

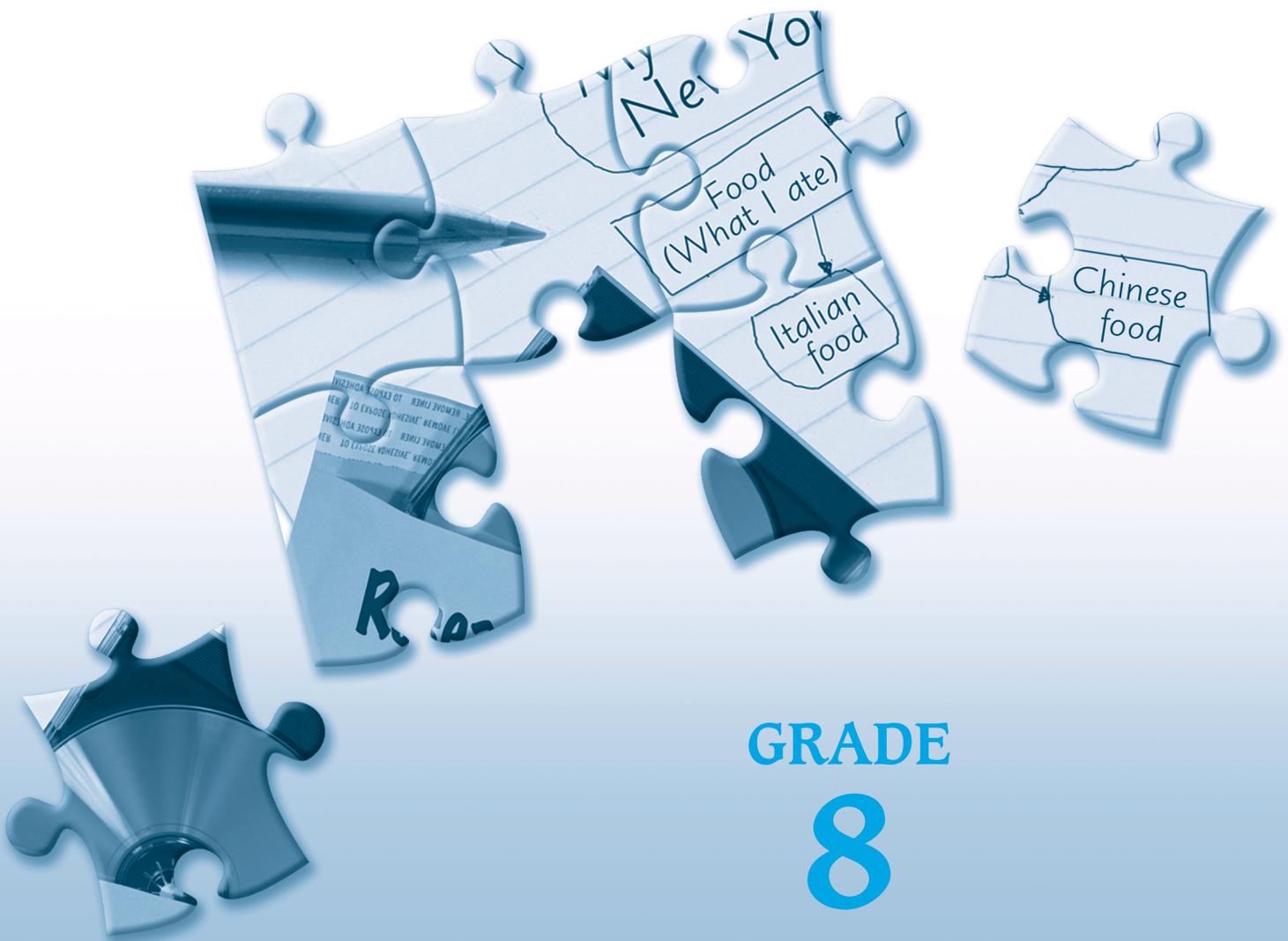
2007

FCAT

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test®

REPORT ON THE 2007 FCAT WRITING+ ASSESSMENT

FLORIDA *Writes!*



GRADE

8

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Florida Writes!
Report on the
2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment

Grade 8

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test[®]

FCAT

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Preface

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

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

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

Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 8 is designed for educators who are involved in developing, implementing, or evaluating curriculum in middle schools. This publication describes the content and application of the Grade 8 writing performance task and offers suggestions for activities that may be helpful in preparing students for the assessment.

Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 4 and *Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 10* provide information about the writing prompts administered to fourth and tenth grade students in 2007. *Florida Solves! Report on the 2007 FCAT Mathematics Released Items*, *Florida Reads! Report on the 2007 FCAT Reading Released Items*, and *Florida Inquires! Report on the 2007 FCAT Science Released Items* provide information about the mathematics, reading, and science performance tasks featured on the FCAT 2007 student reports. Additional information about FCAT reports can be found in *Understanding FCAT Reports 2007* on the Florida Department of Education website at <http://www.fldoe.org>. (See Appendix H for further information on FCAT Publications and Products.)

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

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The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test®: FCAT Writing+

Florida's System of School Improvement and Accountability

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

Florida's Writing Assessment

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

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

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

Effective Writing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Design of FCAT Writing+

Descriptions of the Writing Prompts

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

Prompts are designed to elicit writing for specific purposes. For instance, expository prompts ask students to explain why or how, while persuasive prompts require students to convince a person to accept a point of view or to take a particular action. Prompts have two basic components: the writing situation and the directions for writing. The writing situation orients students to the subject, and the directions for writing set the parameters, such as identifying the audience to whom the writing is directed.

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

Example of an Expository Prompt

Below is an example of an expository prompt. The first component presents the topic: chores. The second component suggests that the student think about the importance of chores and write about why it is important to have chores.

Writing Situation:

Most teenagers have chores.

Directions for Writing:

Think about why it is important for teenagers to have chores.

Now write to explain why it is important for teenagers to have chores.

Example of a Persuasive Prompt

In the prompt below, the first component (the topic) focuses on the effect watching television has on students' grades. The second component suggests that the student think about these effects then persuade the principal to accept the student's point of view.

Writing Situation:

The principal of your school has suggested that watching TV causes students' grades to drop.

Directions for Writing:

Think about the effect watching TV has on your grades and your friends' grades.

Now write to convince your principal whether watching TV causes students' grades to drop.

Scoring Method and Rubric

Holistic Scoring

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Score Points in Rubric

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

6 Points The writing is focused, purposeful, and reflects insight into the writing situation. The paper conveys a sense of completeness and wholeness with adherence to the main idea, and its organizational pattern provides for a logical progression of ideas. The support is substantial, specific, relevant, concrete, and/or illustrative. The paper demonstrates a commitment to and an involvement with the subject, clarity in presentation of ideas, and may use creative writing strategies appropriate to the purpose of the paper. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language (word choice) with freshness of expression. Sentence structure is varied, and sentences are complete except when fragments are used purposefully. Few, if any, convention errors occur in mechanics, usage, and punctuation.

5 Points The writing focuses on the topic, and its organizational pattern provides for a progression of ideas, although some lapses may occur. The paper conveys a sense of completeness or wholeness. The support is ample. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language, including precision in word choice. There is variation in sentence structure, and, with rare exceptions, sentences are complete except when fragments are used purposefully. The paper generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, and spelling.

4 Points The writing is generally focused on the topic but may include extraneous or loosely related material. An organizational pattern is apparent, although some lapses may occur. The paper exhibits some sense of completeness or wholeness. The support, including word choice, is adequate, although development may be uneven. There is little variation in sentence structure, and most sentences are complete. The paper generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, and spelling.

3 Points The writing is generally focused on the topic but may include extraneous or loosely related material. An organizational pattern has been attempted, but the paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Some support is included, but development is erratic. Word choice is adequate but may be limited, predictable, or occasionally vague. There is little, if any, variation in sentence structure. Knowledge of the conventions of mechanics and usage is usually demonstrated, and commonly used words are usually spelled correctly.

2 Points The writing is related to the topic but includes extraneous or loosely related material. Little evidence of an organizational pattern may be demonstrated, and the paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Development of support is inadequate or illogical. Word choice is limited, inappropriate, or vague. There is little, if any, variation in sentence structure, and gross errors in sentence structure may occur. Errors in basic conventions of mechanics and usage may occur, and commonly used words may be misspelled.

1 Point The writing may only minimally address the topic. The paper is a fragmentary or incoherent listing of related ideas or sentences or both. Little, if any, development of support or an organizational pattern or both is apparent. Limited or inappropriate word choice may obscure meaning. Gross errors in sentence structure and usage may impede communication. Frequent and blatant errors may occur in the basic conventions of mechanics and usage, and commonly used words may be misspelled.

Unscorable The paper is unscorable because

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

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

Scoring of the Assessment

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

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

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

Suggestions for Preparing Students for the FCAT Writing+ Performance Task

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

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

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

Recommendations for District and School Administrators

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

- ensuring that *Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 8* is available to all middle school or junior high teachers;
- bringing teachers together to discuss how to use *Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 8*;
- maintaining a literacy program that sets high standards for writing across all subject areas and grade levels;
- bringing teachers together to discuss interdisciplinary approaches and articulation of writing instruction across (and within) all subject areas and grade levels;
- arranging educational and professional growth opportunities for teachers;
- modeling the importance of effective written communication;
- assisting teachers in developing school-level writing expectations and assessment programs, such as portfolio assessment or schoolwide assessment of writing samples;
- scheduling in-service writing instruction and holistic scoring workshops for teachers and parents;
- emphasizing that writing should not be used as punishment;
- providing a print-rich environment in every classroom;
- including reference materials on writing in the schools' professional libraries; and
- encouraging the use of the writing process: planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, and celebrating student writing.

Recommendations for Teachers

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

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

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

- write responses to questions as an alternative to selecting correct responses on a multiple-choice test;
- read passages and create summary questions;
- write their views on current events before or after the events have been discussed in class;
- critique written pieces (e.g., published works and student writings);
- read and analyze different types of writing (e.g., biographies, science fiction, fantasies, historical accounts, speeches, and news reports);
- write letters to explain views on a particular issue or to refute the views of another person;
- write stories about real or imagined events;
- write descriptions of how things look, smell, taste, sound, and feel;
- write endings for unfinished fictional and nonfictional stories;
- write personal anecdotes and incorporate them into writing that either explains or persuades;
- maintain subject-area writing portfolios or participate in a long-term writing project; and
- review student responses in *Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 8*.

Recommendations for Parents and Guardians

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

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

Expository Responses from the 2007 Assessment

Definition of Expository Writing

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

Summary of the Expository Responses Written in 2007

The annotated papers in this section represent responses to a prompt that directed students to explain the way they like to learn. Students responding to this prompt generally chose to explain why they like to learn a certain way, such as by listening, reading, or doing. A paper was scorable if the student explained his or her preferred method of learning. Papers that focused on the topic, displayed an organizational pattern, contained elaborated support, showed variety in sentence structure, and generally followed the conventions of writing were scored in the higher ranges of the scale. (See Appendix A for more information about the prompt and the allowable interpretations.)

Suggestions for Use of the Annotated Responses

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

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

I find that hands-on learning is the best way for me to learn. Hands-on can be writing instead of just watching the teacher show you how to format your paper, experimenting rather than reading about other's results, or going outside and studying a type of bird over reading a book about "Mr. Roger's" discoveries. These activities come in all shapes, sizes and colors, figuratively speaking. By doing instead listening, we as students and investigative children stay focused, become interactive and actually learn the process.

Especially in sixth grade, when all we do in language arts is write, talk about grammar, and write some more. To me, the same routine every day of every week is boring. Hands-on activities spice up the classroom, and helps students keep focus. One, single, random thought can pull us away from the classroom very easily, and teachers knew this. When all teachers do is make us listen to them talk about what grammar is, let the drifting begin. By doing something interactive, we stay focused on our school work and there is no room for thoughts like, "Why are the chairs in school blue, why couldn't they be purple, or yellow?" This focus helps us remember important things also because, well, you cannot learn if you are not listening.

And why are we focusing, because we are being interactive, and as kids that word is a synonym for fun in the dictionary. Everytime we have fun, we remember what we are seeing and doing, correct? If you do not believe me, take a thirteen-year-old to Universal for the first time in his or her life and tell me that they don't come home and tell their friends and family about what they saw and did while they were there. We would all rather ride the roller-coasters than read about what it feels

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like to go down a two-hundred foot long, ninety degree angle slope at forty-eight miles an hour. Being interactive by touching what we are learning helps us remember exactly what we did in math class, December Seventh, 2005, while discussing velocity.

Only if we did the activity completely and correctly, however. Hands-on activities are self-explanatory experiments, so we know if we are doing something wrong. Let's go to science class and work on chemical physics, shall we? At the boring, Gray + Dull Middle School, Ms. D _____ is reading about engineers who discovered a self-replenishing fuel by mixing plutonium and chloride. Now look around the classroom, do you see one student paying attention? I certainly don't. Ok, it is time to visit the enjoyable, Happy + Fun Junior High, where Ms. M _____ is teaching the same subject, and discussing those same engineers. Only, her students are wide awake and ready to work because they are going to build small, individual race cars that will straight line down the hall. Their mission, however, is not only to build the car, but see which mixture of plutonium and chloride works the best.

The simple difference of the classrooms is that one is learning, and one is not. Wouldn't every school like to have students come to school with a smile on their face everyday because they are going to learn? In my opinion, that statement caps every school.

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This response clearly focuses on hands-on learning as the student's favorite way to learn. An effective organizational plan and skillful use of transitional devices provide for a logical progression of ideas. Support is consistent and supporting details are substantial and concrete: "We would all rather ride the roller-coasters than read about what it feels like to go down a two-hundred foot long, ninety degree angle slope at forty-eight miles an hour." The creative comparison of science classes provides strong support for the writer's opinion. A sense of commitment to the subject is demonstrated and a mature command of language is evident. Sentence structure is varied. Few convention errors occur.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could provide more precise word choice and correct basic convention errors.

Learning is a Group Effort

When it comes to learning, I work best in groups. I enjoy researching a topic freely with a few of my peers, and then presenting a project to the class. I like to learn this way because different people have different strengths, and the group can benefit from the diverse specialties. Also, in a group, the work can be divided among the students. Lastly, I feel there is less pressure when you can count on your group for help.

To begin with, I learn best in a group situation because I can benefit from my peers' strengths in the group. When a project is presented to a group, it is easy to sort through the tasks and see which is best suited for each member. When an art prop is needed, the group can assign the most artistic person in the group to make it. Also, different people take pleasure in learning about different things. For example, a person that enjoys cooking and is in a group that is researching an ancient civilization can be in charge of researching the food of that time. Having a group with different strengths is key to learning in groups.

Another reason I like learning in groups is you can divide the work among the group members. I like finding things out for myself, but expecting to know everything in detail with the time I have to research at school is crazy. This is why group projects can be so helpful. In a group, you can divide up the work and research

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your own section. When you have learned your part, then you can go over it with your group so they all understand.

Lastly, I feel that pressure is lifted when a project and learning is a group effort. Being able to have peers to count on to do their part sets your mind at ease. Having friends in your group builds your trust of their work and you know the job will get finished. Also, you can ask your group questions if you don't understand something. A good group will help you to understand because they know a group is only as strong as its weakest member. In a group, you are most likely to succeed.

In conclusion, I learn best in a group. I like to learn this way because, in a group, you can pull each others strengths so all benefit. The work of a project can be divided among the group members and you still learn what you need to. Lastly, in a group you aren't under stress when you work.

SCORE POINT
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This student focuses on the topic: “When it comes to learning, I work best in groups.” The organizational plan and substantial support convey a sense of completeness. The writer elaborates on three reasons for liking group work: “the group can benefit from the diverse specialties . . . the work can be divided among the students . . . there is less pressure when you can count on your group for help.” Support is specific, relevant, and illustrative: “When a project is presented to a group, it is easy to sort through the tasks and see which is best suited for each member . . . For example, a person that enjoys cooking and is in a group that is researching an ancient civilization can be in charge of researching the food of that time.” Precise word choice and freshness of expression contribute to support for the writer’s commitment to and involvement with the subject: “A good group will help you to understand because they know a group is only as strong as its weakest member.” Sentence structure is varied, and convention errors do not interfere with understanding.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could connect his or her feelings about group work to actual personal experiences. For example, the student could tell about a time when he or she contributed to or learned from a group. Correction of convention errors would also enhance this response.

Most students learn by listening, reading or doing. For me, reading is an okay way to learn new things. But books can be a hassle. Carrying those heavy books around, reading those big words that you may not understand. Sure, you can look up the word in a dictionary, but that would take a long time. And with a dictionary, that's another heavy book you have to carry. Listening and doing, in my opinion, is the best way to learn.

Listening to someone is better than reading, because you can set up a tape recorder in your mind and remember a lot better. When you're reading, you are more likely to forget things. In the off chance that you do forget what you were learning, you can ask someone else, listen to them, and learn it again. If you were reading a book on something and you forget what you learned, you have to take all that time, again, to look it up. When a book gets to old, it becomes more inaccurate. And if you look something up in an inaccurate book, you could learn the wrong thing. See, if you're talking and listening to someone who is alive and well, they'll tend to be more accurate. The best thing about listening is if you don't understand it when one person tells you, ask another person, and you'll get it.

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Listening and doing can go hand in hand. When you're listening, what you can do is record what they're saying on a tape recorder. This way, if you forget, you can just rewind the tape recorder, and listen to it again and again until you have it stuck in your mind. You can also take notes on what you're learning. Notes are good because they are in your handwriting and in your words, so you can understand what you're learning better. What you can also do is reask the person you are talking to, and have them retell you again and again until you understand it. If you had a book, you would take a lot more time than you need to relook up the same thing over and over again. That could get tiring after a while.

Most students learn by listening, reading or doing. Reading is an okay way to learn. But books can become old and inaccurate. For me, listening and doing are the best ways to learn. You can take notes or bring a tape recorder and record what you are learning. Listening and doing are, in my opinion, easier than reading.

SCORE POINT
5

This response is focused and has an effective plan. At times, however, the student fails to explain one idea before introducing a new concept. The writer uses a comparative strategy to explain why listening and doing are better ways to learn than reading: "When you're reading, you are more likely to forget things. In the off chance that you do forget what you were learning, you can ask someone else, listen to them, and learn it again. If you were reading a book on something and you forgot what you learned, you have to take all that time, again, to look it up." A mature command of language is sometimes demonstrated. Sentence structure is varied, and occasional convention errors do not impede meaning.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could pause to explain one idea before introducing something new. For example, in the third paragraph, the writer introduces taking notes as an aid to learning; however, he or she rushes into another idea without fully explaining the concept of taking notes. More fully elaborated support could be provided. Editing the repetitive details and correcting errors in conventions would also strengthen this response.

If given the choice, how would you choose to learn? I know that I would pick hands-on. There are many reasons why hands-on works best for me. First, it is more fun. Next, I remember the information better when I learn this way. Also, when you do hands-on activities you learn how the concept applies to our lives. These are just a few of the ways hands-on works best for me.

First, hands-on is fun. Actually doing things is much more interesting than doing a worksheet. For example, last year we did an activity in science to learn about the food chain. We went outside and played a game that was sort of like red rover. Half of the class were deer and the other half was things that the deer ate, or that ate the deer. Doing that activity held our attention and was much more interesting than reading a text book.

Next, I remember things much better when I learn this way. Statistics show that 7 in every 10 children retain information better when they participate in an activity. I am able to remember things better because I focus more when I am doing something rather than when I am taking notes.

Lastly, we learn how the concept applies to our lives when we do hands-on. We learn that the lesson is used in maybe a very obvious

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way that we never realized before. For example, in our math project right now we are learning how the golden ratio applies to many things. For instance, we are all built proportionally, flowers are created according to the golden ratio, and music octaves all fit this ratio. This helps us understand how it is used.

In conclusion, hands-on learning works best for me. It is more fun, I remember things better this way, and we learn how ^{the} applies to our lives. These are just a few of the reasons why hands-on is better than taking notes, so yes, I would choose to learn hands-on.

SCORE POINT
5

This writer focuses on “hands-on” learning as the best way to learn. The response is organized and some effective transitional devices provide for a progression of ideas. Support is ample, and each reason is consistently elaborated. A mature command of language with precise word choice is demonstrated: “Doing that activity held our attention and was much more interesting than reading a text book . . . Statistics show that 7 in every 10 children retain information better when they participate in an activity . . . For instance, we are all built proportionally, flowers are created according to the golden ratio, and music octaves all fit this ratio.” Sentence structures are varied, and conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could provide more specific facts, examples, or illustrations to support the choice. For example, the student could explain more fully how the “food chain” game held his or her attention. The writer could describe how taking notes hindered his or her learning or when doing something helped him or her remember better. Correction of convention errors would also enhance this response.

Remembering! It's hard to do. So when I am studying or trying to remember something I try to do it. When you do something, like a skit or a group project, you get more experience with it. Also when you do something hands on you seem to memorize it better because it's fun, and it also stays in your memory a lot longer. So when I have a subject that I just can't grasp, it helps me to do different things with that subject to make it fun.

Having more experience with a subject can be great to remember. The hands on way is like you get to feel the concept. Like a doctor, in a surgery he feels the heart pumping. It's the same with any subject. Science is a great example of this also, you feel the chemical watch it explode, and to have that experience is great. It's also very fun to do.

Having fun! It makes me remember great times when I was having fun. So why not channel that into learning? When I'm doing an experiment for science or a play for history, I just have fun with the project. That way I remember it. Like it was time for the big test, I wasn't worried at all, I just remembered the project and how I remember everything because it was so much fun.

Getting it implanted in your mind is very good also. Having trouble remembering stuff that you just heard the teacher say, or reading it is very hard. So every chance I get I try to have fun, so I learn a lot faster, like it a lot more, and remember it forever. Having something to remember forever is really good to have.

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Finally, doing anything with learning makes it easier for me to remember. Having more experience, having fun, and also having it in my head for many years makes it easier. So when ever it comes to learning, doing is definitely the way to go for me. I like learning this way.

SCORE POINT
4

This response is focused, and an organizational pattern is apparent. Supporting details are provided for each reason, but development is uneven. The “hands on” and “fun” reasons are developed with a few details and anecdotes; however, the writer fails to provide logical connections for the repetitive and list-like ideas in the “implanted in your mind” reason: “Having trouble remembering stuff that you just heard the teacher say, or reading it is very hard. So every chance I get I try to have fun, so I learn a lot faster, like it a lot more, and remember it forever. Having something to remember forever is really good to have.” The writer does not explain what he or she does to have fun and how having fun enhances the learning process. The organizational plan and adequate support contribute to a sense of completeness. Word choice is adequate. Errors in sentence structure and basic conventions do not interfere with the writer’s meaning.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: More effective transitional devices could be employed to connect the ideas. Fully elaborated support with more precise word choice could be provided. For example, the writer could further explain how feeling “the heart pumping” helps a doctor learn, how conducting science experiments helps one learn, or how working on a project prepares students for a “big test.” Fully developed personal anecdotes or specific, concrete examples about how the writer learns would enhance reader understanding. Correction of errors in sentence structure and basic conventions would also strengthen this response.

Many people, including me, like learning in the form of doing it. I have a few reasons for this, it helps me to memorize what you need to know, learn how it is done, and learn how I could do it in an everyday situation.

Doing helps me in memorization everyday. For example, if my teacher wanted me to memorize the ten Amendments I would have a hard time memorizing by reading or listening to them. The best way would for me to write them down. This would make something physical for me and to where the thing I had to know was, in a way, forever burned in my head or memory.

My second reason is that doing helps me learn how what I am doing is done. If I was learning how to ride a bike the best way for me to learn would be to get on my bike and try until I got it. Not to read how or listen to some one tell me how because mabe they don't have the same kind or size of bike or mabe I am taller or shorter than them, this would change how I would ride a bike a lot from the way they do. So by riding my bike I would learn how to do it in my situation.

Lastly by doing something I would learn how to use it in my everyday situation. Sopose I was learning how to make statues out of clay or paint. I would have to get a lot of practice in before I was good. So by doing it I would be getting the practice I need

SCORE POINT
4

This writer focuses on learning by doing as the best way to learn something. A predictable organizational pattern is apparent, and transitional devices are sometimes used effectively. The development of the support is uneven. The writer fails to provide specific, concrete details consistently. In the third paragraph, the writer includes some specific information to enhance the reader’s understanding: “Not to read how or listen to some one tell me how because mabe they don’t have the same kind or size of bike or mabe I am taller or shorter than them, this would change how I would ride a bike a lot from the way they do.” Although errors occur in basic sentence structure, variation is attempted. Word choice is adequate, and conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: Effective transitional devices could be employed throughout. More fully elaborated support could be provided for each reason. Consistently providing more specific details would clarify the writer’s meaning. Corrected and more varied sentence structure, more precise word choice, and better control of conventions would also strengthen this response.

Many people are different when it comes to learning. Some people learn by listening to what certain individual is telling them. Not everyone a like when it comes to learn, some favor reading. Me personally I prefer to actually like apply myself so I can have hands on experience.

I am person who has to be active. In order for me to feel like I'm actually doing something. My teacher told I was kinethic learner, which means I have to do it or try it to learn whatever it is that I'm learning.

Hands on learn isn't the only way I learn. Being able to see what someone doing helps me learn how to do things also. I am able to see whats going on, which allows me to break it down in steps. If you tell me what and don't I space out.

Talking to me is like talking to a wall. It hard to tell me thing and expected to do with out messing up things. If tell me do somethings its

GO ON 

very rare that do thing and ask 3 or 4 times how to do them.

Telling me how to do thing isn't allows a smart idea. When show me how to do thing, you can expected to get the job done. But not all people are like me.

SCORE POINT
3

This response focuses on learning through “hands on” experiences. The attempted organizational pattern includes a beginning and ending with additional information and a middle section with list-like support. In the second paragraph, the writer explains why he or she needs to be actively engaged to learn something: “My teacher told I was Kinesthetic learner, which means I have to do it or try it to learn whatever it is that I’m learning.” In the third paragraph, the writer explains why “Hands on learn isn’t the only way I learn . . . I am able to see what’s going on, which allows me to break it down in steps.” Each reason is extended with brief, vague, and repetitive examples. The “talking to me” reason contains a few specific details: “Talking to me is like talking to a wall . . . If tell me do somethings its very rare that do thing and ask 3 or 4 times how to do them.” Word choice is sometimes adequate, and some sentence structure variation is attempted. Omitted words sometimes cause the reader to pause; however, knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: Effective transitional devices could be used to connect the ideas logically. Elaboration of support could be provided. For example, the student could use specific examples, illustrations, or anecdotes to explain why he or she is a kinesthetic learner. More information is needed for why seeing or doing something also helps the student to learn. The writer might recall a time when he or she learned something by seeing or doing. Editing the response for omitted words would clarify the writer’s meaning. More precise word choice, better use of conventions, and more variation in sentence structure would also strengthen this response.

Most students learn by listening or doing, but I learn by reading what to do. I say it is better to read what to do than to listen. In listening you might miss something and do the wrong work. In reading if you miss something you can go back and read it again.

When you do the work with out listening or reading people donot know what to do. People mess up real bad and make bad grades. In reading the directions you can understand more of it. Reading is useful in many ways. Like reading the directions to a project.

I like to read when I am trying to learn something because if you don't you will mess up. When you are doing a book report you must read a book or are not even doing the book report. You have to read a book.

When you are doing a science project and the teacher tell you what to do and you miss a major part of the instruction, you can ask her to write it down so you can read it later. You have to read for almost every thing. You have to read the board every morning.

Some peolpe have to read. They can not hear or do. So they have to read.

GO ON 

Some have to read signs and read to others.

I like to read my work. I like it better than listening or even doing it. I wish all people could read what to do.

SCORE POINT
3

The writer is generally focused on learning by reading, and an organizational pattern is attempted; however, the development of support is list-like, non-specific, and repetitive: “I like to read when I am trying to learn something because if you don’t you will mess up. When you are doing a book report you must read a book or are not even doing the book report. You have to read a book.” The “science project” reason is the most developed with some specific information: “you miss a major part of the instruction, you can ask her to write it down so you can read it later.” Word choice is adequate, but sometimes vague and predictable. Some variation of sentence structures is attempted, and knowledge of basic conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: Specific supporting details would enhance the reader’s understanding. For example, facts, examples, illustrations, or anecdotes could be used to explain why the writer thinks “Some people have to read” to learn. The writer could explain how reading helped him or her learn. Personal anecdotes or examples about reading board work, reading teacher instructions, or reading project directions would enhance the reader’s understanding. Precise word choice, varied sentence structure, and improved conventions would also strengthen this response.

The best way I learn is by doing. It is hard for me to learn by listening, because while someone is trying to tell me what to do I lose concentration. It's also hard to learn by reading because I can't really see what they're trying to say. It's easier to learn by doing, because since I'm actually there doing it I can remember better, and learning first hand is usually always more efficient. I like learning by doing because it is more fun than having someone telling me what to do, or having to read about it. That is why I would rather learn by doing.

SCORE POINT
2

This response is focused on learning by doing. An organizational pattern is demonstrated, including a brief beginning, a middle part, and a one-sentence conclusion. Development of support is inadequate and list-like. The use of a comparative strategy is an attempt to help the reader better understand the differences between the learning methods and why the writer prefers to learn by doing: “while someone is trying to tell me what to do I lose concentration . . . because I can't really see what they're trying to say . . . because since I'm actually there doing it I can remember better . . . always more efficient . . . because it is more fun . . .” Word choice is adequate and sometimes precise. Although some errors occur, knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should use effective transitional devices. All reasons could be consistently developed with supporting details. For example, why does the writer lose concentration while listening? What does the writer mean by the statement, “It's also hard to learn by reading because I can't really see what they're trying to say”? Why is learning by doing more efficient and more fun? The use of personal anecdotes or examples about when the writer tried to learn something using each of the methods would further enhance the reader's understanding. A more precise choice of words and varied structure of sentences are needed. Correction of convention errors would also strengthen this response.

The way I like to learn is by listening. I like to learn by listening because it is alot easger to be listening when the teacher is saying something. When we would be doing a lesson and the teacher is talking and talking I would understand it alot better and it would make it alot easger for me to work. After the teacher is done talking I know what I need to do and I understand all of the work that she has handed out. From what I have learned I think listening would be the best way we all should do it. Now you know how I like to learn.

SCORE POINT
2

This response is generally focused on learning by listening. A brief organizational pattern is demonstrated, including a one-sentence introduction, a repetitive middle section, and an abrupt conclusion. The limited support is developed through extended and repetitive ideas: “When we would be doing a lesson and the teacher is talking and talking I would understand it alot better and it would make it alot easger for me to work. After the teacher is done talking I know what I need to do and I understand all of the work that she has handed out.” Word choice is limited and predictable, but sentence structure variation is attempted. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could provide a more effective organizational plan and connect the ideas logically. Facts, examples, anecdotes, or illustrations would enhance the reader’s understanding. For example, the writer could provide more specific information about how he or she learns by listening. The writer could explain how he or she learned something while listening to the teacher. Has the writer ever learned something while working alone? Precision of word choice, variation of sentence structures, and improvement of basic conventions would also strengthen this response.

Most student learn by listening,
 reading, or doing. I like to do things when
 I learn because it's easier for me to do it instead
 of listening to a teacher or reading a book I
 learn better when I just do it. When I'm
 doing something I like to figure out how
 to do it myself, sometimes its fun.

SCORE POINT
1

This student focuses on liking “to do things when I learn.” Little, if any, organization is apparent. Some vague, repetitive, and list-like support is provided: “it’s easier for me to do it instead of listening to a teacher or reading a book. I learn better when I just do it . . . I like to figure out how to do it myself, sometimes its fun.” Word choice is limited and predictable, and there are errors in sentence structure; however, basic convention errors do not interfere with the reader’s understanding.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should provide an organizational pattern with effective transitional devices. Supporting details could be elaborated with facts, examples, anecdotes, or illustrations. For example, the writer could tell about a time when doing something helped him or her learn. Further explanation is needed for why the writer enjoys working alone and why learning “how to do it myself” is fun. More precise word choice, more varied sentence structure, and improved basic conventions would also strengthen this response.

I like to learn be read. because it mack it seem
 easy to me. I like to learn this why because it is easy to
 me. because I learn more myself. You can lean big word
 on you own. You can techer yourself to read. You can lean to
 read. It is fun to lean to read word you don't know yet.

SCORE POINT
1

The response minimally addresses the topic. Little, if any, development of support or an organizational pattern is apparent. Loosely related ideas about learning to read are randomly listed and repeated: “Because it mack it seem easy to me . . . Because I learn more myself . . . You can lean big word on you own. You can techer youself to read . . . It is fun to lean to read word you don’t know yet.” Word choice is limited and inappropriate, and convention errors sometimes impede the reader’s understanding.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The focus of the response could be clarified. The response should explain how the writer learns rather than what he or she enjoys learning. The writer should provide an organizational pattern with effective transitional devices. Support could be developed with examples, illustrations, and anecdotes. For example, the writer could explain how it was fun to learn a new word. The student should clarify why learning to read is easy. Word choice could be more precise, and sentence structures could be more varied. Correction of basic convention and sentence structure errors would also strengthen this response.

Persuasive Responses from the 2007 Assessment

Definition of Persuasive Writing

The purpose of persuasive writing is to convince the reader to accept a particular point of view or to take a specific action. Anticipating counterarguments is important; in fact, the writer may choose to clarify his or her position by refuting counterarguments. The unmistakable purpose of persuasive writing is to convince the reader. In well-written persuasion, the topic or issue is clearly stated and elaborated to indicate understanding and conviction on the part of the writer.

Summary of the Persuasive Responses Written in 2007

The annotated papers in this section represent responses to a prompt that directed students to persuade the principal whether schools should have candy and soda machines. Students responding to this prompt generally provided arguments for or against having candy and soda machines at school. A paper was scorable if the student supported his or her position regarding whether it is a good idea to have candy and soda machines at school. Papers receiving scores in the higher ranges of the scale focused on the topic, displayed an organizational pattern, contained developed support, showed variety in sentence structure, and generally followed the conventions of writing. (See Appendix A for more information about the prompt and the allowable interpretations.)

Suggestions for Use of the Annotated Responses

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

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

Imagine a school, a place for education and learning. It is full of young adults moving between classes with no disruptions. Now imagine a school with candy and soda machines, contraptions that block the orderly flow of learners. Candy and soda machines would disrupt school campuses by being present. They would also encourage kids to congregate around them instead of going to class. Candy and soda machines would make students late for class if they had to wait in line.

A school is meant to be one thing, and one thing only: a place for education. By having candy and soda machines, the school has turned into a store. The cafeteria sells food for lunch, but these devices would only sell junk food and teeth-damaging soft drinks. The machines would disrupt school campuses. If a student loses his money in a machine and gets nothing for it, he may become angry and start punching and kicking the machine. If a student sees a classmate eating a bag of chips, he may decide he wants them, and could steal them. Now this place of education has been transformed into a horror of violence and theft.

Picture the bright lights of a candy or soda machine. On one you can see the products through a glass window, on the other there is a picture of a refreshing Coca-Cola or Pepsi product. Students bring their friends with them to buy a cold drink or

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a crunchy candy bar and then the whole group stays by the machines to hang out or search for money to buy more. Immediately the traffic patterns have changed. Other students must push through them to get to the machines, and passerbys must take a detours around the chatting group. These bright lights of the machines get student's attention and encourage them to stay by the machines. This is a problem for the school, and there is no solution.

Candy and soda machines have another undesired effect on a school. If there is a limited number of machines, lines begin to form because of the high demand. These lines are not only another traffic problem, but can cause students to be tardy for their next class. There is a limited amount of time between two classes, and if a student wishes to have a soda or snack in the next class, there will be a line to stand through. Often these lines are long and take up much of the student's walking time.

Candy and soda machines are a bad idea for our school. They cause disreputations on campus, and encourage kids to gather around them. Furthermore, they make students late for class with their long lines. Keep these machines out of school, and let our school continue to be one thing, a place of education and learning.

SCORE POINT
6

The writer clearly focuses on the position that candy and soda machines are a bad idea. The organizational plan includes effective transitioning that provides for a logical progression of ideas. A sense of completeness is conveyed through the organizational plan and substantial support. Persuasive arguments are consistently supported by relevant examples: “the whole group stays by the machines to hang out or search for money to buy more . . . Other students must push through them . . . passerbys must take a detour around the chatting group.” The writer concludes with a brief summary. Word choice is precise with freshness of expression. Sentence structure is varied, and few convention errors occur.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could provide more specific elaboration of some of the supporting details. For example, the writer could recall a particular time when school traffic patterns were disrupted and made students late for class. Correction of convention and sentence structure errors would also enhance this response.

An innocent student is starving after school. He brought some money for the vending machine, however he encounters a bully who steals his money. Personally, I wouldn't want my child or student put in that position. Every kid loves to come across a vending machine full of snacks. However, one in the school building is more hazardous than helpful.

I'm sure that the school administration would not want to provoke or encourage stealing or vandalizing of school property. Unfortunately, it is a given that these problems will occur. There is bound to be at least a few students who will try to take the machines for granted and kick them for either food or money to come out. The school probably didn't spend money on something that will end up on its side by the end of the day.

Not only would a candy or soda machine be negative for the costly machine, it could also endanger harmless student. Because of its abundance of sugar-coated snacks and money, I'm sure that plenty of bullies, even gangs would accumulate near the vending machine waiting to strike innocent children. Like a predator keenly waiting for its prey by the pond, I could picture a gang of big oafs threatening a small child who just wanted to get a snack. They would jump out from in back of the machine and force the money from the child,

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or mysteriously come out of nowhere in back of the helpless child, just as a thief does to an adult using an ATM machine. The difference between a vending machine and an ATM is that ATMs are necessary, whereas snack machines are merely to pleasure the students.

Bullies, recognizing that many students must have money for the snack machines, could strike anywhere, anytime. A sharp person would probably realize that people are going to steal near the actual machine and be cautious. ^{about} approaching them. A person, no matter how witty or careful they are, could at any moment in time, find themselves face to face with a tough bully threatening them with words and possibly a sharp object that could be jabbed into them at any given time. Students would be aware of this situation and hence feel less safe on the school campus. This is the opposite effect than what you would want for the students.

For a machine that you must pay for, I don't think its worth risking the safety and security of the students as well as school property and costly merchandise when kids could bring food from home. I'd pick a comfortable daily environment over calorie-filled sugar-coated overly-processed made with two percent more real cheese snacks any day.

SCORE POINT
6

This writer takes the position that vending machines in schools are “more hazardous than helpful.” The introduction is imaginative, and the organizational plan is enhanced by effective transitioning. Support is substantial, relevant, concrete, and illustrative. The student offers specific examples and vivid illustrations to explain why schools do not need vending machines: “a gang of big oafs . . . would jump out . . . and force the money from the child . . . just as a thief does to an adult using an ATM machine. The difference between a vending machine and an ATM is that ATMs are necessary, whereas snack machines are merely to pleasure the students.” At times, however, supporting details about how campus bullies lurk around the machines to prey on “innocent children” seem repetitive or unnecessary. A mature command of language with freshness of expression is demonstrated: “Bullies, recognizing that many students must have money for the snack machines, could strike anywhere, anytime.” Sentence structures are varied, and basic conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by including more specific examples, factual evidence, or personal anecdotes. Editing for redundancy would clarify the writer’s meaning. Correction of convention errors would also enhance this response.

Some schools have candy and soda machines. Our school does have a soda machine, but not a candy machine. I think we shouldn't have either. When the bell rings to go home, there a lot of people at the outside soda machines. Sometimes even fighting over who was there first! Then if we by a candy machine, there will even be more trouble. People will be hiper after lunch, you will get to class late, and the school will be such a mess. let me explain more.

First, if we get candy machines, people will be hiper after lunch. Thats the last thing we need more people getting in trouble. Candy won't help. We have two more classes after lunch, and they would be boring. For example, if someone gets in trouble in reading class, we (the class) would have to wait until the kid was taken care of. If your hiper you can't help yourself some-times. Either way, you loose. People who actually eat the candy get in trouble, the people who don't eat the candy, gets the time taken away from there learning time.

Secondly, people would be late to class. If your late to class, you get behind in your work, just because you were at the candy machine. For example, the bell just rang you 'NEED' a piece of candy, you go and the machine takes your money without giving you candy. The first thing that pops into your mind is that you want your money back. Oh no

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the bell just rang. Two things, one you didn't get candy, two your late for class. Then when you walk into your class room, you make a disturbance in the class room. No one would like that. This is another reason that we don't need candy machines.

Finally, our school would be a mess. Some in-mature kids would stick candy under the desk, on the chairs and even in books. A candy machine would raise the chances of getting candy everywhere. Even the lunch room would be a mess. The jaintors^(sp) would have to work even harder to clean the lunchroom. They would want a raise and no one would be happy, except the people who think it is funny. No candy machines!

To conclude, we don't need anymore problems in class or in school. People would be late for class, the lunch room would look nasty, and you would create a disturbance in class. I think we should not have candy machines in our school. Please take my opinion^(sp) into consideration^(sp).

SCORE POINT
5

The student takes the position that candy and soda machines are not needed in schools. A predictable organizational pattern is provided, including some effective transitional devices. The organizational plan and ample support contribute to a sense of completeness. The writer consistently employs a cause and effect strategy to enhance the reader's understanding: "Kids would stick candy under the desk, on the chairs and even in books . . . The jaintors would have to work even harder . . . They would want a raise . . . no one would be happy . . . No candy machines!" A mature command of language and precision in word choice are sometimes demonstrated. Although errors occur in basic sentence structure, attempts to vary sentence structures and to use purposeful fragments are demonstrated. Conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The "late to class" argument is somewhat vague and rambling. For example, the student could provide anecdotal evidence to support the argument. What does the writer mean by "If your hipier you can't help yourself sometimes. Either way, you loose." More precise word choice, varied sentence structure, and improved basic conventions would also strengthen this response.

Mrs. H _____, Dec. 10, '02

I have been asked whether or not we should have candy and soda machines at our school and after deep thought and consideration I have finally come up with an answer. Yes, I do believe we should have candy and soda machines. Don't you ever get hungry or thirsty? You are always thinking about ways to create a fund raiser. This could be a great opportunity for all of us at _____.

The first reason I think that we need candy and soda machines is because some of us get really thirsty or hungry during class. If you put these machines in the halls, we could just stop on the way to class get something and eat it or drink it during class. Most teachers won't let us out in the middle of class to get water so this way we would have something to drink all the way during class. Think about it, aren't there just some days you get really thirsty? Well just because were kids doesn't mean that we don't get thirsty or hungry too.

The second reason I strongly believe we should get snack and soda machines is because, our school right now is not

Go On 

doing many fund raisers so we can have dances and do things that we as kids need to be doing. If we got the machines I'm pretty sure it would make our school some money and more money means more fun. I mean, with the money we would be making, we could afford to buy some new library books, sports equipment, art supplies, etc. With the money we'd be making we could afford many new things. Sure, we would still need other fund raisers, but this would be a big help?

Please consider my thoughts and ideas and let us have some candy and soda machines here at ____! Many students would buy, I guarantee it; it's a wonderful solution to many money problems. Not only that, but it also keeps us from getting out of class every five minutes to get a drink of water. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Your friend and student,

SCORE POINT
5

PERSUASIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

This writer’s position is that candy and soda machines should be installed in schools. The organizational plan includes some effective transitional devices. Supporting arguments are developed consistently, and some specific details are provided: “we could afford to buy some new library books, sports equipment, art supplies . . . keeps us from getting out of class every five minutes to get a drink of water.” In the second paragraph, the writer attempts to connect with the reader through a persuasive appeal: “Think about it, aren’t there just some days you get really thirsty? Well just because were kids doesn’t mean that we don’t get thirsty or hungry too.” A sense of completeness is conveyed through the organizational plan and ample support. Although occasional errors occur, conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could provide more specific examples or illustrations to support each argument. For example, factual or anecdotal evidence could explain how eating candy and drinking sodas during class would help students learn. Further explanation is needed to support the assertion that earning “more money” from the machines would produce “more fun” for the students. Expanding word choice and correcting convention errors would also strengthen this response.

Hello. My name is _____ and I am an eighth here at _____ Middle. My fellow students and I have been talking about perhaps getting a few soda and candy machines for the schools. I know this may not sound like a good idea, but it actually really is. With these candy and soda machines we could make a lot of money for the school, the students would enjoy them and the teachers and staff would enjoy them also.

Since everyone likes candy and soda many people would buy them. When people buy all that candy and soda a profit of that goes into money for our school. With all that money we could buy more plants or books or lab equipment for our school. I believed that these machines would be used very often if they were to be installed. The candy and soda machines would probably have to be restocked every five minutes too because they would be so popular.

The students would enjoy these machines a great deal if we got these machines. I also thought about the rule of no eating in class and I was thinking that we would still enforce that law. We could make a law that candy and soda are to be devoured prior to class or in the lunch period. That way the rule would still be used and so would the candy and soda machines.

The students would not be the only ones to use the machines the teachers and staff would too. For example if the teacher is on a free period or just had a hectic class she could go buy a candy bar or a soda. The soda machines can be used by teachers at any time also.

Whether it's the teachers and staff or the students using the soda and candy machines I be that it is a good investment for the school. Thank you and please take this into consideration.

SCORE POINT
4

The writer takes the position that schools should have candy and soda machines. A predictable organizational pattern is apparent, and effective transitional devices are used. Although supporting details are provided for each argument, the development of support is uneven. Support for the “teachers and staff” argument is limited, but more specific support is provided for the “make a lot of money” and “students would enjoy them” arguments. Word choice is occasionally precise, sentence structure is sometimes varied, and basic conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could elaborate each argument. For example, personal anecdotes or factual evidence could be used to support the writer’s position that candy and soda machines would be “a good investment for the school.” Precise word choice, varied sentence structures, and corrected basic conventions would also strengthen this response.

The sound of a soda opening is a beautiful sound. This could mean many things. For instance some-one with a sprite might have a stomach ace. I feel that schools should have soda machines but I don't feel we should have candy. Sodas something that can be of good in schools but candy on the other hand isn't.

Soda? Sodas a good thing to have around. For those days when you have a mayer stomach ace and you don't know how to help it; a coke machines good for that. Pop some money in press sprite or Mup and I gaurantie you'll feel better in no time. Sodas also a good beverage. Sometimes students get tired of the same water or milk and they want more choices. Thats why sodas a good thing to have.

Candy? Candy on the other hand is not some thing I think we should have in schools. If we had machines of candy thats all kids would eat. The nurse would have alot of sick kids coming to her from sugar rushes and lots else. Candy also makes alot of students hyper. If these kids

GO ON 

go into class that way its bound to mess with how they learn. Also, Students are most likely going to throw all those many many rappers on the floor wich will make the custodians job even harder.

In conclusion, I say yes we should have soda machines in schools. They could help students feel appreciated but I also say that students should not be aloud to have candy machines for the better of thier learning.

PERSUASIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
4

This writer qualifies his or her position by stating that “I feel that schools should have soda machines but I don’t feel we should have candy.” The organizational pattern is apparent and helps to provide a sense of completeness to the response. Support is presented for each argument. Some specific support is given for the “soda” argument: “When you have a major stomach ace . . . Pop some money in press sprite or 7 up and I gaurantie you’ll feel better in no time . . . Sometimes students get tired of the same water or milk and they want more choices.” The student’s conclusion further explains the qualified position: “Yes, we should have soda machines in schools . . . help students feel appreciated but I also say that students should not be aloud to have candy machines for the better of their learning.” Word choice is adequate, and some variation in sentence structure is evident. Convention errors do occur, but they do not interfere with meaning.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could use more effective transitional devices. More specific support could be provided for each argument. For example, how does the writer know that students want more drink choices? What does the writer mean by “sugar rushes”? The writer could recall personal experiences or present factual evidence to illustrate his or her assertions. The response needs more precise word choice and varied sentence structure. Better use of conventions would also strengthen this response.

"Please insert seventy-five cents." Some schools have candy and soda machines. I'm writing to tell you that I think that is a bad idea.

My first statement is if we have those machines most likely these students being in the area that we live in will probably steal the stuff when no one is looking. The reason I say that is because most of the students don't have any money and when they want something and nobody's telling them no they'll take it.

Second I think some of the kids will try and skip the classes they don't like and hang out near the machines. I think if the school was to get those machines they should have some type of adult supervisor over them so the children will have to stay in class.

Third I think those machines could make the school lose money instead of gaining money because those machines are most likely to run out of order and the drink and snacks they provide.

In conclusion I think that it is a bad idea to put those candy and/or soda machines in to this school because the school will lose money, some kids might try to skip some classes and hang out by it, and they will try to steal from it.

SCORE POINT
3

PERSUASIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

This student's position and arguments are summarized in the conclusion: "I think that it is a bad idea to put those candy and/or soda machines into this school because they school will lose money, some kids might try to skip some classes and hang out by it, and they will try to steal from it." An organizational pattern is attempted, but transitional devices are not used effectively. Some vague and confusing support is included for the "lose money" argument: "those machines are most likely to run out of order and the drink and snacks they provide." Although supporting details are provided for each argument, the development of that support is general and non-specific. Word choice is limited. Errors occur in sentence structure and basic conventions; however, these errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could maintain a clear focus and use an organizational plan with effective transitional devices. All of the supporting ideas should be logically connected to enhance the reader's understanding. Specific details could be provided for each argument. For example, the student could use facts, examples, or anecdotes to explain more fully how "the area that we live in" influences his or her opinion. The recounting of personal experiences would strengthen the writer's position. This response also needs more precise word choice, better use of conventions, and more variation in sentence structure.

Should some schools have candy and soda machines?
 you might say yes but on the other hand I say no. Some
 schools shouldn't have candy and soda machines. I
 schools shouldn't have candy and soda machines
 because students will buy candy and sodas out of the
 machines instead of buying school lunch to eat. That
 is not a problem but true enough it is not a healthy
 choice and you don't want students lined up in your clinic
 because they have a stomach ache where they didn't eat
 lunch. It would be a money problem too because
 parents will get tired of the students asking them for money
 and parents are really going to get tired of giving them
 money to buy junk food with. Teachers will start to
 complain because students will be buying candy and
 eating it in class. It will be a littering situation
 too because next thing you know students will start
 to throw paper and soda cans on the ground because
 they are too lazy to throw it in the trash can. I
 have listed several reasons why school shouldn't have
 soda & candy machines. I hope you take this in
 consideration and think about it. Thanks for your time.

PERSUASIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
3

This writer asserts that “Some schools shouldn’t have candy and soda machines.” An organizational pattern is attempted, but lapses occur. The writer briefly describes the effect that candy and soda machines at school have on the students, the parents, the teachers, and the school. Each argument is extended by little bits of information; however, most support development is provided in the second paragraph for the effect on “students” argument: “students will buy candy and sodas out of the machines instead of buying school lunch to eat. That is not a problem but true enough it is not a healthy choice and you don’t want students to end up in your clinic because they have a stomach ache where they didn’t eat lunch.” Word choice is limited and predictable. Although an attempt is made to vary sentence structures, there are basic errors in sentence structure. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: An effective organizational plan could be employed with effective transitional devices. Stronger connections should be made between and among the arguments. Elaborated support for each argument would further enhance reader understanding. For example, the writer could include facts and examples about making healthy food choices. The student’s position would be strengthened by the use of personal anecdotes that show commitment to and involvement with the subject. Precise word choice, varied sentence structure, and improved conventions would also strengthen this response.

I think the soda and candy machine is a good idea for the student to have so that way if we do not want to eat the school lunch you can get it from the machine. And it should be for students only because some teachers may come and try to take over. And this is my conclusion. My first reason why students should have a candy and soda machine is some classes have early lunch and by the time third pd. come they would want a snake, so that can give us a chance to have a break.

My second reason why we should have a candy and a soda machine. It will finally give the student something to have and use and show the teacher that we are responsible student. The school should have the machine for all middle and high schools.

My third reason why some school have candy and soda machine is some of money can help the school.

SCORE POINT
2

PERSUASIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

The writer takes the position that schools should have candy and soda machines “for students only because some teachers may come and try to take over.” An organizational plan is attempted, but effective transitional devices are lacking. Support is inadequate, list-like, and sometimes illogical: “It will finally give the student something to have and use and show the teacher that we are responsible student. the school should have the machine for all Middle and High Schools.” The “money” argument is undeveloped, but the “early lunch” argument is supported by a vague extension: “Some classes have early lunch and by the time third pd. come they would want a snake, so that can give us a chance to have a break.” The writer fails to pause to fully explain the ideas for the reader. Word choice is limited and predictable, and errors occur in sentence structure. Convention errors sometimes cause the reader to pause.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should employ an effective organizational plan. The student should use transitional devices to provide needed connections between and among the ideas. Support for each argument should be developed through facts, examples, anecdotes, or illustrations. For example, the writer could recall a time when he or she needed a snack during the school day. How would the installation of candy and soda machines make students more responsible? Why should the machines be used by students only? The writer could provide an effective conclusion. Word choice should be more precise. Correction of sentence structure and convention errors would also strengthen this response.

Dear Ms. _____

I President of the student council have decided that we should have soda and candy machines. This will help in student's work. also help in student's morale.

There work will increase because of brain stimulation candy gets kids happy. therefore they feel better. the kids will be pleased that you have done this for them.

they will also spend more money at lunch than normal they will demand a lot of soda and candy though. So if you get the machiens you must have a larg supply of candy or soda.

PERSUASIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
2

The writer takes the stand that students should be allowed to purchase candy and soda at school because “This will help in student’s work. also help in student’s morale.” An organizational pattern is attempted, but the paper lacks closure. Support development is inadequate. Support for the two arguments is confined to the second paragraph. In the third paragraph, the writer presents some loosely related information: “they will also spend more money at lunch than normal. they will demand a lot of soda and candy though. So if you get the machiens you must have a larg supply of candy or soda.” Word choice is limited and vague, and errors occur in sentence structure. Convention errors do not interfere with understanding.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could more clearly focus on the stated position and employ an organizational plan with effective transitional devices. The writer should include relevant facts, examples, anecdotes, or illustrations to support the arguments. For example, the author could use specific facts or personal anecdotes to explain how eating candy and drinking soda causes “brain stimulation” and affects their morale. How would the school benefit from students spending more money during lunch? Precision of word choice, variation of sentence structures, and improvement of basic conventions would also strengthen this response.

Why Should We have
Candy + Soda Machines

Because we are responsible Teenagers,
And we should be able to have a candy
+ sock Machine. We have sock Machines
in the Gym But They Need to put some
all around the School + Candy Machines.
Their Businesses will make a lot of
Money off us. May Be if we do than
children will acted Better, since we have
rites, But some children don't need none
Because they get very hipe off the candy.
But other than that I think we
really deserve Them please.

July

PERSUASIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
1

This brief response minimally addresses the topic, and little evidence of an organizational plan is demonstrated. Although the school allows soda machines in the gym, the writer asserts that “They need to put some all around the school and candy machines.” Two vague and confusing arguments are offered: “Their Businesses will make a lot of money off us. May Be if we do than children will acted Better.” The “acted Better” argument is extended by a bit of information: “since we have rites.” Presenting a negative aspect weakens the writer’s position: “But some children don’t need none Because they get very hipe off the candy.” Word choice is limited, and errors occur in mechanics and sentence structure.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should clearly focus on the topic and provide an organizational pattern with effective transitional devices. All arguments should be clarified and elaborated with facts, examples, or anecdotes. For example, what does the writer mean by “Businesses will make a lot of money off us”? More precise word choice, more varied sentence structure, and improved basic conventions would also strengthen this response.

Dear Mr. I, I was wondering if we students can have candy and soda machines? Since some of the other schools have them and we don't. It would be nice if we did so that if people become hungry during 6th hour they can always go to the snack machines. Instead of eating the nasty disgusting cafeteria food we can all eat real junk food.

Sincerely your student,

PERSUASIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
1

This sparse response is minimally focused on the position that students should be allowed to buy candy and soda at school. There is little, if any, evidence of an organizational plan. The writer provides a vague list of assertions; however, the student fails to develop any support for those arguments: “Since some of the other schools have them and we don’t . . . if people become hungry during 6th hour they can always go to the snack machines. Instead of eating the nasty disgusting cafeteria food we can all eat real junk food.” Word choice is limited, and errors occur in sentence structure and basic conventions.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should provide an organizational pattern with effective transitional devices. Consistent support for each argument should be provided and further developed with facts, examples, anecdotes, and illustrations. For example, the writer could compare the schools with candy and soda machines to those schools without the machines. What advantages or disadvantages do the machines provide to the schools? The writer could fully explain what is meant by “6th hour” hunger and “the nasty disgusting cafeteria food.” Why do students need “real junk food”? Word choice should be more precise. Correction of sentence structure and basic convention errors would also strengthen this response.

Appendix A

Prompt and Allowable Interpretations

Grade 8 Expository Prompt

Writing Situation:

Most students learn by listening, reading, or doing.

Directions for Writing:

Think about the way you like to learn.

Now write to explain why you like to learn this way.

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

Allowable Interpretations

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

- The student is allowed considerable latitude in his/her interpretation of the prompt; therefore, the words in the prompt may be broadly defined.
- The explanation may be fact or fantasy.
- The student may write about one “way” or more than one “way” that he/she likes to learn.
- The student may select a way to learn that is not mentioned in the prompt. The “way to learn” may be construed to mean the student likes to learn “about” a particular topic.
- The student may present information as “factual” even if the information is not based on fact.
- The student may provide one or more reasons for his/her preference, and/or the student may explain multiple aspects (positive and/or negative) of the preference. The way of learning may be implied rather than explicitly stated.
- Narration, description, and persuasion “work” if they provide explanatory information related to the prompt.

Grade 8 Persuasive Prompt

Writing Situation:

Some schools have candy and soda machines.

Directions for Writing:

Think about whether this is a good idea for your school.

Now write to persuade your principal to accept your opinion about the candy and soda machines.

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

Allowable Interpretations

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

- The student is allowed considerable latitude in his/her interpretation of the prompt; therefore, the words in the prompt may be broadly defined.
- The student may present information as “factual” even if the information is not based on fact.
- The student may cite one or more arguments and may include positive and/or negative aspects.
- Students may interpret the “candy and soda machines” to be any type of machine containing items to eat or drink, and/or the student may assume that the items to eat or drink are being provided free of charge.
- The writer may take the position that the decision should be left to others or influenced by other factors, or the student may take another qualified stand to provide an alternative. The following is an example of a qualified stand: “If you’re asking me about machines, Mr. Power, we do not need anything else unhealthy. You need to get some machines to help us get in shape, like treadmills, bicycles, and weight benches.”
- Narration, description, and exposition “work” if they provide support related to the persuasive prompt.

Appendix B

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Loosely Related – only slightly related

Extraneous – not related

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Response – writing that is stimulated by a prompt

Rubric – scoring description for each score point of the scale

Scorer – person trained to score student responses

Support – quality of details illustrating or explaining the central theme

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix C

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

Assessment Directions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PROMPT



SAMPLE

DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAGE.

Appendix D

FCAT Writing+ Prompt Specifications and Prompt Evaluation Form

Specification for Expository Writing Prompts

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

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

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

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

Example:

Most teenagers have chores.

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

Example:

Think about why it is important for teenagers to have chores.

Now write to explain why it is important for teenagers to have chores.

Specification for Persuasive Writing Prompts

The purpose of prompt specification is to ensure that the prompt tells the students the subject (topic) and purpose of writing. Persuasive prompts are developed to elicit writing for a desired purpose and audience. Persuasion is writing that attempts to convince the reader that a point of view is valid and/or that the reader should take a specific action. If it is important to present other sides of an issue, the writer does so, but in a way that makes his or her position clear. The unmistakable purpose of persuasive writing is to convince the reader.

Cue words that may be used in persuasive prompts are *convince*, *persuade*, and *why*. Persuasive prompts should avoid the term *how* because it tends to elicit narrative or expository writing.

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

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

Example:

The principal at your school has suggested that watching TV causes students' grades to drop.

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

Example:

Think about the effect watching television has on your grades and your friends' grades.

Now write to convince your principal whether watching television causes students' grades to drop.

FCAT Writing+ Prompt Evaluation Form

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

INTEREST LEVEL

Yes No 1. Will the topic be of interest to students at this grade level?

Comments

BIAS

- Yes No 2. Is the topic free of bias?
- Yes No 3. Is the wording free of bias?
- Yes No 4. Is the topic general enough to be readily accessible to students at this grade level?
(Would most students know something about the topic?)
- Yes No 5. Will students be able to respond without becoming overly emotional or upset?

Comments

PURPOSE OF WRITING

Yes No 6. Is the prompt well-suited for the desired purpose?

Comments

WORDING OF PROMPT

- Yes No 7. Is the wording of the prompt clear?
- Yes No 8. Is the readability appropriate for the majority of students?
- Yes No 9. Are components, such as the writing situation and the directions for writing, compatible?

Comments

ORGANIZATION OF RESPONSE

Yes No 10. Does the prompt allow for student preference in the choice of an organizational plan?

Comments

DEPTH OF SUPPORT

- Yes No 11. Will the prompt discourage list-like support?
- Yes No 12. Is the prompt manageable within the 45-minute testing period?
- Yes No 13. Will the prompt allow for substantial development of the topic?

Comments

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Yes No 14. Should the prompt be used as it is written?

Comments

Reviewer's Signature _____

Appendix E

Scorer Bias

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

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

Appendix F

Instructional Implications for Each Score Point

Grade 8

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix G

Recommended Readings

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

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

Atwell, Nancie. *Coming to Know: Writing to Learn in the Intermediate Grades*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1990.

This is a book for teachers who are ready to put writing to work across the curriculum—to abandon the encyclopedia-based approach and ask their students to write as literary critics, scientists, historians, and mathematicians.

Atwell, Nancie. *Lessons That Change Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.

In this book, teachers can access the author's comprehensive writing lesson plans. Included are mini-lessons for Grades 5–9: a yearlong writing workshop curriculum.

Baines, Lawrence and Anthony J. Kunkel, Editors. *Going Bohemian: Activities That Engage Adolescents in the Art of Writing Well*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2000.

This book is a collection of "tried and true" lesson plans from classroom teachers and university faculty. The activities often advocate using innovative strategies, competitive games, interdisciplinary methods, art and multimedia, and indirect approaches to teaching some of the difficult lessons of writing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Florida Department of Education. *Florida Writes!* Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education, 2007.

Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 4; Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 8; and Florida Writes! Report on the 2007 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 10 describe the development, purpose, content, and application of the writing assessment program, and they suggest activities that are helpful in preparing students for the assessment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jago, Carol. *Beyond Standards: Excellence in the High School English Classroom*. With a foreword by Sheridan Blau. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 2001.

Packed with detailed classroom anecdotes, *Beyond Standards* explores ways teachers can select books, design lessons, and inspire discussions that can lead their students to produce excellent work. This book offers vivid examples of student work and concrete suggestions about how to foster student commitment to achievement in the classroom.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mueller, Pamela N. *Lifers: Learning from At-Risk Adolescent Readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.

Twenty-two high school students are introduced to readers as “lifers”—students who have spent all their lives in remedial programs. Unwilling to accept that they will remain “lifers,” Pamela Mueller offers her own solutions through three reading workshops she and her colleagues implemented, which are fully described in this book.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thompson, Thomas C., ed. *Teaching Writing in High School and College*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2002.

An illuminating collection of encouraging narratives and studies suggesting that secondary-postsecondary partnerships and exchanges can significantly improve students’ ability to succeed at college-level writing tasks.

Tsujimoto, Joseph. *Lighting Fires: How the Passionate Teacher Engages Adolescent Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Heinemann, 2001.

This book contains writing assignments, exercises, a few adult examples, and student writings collected by the author over the years. It shows specific ways that the author motivated students to write.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix H

FCAT Publications and Products

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

About the FCAT Web Brochure

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

Assessment & Accountability Briefing Book

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

FCAT Handbook—A Resource for Educators

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

FCAT Myths vs. Facts

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

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

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

FCAT Posters

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

FCAT Released Tests

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

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

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

FCAT Results Folder: A Guide for Parents and Guardians

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Frequently Asked Questions About FCAT

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

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

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

Lessons Learned—FCAT, Sunshine State Standards and Instructional Implications

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

Sample Test Materials for the FCAT

Reading and Mathematics, Grades 3–10

Science, Grades 5, 8, and 11

Writing+, Grades 4, 8, and 10

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

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

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

Understanding FCAT Reports

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

What every teacher should know about FCAT

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



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
www.fldoe.org

Assessment and School Performance
Florida Department of Education
Tallahassee, Florida

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ISBN 978-0-85666-996-1



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