

WRITING

INDEPENDENT WRITING

WHAT?

Independent Writing is an authentic sample of a student's writing collected periodically throughout the school year.

This assessment measures the child's ability to:

- use the conventions of print
- use grammar and punctuation conventions
- apply sound-symbol relationships
- use conventional spelling
- apply elements of a story
- record observations and describe experiences
- use tools in the environment for writing (words around the room, dictionaries, word books).

WHY?

Each piece of writing is a document of a child's growth in the use of print to communicate ideas effectively. Periodically the teacher can analyze the child's piece of writing for information about writing and spelling development.

HOW?

Administration

The topic is self-selected and the sample is informal, an example of daily work. Independent Writing is not based on an assigned topic or specific prompt generated by the teacher. Nor is it a structured frame sentence where the child is expected to fill in a blank. It is an authentic sample of work that shows what the child **can do**.

Scoring and Analysis

The teacher needs to use professional judgment in determining which profile, rubric scale, or checklist to use in evaluating the Independent Writing sample.

ON-DEMAND WRITING

WHAT?

On-Demand Writing is more formal than Independent Writing and all students write on a specific prompt. The writing reflects a student's ability to produce a written product in a controlled situation within a given period.

This assessment measures the child's ability to:

- use the conventions of print
- use grammar and punctuation conventions
- apply sound-symbol relationships
- use conventional spelling
- use techniques that give writing power and impact
- use a pattern of organization suited to topic, purpose and audience.

WHY?

An On-Demand Writing is another opportunity to assess a student's progress in writing. It gives the teacher a "snapshot" of how well a student can write about a given topic on a given day. This writing sample is another piece of information the teacher can use to make an informed decision about the next steps in writing instruction.

HOW?

Administration

Go to the PUSD literacy web site for a selection of prompts appropriate for the grade level. (<http://powayusd.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/projects/literacy/>)

California Standards Test Scoring Rubric Grade 4 Writing Tasks

4	<p>The writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ clearly addresses all parts of the writing task ■ demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose ■ maintains a consistent point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate ■ includes a clearly presented central idea with relevant facts, details, and/or explanations ■ includes a variety of sentence types ■ contains few, if any, errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing. 	<p>Narrative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ provides a thoroughly developed sequence of significant events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories ■ includes vivid descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to visualize the events or experiences <p>Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ is characterized by paraphrasing of the main idea(s), and significant details <p>Response to Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ demonstrates a clear understanding of the literary work ■ provides effective support for judgments through specific references to text and prior knowledge
3	<p>The writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ addresses all parts of the writing task ■ demonstrates a general understanding of purpose ■ maintains a mostly consistent point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate ■ presents a central idea with mostly relevant facts, details, and/or explanations ■ includes a variety of sentence types ■ contains some errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing. 	<p>Narrative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ provides an adequately developed sequence of significant events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories ■ includes some descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to visualize the events or experiences <p>Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ is characterized by paraphrasing of the main idea(s), and significant details <p>Response to Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ demonstrates an understanding of the literary work ■ provides some support for judgments through references to text and prior knowledge
2	<p>The writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ addresses only parts of the writing task ■ demonstrates little understanding of purpose ■ maintains an inconsistent point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure ■ suggests a central idea with limited facts, details, and/or explanations ■ includes little variety of sentence types ■ contains several errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing. 	<p>Narrative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ provides a minimally developed sequence of events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories ■ includes limited descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to visualize the events or experiences <p>Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ is characterized by substantial copying of key phrases and minimal paraphrasing <p>Response to Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ demonstrates a limited understanding of the literary work ■ provides weak support for
1	<p>The writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ addresses only one part of the writing task ■ demonstrates no understanding of purpose ■ lacks a clear point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure ■ lacks a central idea but may contain marginally related facts, details, and/or explanations ■ includes no sentence variety ■ contains serious errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing. 	<p>Narrative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ lacks a sequence of events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories ■ lacks descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to visualize the events or experiences <p>Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ is characterized by substantial copying of indiscriminately selected phrases or sentences <p>Response to Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ demonstrates little understanding of the literary work ■ fails to provide support for judgments

Response to Literature Writing Rubric Grade 4

6 Exceptional Writer

- Expresses and maintains a clear insightful thesis
- Sustained quality throughout.
- Excellent organization:
 - solid introduction which contains thesis sentence.
 - multi-paragraph body which contains either specifically quoted or well-paraphrased evidence from the text; *the strength of the paper lies in the writers interpretation both in quality and quantity*
 - a solid conclusion which goes beyond summary of examples presented by giving further interpretation (either by making personal connections to the text or stating theme)
- Powerful, precise language
- Clear sentence sense and variety results in interesting writing
- Few errors in conventions and spelling
- Correct paragraphing

5 Strong Writer

- States thesis
- Quality may not be even: will have intro, multi-paragraph body and conclusion but may begin better than end -- or -- end more strongly than begins -- or -- may be unevenly written in the body paragraph.
 - Strong organization:
 - introduction which contains or leads clearly to writer's thesis
 - develops multiple reasons through either quotations from text or paraphrased examples; won't elaborate as fully as does a 6-point paper;
 - conclusion provides finality or closure and may add further interpretation (either by personalizing connections to text and/or explaining the theme)
 - Precise language, though may show less impressive word choice
 - Clear sentence sense and variety
 - Few errors in conventions and spelling
 - Correct paragraphing

4 Capable Writer

- Thesis may not be very obviously, stated but is clearly implied
- Usually relies on visible, predictable organizational plan:
 - may begin directly with thesis sentence;
 - supporting ideas are offered but the interpretation may be at the literal, concrete level (they merely restate the example in different words);
 - conclusion restates thesis;
 - some writers may attempt a personal connection to story or offer personal opinion
- Word choice is generally appropriate but lacks the vigor and exactness of higher scoring papers

- May have occasional run-ons and fragments as a result of attempting more complex sentences but MOST sentences are correct
- Some errors in conventions and spelling; errors seen are those typical of first draft writing appropriate to the grade
- Paragraphing mostly correct

3 Developing Writer

- May offer a weak interpretation of the text; or **may not really address the prompt**; or may be a retelling of the story with no interpretation offered but structured as an essay
- Evidence of organizational plan but may lose focus; may be missing either an introduction or conclusion
- Body may be undeveloped; may offer evidence but no interpretation
- Predictable word choice
- Simple or repetitive sentences, may include fragments and/or run-ons but still mostly correct
- Noticeable errors in conventions and spelling, but readable; accountability words are mostly correct
- May have inconsistent paragraphing

2 Limited Writer

- Interpretation may be unclear or reader may simply retell the story briefly
- Little logical arrangement of ideas and may have a “jumping around” quality
- Longer papers are usually rambling and unfocused
- May contain disconnected ideas and/or examples from story. May contain many areas of vagueness and/or confusion
- Examples sparsely developed
- Limited word choice
- Short, simple sentences or fragments; long rambling sentences or run ons
- Frequent errors in conventions and phonetic spelling interfere with readability
- Excessive plagiarism without the benefit of quotation marks

1 Emergent Writer

- May have no discernible interpretation, papers may be partially or wholly incoherent
- Little or no organizational plan
- Simple, vague, and imprecise, a complete lack of sentence control
- A general failure to communicate
- Wholly plagiarized; or not enough original writing to determine proficiency.

O Off Topic

- Does not even mention key word(s) from prompt; wrote on another topic.

Persuasive Writing Rubric Grade 4

6 Exceptional Writer

- Expresses and maintains a clear judgment or interpretation.
- Sustained quality throughout.
- Excellent organization:
 - solid introduction which contains thesis sentence (writer's judgment or interpretation);
 - multi-paragraph body which contains specific evidence from the text **AND** the writer's thorough interpretation of what this evidence means;
 - a solid conclusion which goes beyond summary of examples presented by making personal connections to the text
- Powerful, precise language
- Clear sentence sense and variety results in interesting writing and convincing writing
- Few errors in conventions and spelling
- Correct paragraphing

5 Strong Writer

- States thesis (judgment or interpretation) but may be written in multiple sentences
- Quality may not be even: will have intro, multi-paragraph body and conclusion but may begin better than ends -- or -- end more strongly than begins -- or be unevenly written in the body paragraphs.
- Strong organization:
 - introduction which contains or leads clearly to writer's judgment or interpretation
 - develops multiple reasons through quotations from text or paraphrased examples; may not elaborate as fully as does a 6-point paper;
 - conclusion provides finality or closure but may not personalize connections to text
- Precise language, though may show less attention to exact meaning
- Clear sentence sense and variety
- Few errors in conventions and spelling
- Correct paragraphing

4 Capable Writer

- Thesis (judgment or interpretation) may be very obviously stated but is clear
- Usually relies on visible, predictable organizational plan:
 - may begin directly with thesis sentence;
 - has at least two supporting ideas with evidence and interpretation developed in body; these may not be even however;
 - conclusion at least summarizes main points but may go no further;
- Word choice is generally appropriate but lacks the vigor and exactness of higher scoring papers.

- May have occasional run-ons and fragments as a result of attempting more complex sentences but MOST sentences are correct
- Some errors in conventions and spelling; errors seen are those typical of first draft writing appropriate to the grade
- Paragraphing mostly correct

3 Developing Writer

- Make a judgment but may be a very literal reading of the text
- Evidence of organizational plan but may lose focus; may be missing either an introduction or conclusion
- Arguments or ideas will be loose, unsystematic, or undeveloped; may offer no evidence from text -- or may offer evidence but no interpretation of what the evidence shows
- Predictable or sometimes inappropriate word choice
- Simple or repetitive sentences, may include fragments and/or run-ons but still mostly correct
- Errors in conventions and spelling, but readable; accountability words are mostly correct
- Generally uses incorrect or inconsistent paragraphing

2 Limited Writer

- Judgment or interpretation may be unclear or reader may simply retell the story briefly with NO judgment or interpretation
- Little logical arrangement of ideas and may have a “jumping around” quality
Longer papers are usually rambling and unfocused
- May contain disconnected ideas, arguments, and/or evidence. May contain many areas of vagueness and/or confusion
- Evidence is sparsely developed or lacking
- Limited word choice
- Short, simple sentences or fragments; long rambling sentences or run ons
- Frequent errors in conventions and phonetic spelling interfere with readability
- Excessive plagiarism without the benefit of quotation marks

1 Emergent Writer

- May have no discernible interpretation, papers may be partially or wholly incoherent
- Little or no organizational plan
- Simple, vague, and imprecise, a complete lack of sentence control
- A general failure to communicate
- Wholly plagiarized; or not enough original writing to determine proficiency.

O Off Topic

- Does not even mention key word(s) from prompt; wrote on another topic.

LOWER CORE

Narrative Writing Rubric Grade 3

6 Exceptional Writer

The writer focuses on one incident and writes an engaging, well-told narrative. The opening captures the reader's attention through use of action, dialogue, description or some other appropriate technique. The middle of the paper is tightly focused, and the conclusion provides closure and significance. The writer locates the story in a particular setting and provides enough information to orient the reader to the action. The 6 paper sustains quality throughout.

The writer's voice is shown through liveliness and originality. There should be evidence of humor, suspense, and/or drama. The paper evidences a number of narrative strategies to elaborate detail:

- Naming specific objects, places, and people
- Visual details (sizes, colors, shapes, textures, clothing, etc.)
- Other appropriate sensory details
- Sophisticated, effective word choice

Additional characteristics of a 6 paper:

- Clear sentence sense and variety
- Few errors in conventions
- Correctly spells high-frequency words and attempts more challenging words

5 Strong Writer

The writer focuses on one incident and write a solid, interesting narrative. While there is a clean opening, it may be less imaginative and engaging than a 6 paper. The middle of the paper is tightly focused, and the ending provides closure and significance. The writer locates the story in a particular setting and gives enough detail to orient the reader to the action. The five papers may not display even quality throughout.

The writer's voice is shown through use of humor, suspense, and/or drama although these are less effectively employed than in a 6 paper. The writer attempts some narrative strategies.

Additional characteristics of a 5 paper:

- Clear sentence sense and some sentence variety
- Few errors in conventions
- Correctly spells most high frequency words

4 Capable Writer

Although there may be minor digressions, the writer describes one incident and writes a capable narrative. There is a clear beginning, middle and ending although the quality of these three parts may be inconsistent. The writer focuses too much on the setting and/or character descriptions. The writer's voice is enthusiastic but may lack the sophistication of the 5 or 6 writer's. Fewer narrative strategies are used and the paper may rely more on "telling" than "showing."

Additional characteristics of a 4 paper:

- Few varied sentences but maintains sentence control
- Minor errors in conventions which do not interfere with communication
- Minor spelling errors or attempts only low-risk words

3 Developing Writer

The writer describes one incident but the narrative may be flat and unengaging. There is usually some attempt at a beginning and an ending, but some 3 papers may simply tell the incident and go no further. These papers maintain a comprehensible narrative thread but may sometimes lose focus. Descriptions of setting and/or character may be missing or dominate the narrative. There is often little evidence of real voice. The 3 paper generally relies exclusively on “telling” with little or no use of narrative strategies to elaborate details. Other papers simply list details.

Additional characteristics of a 3 paper:

- Inconsistent sentence control
- Errors in conventions and spelling **but is readable**

2 Limited Writer

The writer may fail to focus on a single incident or stray from the topic. The paper is usually brief and undeveloped. If longer, it may be unfocused and rambling. The 2 paper’s organizational plan is inconsistent or lacking. The writer’s voice may be flat and/or lack enthusiasm.

Additional characteristics of a 2 paper:

- Simple sentence structure; many fragments and/or run-ons
- Limited word choice
- Frequent errors in conventions and/or spelling **interfere with readability**

1 Emergent Writer

There may be no discernible incident or if specified, it may only be named and not described. Many 1 papers are incomprehensible. Others are so short that the writer’s competency is impossible to judge.

Additional characteristics of a 1 paper:

- Severe problems with sentence structure
- Limited or incorrect word choice
- Severe errors in conventions and/or spelling make the **paper impossible to read**
- General failure to communicate

O Off Topic

The paper is off topic. A score of zero is less than a score of one. It indicates that the student wrote on a topic entirely different from the assigned prompt.

Persuasive Writing Rubric Grade 5

6 Exceptional Writer

- Expresses and maintains a clear position throughout.
- Sustained quality throughout the piece.
- Clear awareness of reader; effectively anticipates and answers opposing views (counter-arguments)
- Excellent organization: solid introduction which contains writer's position; multi-paragraph body (with two or more reasons offered in support of controlling idea); a solid conclusion which goes beyond summary of reasons.
- Elaborates all reasons offered through use of text, examples, and/or anecdotes in an effective and/or persuasive way. Shows a real sense of authority.
- Gives credit for information taken from text (either through use of quotation marks or citation of source).
- Powerful, precise language showing attention to persuasive appeal.
- Clear sentence sense and variety which result in interesting and convincing writing.
- Few errors in conventions and spelling; tend to be nearly "invisible" errors.
- Effective paragraph structure; uses transitions between parts.

5 Strong Writer

- States a clear position.
- An awareness of reader; anticipates opposing points of view (counter arguments), and while writer attempts to answer them, it may not be as well done as in a 6 paper.
- Strong organization: introduction contains controlling idea; multi-paragraph body (with two or more reasons offered in support of controlling idea); conclusion which goes beyond a summary of reasons.
- Elaborates reasons but may not do equally well in all reasons offered; uses text, examples, and anecdotes; shows some sense of authority.
- May not give direct credit for information taken from text but never plagiarizes.
- Precise language, though may show less attention to exact meaning and persuasive appeal.
- Clear sentence sense and variety.
- Few errors in conventions and spelling; these are never distracting or troubling to the reader.
- Effective paragraph structure; may use transitions.

4 Capable Writer

- States or implies a clear position.
- Reader awareness is less skillful than a 5 or 6; **may** attempt to address counter arguments but may not refute them. If no counter arguments are attempted, the writer will have very well-developed reasons.
- Organizational plan evident; introduction may begin with controlling idea; at least one reason is offered and elaborated on in the body; a conclusion is present but may be no more than a summary of reasons offered.
- Reason(s) offered is/are appropriate.
- May simply summarize information taken from text but does not plagiarize.
- Word choice is generally appropriate but lacks the vigor and exactness of higher score papers.
- Occasional run-ons and fragments as a result of more complex sentences.
- Occasional errors in conventions and spelling, but accountability words are correct. The types of mistakes made are typical of first draft grade-level work.
- Shows mostly correct paragraphing.

3 Developing Writer

- Takes a position; although the writer may waiver or include digressions, the paper returns to the original position.
- Evidence of organizational plan; writer may lose focus but will return to controlling idea; may not have either introduction or conclusion.
- Arguments or ideas may be loose, unsystematic, or undeveloped; may be list-like and unelaborated; may contain some areas of vagueness or confusion.
- Usually does not reflect reader awareness.
- Generally does not use information from text.
- Predictable or inappropriate word choice.
- Simple or repetitive sentences, may include fragments and/or run-ons but mostly demonstrates correct sentence control.
- Noticeable errors in conventions and spelling, but still readable; most accountability words are correctly spelled.
- Attempts paragraphing but may be inconsistent.

2 Limited Writer

- Position **may** be unclear
- Little logical arrangement of ideas and may have a “jumping around” quality; longer papers are usually rambling and unfocused.
- May contain disconnected ideas, arguments, and/or evidence; may contain many areas of vagueness and/or confusion.
- Topic is sparsely developed; supportive ideas are thin or missing.
- Limited word choice.
- Short, simple sentences, long rambling sentences, or in phrase-like groups of words.
- Frequent errors in conventions and gross spelling errors interfere with readability.
- Excessive plagiarism.

1 Emergent Writer

- May not have a discernible position; papers may be partially or wholly incoherent.
- No evidence of reader awareness. Papers may be **very** brief (not enough text to determine proficiency of writer).
- Little or no organizational plan.
- Simple, vague, and imprecise language; a general lack of sentence control.
- May be incoherent and/or indecipherable.
- A general failure to communicate.

O Off Topic

- Wrote on another topic.