOOL AND DISTRICT COMPARISONS

After reviewing the School/District Aggregated Rating Distribution and School/District Aggregated Writing Averages in the "District Data" section of this notebook, respond to the following questions about the comparisons between your school data and the district data.

I. The six Beaverton analytical traits are listed below.

- A. On which traits was performance of your students similar to performance of other students at that grade level in the district? Place an "S" on the line before each of those traits.
- B. On which traits was performance of your students different than the performance of other students at that grade level in the district? Place a "D" on the line before each of those traits.

\_\_\_ Ideas/Content

\_\_\_ Effective Word Choice

\_\_\_ Organization

\_\_\_ Syntax/Sentence Structure

\_\_\_ Voice

\_\_\_ Writing Conventions

II. Considering the traits labeled with an "S" in Section I above, please respond to the following questions.

- A. To what do you attribute the similarity in performance between your students and other students in the district at the same grade level?

- B. Based upon these similarities, do you have any recommendations relative to those traits in addition to those which you identified on Worksheet B (Sections IV and V)? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, please specify.

III. Considering the traits labeled with a "D" in Section I above, please respond to the following questions.

- A. To what do you attribute the difference in performance between your students and other students in the district at the same grade level?

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B. Based upon these differences, do you have any recommendations relative to those traits in addition to those which you identified on Worksheet B (Sections IV and V)? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, please specify.

ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL WRITING ASSESSMENT DATA

WORKSHEET D  
DOCUMENTATION FOR INTERPRETATION OF FUTURE WRITING ASSESSMENT DATA

As you continue or begin to implement changes in your writing instructional program, you are encouraged to document both the change and the related desired effect. By doing this you can review future writing assessment data to determine if the desired effect was achieved. This will provide valuable information as you continue to monitor and adjust your writing instructional program.

CHANGE IN WRITING INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	DESIRED EFFECT RELATED TO CHANGE IN WRITING PROGRAM	DATE OF FUTURE WRITING ASSESSMENT	REVIEW OF FUTURE WRITING ASSESSMENT DATA TO DETERMINE IF THE DESIRED EFFECT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED
<p style="text-align: center;">40</p>				<p style="text-align: center;">40</p>

C-29

40

40

APPENDIX D  
HOLISTIC SCORING MODEL

The materials provided in this appendix describe writing assessment procedures and holistic scoring methods used in Salem-Keizer and Estacada School Districts.

## SETTING THE STANDARDS FOR MSO RANGE FINDING

For each group of papers scored in a holistic manner, it is necessary to identify papers which represent a score or range of scores.

District standards at each level (1, 2, 3, 4) have been established. These standards are then applied to each new topic and set of papers. The district standards are cited below.

Possible scores:

- 4 A superior response to the topic. Though it may have occasional faults, the essay will be well organized, contain transitional devices and be generally well written. It will show command of the vocabulary used, correct usage, correct punctuation, few spelling errors, and legible handwriting. The papers will probably not be perfect, but will contain errors which are easily corrected.
- 3 This score is appropriate for a competent paper; it responds well to the topic, but may not fully develop each component. It may not be as clearly organized or a fully developed as the superior paper. It may contain more mechanical problems than a paper rated "4."
- 2 This score is appropriately used for papers which show some promise but contain frequent errors. The errors demonstrate a lack of skill in written composition. On occasion the papers may show some promise, but the writing is not competent when considered as a whole. A paper containing frequent errors in usage, punctuation and other conventions of written language should receive this score.
- 1 This score is to be used for papers showing little control of the topic or suggest incompetence in written composition. Papers which ramble or completely miss the topic will also receive this score.

A group are brought together to establish the range finders for each new topic and/or group of papers.

At that time, each participant selects a candidate for a 1, 2, 3 and 4. These papers are then scored by all of the readers. The papers which receive the highest correlations (most number agreeing) are used as the range finders.

**MSO WRITING**  
**March 1985**

**SCORING PROCESS**

All papers will be scored on a 1-4 scale. They will be scored by two readers. The two scores will be totaled. When the scores on a paper are more than 1 point apart, the paper will be considered a DISPUTE and will be read by a third reader. The third reader will independently decide whether the disputed paper is a pass or fail and give it a score. This score will then be added to the score given by the original reader who selected the score on the same side of the pass/fail line. This becomes the total score. The unused score will be considered void and will not be counted.

The basic issue in the dispute is whether the paper is a pass or failure. The third reader will make this decision based on the original standards set by the range finders.

**INDIVIDUAL SCORES:**

FAIL		PASS	
1	2	3	4

**TOTAL SCORES:**

FAIL			PASS			
2	3	4	5	6	7	8

A student must have a total of 5 or more to pass.

**POSSIBLE SCORES:**

Reader #1	Reader #2	Total	Result	Reason
1	1	2	FAIL	Less than 5
1	2	3	FAIL	Less than 5
1	3		DISPUTE	More than 1 point difference
1	4		DISPUTE	More than 1 point difference
2	1	3	FAIL	Less than 5
2	2	4	FAIL	Less than 5
2	3	5	PASS	Meets criteria
2	4		DISPUTE	More than 1 point difference
3	1		DISPUTE	More than 1 point difference
3	2	5	PASS	Meets criteria
3	3	6	PASS	Meets criteria
3	4	7	PASS	Meets criteria
4	1		DISPUTE	More than 1 point difference
4	2		DISPUTE	More than 1 point difference
4	3	7	PASS	Meets criteria
4	4	8	PASS	Meets criteria

TEACHER DIRECTIONS  
MINIMUM SKILLS OBJECTIVES TEST  
GRADE 8  
DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE TEST

1. Make sure you have a copy of the STUDENT DIRECTIONS for yourself and a copy for each student.
2. Familiarize yourself with the STUDENT DIRECTIONS.
3. Read the STUDENT DIRECTIONS aloud to the students as they follow along.
4. Please collect student rough draft papers at the end of the first testing period. This is not a homework task.
5. At the beginning of the second testing period, return papers to students. Urge them to stick with their original topic choice in writing their final drafts.
6. Make sure that students have their names on the final draft. UNIDENTIFIED PAPERS WILL NOT BE SCORED.

STUDENT DIRECTIONS  
MINIMUM SKILLS OBJECTIVE TEST  
WRITING - GRADE 8  
INFORMATION, DIRECTION AND ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

You are now going to take the District Minimum Skills Objective Test in Writing. The test is designed to meet the following district objective:

*The student shows the ability to maintain a point of view by writing a paper of at least four paragraphs, including an introduction and conclusion in which the student's thesis is consistently and clearly developed (using rank, space, chronology, or comparison). Capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and language usage must be accurate.*

The purpose for testing is to establish whether or not you have the ability to write a four paragraph paper. If you do not pass this test, you need to continue to take classes which are designed to help you develop this skill.

Your paper will be scored by a group of English teachers. The scores will range from 2 to 8. You must receive a score of 5 or better to pass. Your teacher can explain the scoring system to you.

THE TEST:

1. You will have two class periods to complete this assignment. Use the first period to write your rough draft. Use the second class period to edit and polish your paper. Rough drafts will be collected at the end of the first testing period and returned to you at the beginning of the second.
2. If you should leave the room, your paper will be collected. When you return, your paper will be given back to you.
3. You may use a dictionary or thesaurus.

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ESTACADA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
WRITTEN COMPOSITION ASSESSMENT

STUDENT'S DIRECTIONS  
(Grades 3-5)

PART I: Rough Draft Directions

Today you are going to spend up to 45 minutes writing your rough draft on the assigned topic. Consider the ideas that you wrote down yesterday. You are to write in pencil on one side of the page only. Please write only on every other line of the paper, so that you have room to revise your work later. Print your name at the top of the page.

Keep in mind that one mark of a good writer is being able to express ideas clearly and completely without using unneeded words. Longer papers will not automatically be scored higher. It is important that you do your best writing.

At the end of 45 minutes, I will collect your rough draft. Tomorrow you will have 45 minutes to revise and edit your rough draft. You may begin now.

PART II: Revision Directions

Today you will have 45 minutes to revise and edit your rough draft. Use pencil. You may make as many marks or corrections on your rough draft as you wish. When you look over your rough draft, ask yourself these questions:

1. What did I say? Are my ideas clear?
2. Does my paper have a beginning, middle and end?
3. Did I choose the best words?
4. Did I use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar?
5. Is my paper easy to read?
6. Does my paper show that I cared enough to do my best?

PART III: Recopying and Proofreading Directions

Today you will have 45 minutes to recopy and proofread the revised rough draft you worked on yesterday. Please use a pencil or pen to copy your final draft. Grades 1-4 must use pencil. Grades 5-8 may use either pencil or pen. Grades 9-12 must use pen. Do not skip lines. Take your time and work neatly. Make your handwriting as clear and easy to read as you can. As you are copying, you may make last minute changes if you wish and you may still refer to the dictionary if you need to. However, do not spend so much time making changes that you do not have time to recopy everything. If necessary, you may cross out a word or words on your final copy. Do not write your name on the final copy. Make sure your topic page (the one that has your special identification number of it) is stapled on top of your final draft when you hand your paper to your teacher.

ESTACADA SCHOOL DISTRICT #108  
WRITING ASSESSMENT

WHAT THE ESTACADA SCHOOL DISTRICT HOPES TO GAIN FROM ASSESSING STUDENT WRITING:

1. To get some sense of whether our students are progressing satisfactorily in written composition. (Can students take themselves through the writing process independently? How many students do we feel are "tending toward competency" in their writing?)
2. To give training to teachers about the assessment of writing.
3. To provide an opportunity for teachers and administrators to reflect and dialogue about student writing and as a scoring team to make recommendations about the teaching and assessing of written composition in the school district.
4. To give students, teachers, administrators, and board appropriate information about the results of the written composition assessment. (Each gets a different report.)

SCORING METHOD: CRITERION-REFERENCED HOLISTIC SCORING

This scoring method is based on the evaluation method used by the California Testing Service when it assesses the CBEST. It is an attempt to combine elements of holistic and analytical scoring.

In holistic scoring, we score papers with one score based on our impression of the paper as a whole. In analytical scoring we assess papers by considering different writing traits. We give each trait a separate score. Holistic scoring is more or less a rank ordering of papers. Analytical provides much more specific information about the composition strengths and weaknesses of individual papers and of groups of students. In criterion-referenced holistic scoring, papers are given only one score, but this score is based on how the paper compared to the standards or identified criteria and therefore we assume that it is not a rank ordering.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODEL:

Because the Estacada School District wishes to assess every student, an analytical scoring model has been ruled out as costs for that type of scoring are roughly \$3.15 per paper. Holistic is a more economical way to assess writing and while most of the specific data about the writing strengths and weaknesses are lost, it has been chosen because we believe it is far better than no assessment at all. We are working very hard on ways to get more benefits from this type of assessment.

From the beginning of our interest in assessment five years ago, we have relied on training from Vicki Spandel, the Northwest Regional Lab and Dr. Marjorie Kirrie, PSU ret., the CBEST training and the Beaverton Analytical Model for guidance in designing our own assessment. We believe that when people assess writing, they do it with greater expertise if they have some definite criteria in mind. We have adjusted the Beaverton scale and thus the descriptive language of some of the traits, to reflect our need for a four-point scale and to incorporate elements of our district curriculum guide. As will be noted, we regrouped some of the Beaverton traits to form just four main criteria.

The Estacada Assessment Model uses a four-point scale to judge papers. The first question we ask ourselves about a paper is this: Taking the four judging criteria into account, does this paper tend toward competency or toward incompetency? If the paper gives the scorer the impression of competency, then he/she must decide whether it fits the description of a four or a three paper. If the paper tends towards incompetence, then the scorer must decide if it has the characteristics of a one or a two paper.

#### PRACTICES THAT ENHANCE THE ESTACADA ASSESSMENT:

1. Each of the three scoring teams (range finder, elementary and secondary) publish their insights regarding the strengths and weaknesses of each grade level's papers.
2. Scoring teams are asked to formulate recommendations regarding the teaching of writing, necessary inservice, etc. They are encouraged to help refine the scoring procedure. All recommendations are published.
3. A perception survey was taken this year. Teachers were asked to note "surprise" scores. The following requests were given: "Based on your knowledge of your students' writing accomplishments during the year, list those students who did not pass but whom you feel should have. Also list those students who passed but probably would not have on a daily basis."
4. Every administrator is trained to score papers with our teachers and other staff members.
5. Our goal is to have every teacher in the district serve as a scorer. In addition, we have trained some of our classified people.
6. We have set up a data base this year and will keep longitudinal records on each student.
7. This year, we will score our 6th grade papers analytically in addition to holistically. We are in the VEC consortium and will be participating in an analytical scoring with Central, Woodburn and Silverton.

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