

2006

FCAT

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test®

REPORT ON THE 2006 FCAT WRITING+ ASSESSMENT

FLORIDA *Writes!*



GRADE

4

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Florida Writes!
Report on the
2006 FCAT Writing+ Assessment

Grade 4

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test

FCAT

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Preface

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

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

For this assessment, each student is given a prompt and has 45 minutes to read the prompt independently, plan the response, and write the draft. A separate sheet is provided for planning and prewriting activities (e.g., outlining, clustering, mapping, and jotting down ideas). Within each classroom, students are randomly assigned one of two prompts. Fourth grade students respond to a prompt asking them to explain (expository writing) or tell 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 B for examples of the assessment directions, answer book, and planning sheet.)

Florida Writes! Report on the 2006 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 4 is designed for educators who are involved in developing, implementing, or evaluating curriculum in elementary schools. This publication describes the content and application of the Grade 4 writing performance task and offers suggestions for activities that may be helpful in preparing students for the assessment.

Florida Writes! Report on the 2006 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 8 and *Florida Writes! Report on the 2006 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 10* provide information about the writing prompts administered to eighth and tenth grade students in 2006. *Florida Solves! Report on the 2006 FCAT Mathematics Released Items*, *Florida Reads! Report on the 2006 FCAT Reading Released Items*, and *Florida Inquires! Report on the 2006 FCAT Science Released Items* provide information about the mathematics, reading, and science performance tasks featured on the FCAT 2006 student reports. Additional information about FCAT reports can be found in *Understanding FCAT Reports 2006* on the Florida Department of Education web site at <http://www.fldoe.org>. (See Appendix G 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 last year as part of the February 2005 administration of FCAT Writing+ (performance task plus multiple-choice items). With the addition of the multiple-choice component, the writing assessment was renamed "FCAT Writing+." Scores for FCAT Writing+ were reported for the first time in May 2006.

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

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

Effective Writing

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

Teachers must recognize the limitations of presenting, and accepting as correct, one organizational plan over all others. While a formula may be useful for beginning or novice writers who need scaffolding in organizational techniques and in the crafting of 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, and editing. A curriculum that consistently emphasizes reading and the use of spoken and written language in all subject areas and at all grade levels affords students the opportunity to write for a variety of purposes, thereby enhancing a student's success in writing.

Design of FCAT Writing+

Descriptions of the Writing Prompts

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

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

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

Example of an Expository Prompt

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

Writing Situation:

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

Directions for Writing:

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

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

Example of a Narrative Prompt

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

Writing Situation:

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

Directions for Writing:

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

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

Scoring Method and Rubric

Holistic Scoring

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conventions refer to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, usage, and sentence structure. These conventions are basic writing skills included in Florida's Sunshine State Standards.

- Papers receiving low scores often contain 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 E contains instructional implications for each score point.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Unscorable The paper is unscorable because

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

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

Scoring of the Assessment

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

Scorers are required to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree, preferably in education, English, or a related field, and must write an essay as part of the application process. To qualify as a scorer for FCAT Writing+, each candidate must also complete intensive training and demonstrate mastery of the scoring method by accurately assigning scores to the sample responses in a series of qualification sets. (See Appendix D 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. This includes having at least two scorers score each student response and having scorers score sets of papers pre-scored 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 simply list rather than elaborate on reasons or events.

Recommendations for District and School Administrators

Administrators have the unique opportunity to directly influence the establishment and maintenance of writing programs. Administrators can provide leadership to writing instruction programs by

- ensuring that *Florida Writes! Report on the 2006 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 4* is available to all elementary teachers;
- bringing teachers together to discuss how to use *Florida Writes! Report on the 2006 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 4*;
- maintaining a literacy program that sets high standards for writing across all subject areas and grade levels;
- bringing teachers together to discuss interdisciplinary approaches and articulation of writing instruction across (and within) all subject areas and grade levels;
- arranging educational and professional growth opportunities for teachers;
- modeling the importance of effective written communications;
- assisting teachers in developing school-level writing expectations and assessment programs, such as portfolio assessment or schoolwide assessment of writing samples;
- scheduling in-service writing instruction and holistic scoring workshops for teachers and parents;
- emphasizing that writing should not be used as punishment;
- providing a print-rich environment in every classroom;
- including reference materials on writing in the schools' professional libraries; and
- encouraging the use of the writing process: planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, and celebrating student writing.

Recommendations for Teachers

Teachers' daily contact with students gives them many opportunities to directly 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 acknowledges their successes.

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 performance task through a number of teacher-generated activities that include asking students to

- write responses to questions as an alternative to selecting correct responses on a multiple-choice test;
- read passages and create summary questions;
- write their views on current events before or after the events have been discussed in class;
- critique written pieces (e.g., published works and student writings);
- read and analyze different types of writing (e.g., biographies, science fiction, fantasies, historical accounts, speeches, and news reports);
- write letters to explain views on a particular issue or to refute the views of another person;
- write stories about real or imagined events;
- write descriptions of how things look, smell, taste, sound, and feel;
- write endings for unfinished fictional and nonfictional stories;
- write personal anecdotes and incorporate them into writing that either explains or tells a story;
- maintain subject-area writing portfolios or participate in a long-term writing project; and
- review student responses in *Florida Writes! Report on the 2006 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 4*.

Recommendations for Parents and Guardians

Parents' and guardians' daily contact with children provides them the unique 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 2006 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 2006

The annotated papers in this section represent responses to a prompt that directed students to choose something fun to do outside and explain what makes this activity fun. Students responding to this prompt generally selected a fun outdoor activity and explained why the activity is fun. A paper was scorable if it focused on the topic and provided support related to what makes this outdoor activity fun. 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.

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:

- rank 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 either a student-generated list of the strengths and weaknesses or the annotation beneath the response (this activity might include improving the introduction and conclusion, adding transitional devices, providing more details and examples, refining word choice, and varying sentence structure); and
- using the rubric and skills above to score student responses to similar prompts.

Have you ever played soccer? Well I think it's fun to play outside and I'll tell you why.

To make soccer fun you will need the equipment to do it. You need a soccer ball, soccer shoes, pads, and sometimes someone else to play with. There are two kinds of soccer real and fake. For example, real soccer is where you have a goaly, and maybe a few players. What makes it fun is when you can block the ball, and pass it. When you pass, it can be intersepted, or not make it all the way. That's when you have to fight for it and really get in the game. Fake soccer is where there is no goaly and it's just you. You can dribble it and make a goal. The great part is when you score you can have fake cheering or pretend you won the world cup. Also, it can be fun if you only have you and the goaly up aganist each other.

The other way it's awsome is when you practice kicking. Kicking is cool and exciting because you can dribble or do tricks with the soccer ball. One of the tricks is the "Olie." You jump-up in the air with the soccer ball between your feet and kick it up to make it bounce off your head. You can also practice blocking. You would have you being the goaly and someone else being the kicker. If someone shoots sideways you would either run for it or dive and block it with your hands. It's awsome because once you black it you feel really good inside. Last but not least, there are games you can make out of soccer. One is "Fox and

GO ON 

the Hound. That's where your dribbling side to side and then you kick it like a bullet. It's really exciting. One more game is "Ball." It's where you have to dance and kick the soccer ball at the same time. The games are hard but very fun. filling. The games can have different moves in them and can be really cool but really hard.

Soccer is fun to play outside. You can practice your skills or just play a game!

SCORE POINT
6

The response focuses on why the student enjoys playing soccer. An organizational pattern is apparent, and transitional devices are used effectively. Some examples of effective transitioning can be found in the second paragraph: “To make soccer fun,” “For example,” “What makes,” and “When you pass.” Support is ample and elaborated by examples, illustrations, and anecdotes. Also in the second paragraph, the writer uses a comparative strategy to explain the difference between “real and fake” soccer: “There are two kinds of soccer real and fake. For example, real soccer is where you have a goaly, and maybe a few players . . . Fake soccer is where there is no goaly and it’s just you.” The writer demonstrates an involvement with and interest in the topic: “The great part is when you score you can have fake cheering or pretend you won the world cup.” Word choice is sometimes precise, and sentence structures are varied. Conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: More specific supporting details are needed to enhance the reader’s understanding. For example, the writer could include some personal anecdotes about particular times when he or she played “Fox and the Hound” or “Ball.” Does the writer play on a team? What position does the writer play? How much time does the writer spend playing soccer? More precise word choice and better control of conventions also would strengthen this response.

"Oh yeah!" that was a great activity to do outside! I went outside and swung on the swings. I swung high and I jumped high on the swings.

To begin with, I swung super high into the air. I was feeling the wind go all through my hair. My hair was being blown around like grass on a windy day. The air was really strong as it hit my face with all of its force and power. Then, I felt like I was flying in the air just like a hawk trying to find breakfast for its babies. I felt that if I tried to jump I wouldn't fall, I would just sit there floating in the air trying to get down. I could jump off of the swing, but I would glide in the air like a bird going somewhere really fast. It was awesome.

Further more, I had fun swinging because I would jump high into the sky. I would jump off the swing like a missile launching into space. I might be able to jump to the moon wearing an astronaut suit and travel on the moon for days, weeks, and even months looking for a big shiny moon rock. Then, I would jump to the top of Mt. Everest if I tried to.

When I did jump I would land on the bottom of my feet and bounce on the ground. The ants would scatter and the twigs would crunch. It is an excellent feeling like an acrobat at the end of a great circus show. I yelled out "That was incredible."

GO ON 

Having done that, I called my best friend over to play with me outside on the swing. Now I didn't have to imagine the fun. We would swing fast and slow and high and low. We would spin the swing around and around while we were in it and then unwind.

We were singing swinging songs and telling swinging jokes. We waved good bye to the sun. I love to swing outside.

SCORE POINT
6

This response is clearly focused. The organizational plan includes a brief introduction, a middle explanation of a swinging “high into the sky” experience, and an imaginative conclusion; however, transitions between and among the ideas are not always effective. Support is ample and developed through descriptive examples, illustrations, and anecdotes. In the fourth paragraph, the writer dramatically illustrates how jumping off the swing makes him or her feel: “When I did jump I would land on the bottom of my feet and bounce on the ground. The ants would scatter and the twigs would crunch. It is an excellent feeling like an acrobat at the end of a great circus show. I yelled out “That was incredible.” The response exhibits a sense of completeness. A mature command of language is demonstrated, including precise word choice and varied sentence structures. Conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: More effective transitional devices could be employed. The writer could clarify some of the descriptive phrases to logically connect the ideas. For example, the writer could provide better connections between jumping off the swing and “wearing an astronaut suit” and traveling on the moon and jumping “to the top of Mt. Everest . . .” The writer could include some specific, concrete details about the experience. Correction of convention errors would also strengthen this response.

Oh! Hi good friend. Playing outside can be so much fun, you can play with your friend, Play games like kickball and Base Ball. Those are some reasons why playing outside can be so much fun.

One of my favorite things to do outside is to play Baseball with all of my friends. My favorite thing to do during the game is batting. I like batting because once I hit the ball I run like crazy so I won't get out by a fielder. If I get out by a fielder I will have to sadly walk back to the old dugout. I also like fielding because I get to get people out myself and there is no possible way I can get out. I just love playing baseball with my friends.

Another reason playing outside is fun is I play games with my friends. playing games with my friends is fun because no one ever loses. No one ever loses because we use fair sportsmanship. My favorite game to play with them is Truth or Dare. Truth or Dare is fun to play because if you choose Dare you have to do the dare they say. If you choose truth you have to tell the truth. Onetime I picked dare and I had to go into a sewer, it was disgusting. Playing games with your good friends is so much fun.

GO ON 

I love playing Kickball outside. Playing kickball outside is fun because you get to kick the kickball with all of your might and run all around the spread out bases. One time I kicked the kickball so high and far that it was a homerun. playing kickball is so much fun. Don't you like playing kickball.

Isn't Baseball, playing with your friends and kickball fun especially when you do it outside. Join me outside with all my friends.

SCORE POINT
5

This writer chooses playing with friends as a favorite thing to do outside. Three outside activities are detailed in the response. The organizational plan provides for a progression of ideas, but the writer sometimes fails to logically connect and fully explain the ideas: “Another reason playing outside is fun is I play games with my friends. playing games with my friends is fun because no one ever loses. No one ever loses because we use fair sportsmanship. My favorite game to play with them is Truth or Dare.” A sense of completeness is conveyed through the organizational plan and ample support. Each reason is consistently elaborated, but the “playing baseball” reason contains more specific examples: “My favorite thing to do during the game is batting. I like batting because once I hit the ball I run like crazy so I won’t get out by a fielder. If I get out by a feilder I will have to sadly walk back to the old dugout. I also like feilding because I get to get people out myself and there is no possible way I can get out.” Word choice is adequate and occasionally precise. Sentence structure variation is attempted, but errors occur in basic sentence structure. 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 employ a more effective transitional plan to logically connect the ideas. The writer could provide more specific examples, illustrations, or anecdotes. For example, the student could have described a particular time when he or she was struck out by a fielder. Why does no one ever lose, and how do the friends show “fair sportsmanship”? What happened when the writer had to go into a sewer or when the writer kicked a homerun? More precision of word choice and better control of conventions and sentence structure would enhance the reader’s understanding.

Every body likes to do something fun outside. My favorite thing to do outside is kickball. The reasons I like kick ball is because I like to kick the ball, I like to pitch the ball, and I like getting people out. Now let me tell you more.

One of my favorite reasons why I like kickball is because I get to kick the ball. The first reason why I like to kick the ball is because I get to slam it over the fence! Some times when that ball goes flying out of the park I just wait for the ball to land before I run. Another reason why I like to kick the ball is because I get to run the bases. Most of the time I don't even have to kick the ball over the fence for home run.

Another reason why I like kickball is because I get to pitch. One of my favorite reasons why I like to pitch is because I get to pitch fast. I pitch so fast that even the best kickers miss the ball. The final reason why I like to pitch is because I get to pitch however I want to pitch. Sometimes when I look like I'm pitching hard the people I'm pitching to think that I'm going to pitch hard but I'm not. But when I pitch nobody knows what I'm going to do.

My favorite reason why I like kickball is because I like getting people out. One of the reasons I like getting people out is because I get to throw the

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ball at people. When I was little I threw with two hands, and I never got anyone out. But now when somebody is running to first, guess what it's their lucky day. Finally I like getting people out is because I get to catch pop flies. When I pitch slow and bouncy to them sure their going to hit a popfly, but when I'm there once that ball comes down I catch it and guess what he's OUT!!!

Now you know I like kick ball beause I get to kick, I get to pitch, and I get to get people out. Those are only a few of the reasons why I like kickball. Now you tell me what you like to do outside, and why.

SCORE POINT
5

This response focuses on why the writer enjoys playing kickball, and an organizational pattern is demonstrated; however, the writer sometimes fails to provide effective transitional devices to logically and smoothly connect the ideas: “One of my favorite reasons,” “The first reason,” and “Another reason.” A sense of completeness is conveyed through the organizational plan and ample support. The development of support seems list-like, but each reason is consistently developed with examples, illustrations, and anecdotes. The “getting people out” reason includes a relevant example: “When I was little I threw with two hands, and I never got anyone out . . . I get to catch popflies. When I pitch slow and bouncy to them sure their going to hit a popfly, but when I’m there once that ball comes down I catch it and guess what he’s OUT!!!” Word choice is adequate, and sentence structures are varied. Conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: A more effective organizational plan with transitional devices could be used to enhance the reader’s understanding. More fully elaborated support could be provided. For example, the student could have included specific details or anecdotes about his or her participation in the game of kickball. A more precise choice of words and better use of conventions would also strengthen this response.

My favorite outdoor game is freeze tag. I like running after people in the game. Outdoor gives me lots of energy when I play. I love getting frozen, it's so fun. Now you know why I think freeze tag is something fun to do outside.

My first reason is running. I like running all over the place, and in freeze tag I can run all I want. The running gives me strength and exercise. I can chase people too. Now you know why I like running in freeze tag.

My second reason was that I like the outdoors. The sun gets very hot and when it gets hot I run even faster. When it's cold outside I get tired but I still play the game. This year I'm going to [Europe] for Christmas and my sister and my niece and nephew love playing freeze tag in the snow, and so do I. Now you know why I like the outdoors.

Last but not least, my reason is getting frozen in the game. I sometimes I am an one leg and when I fall I still don't move because I would be O-U-T out of the game. If someone freezes me and I feel what they do that they are out, then usually I freeze someone because they think I got hurt. Now you know why I like getting frozen in freeze tag.

My opinion on what outdoor game is fun is freeze tag. One reason why I like freeze tag is because I like running around. One other reason why I like freeze tag is the wonderful

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outdoors, with what ever weather there might be. Last but
 definitely not last I like to get scared in
 the game when people freeze me. Now you know
 why I like freeze tag, running, the outdoors, and
 getting frozen.

EXPOSITORY STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
4

This writer generally focuses on playing freeze tag, but some ideas seem only loosely related. The organizational plan consists of a brief introduction, a middle part detailing why the game is enjoyed, and a summarizing conclusion. The “like the outdoors” reason is the most developed with some specific details, including a personal reference: “The sun gets very hot and when it gets hot I run even faster. When it’s cold outside I get tired but I still play the game. This year I’m going to [Europe] for Christmas and my sisters, and my niece and nephew love playing freeze tag in the snow, and so do I.” A sense of completeness is demonstrated. Word choice is generally adequate, and sentence structure variation is attempted. Errors in sentence structure and basic conventions do not interfere with the reader’s understanding.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could employ effective transitional devices to provide logical connections between and among the ideas. More fully elaborated support could be provided. For example, the student could move beyond a list of supporting details to more specific facts, examples, or anecdotes. For example, the writer could pause to explain more about playing freeze tag with his or her sisters, niece, and nephew or recall a particular time when playing freeze tag with friends was fun. Corrected and more varied sentence structure, more precise word choice, and better control of conventions would also strengthen this response.

Do you like to jump rope? I do. One of my reasons why I like to jump rope is because you can do different tricks also, you can jump rope with more than one rope. finally, if you like to jump rope you can keep on learning new tricks.

First of all, if you like to jump rope you can do different tricks. One of the tricks that I know is called "Skating" it is fun because you get to jump side to side. When I learned how to jump rope my mom taught me it. I fell a lot of times but I got up back again.

Additionally, if you know how to jump rope you can use more than one rope. When it was easy for me to jump with one rope I tried with two. I fell a lot of times and the rope got tangled with my feet but I kept on trying until I got it right.

finally, if you like to jump rope you can always keep on learning. When I learned to jump rope very good. I learned a lot of new things like I learned how to jump with one foot.

now you know why it is fun to jump rope, because you can do different tricks also, you can use more than one jump rope. finally, if you like to jump rope you can keep on learning

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new things. And that is why I like to jump rope. My advice to you is to try to jump rope you will like it.

EXPOSITORY STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
4

This response focuses on the writer’s enjoyment of jumping rope, and an organizational plan is apparent. Reasons for enjoying jumping rope are given in the introduction: “because you can do different tricks also, you can jump rope with more than one rope. finally, if you like to jump rope you can keep on learning new tricks.” The development of the support is uneven and mostly list-like; however, the “tricks” and “more than one rope” reasons contain some specific examples and anecdotes: “Additionally, if you know how to jumprope you can use more than one rope. When it was easy for me to jump with one rope I tried with two. I fell alot of times and the rope got tangled with my feet but I kept on trying until I got it right.” Word choice is generally adequate. Sentence structures are varied, but errors occur in basic sentence structure. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could employ a less traditional and predictable organizational plan with more effective transitional devices. Fully elaborated support with more precise word choice could be provided. For example, the writer should pause to explain more about the “skeing” trick, what happened when trying to jump with more than one rope, or what new things were learned. Precision of word choice and correction of basic convention and sentence structure errors would also strengthen this response.

My favrite thing to do outside is play hide and go seek. The reason why I like to play that is because you count out loud, and you can run and go hide, and run away away from the catcher.

First, the reason why I like to play hide and go seek is because you can count out loud. It is very fun to count out loud. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

Second, the second reason is hiding. It is also fun to hide too you know. After the counter stops counting he or she comes to find you. Boom! I got you.

Then, my last reason why is that you can run away from the catcher.

Run! Run! you can't catch me. If you don't get caught and you get to the base, you say base.

My favrite thing to do is play hide and go seek. The reason why I like to play that is because you can count out loud and you can run and go hide, and run away from the catcher

SCORE POINT
3

This response is generally focused on the student's favorite thing to do outside, playing the game of hide and go seek. The predictable organizational pattern includes a brief introduction, three reasons for enjoying playing the game: "you count out loud, and you can run and go hide, and run away away from the catcher" and a brief, repetitive conclusion. Although the development of support is mostly vague and list-like, a few supporting details are provided for each reason; however, the writer sometimes fails to logically connect the ideas, and the support seems loosely related: "you can count out loud. It is very fun to count out loud. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10." Most of the support consists of a description of how to play the game. Word choice is adequate, and sentence structure variation is attempted. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: Effective transitioning is needed to provide logical connections between the ideas. To enhance the reader's understanding, each reason could be elaborated with facts, examples, illustrations, or anecdotes. For example, the student could further explain why it is fun to count out loud, to run and go hide, and run away from the catcher. The student could recall a time when playing this game was fun. More precise word choice, better control of basic conventions, and more variation in sentence structure would also strengthen this response.

Something fun to play outside is riding bike. It is fun to ride bike because it gives you energy. Energy helps you because your bones get stronger.

Also another thing that riding bike is you could race with your friends and get to see the whole neighborhood. But the most important thing is you always have to use your helmet. You could even ride with your family.

You could also do tricks on bikes, but it is hard, very, very hard. Sometimes its fun to do easy tricks and when you keep on trying hard tricks, someday you'll get it. Another reason I like riding bike is because I like going hiking with it, when we're going on a camp with my family and friends.

GO ON 

When you go on a camp with your bike you might think its pretty out there in the world. Also you can ride bike at night but sometimes it dangress out there in the world. You could even go to place to place.

SCORE POINT
3

This writer chooses bike riding as a favorite thing to do outside. An organizational pattern is attempted; however, the writer fails to transition effectively between the ideas: “Also another thing that riding bike is you could race with your friends and, get to see the whole neborierhood. But the most emportent thing is you always have to use your helment. You could even ride with your family.” Supporting details are provided for each reason. But the writer fails to provide enough information to fully explain the reasons for enjoying bike riding: “Another reason I like riding bike is because I like going hiking with it, when we’re going on a camp with my family and friends.” More information is needed to enhance the reader’s understanding. Word choice is adequate, but errors occur in sentence structure and basic conventions. These errors do not impede meaning.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should employ effective transitional devices to provide logical connections between and among the ideas. Relevant supporting details for each reason are needed for the reader’s understanding. For example, the student could have used specific details or anecdotes to explain how riding bikes gives you energy. Why is it hard to do tricks on bikes? Why is biking on a camping trip a fun thing to do? Precise word choice, better sentence structure, and improved conventions would also strengthen this response.

Spending Time Outside Is Fun!

What I do outside is play football for fun that is what I do.

Football is fun to me is. You can hit each other, you can jump or dive so you can not get hit.

Some more things that is fun about football is falling down on the grass and the most fun thing about football is winning football game.

Football is fun because you get to make up a name for your team. It is fun to catch the ball and you did not get hit.

Making Touchdowns is the most fun thing in football to do.

I remember when my friends and I

~~GO ON~~ 

played football over five hours
and we won the game!!

That is my story about
Spending time outside.

SCORE POINT
2

The writer generally focuses on the topic. Although organization is attempted, the writer fails to include transitional devices that would provide logical connections between and among the ideas. Support is undeveloped and consists of a list of reasons the writer enjoys playing football. Some additional vague information is provided in the second and sixth paragraphs: “You can hit each other, you can jump or dive so you can not get hit” and “I remember when my friends and I played football over five hours and we won the game!!” Word choice is limited and immature. There are errors in sentence structure and basic conventions. These errors may cause the reader to pause, but they 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 employ an organizational plan with effective transitional devices. All reasons could be consistently extended or elaborated with supporting details. For example, the student could further explain how jumping or diving keeps you from getting hit, why falling down on the grass and making touchdowns are so much fun, how a name was chosen for the writer’s football team, and what happened during the five-hour football game. Words should be more precise, and sentence structures should be improved and more varied. Correction of convention errors would also strengthen this response.

I like to jumprope. This is why I like to jumprope. I can sing when I jumprope. I can jump with friends. I can also jump by myself. So if you want to see why I like jumping rope. Read this.

I can sing when I jump rope. I can jump rope with all of my friends. I can jump all by myself. That is the best of all. Sometimes I fall but jumping rope is good for me.

Maybe when you jumprope. You can sing when you jumprope. You can jump with your friends. You can jump by yourself too. So try to jump rope and see why you can like it too.

SCORE POINT
2

This rambling response attempts to explain why jumping rope is fun. An organizational pattern is attempted, including a repetitive beginning, middle, and ending; however, the writer fails to provide effective transitioning between and among the ideas. Support is provided through a repetitive list of three ideas: “I can sing when I jump rope. I can jump with friends. I can also jump by myself.” The “jump by myself” reason is extended with a little vague information: “I can jump all by myself. That is the best of all. Sometimes I fall but jumping rope is good for me.” Word choice is limited and immature, but knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could provide effective transitional devices to connect the ideas. Facts, examples, anecdotes, or illustrations are needed to enhance the reader’s understanding. For example, what songs does the writer sing while jumping rope? What games do the friends play while jumping rope? Why does the writer most enjoy jumping rope alone? Precision of word choice, variation of sentence structures, and improvement of basic conventions would also strengthen this response.

Speding is fun because you can run all over the place and then run a lap in the gim then you can run outside then you get your sped and you run some more that you dont want to stop then you want to race in a field then you bread and you run and run your a winner. Then you want to rate for your hole life then you want to be a champion racing and winning trophes.

SCORE POINT
1

This writing addresses the topic, but the response does not exhibit an organizational pattern. The writer fails to employ effective transitional devices to logically connect the ideas. Support is list-like and vague. The writer fails to develop the supporting details beyond a confusing list: “because you can run all over the place and then run a lap in the gim then you can run outside then you get your sped and you run some more . . .” Word choice is limited and predictable. Errors in sentence structure and basic conventions sometimes cause confusion.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should provide an organizational pattern with effective transitional devices. Each of the supporting details could be elaborated with facts, examples, anecdotes, or illustrations. For example, the writer could describe some personal running experiences. Does the writer run alone or with friends? Does the writer run just for pleasure or to win races? Why is running fun for the writer? More precise word choice, more varied sentence structure, and improved basic conventions would enhance the reader’s understanding.

Spending time outside is fun
 because you can play on
 stuff like your bike, Skate's,
 even on hot days, you can
 even go swimming
 and that's why I think
 spending time outside is fun.

SCORE POINT
1

This response minimally addresses the topic, and there is little evidence of an organizational plan. Supporting ideas are sparse and consist of a list of things to do when playing outside: “you can play on stuff like your bike, Skate’s, even on hot days you can even go swimming.” The introduction and conclusion offer no additional information. Word choice is limited, but errors in basic conventions do not interfere with understanding.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should provide an organizational pattern with effective transitional devices. Support should be developed with more details. For example, the writer could further explain biking, skating, and swimming activities and provide examples, illustrations, or anecdotes to enhance the reader’s understanding. Word choice could be more precise, and sentence structures could be more varied. Correction of sentence structure and convention errors would also strengthen this response.

Narrative Responses from the 2006 Assessment

Definition of Narrative Writing

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

Summary of the Narrative Responses Written in 2006

The annotated papers in this section represent responses to a prompt that directed students to write a story about a time an animal does something smart. Students responding to this prompt generally wrote a story about an animal doing something smart. A paper was scorable if it focused on the topic and provided details related to when an animal does something smart. 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.

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:

- rank 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 either a student-generated list of the strengths and weaknesses or the annotation beneath the response (this activity might include improving the introduction and conclusion, adding transitional devices, providing more details and examples, refining word choice, and varying sentence structure); and
- using the rubric and skills above to score student responses to similar prompts.

Jelousy Jepordy

I know animals aren't supposed to be smart. Only sometimes their jelousy gets a little bit out of hand. That's what happened to me. On a breezy, autumn day, I got a letter from my uncle, the farmer. He invited me to his farm where I could meet some of the newborn animals. I gladly excepted. When I got there the farm was deserted. There was only a pig, horse, and cow grazing in the pasture. Suddenly, a pig came racing and snorting towards me. As he knocked into me I flew backwards into a dark narrow hole. Soon after I hit the bottom, the three animals they cornered me into a corner where I fell back against a chair a giant wha-cha-ma-callit lowered onto my head. There was a whirring sound and that's all I remembered before I got knocked out.

When I wheezily wake-up I couldn't even remember what $2+2$ was! I must have been brainwashed! I looked around and saw a note. On it there was unreadable handwriting. When I decoded the writing (which took about five hours), I could make out the words. It said "We will be at your school getting A's on everything. P.S. Don't try to start the brainwashing machine. Sincerely yours, the three animals." I was burning with anger when I realized I couldn't go after them because I couldn't get out of the cave. As I leaned against the silthy wall I thought to myself "Those animals are going to pay!"

GO ON 

Meanwhile, at school, the pig, horse, and cow were getting A's on everything! They won the spelling bee. They got 100 on the math quiz! They even got to explain algebra to the class! Those used to be my jobs. After a full day of hard work, they got to stay after school and help the teacher clean the chalkboard. The animals were beginning to like school. Their only worry was when they got back to the farm, what would I do to them.

Back at the barn, I gave the animals a lecture. The cow said "We just wanted to be like you." I was shocked "You were jealous of me?" I asked. "Yes" answered the three animals in unison. I know but you still have to change me back. I told them. "But we want to be smart!" yelled the animals. "You are smart." I told them. You came up with this idea all by yourself, I think that is smart. "Okay. We will change you back." After they changed me back I ran home. Excited.

When I got home and I told my mom about my adventure I went up to my room. I lay on my bed thinking. Those animals just wanted to be like me. I bet I'm like their role model. I went to bed.

SCORE POINT
6

This organized narrative response focuses on a story about a time the writer was kidnapped by three smart animals. Effective transitional devices move the story line through time. The organizational plan and ample support convey a sense of completeness. Each event is elaborated with examples, illustrations, or anecdotes: "They won the spelling bee. They got 100 on the math quiz! They even got to explain algebra to the class! Those used to be my jobs." A mature command of language and a precise choice of words enhance the response: "I was burning with anger when I realized I couldn't go after them because I couldn't get out of the cave. As I leaned against the filthy wall I thought to myself 'Those animals are going to pay!'" Sentence structure is varied, and conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could have further explained what happened between the time the animals returned to the farm and the writer's lecture to the animals. Better control of conventions also would strengthen this response.

"[Penny] want a cracker?" is what I used to say to get my Porecheet to talk. But not anymore! Definitely not after I heard her talking to a cracker saying "Cracky want a [Penny]?"! Or after seeing her read The Moby Dick out loud to that very same cracker! I used to think my Porecheet was as dumb as pie, but now I can see that she is a very intellegint animal. That [Penny] is one smart bird! And I learned all of this on one sunny evening of Spring...

"Mom, I'm home from school!" I yelled as I galloped into my _____ home. I sat down at the kitchen table and began munching on a very healthy snack... chocolate! Well, then I heard noises... weird noises. "Mom, is that you?" I bellowed out curiously. No replie. So, I decided to do some investigating. When I turned the corner into my living room, my eyes did a backflip! So did my ears. "Cracky want a [Penny]? Cracky want a [Penny]?" is the words that came out of my P'tacheets mouth. My dumb bird... [Penny]... was... talking... to... a... cracker! Whoa! I would of never imagined this! I pinched myself just to make sure I wasn't dreaming. Agh! I wasn't! I decided that the heat was getting to me and I trotted out the door. I took a big gulp of ice cold water and layed down to rest.

GO ON 

2 hours later, I was up from my nap. I walked back into the living room to check on [Penny]. The bird was clutching onto a book and the cracker was in her water bowl. What? Then [Penny] started talking again... "As the updraft sent billows by billows of waves crashing upon the boat, the sky darkened over the horizon". Hey! I knew that line. My [Penny] was reading The Moby Dick! My bird was reading! No way! I knew the heat wasn't getting to me because it was 5° below zero! It was real... my [Penny] was the smartest bird ever. It was the smartest thing my pearl white Parakeet had ever done! Even better than the time she locked our cat, [Slinky] in her cage. It was too cool!

Who can read? Who can talk? Who can even walk? But most of all, who can read my pet? It's [Penny]! [Penny] definitely did something smart that day. It was astounding! Could any other bird ever read a book or talk to a cracker? I don't think so! I can't believe that my Parakeet could have the ability to do that! So, if you by any chance know a Genius Wild Read book for birds... please help me get [Penny] into it!

SCORE POINT
6

This imaginative response is clearly focused. The organizational plan includes effective transitional devices. The ample support also contributes to a sense of completeness. The writer uses examples, illustrations, and anecdotes to elaborate each event. The writer's creative introduction makes the reader want to find out more about this extraordinary bird: "[Penny] want a cracker?" is what I used to say to get my Parakeet to talk. But not anymore! Definitely not after I heard her talking to a cracker saying "Cracky want a [Penny]?"! Or after seeing her read The Moby Dick out loud to that very same cracker!" A mature command of language is demonstrated. Word choice is precise, and sentence structure is varied. Although some spelling 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: More supporting details could be added to enhance the reader's understanding. For example, the writer could more fully elaborate the events surrounding the discovery that [Penny] could read and further explain the reaction of others to this remarkable bird. Correction of the few spelling and convention errors also would strengthen this response.

One rainy horrible day a boy named _____ was sitting in his room staring out the window. His face looked sad so his mother went out and bought him a hamster. He lived in Tennessee and he didn't have much friends. When his mother came home he knew it was going to be his best friend.

When his mother gave him the hamster he thanked her and went up stairs. He was thinking of a name and he said, "Why don't I name you [Fuzzy]?" He brought [Fuzzy] out and [Fuzzy] was just sitting there. "You're useless!" And he walked away.

The next day _____ brought [Fuzzy] down stairs and told his mother that [Fuzzy] was useless. [Fuzzy] just sat there. So _____ brought [Fuzzy] up stairs and put it in its cage. [Fuzzy] was running on his wheel and _____ just knew somehow he was special.

That night when _____ was asleep his mother was baking cookies. She went in the living room to watch T.V. _____ mother fell asleep. Something horrible happened.

During the night [Fuzzy] smelt

GO ON 

burning. It was the cookies! [Fuzzy] climbed onto his house, pushed the top of his cage off and crawled onto _____'s bed. He crawled on his face and _____ woke up. _____ ran down stairs, woke his parents up, and they ran out of the house as soon as they could. When they got outside they turned back and there house crashed down. They ran to there neighbors house and called the fire men. The fire men came over and stoped the fire. "I was wrong, you are a life saver," _____ whispered. So at the end they became a happy family. The hamster stayed with them and they stayed with [Fuzzy]. Also the happy family bought a new house.

SCORE POINT
5

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

This narrative response focuses on the story of a heroic hamster named [Fuzzy]. The organizational plan provides for a progression of events, although lapses occur. "His face looked sad so his mother went out and bought him a hamster. He lived in Tennessee and he didn't have much friends. When his mother came home he knew it was going to be his best friend." Development of support is adequate, and a sense of completeness is demonstrated. A feeling of suspense is created as the writer tells how [Fuzzy] changed from a "usless" hamster to the family's "lifesaver": "During the night [Fuzzy] smelt burning. It was the cookies! [Fuzzy] climbed onto his house, pushed the top of his cage off and crawled onto _____'s bed. He crawled on his face and _____ woke up." Word choice is adequate and sometimes precise. Errors occur in sentence structure and basic conventions, but these errors do not impede meaning.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: Effective transitions between the events could be used. More fully elaborated support for each event could be provided. For example, the student could have included specific details or anecdotes about why the writer thought the hamster was useless and what happened during the night of the disastrous fire. Word choice could be more precise. Correction of sentence structure and basic convention errors would also strengthen this response.

I have the world's smartest cat! Last year my cat, [Gibby], and I went to the park to play with my new frisbee. It was my friend, [Gibby]'s turn to throw the frisbee, and she threw it so high that it got stuck in a huge maple tree that was impossible to climb.

First, I suggested we should try and knock it down with a stick. So we ran off into the park with [Tipzy] behind us looking for a stick long enough to knock the frisbee down. [Gibby] came back with a very long stick. I told her "you stand on my back and use the stick to try and get the frisbee." That didn't work out so good, [Gibby] lost her balance and fell. Then I asked, "what do we do know?"

Then, before we were about to leave [Gibby] shouted "I've got an idea, why don't we borrow some of the soccer balls kids have and throw the balls at the tree." We both went around the park asking if we could borrow some balls. [Gibby] and I came back with six balls each. We started throwing like we were on fire, but every time we threw the balls missed. We returned the balls to their owners.

Shortly after, we returned the balls we got our bikes. Just before we rode off [Tipzy] jump out of the basket and started climbing the tree. We tried to stop her but she kept climbing. She got on the same limb

GO ON 

as the frizbe and knocked it down with her paws. Then she climbed down and [Gibby] and I hugged and kissed her.

Last of all, we picked up the frizbe and went back to my house. We treated our hero, with a tuna sundae. "I told [Gibby] that I have the smartest cat in the world and I love her."

SCORE POINT
5

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

This writer tells a suspenseful story about a time when a “frizbe” gets stuck in a tree. The response is organized, and effective transitional devices are used. The writer uses the attempts to get the “frizbe” out of the tree to move the story line along. Development of the support is adequate; however, sometimes the story line seems hurried because the writer does not stop to fully elaborate the events: “[Gibby] and I came back with six balls each. We started throwing like we were on fire, but every time we threw the balls missed. We returned the balls to their owners.” Precise word choice is demonstrated at times: “a huge maple tree that was impossible to climb,” and “[Gibby] lost her balance and fell,” and “She got on the same limb as the frizbe and knocked it down with her paws.” Sentence structure is varied, and conventions are generally followed.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could provide more specific facts, examples, or illustrations to support the story line. For example, the student could have more fully explained the frustrating experiences with the “frizbe.” Were the girls hurt by the fall? How did they convince the players to borrow their soccer balls? Did the girls have fun during their experiences? A more fully elaborated conclusion and better control of conventions would enhance the reader’s understanding.

One sunny day two nice little boys named _____ and _____ went to their tree house. At their tree house they told true stories and it had to be about animals. After _____ it was _____'s turn. He was going to tell the story about a dog named [Bohdi]. The story went like this.

Once upon a time a dog named [Bohdi] was playing fetch with his kind owner. They were having a lot of fun. The owner accidentally threw the ball in the tree and got it stuck. He climbed the tree to get the ball, when he noticed someone is drowning. The owner quickly went in his house and called the ambulance. [Bohdi] quickly jumped in the water and swam toward him.

When [Bohdi] reached him the man grabbed hold on [Bohdi]. [Bohdi] swam to the shore. Quickly the doctors and nurses put him in the ambulance. [Bohdi] was all wet. The owner walked over to [Bohdi] and said "I'm very proud of you." They gave [Bohdi] a golden medal, that said your a lifesaver.

After [Bohdi] and his owner got home the owner turned on the news. The lady on the news said "a dog named [Bohdi] had saved the life of _____. The dog was rewarded with a medal. I think [Bohdi] did something smart." His owner turned off the tv and told [Bohdi] "Shes right you did do something smart."

"That's how the story went" said _____. They were tired. They climbed out of the tree house and went to bed.

SCORE POINT
4

This response focuses on friends telling stories about smart animals. The organizational plan includes some effective transitional devices to move the story along, but the story line seems rushed at times. The development of supporting details is uneven. Each event is extended with little bits of information, but the "news" event contains some elaborated details: "the owner turned on the news. The lady on the news said 'a dog named [Bohdi] had saved the life of _____. The dog was rewarded with a medal. I think [Bohdi] did something smart.' His owner turned off the tv and told [Bohdi] 'Shes right you did do something smart.'" Word choice is adequate, and sentence structures vary. Some errors occur in basic conventions.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could add transitions to enhance connections between and among events. More support could be provided through examples or anecdotes to tell what happened when the writer saw someone drowning and what caused [Bohdi] to react quickly to the emergency. Greater sentence variety, precise wording, and correcting conventions errors would also improve this response.

Everyone has a story about a smart animal. I know I do. My story was about my pet dog [Tiny] pretending she was sick to not go to the salon and get a haircut. Now I am going to tell you how this story started.

One day my mom was talking to me about going to the salon for animals. My pet dog [Tiny] was getting a haircut! It was about time. [Tiny] looked like a little furball running around like crazy. I was very happy for her.

Later I was talking to her about her haircut. Then when I put her leash on she started to sneeze and make weird noises. I quickly ran to my mom and told her. She said that we couldn't go to the salon and give her a haircut because she was sick. I was sad.

But then I didn't see her sick. She was playing and jumping everywhere. I started to think that maybe she understood me. I went to tell my mom. She said that [Tiny] was a very smart dog. Because out of all the dogs we have had she has been the smartest dog. My mom and I understood the way she feels to get a haircut. Because my mom told me about how I reacted and she did when our first haircut. So we didn't take her to the salon to get a haircut. [Tiny] was so happy.

Everyone has a story about a smart animal. I know I do. My story was about my pet dog [Tiny]. As you can see [Tiny] is a smart animal. What is yours? Now you know that [Tiny] is the smartest animal ever! And after all [Tiny] looks cute the way she is!

**THE
END!**

SCORE POINT
4

The writing generally focuses on the topic. An organizational pattern is employed, but some lapses occur. The introduction and conclusion are repetitive and lend an expository tone to the story. Some effective transitional devices are used to provide connections between the events. Development of the support is adequate, but the story line seems rushed. Word choice is adequate, and sentence structure variation is attempted. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could pause to elaborate each event with facts, examples, illustrations, or anecdotes. For example, the student could further explain what happens when the dog pretends to be sick, and why Mom thinks [Tiny] is a smart dog. How did the writer and the mother react when they got their first haircuts? More precise word choice and better control of basic conventions and sentence structure would also strengthen this response.

One day I went to the zoo in Kissimee Fl. and I saw a elephant. What I saw that elephant do was so amazing! That elephant was reading a book and you would know he was because he was reading aloud and you could hear him 1,000 miles away! So I went up to him and, bi, golly he could read, write, do everything we can do. So I invited him to my school. I told my friends and everybody that he could read and write but when I asked him to, he refused. I gave him a peanut but before I gave it to him I said "you better read a book." He promised. But after he ate the peanut he said "silnce"! So I had to walk home embarrassed. My class made up a book called "Can your elephant read and write" The teacher approved it. So I asked my mom to swieth me to another zone. And she did so I was there for about 5 months, and they were ready to go on a field trip to the zoo in Kissimee Fl.! Can you guess what happened? Sure enough she met an elephant That Could Read and Write!

SCORE POINT
3

This writer tells about a time he or she heard an elephant read aloud. Predictable transitional devices are used. The story line seems rushed, and the writer does not pause to provide enough details about the events. The most developed event is the writer's *attempt* to persuade the elephant to read at school: "I gave him a peanut but before I gave it to him I said 'you better read a book!' He promised. But after he ate the peanut he said 'silnce'!" The conclusion is nonspecific and confusing. The writer switches abruptly from changing schools to "*they* were ready to go on a field trip to the zoo" to "Sure enough *she* met an elephant That could Read and Write!" It is unclear to whom the pronouns *they* and *she* refer. Word choice is adequate. Some sentence structure variation is attempted. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should employ effective transitional devices to provide logical connections between and among the events. The writer should pause to elaborate on each event. Facts, examples, illustrations, and anecdotes could be used to enhance the reader's understanding. For example, the writer could have used specific details or anecdotes to tell about what happened when he or she discovered that the elephant could read. Why was the writer upset about the class book and the teacher's approval of the book? Precise word choice, better sentence structure, and improved conventions would also strengthen this response.

Me my dad, and my best friend [Candy] the most
 smartest bear last March.

This is how the story started it was it was
 my birthday and me and [Candy] wanted to go camping
 so my dad said yes and we all gathered our stuff
 and went to the camp ground and get up camp. A couple
 of minutes later a bear should up at the camp and my
 dad was doing his karate on the bear and then the bear
 ran off. After we got the fish and finished cooking them
 my dad before we eat we should take a nap so the
 fish can cool down, so we got in our tents and took a
 nap. When I woke up I heard my dad screaming that bear
 is taking all of our fish. The bear said, what I get hungry
 to I tried to tell but your dad scared me away. [Natalie]
 [Candy] did you just hear the bear talk, yes dad we heard him.
 Get out of here you evil humans how can you push us
 out of our camping ground you food stealing, talking bear
 you.

SCORE POINT
3

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

The writer generally focuses on the topic and shows an attempt to organize the events sequentially: “This is how the story started,” “After we got the fish and finished cooking . . .” and “When I woke up . . .” The presentation of events seems generally rushed. In the following example, three “events” are strung together without details being provided for any of one of them: “we all gathered our stuff and went to the camp ground and set up camp.” Dialogue is used to extend the hungry bear event: “What[?] I get hungry to I tried to tell but your dad scared me away.” Word choice is adequate. Although punctuation errors are frequent, knowledge of basic conventions is demonstrated. Sentence structure variety is attempted.

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 enhance the events by providing specific examples. Precise word choice would also improve the story. While spelling is generally correct, the student should insert missing words where their absence makes the meaning unclear. Errors in punctuation should be corrected.

It was on a bright sunny Sunday morning, I asked my mom if we could get a dog called a Pollywollyoptasuarus. She asked what it looked like. I said it was a little purple thing, it had blue spikes on its back, it had black eyes, smaller tail and and a small head. She said ok. We went to the store to get it. When we got back I ran some tests on it about the size of its brain. I was the hieght of its brain was the size of six hands and the width was the length of my hand so I could tell it was smart.

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
2

This response focuses on the topic, and an organizational pattern is attempted. The writer fails to employ effective transitional devices to provide logical connections between and among the events. Most of the support is list-like and somewhat confusing. The writer seems to concentrate more on describing the dog than on telling a story about what happens when this strange animal does something smart. Details are given about what the dog looked like: “It was a little purple thing, It had blue spikes on it’s back, it had black eyes, small tail and and a small head.” A theory about why the dog is smart also is presented: “about the size of it’s brain. I was the hieght of it’s brain was the size of six hands and the width was the length of my hand so I could tell it was smart.” Word choice is adequate. Errors in sentence structure and basic conventions do not impede understanding.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should employ a consistently narrative story line with effective transitional devices. The writer should pause to provide logical connections between the events and to elaborate the events with relevant supporting details. For example, the student could tell more about the mother’s response to this request for such a strange animal. What did the size of the dog’s brain have to do with intelligence? Did the dog do something smart? Sentence structures should be improved and more varied. Correction of convention errors would also strengthen this response.

What I am going to talk about is a smart dog. I am going to tell you a little story about when my grandfather was small. Once my grandfather went to school. He was walking and some mean kids were bothering him. His dog went to those kids and he bit them up. My grandfathers dog saved his life. That is what you call a smart dog. That is my fact that you learned. I would love to have a smart dog like that. The dog was very intelligent.

SCORE POINT
2

This response focuses on a time the writer’s grandfather was rescued by a dog. The attempt to organize includes a brief introduction, some list-like support, and a rambling conclusion. The writer fails to provide effective transitional devices to logically connect the events. The writer rushes through the story line and does not pause to provide adequate supporting details: “He was walking and some mean kids were bothering him. His dog went to those kids and he bit them up.” The writer attempts to conclude the story, but the addition of extraneous and loosely related ideas confuses the reader: “That is what you call a smart dog. That is my fact that you learned. I would love to have a smart dog like that. The dog was very intelligent.” Word choice is limited, but some variation in sentence structure is attempted. Knowledge of conventions is demonstrated.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer could employ more effective transitional devices to connect the events. Facts, examples, anecdotes, or illustrations are needed to enhance the reader’s understanding. For example, the student could recall more details about the events. What were the “mean kids” doing to bother the grandfather? How did the grandfather respond to the taunts? What is meant by “he bit them up”? What happened immediately after the dog saved him? Precision of word choice, variation of sentence structures, and improvement of basic conventions would also strengthen this response.

My cat did something smart. we wanted to take my cat to the vet but my cat ran under the bed. Then we had to call the vet we can't come there today. So we didn't go to the vet. That's the day my cat did something smart.

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT
1

This brief response minimally addresses the topic. An organizational pattern is attempted, but development of support is limited, vague, and moves too quickly through time: “Then we had to call the vet we can’t come there today. So we didn’t go to the vet.” Word choice is limited and immature. Errors in sentence structure and basic conventions do not impede understanding.

Draft responses are planned and written in a 45-minute time period. This response could be strengthened by employing the following strategies: The writer should use more effective transitional devices. Each of the supporting details could be elaborated with facts, examples, anecdotes, or illustrations. For example, the writer could tell more about what happened when they tried to get the cat from under the bed. What happened on the phone conversation with the vet? Do they plan to use a different strategy for their cat’s next appointment with the vet? More precise word choice, more varied sentence structure, and improved basic conventions would enhance the reader’s understanding.

One time my dog did smthing very smart. He found something in my backyard. He dug up a old blue rock. The rock was big

NARRATIVE STUDENT RESPONSE

SCORE POINT 1

The writer minimally addresses the topic in this brief response. There is little, if any, attempt to develop an organizational plan. Supporting ideas are sparse and vague: "He found something in my backyard." The writer provides only one vague detail: "The rock was big." Sentence structure and word choice are adequate, and few errors occur in 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. Support should be developed with more details. For example, the writer could include examples or anecdotes to tell why finding a blue rock made his dog a smart animal. Word choice could be more precise, and sentence structures could be more varied.

Appendix A

Glossary

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 pre-defined criteria

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Response – writing that is stimulated by a prompt

Rubric – scoring description for each score point of the scale

Scorer – person trained to score student responses

Support – quality of details illustrating or explaining the central theme

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix B

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 C

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 should 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 statement directs the student to write about a specific topic described by a key word or phrase. This topic serves as the central theme of the student's written response. The statement provides examples or definitions of the topic. The intent is to provide a common understanding of the topic by expanding, restating, or clarifying it for the student. The intent is not to preclude the student's narrowing or restating of the topic to suit his or her own plan.

Example:

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

Directions for Writing The directions for writing include a strategy statement that suggests an approach for those students who might have some difficulty getting started.

Example:

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

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

Specification for Narrative Writing Prompts

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

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

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

Writing Situation The writing situation statement directs the student to write about a specific topic described by a key word or phrase. This topic serves as the central theme of the student's written response. The statement provides examples or definitions of the topic. The intent is to provide a common understanding of the topic by expanding, restating, or clarifying it for the student. The intent is not to preclude the student's narrowing or restating of the topic to suit his or her own plan.

Example:

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

Directions for Writing The directions for writing include a strategy statement that suggests an approach for those students who might have some difficulty getting started.

Example:

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

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

FCAT Writing+ Prompt Evaluation Form

Prompt ID _____ Grade Level _____ Date _____

INTEREST LEVEL

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

Comments

BIAS

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

Comments

PURPOSE OF WRITING

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

Comments

WORDING OF PROMPT

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

Comments

ORGANIZATION OF RESPONSE

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

Comments

DEPTH OF SUPPORT

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

Comments

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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

Comments

Reviewer's Signature _____

Appendix D

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 development of support or 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 legibility 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 non-traditional 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 non-illustrative 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 E

Instructional Implications for Each Score Point

Grade 4

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

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

- 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 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

- 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

- 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

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

Appendix F

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 pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading 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, 2006.

Florida Writes! Report on the 2006 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 4; Florida Writes! Report on the 2006 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 8; and Florida Writes! Report on the 2006 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 G

FCAT Publications and Products

The Department of Education 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 web site at <http://www.fldoe.org>.

About the FCAT Web Brochure

This web-based brochure is found on the DOE web site in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole and provides information about FCAT Reading, Writing+, Mathematics, and Science for Grades 3–11. It is designed to provide a summary, as well as detailed information, across grades and subject areas and to 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 web site.

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 web site.

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 web site.

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

Newly designed 17" by 23" 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. New posters were delivered to districts in August 2005 and are available at district assessment offices.

FCAT Released Tests

Reading, Grades 4, 8, and 10

Mathematics, Grades 4, 8, and 10

In 2005, the DOE released previously-used full tests of FCAT Reading and FCAT Mathematics for Grades 4, 8, and 10. This web-based release included not only the tests, but also several other important documents including 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 that are informative for all audiences, especially the range of correct answers and points needed for each achievement level. All materials are available on the DOE web site.

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, Grade Levels 3–5, 6–8, and 9–10**Mathematics, Grade Levels 3–5, 6–8, and 9–10**Science, Grades 5, 8, and 10**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 web site.

*Florida Reads! Report on the 2006 FCAT Reading Released Items (Grades 4, 8 & 10)**Florida Solves! Report on the 2006 FCAT Mathematics Released Items (Grades 5, 8 & 10)**Florida Inquires! Report on the 2006 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 2006 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 available each May.

*Florida Writes! Report on the 2006 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 4**Florida Writes! Report on the 2006 FCAT Writing+ Assessment, Grade 8**Florida Writes! Report on the 2006 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 available each May.

Frequently Asked Questions About FCAT

This brochure provides answers to frequently asked questions about the FCAT program and is available on the DOE web site.

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 web site.

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 analysis will assist educators in interpreting and understanding their local FCAT scores, which will help improve instruction in the classroom. The PDF version is available on the DOE web site.

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 a list of the different kinds of FCAT questions, 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 which Sunshine State Standards benchmark is being assessed by each question. These booklets are available in PDF format on the DOE web site.

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) and provides specifications of the classifications and composition of the reading and mathematics NRT assessments. It is available in PDF format on the DOE web site.

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 web site.

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 web site.



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