California Standards Tests

Teacher Guide for the 2004 California Writing Standards Tests in Grades Four and Seven

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For More Information

For more information about the *California Writing Standards Tests* (*CSTs* in writing) or Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, consult the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at *http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp* (Internet) or contact the Standards and Assessment Division of the CDE at (916) 445-8765 (phone), at (916) 319-0969 (fax), or at *STAR@cde.ca.gov* (e-mail).

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Section I — Introduction

Introduction

In February 2000, the Governor signed legislation to add writing assessments to the STAR Program's *California Standards Tests* (*CSTs*) administered at the elementary and middle grade levels. The *California Writing Standards Tests* (*CSTs* in writing) were administered from 2001 through 2004 at grades four and seven.

The *CSTs* in writing address state Writing Application academic content standards for grades four and seven. In grade four, these standards require students to produce four types of writing: narratives, summaries, information reports, and responses to literature. In grade seven, they require students to produce five types of writing: narratives, persuasive essays, summaries, responses to literature, and research reports.

The *CSTs* in writing do not assess information reports in grade four and research reports in grade seven because these writing assignments require extended time for students to gather information and/or research topics before writing can begin. In addition, the narrative writing tested in grades four and seven does not include personal or autobiographical narrative. Writing that would invite personal disclosure is not tested in any genre on the *CSTs* in writing.

In addition to the *CSTs* in writing, the 2004 *California English-Language Arts Standards Tests* (*CSTs* in English-language arts) in grades four and seven contained 75 multiple-choice questions. Beyond 2004, the *CSTs* in English-language arts in grades four and seven will continue to include a *CST* in writing. The writing test in each of these grades may address any of the writing types identified as appropriate for testing at that grade level.

The *Teacher Guide for the 2004 California Writing Standards Tests in Grades Four and Seven* presents the tasks used on the 2004 *CSTs* in writing, along with sample student responses, teacher commentaries, and the holistic rubric used to score student responses. The *Teacher Guide for the California Writing Standards Tests at Grades Four and Seven,* released in May 2002, included the 2001 writing tasks with sample student responses and teacher commentaries, examples of all writing genres that may be tested at each grade, and student responses and teacher commentaries for those genres. The *Addendum to the May 2002 Teacher Guide for California Writing Standards Tests at Grades Four and Seven*, released in August 2003, included the grade four and seven writing tasks administered in 2002 along with sample student responses and teacher commentaries. The *Teacher Guide for the 2003 California Writing Standards Tests at Grades Four and Seven,* released in December 2004, included the grade four and seven writing tasks administered in 2003 along with sample student responses and teacher commentaries. This guide is designed to be used with the May 2002, August 2003, and December 2004 documents.

Writing Tasks and Scoring Rubric

The writing tasks for the 2004 *CSTs* in writing for grade four are shown in Section II on pages II-2 and II-3 and pages II-10 and II-11. The writing tasks for grade seven are shown in Section III on pages III-2 and III-10. Students in schools, tracks, or programs in session on March 16, 2004, responded to the task administered on that date or on the makeup date, March 17. Students in schools, tracks, or programs not in session on March 16 responded to the task administered on May 11 or on the makeup date, May 12. Students had time to read the tasks and to plan, write, and proofread their essays. The estimated administration time was 75 minutes, including time for directions.

Student responses to the writing tasks administered in 2004 were scored using a four-point holistic rubric, with four being the highest score. Two readers evaluated each response, and the student's reported score was the sum of these two ratings. If the two readers assigned scores that differed by more than one point, a third reader scored the response. If a third reader was needed, the third reader's score was added either to the score to which it was identical or to the higher of the two scores to which it was adjacent. If the third reader's score was adjacent to only one score, it was added to that score.

The scoring rubric for grade four is shown on pages II-17 and II-18 in Section II, and the scoring rubric for grade seven is shown on pages III-19 and III-20 in Section III. Alternate format versions of the rubric for grade four are presented on pages II-19 through II-24 in Section II to indicate how all the scoring criteria were applied to student responses in each genre tested. Alternate format versions of the rubric for grade seven are presented on pages III-21 through III-28 in Section III.

In 2004, each student's result on the grade four or grade seven writing task was reported as a separate Writing Applications score that could range from 2 to 8. This score was combined with the student's multiple-choice score on the *CST* in English-language arts to determine the student's overall English-language arts performance level.

It is important to note that the four score points on the scoring rubric are not intended to correlate with the performance levels used to show overall student performance on the *CST* in English-language arts. A score of four given to a student response by one reader, for example, does not equate to the Advanced level on the *CST* performance-level scale, a three does not equate to the Proficient level, and so on. Nor does a student's overall Writing Applications score—the student's result on the *CST* in writing based on the sum of the two readers' scores—correlate to a *CST* performance level. An overall writing test score of 7 or 8, for example, does not indicate a performance level of Advanced, a score of 5 or 6 does not indicate a performance level of Proficient, and so on. A student can be said to have achieved at a particular performance level only when that student's performance-level result is based on results of the full *CST* in English-language arts (including the *CST* in writing).

Sample Student Responses and Teacher Commentaries

Sample student responses to the writing tasks administered in grades four and seven on March 16 and 17 are shown on pages II-5 through II–9 in Section II and on pages III-4 through III-9 in Section III. Accompanying these student responses are teacher commentaries that illustrate how criteria for each score point were applied during the scoring process. Sample student responses to the tasks administered on May 11 and 12 are shown on pages II-12 through II-16 in Section II and on III-11 through III-18 in Section III, along with teacher commentaries.

The sample responses, drawn from field tests and operational tests, illustrate student work at each score point. It should be remembered, however, that each essay represents only one example of student work at a particular score level. In reality, the range of student work within any of the four score points is broad. To teachers familiar with a six-point rubric, some sample responses that receive a four on a four-point scale may seem less qualified than responses that earn a six on a six-point scale. The four-point responses will include some pieces of student work that would fall into range below a six on a six-point scale. It also should be remembered that, within a given score point, responses will demonstrate differing combinations of strengths and weaknesses.

In 2004, summary writing was tested at grade four, and persuasive writing was tested at grade seven. It should be noted, however, that since other genres may be tested at these grades, the types of writing students may be asked to produce can change annually.

Suggested Uses for This Teacher Guide

The writing prompts, sample student responses, and teacher commentaries in this guide are intended to illustrate how the scoring rubric was used to score student responses on the 2004 *CST* in writing in grades four and seven. Teachers also can use the information provided as guidance in applying the rubric to their students' writing. Students can familiarize themselves with state academic content standards addressed on the writing test by using the rubric to score other students' writing. These suggested activities can enable teachers and students to use rubric-based scoring as a diagnostic tool to help identify areas of strength and weakness in student writing.

The list below provides further suggestions for using the teacher guide to inform and improve the assessment and teaching of student writing.

Using the Teacher Guide for School District or School Assessments

Some suggestions for using the teacher guide to help improve school district or school assessments include but are not limited to the following activities:

- Use the contents of the guide to become familiar with the components of writing assessments (i.e., prompt, scoring rubric, student responses).
- Examine the released prompts to identify distinguishing elements of different writing genres.
- Examine the scoring rubric to ascertain critical features of a holistic rubric.
- Analyze sample student responses in conjunction with teacher commentaries and criteria in the scoring rubrics to determine grade-level-specific writing expectations. This information can inform decisions about areas of focus for writing programs.

Using the Teacher Guide for Classroom Assessments

Some suggestions for using the teacher guide to help improve classroom assessments include but are not limited to the following activities:

- Use the writing prompts, sample student responses, teacher commentaries, and scoring rubrics to help teachers understand what is required by specific state academic content standards that are the focus of the writing tests.
- Use the writing prompts and scoring rubrics to help teachers understand the advantages and benefits of writing tests:
  – They engage students in a cognitively complex activity.
  – They give students an opportunity to create rather than select a response.
- Study the scoring rubrics to understand the criteria that should be used to assess writing.
- Encourage teachers to use the prompts, sample student responses, teacher commentaries, and scoring rubrics to help their students understand what is expected of them on the *CST* in writing.
- Use the writing prompts, sample student responses, teacher commentaries, and scoring rubrics to help teachers identify the knowledge and skills required by the writing tests. This information should become the focus of writing instruction.

- Compare the state writing prompts and scoring rubrics with those that accompany the existing curricular program. This information can help identify areas that need to be strengthened in writing programs. It could be determined, for example, that a particular writing program may not provide students enough opportunities to write in a particular genre. It could be determined that the characteristics of a writing genre in a particular curricular program do not align well with the characteristics of that genre as defined by the state academic content standards and the *CST* in writing.

Note on the 2005 and 2006 *California Writing Standards Tests*

The *CSTs* in writing administered in 2005 will be similar to the writing tests administered from 2001 through 2004. Although the specific prompts will be different from those in previous years, the scoring rubrics will be the same as those used previously, and the prompt formats and student directions will be like those used in the past. Beginning with the 2006 administration, however, the prompts, formats, directions, and/or rubrics may change.

In October 2004, the California Department of Education (CDE), the State Board of Education (SBE), and Educational Testing Service (ETS) hosted a meeting of the California Writing Standards Test Task Force. This task force consisted of representatives from the CDE, SBE, and ETS; psychometricians; school and district administrators; representatives from the STAR English-language arts content review panel; and a large contingent of grade four and grade seven California teachers experienced in teaching writing to diverse student populations. The task force was responsible for reviewing all facets of the grade four and grade seven writing tests and recommending any changes for improvement. The task force recommendations were reviewed by the SBE in January 2005 and most will be implemented beginning with the 2006 operational writing test. Two recommendations required approval by the SBE in January 2005 and were adopted: (1) 40 writing prompts will be field tested in the fall of 2005, and (2) beginning with the 2006 administration, a one-reader scoring model will be implemented.

Section II—Grade Four

Writing Tasks

Sample Student Work

Teacher Commentaries

Scoring Rubrics

Grade Four Summary Writing Task Administered on March 16 and 17, 2004

The writing task below was administered to students who took the *CST* in writing in grade four on March 16 or 17, 2004. The prompt used for the May 11 and 12 administration is shown on pages II–10 and II–11 in this section. Sample student responses and teacher commentaries are included for both tasks.

Summary of an Article Writing Task

Directions:

- Read the informational article on the following page.
- As you read, you may mark the article or make notes. Marks and notes will not be scored.
- After reading the article, write a summary of what you have read. You will have time to read, plan, write, and proofread.
- You may reread or go back to the article at any time during the test.
- Only what you write on the lined pages in this booklet will be scored.

Scoring:

Your writing will be scored on how well you:

- state the main ideas of the article;
- identify the most important details that support the main ideas;
- use your own words in writing the summary; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Kiting

Most kites today are made of plastic or paper, but in China as many as three thousand years ago, kites were made of bamboo and silk. Over time, kites became popular in other places, including the United States, Europe, and Australia, for scientific studies, transportation, and entertainment.

Americans have used kites to conduct scientific experiments. Benjamin Franklin, a famous scientist, inventor, and founding father of our country, used a kite to find out more about lightning. His scientific experiment, on a stormy day in June of 1752, led to the development of many terms we use today when we speak of electricity. As a result of Franklin's work on electricity, others were able to add to what he had discovered. Michael Faraday built the first electric motor, and Thomas Edison invented the light bulb, the

continued…

phonograph, and a small box for viewing moving films. None of these inventions would have been possible without Franklin's discovery.

Kites were also used to study the atmosphere during the 18th century. In the 1790s, box kites, with scientific instruments bound to them, were sent high into the sky. There, they were able to measure wind speed, temperature, atmospheric pressure, and the moisture in the air.

Alexander Graham Bell, an American scientist and inventor, wanted to fly. He was convinced that kites could be used to carry people. In 1907, he actually built kites that were big enough to lift human beings into the air. His work eventually led to the development of gear that made flight safer, speedier, and easier to control.

Kites have always been used for entertainment. Many people simply enjoy flying their colorful kites. In Japan, however, Mr. Katsutaka Murooka sends his kites, complete with digital video cameras, to take photos from 90 to 120 feet up in the sky. These photos are displayed in a small, dome-shaped building that serves as the Miniature Portable Museum of Wind Energy, the smallest museum devoted to kiting. Using this method of photography, Mr. Murooka has been able to take safe and inexpensive photos of many different things, including volcanoes, the ocean, and sporting events.

Today, people enjoy power kiting, that is, being transported by kites as they take part in outdoor activities such as kite sailing, kite buggying, and kite jumping. In kite sailing, kites are stacked and used to sail on water, making travel speedy and smooth. Kite buggying, one of the most popular forms of power kiting, is done by stacking kites and using them to pull a small go-cart across places such as beaches, pavement, or dry lake beds. Buggying is safe and easy to learn. In kite jumping, a pilot lifts himself off the ground for a short period of time. As with any sport, training and safety are important.

Over the years, kite flying has resulted in great scientific discoveries. Kites have also provided us with outdoor fun and entertainment. The next time you see a kite flying, remember just how valuable they have been in the past and how important they are today.

Writing the Summary:
Write a summary of the article. Use the following lined pages.

Remember that your writing will be scored on how well you:
- state the main ideas of the article;
- identify the most important details that support the main ideas;
- use your own words in writing the summary; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Summary Task—Grade Four

Student responses to the summary tasks on pages II–2 and II–10 in this section were scored using the Grade Four Scoring Rubric shown on pages II–17 and II–18 in this section. This rubric incorporates portions of the English-language arts Writing Strategies and Written Conventions academic content standards that address writing in general and includes criteria specific to summary writing.

Standard

Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

2.4 Write summaries that contain the main ideas of the reading selection and the most significant details.

Grade Four Focus

For the writing tasks in grade four, students were expected to summarize main ideas and important details in their own words. Students who did well included only information that was in the original article and avoided extraneous commentary. Effective summaries were organized in a logical order.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Summary Task Administered on March 16 and 17, 2004

Score Point 4 Essay

Student Work

Kites

Many kites today are used for entertainment, but in the past it was used for many important things.

Many people in history used kites to invent things. In the 1700's, a man named Benjamin Franklin became famous for using a kite to make electricity.

After that, lots of people used electricity to make inventions like electric motors, light bulbs, and the first video player.

In the 1790's box kites were used to measure how fast wind was going, what the temperature was, and what was in the air.

Then, in 1907 a man named Alexader Graham Bell thought that kites could be used to fly. So, he built kites big enough to lift people in the air.

But in Japan, Mr. Katsutaka Murooka would send kites with video cameras to take pictures high in the sky. The pictures are displayed in a very small museum.

Today people use kites to have fun. These activites are kite sailing, kite buggying, and kite jumping. These fun activites need lots of important training and safety rules.

In our history, kites have been used to make some important inventions. They are also used for fun. So some of the most funnest things can be used for the best discovors!

Commentary

This response is characterized by paraphrasing of the main ideas of the article and supporting them with relevant and significant details. The response demonstrates a clear understanding of the purpose of a summary.

The writer's introductory statement includes two main ideas paraphrased from the article: 1) "Many kites today are used for entertainment," and 2) "in the past it was used for many important things." The writer develops these ideas with a consistent organizational structure that begins with kiting's historical contributions and proceeds to a discussion of kiting as entertainment. The writer supports these ideas with significant details about the scientific uses of kiting and the forms of entertainment that kiting provides.

In the concluding paragraph, the writer summarizes the article's main ideas ("In our history, kites have been used to make some important inventions," and "They are also used for fun").

The writer uses a variety of sentence types. These include compound sentences ("Many kites today are used for entertainment, but in the past it was used for many important things"), complex sentences ("In the 1790's box kites were used to measure how fast wind was going, what the temperature was, and what was in the air"), and sentences beginning with subordinate word groups functioning as transitions ("After that,…"; "In the 1790's,…"; and "Then, in 1907…").

This response contains an error in pronoun-antecedent agreement ("Many kites today are used for entertainment, but in the past it was used…") and errors in spelling ("activites," "funnest," and "discovors"). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are consistent with what would be expected in first-draft writing.

This summary represents writing in the middle range of score point 4.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Summary Task Administered on March 16 and 17, 2004

Score Point 3 Essay

Student Work

In America about the time of the Revolutionary War, a scientist, inventor, and a founding father of our country, Benjamin Frankin, used kites to learn more about lightning. So one day he took his kite out in the storm and tried it. It worked. So people started inventing things like the light blub by Thomas Edison.

After the 18th century people started using kite to study the atmosphere. They would make what they called "box kites" and send it up to test the wind speed, temperature, atomic pressure and the moisture in the air. This too was another scientific expirament.

An inventor, Alexander Graham Bell, wanted to fly so he created a giant kite. The expirament led to a expiramental gear that made flight safer, speedier, and easier to control. Today those expiraments are called hot air ballons and it is very very fun to ride on.

Kites have always been used to have fun. However, in Japan, a man named Katsutaka Murooka sent camera's up with the ballons. He tried taking pictures about 90 to 120 feet above ground. His pictures are in a dome shaped building that is a Miniature Portable Museum of Wind Energy! It is perhaps the smallest museum on earth.

Today people use kites in transportation. They are called Kite sailing, kitebuggying, and kite jumping. The kites made transportation easier and faster than ever.

Kites changed our world as expiraments, transportation, and entertainment, and kites will be useful maybe even a hundred years from now.

Commentary

This response is characterized by a paraphrasing of ideas and the use of relevant and significant details from the original text. It demonstrates a general understanding of the purpose of a summary.

The response illustrates a consistent organization. The first, second, and third paragraphs summarize kiting's contributions to science, the fourth paragraph discusses kiting as entertainment, and the fifth paragraph addresses kiting as transportation. The writer develops these paragraphs with significant details from the text. Although some details consist of phrases copied from the article, the writer demonstrates an understanding of purpose by paraphrasing most of the information in the summary. However, because the writer organizes the summary not under main ideas such as kiting's contributions to science and entertainment but instead according to the topic ideas in each of the article's paragraphs, the summary demonstrates a general understanding of purpose.

The writer uses a variety of sentence types and, in places, sentence lengths as well. This variety is illustrated especially well in the opening paragraph: "In America about the time of the Revolutionary War, a scientist, inventor, and a founding father of our country, Benjamin Franklin, used kites to learn more about lightning. So one day he took his kite out in the storm and tried it. It worked. So people started inventing things like the light blub by Thomas Edison."

This response contains some errors in the conventions of the English language. These include errors in pronoun-antecedent agreement ("They would make what they called 'box kites' and send it up to test") and spelling ("ballons" and "expirament"). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are consistent with what would be expected in first-draft writing.

This summary represents writing in the middle range of score point 3.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Summary Task Administered on March 16 and 17, 2004

Score Point 2 Essay

Student Work

Paragraph one was about how china's kites were made three thousand years ago. That they we're made with silk and bamboo. Also that kite's became in other places, includin America, Erope, and Australia. It also talk about that today kites are used for scientific studies, trasportration, and entertainment.

Paragrahp two was about americans have used kites to conduct scientific experiments. It also talks about Benjamin Franklin used a kite to find out more about lightning. It also taks about Michae Farady elictric motor, and Thomas Edison invented the light bulb, the photograhp, and a small box for viewing movie films.

Paragraph three talks about kite's that were used to study the atmosphere during the 18th century. It also taks about that kite's were used in the 1790's box kite's, with scientific instruments bound to them, were sent high into the sky. They were able to mesure the wind speed.

Paragraph four was about Alexander Grahm wanted to fly. So he invented a kite big enough and to soport human weight and fly in the air he eventully made develomt of a gear made to fligh safer and fet control esaer.

Paragraph five was about Mr. Katsuka Murooka send his kite with a complet digital video cameras, to take photos from 90 to 120 feet. These photos are displaised in a small dome-shape building that serves as the minature portable museum of wind energy, the smallest museum devoted to kitting.

Commentary

This response addresses only part of the writing task and demonstrates little understanding of the purpose of a summary.

The writer begins in an orderly manner, presenting details in the sequence in which they appear in the article. Rather than connecting these details to the article's main ideas, however, the writer presents them as discrete bits of information.

The article's main ideas are mentioned at the end of the first paragraph ("[The article] also talk about that today kites are used for scientific studies, trasportration, and entertainment"), but there is no indication the writer recognizes these as ideas that overarch the article's more specific information. Rather, the sentence on scientific studies, transportation, and entertainment is introduced with phrasing very similar to that used to introduce the more specific information about Americans' use of kites and about Benjamin Franklin in the succeeding sentences ("It also talk about …"; "Paragrahp two was about …"; "It also talks about …"). This similarity of phrasing suggests that the writer regards the information about scientific studies, transportation, and entertainment not as something that might encompass the rest of the information in the article but simply as a factoid in a series of factoids the article presents.

Near the end of the response, the organization becomes inconsistent when the writer neglects to summarize information from the last two paragraphs of the article.

In places, the writer relies on substantial copying rather than paraphrasing. Copying is especially apparent from the last sentence of paragraph one through the first two sentences of paragraph two and in the final paragraph.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Summary Task Administered on March 16 and 17, 2004

Score Point 2 Essay (continued)

Commentary

The response demonstrates little variety in sentence types. Sentences typically begin "Paragraph such and such talks about …" and "It talks about …" The presence both of fragments ("That they we're made with silk and bamboo") and of awkward sentences ("It also taks about that kite's were used in the 1790's …") illustrates a lack of control over sentence structure.

This response contains several errors in the conventions of the English language. These include mistaken verb tense ("Mr. Katsuka Murooka send his kite with a complet digital video cameras"), incorrect punctuation ("Also that kite's became in other places …"), incorrect capitalization ("was about americans") and numerous spelling errors ("trasportration," "paragrahp," "elictric," "displaised," "kitting"). These errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are more than would be expected in first-draft writing.

This summary represents writing in the middle range of score point 2.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Summary Task Administered on March 16 and 17, 2004

Score Point 1 Essay

Student Work

They use Kites to conduct scientific experiments. As a resuslt day in June of 1752 led to development of many terms we use to day. When they speak of electricity Franklin's work is a electricity. Michael Farady buitt the first electric motor. Thomas Edison invented the light bulb. Kits were also used to study the atmosphere during the 18th century. In the 1790's boxes kites, with scientific instruments bound to them. Over the years, kite flying has resulted in great scientific discoverys.

Commentary

This response is characterized by substantial copying of indiscriminately selected phrases from the article, illustrating a lack of understanding about the purpose of a summary.

The response addresses the part of the writing task that asks students to include details that support the main ideas, but it does not make clear how those details relate to the main ideas or to each other. The writer begins with one main idea ("They use Kites to conduct scientific experiments"), but the details that follow appear randomly selected and fragmentary.

Although much of the response is copied from the article, there is very little sentence variety. Most of the response is made up of simple sentences ("Michael Farady buitt the first electric motor," and "Thomas Edison invented the light bulb"). The one sentence that is both complex and comprehensible is copied from the article ("Over the years, kite flying has resulted in great scientific discoverys.")

This response contains many serious errors in the conventions of the English language. These include use of sentence fragments and improper punctuation ("In the 1790's boxes kites, with scientific instruments bound to them."), errors in grammar and spelling ("As a resuslt day in June of 1752 led to development of many terms we use to day"), and errors in capitalization ("They use Kites to conduct scientific experiments"). These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are more than would be expected in first-draft writing.

This summary represents writing in the middle range of score point 1.

Grade Four Summary Writing Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

The writing task below was administered to students who took the CST in writing in grade four on May 11 or 12, 2004. Sample student responses and teacher commentaries are presented on the pages following the task shown below.

Summary of an Article Writing Task

Directions:

- Read the informational article on the following page.
- As you read, you may mark the article or make notes. Marks and notes will not be scored.
- After reading the article, write a summary of what you have read. You will have time to read, plan, write, and proofread.
- You may reread or go back to the article at any time during the test.
- Only what you write on the lined pages in this booklet will be scored.

Scoring:

Your writing will be scored on how well you:

- state the main ideas of the article;
- identify the most important details that support the main ideas;
- use your own words in writing the summary; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

The Japanese Art of Bonsai

Imagine a tree so small that it can give shade only to insects, not to people. To take a tree that would naturally grow larger and shape it so that it fits in a pot is a kind of sculpture known as the Japanese art of bonsai.

Bonsai has a long history. There is proof that trees were grown in pots in Egypt 4,000 years ago. Trees grown in pots were easy to move and, therefore, practical. For the same reasons, the Greeks, Babylonians, Persians, and some Indians accepted this form of growing trees.

It was not until 200 A.D. that the Chinese first planted trees in pots for the sake of their beauty. The Japanese then adopted and perfected the art. An ancient Japanese scroll from Japan's Kamakura period (1185–1333) describes the presence of bonsai during the Heian period (794–1185).

continued…

Originally, bonsai trees were made from trees that were already small. Today, that is not the case. Almost any tree can be made into a bonsai tree. Classic bonsai are usually woody, stemmed trees or bushes like Japanese black pine, Sargents juniper, and Japanese maples. Other bonsai include the weeping willow tree and the jade plant.

Bonsai trees can be as short or as tall as the grower desires. They can range in height from a few centimeters to a meter. They must, however, be grown in a pot and appear like natural trees. In order to preserve bonsai trees, growers must keep three things in mind. First, they need to remember that these trees, like trees that grow outdoors, need sunlight, food, and moisture. Plenty of good soil and occasional fertilizer will give a bonsai a good start. The amount and degree of sunlight a tree needs is dependent upon the type of tree. For instance, junipers may not have the same needs as azaleas. Second, the trees must be pruned to keep them small. Pruning refers to removing one-third of the roots each year so that new soil can be introduced into the pot. Third, bonsai trees need to be styled or shaped. Branches and leaves need to be trimmed.

Naturally, tools needed for pruning and styling should be small. Rakes less than 18 inches long are commonly used to work the soil, as well as to spread heavier material in the pot. Wire is used to shape and position trunks and branches of pine trees. Pruning shears and straight shears are necessary for trimming branches and leaves.

These symbols of Japanese culture have grown in popularity over the past two centuries. Bonsai, as a gardening art form, has spread. Bonsai shows and contests are held all over the world. One such contest, the New Talent Bonsai Competition, which was held in June 2002, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, required that contestants be given specially selected material which they had to work with to create their best bonsai display. This task had to be done within an 8-hour time period. The prize for the contest was round-trip airline ticket to Japan. The winning artist spent some time with a Japanese master to learn more about the creation of the living sculpture known as bonsai.

Writing the Summary:
Write a summary of the article. Use the following lined pages.

Remember that your writing will be scored on how well you:
- state the main ideas of the article;
- identify the most important details that support the main ideas;
- use your own words in writing the summary; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Summary Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

Score Point 4 Essay

Student Work

This passage is mainly about the Japanese art of bonsai trees. It tells about their history, like how there is proof they were grown in pots in Egypt 4,000 years ago. These trees were grown in pots, so they were easy to move and very practical. People must have liked bonsais because Greeks, Persians, Babylonians, and even some Indians accepted this strange creation. Bonsai trees are still around and popular today.

Originally bonsais were made from small trees. Today they can be made from any type of tree. Most bonsais are woody and stemmed like Japanese Sargents juniper and maples. Bonsai trees are made for their beauty and smallness. For most people, that is why they like them.

These very odd trees can be as big as you want. However, they must be grown in pots and look like regular trees. People must remember that even though they are small they still need food, moisture, and even sunlight like big trees. Soil and fertilizers are also good to help keep them alive. Bonsais need to be pruned to help keep them small. You should also use small equipment like rakes and shears for trimming them.

These Japanese symbols have really started to become popular over the last two centuries. There has been bonsai competitions like the one in Milwaukee. Bonsais were one of the greatest and most intresting creations.

Commentary

This response demonstrates a clear understanding of the purpose of a summary by paraphrasing main ideas from the original text and supporting them with significant details.

The writer maintains a consistent focus and organizational structure, discussing the history of bonsai in the first two paragraphs, techniques and tools for growing bonsai trees in the third paragraph, and the growing popularity of bonsai in the final paragraph.

The writer does an excellent job of paraphrasing ideas from the article, while excluding less significant details. Two sentences from the original article read, for example, “Bonsai trees can be as short or as tall as the grower desires. They can range in height from a few centimeters to a meter. They must, however, be grown in a pot and appear like natural trees.” The writer summarizes these sentences, “These very odd trees can be as big as you want. However, they must be grown in pots and look like regular trees.”

Significant details are paraphrased to support the main ideas. In the second paragraph, for example, the writer supports the statement, “Today [bonsais] can be made from any type of tree,” by naming the types of trees that can be used for bonsai. In the third paragraph, the writer supports the statement, “they must be grown in pots and look like regular trees,” with details describing the materials and methods “People must remember” to preserve bonsais.

The writer uses a variety of sentence types, including compound and complex sentences, to summarize details (“These trees were grown in pots, so they were easy to move and very practical. People must have liked bonsais because Greeks, Persians, Babylonians, and even some Indians accepted this strange creation”).

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Summary Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

Score Point 4 Essay (continued)

Commentary

This response contains few errors in the conventions of the English language. The last paragraph contains a misspelling ("intresting"), an error in subject-verb agreement ("There has been bonsai competitions"), and an error in verb tense ("Bonsais were one of the greatest and most intresting creations"). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are consistent with what would be expected in first-draft writing.

This summary represents writing in the middle range of score point 4.

Score Point 3 Essay

Student Work

This story talks about how to nurture the Bonsai tree. It also talks about the history of the Bonsai tree. They have Bonsai contest's in Milwaukee and Wisconsin.

The first thing it talked about was of the Bonsai history. The story said that Egyptians grew Bonsai trees 4000 years ago. Greek's, Babylonians, Persians, and some Indians grew these kind of tree. It also said that until 200 A.D. the Chinese culture did not know of the Bonsai tree. The last thing was that the Bonsai tree is so small that it can only shade insects and small creature's.

The second thing it talks about is how tall it is and How to nurture the tree. The person or person's talking care of this tree can make the tree as tall as they want it or as small as they want it. The story said that the Bonsai tree is a few cenimeters to a meter. A person growing this tree must realise that the Bonsai Tree grows like any other tree. These trees grow out doors, need plenty of sunlight, moisture, and food. Branches and brims need to be trimmed.

Last but not least this story talks about the contest and the popular rate of these plants. the popularity of these trees have grown for about two hundred years. There is a contest with these trees the winner gets a flight to Japan to spend time with a Chinese master to learn more about the Bonsai tree.

That was my summary on the famos Bonsai tree. I learned alot of interesting things about the bonsai tree.

Commentary

This response demonstrates a general understanding of the purpose of a summary. In the introductory paragraph, the writer says that the article describes "how to nurture the Bonsai tree," the history of bonsai, and bonsai contests. The writer supports these main ideas by providing mostly relevant details from the article within a mostly consistent organizational structure. Although each of the main ideas is addressed in the summary, these ideas are not discussed in the order in which they appear in the opening paragraph.

The writer includes mostly relevant details from the article to support main ideas. In the second paragraph, for example, the writer supports the statement that "The first thing it talked about was of the Bonsai history" by citing the people who grew bonsais. In the third paragraph, the writer includes details from the text to explain how a bonsai tree is nurtured. Although the writer's second paragraph includes facts irrelevant to that paragraph's main idea (i.e., the fact that the that the bonsai tree "can only shade insects

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Summary Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

Score Point 3 Essay (continued)

Commentary

and small creature's"), most of the facts are relevant to the main ideas.

The writer uses a variety of sentence types throughout the summary. These include complex as well as simple sentences ("The second thing it talks about is how tall it is and How to nurture the tree. The person or person's talking care of this tree can make the tree as tall as they want it or as small as they want it . . . A person growing this tree must realise that the Bonsai Tree grows like any other tree").

This response contains some errors in the conventions of the English language, including errors in punctuation ("They have Bonsai contest's"), capitalization (" . . . how tall it is and How to . . ."), and spelling ("realise," "out doors," and "famos"). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are consistent with what would be expected in first-draft writing.

This summary represents writing in the middle range of score point 3.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Summary Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

Score Point 2 Essay

Student Work

This text was about Bonsai tree. It talks about how these trees were so small that they could only shade insects, and were grown in a pot. They say the Bonsai tree were grown in Egypt 4,000 years ago. The said it wasn't until 200 A.D. that the Chinese first planted planted these little trees for sake of there wonder full beauty. Originally the Bonsai trees were made from small trees. Almost any tree can be turned into a Bonsai tree. A Bonsai tree is just like any outdoor tree there leaves fall they are bare for the winter and bloom in the spring. They also are racked to by a racke less then 18 inches. The tree is manlly planted for its grate beauty. In Millwaukee June of 2002 there was a contest held for who could make the best Bonsai tree who ever won would get a free trip to Japan to meet the best Bonsai artist in the world. that is what has happend with the Bonsai tree.

Commentary

This response shows little understanding of the purpose of a summary.

Many details early in the summary are characterized by substantial copying of key phrases and minimal paraphrasing. This is especially true of sentences three through six.

Moreover, the writer does not summarize main ideas and significant details. The opening sentence does suggest something like a central idea ("This text was about Bonsai tree"), and this idea is initially supported with details from the article (although these details are primarily copied). Rather than organizing the summary under main ideas, however, the writer lists details that appear randomly chosen.

This haphazard quality is especially apparent in the second half of the summary. There, for example, the writer jumps from the idea that bonsai trees should be raked "by a racke less then 18 inches," to the idea that "The tree is manlly planted for its grate beauty," and finally to the idea that "In Millwaukee June of 2002 there was a contest held for who could make the best Bonsai tree…") The absence of main ideas to focus the response and the inclusion of details that seem randomly selected result in an inconsistent organizational structure.

The writer attempts to vary sentence structures, but this effort often results in run-on sentences ("In Millwaukee June of 2002 there was a contest held for who could make the best Bonsai tree who ever won would get a free trip to Japan to meet the best Bonsai artist in the world").

This response contains errors in subject-verb agreement ("They say the Bonsai tree were grown…"), failure to use the possessive pronoun ("there leaves fall"), and mistakes in spelling ("grate" instead of "great"; "manlly" instead of "mainly," "racke" instead of "rake"). Some errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are more than would be expected in first-draft writing.

This summary represents writing in the middle range of score point 2.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Four Summary Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

Score Point 1 Essay

Student Work

I think Bonsia arts was very famous even the artist. The Chinese first planted the tree on the pot. I think for there was a reason for there culter of something. Did you know that trees in japanese can grow small. The trees need good soil and fertilizer. And they have steps to take good care of it.

Branches and leaves need good healthy water. This is now culter for the jampanese people for past two centuries. There was a contest in June in 2002 in Melwauke, Wisconsin. Are any trees like that in California? The plant grows small it doesn't grow big as others. In Japanese alot of people have trees like that at homes. Any thing can fit in that small tree. Like a little bug.

Who might live in a small tree that doesn't grow. Who found this discovery? The name of the beatiful arts called, "Bonsai. Alot of people liked that art alot.

Bonsai trees can be short or tall as the growing desires. Bonsai has a long, long history.

Commentary

This response does not distinguish between main ideas and details from the bonsai article and is characterized by an indiscriminate selection of details. The way in which these details are presented indicates a lack of understanding about the purpose of a summary.

In the first paragraph, the writer attempts to provide a central idea ("I think Bonsia arts was very famous even the artist") and tries to support it with facts from the article. These facts, however, are unfocused and only marginally related to the central idea. In the second paragraph the writer begins with "Branches and leaves need good healthy water," then jumps to a statement about the history of bonsais, then to information about bonsai contests, and finally to a statement about how bonsai trees grow. This scattering of details results in a lack of organizational structure.

Sentence variety results mainly from the inclusion of questions, but these are only marginally related to the writing task's overall purpose. Numerous errors in sentence construction reflect a lack of sentence control. Errors include a run-on sentence ("The plant grows small it doesn't grow big as others"), a fragment ("Like a little bug."), and awkward construction ("I think for there was a reason for there culter of something").

This summary contains serious errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include mistakes in subject-verb agreement ("I think Bonsia arts was very famous"), punctuation and capitalization ("Did you know that trees in japanese can grow small."), sentence grammar ("This is now culter for the jampanese people for past two centuries"), and spelling ("culter" for "culture," "beatiful" for "beautiful"). Several of these errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are more than would be expected in first-draft writing.

This summary represents writing in the middle range of score point 1.

Grade Four Scoring Rubric

The scoring rubric shown below is used to assign scores to students' written responses on the grade four writing tests. This rubric includes two sets of criteria. The criteria under "The writing" are adapted from the English-language arts academic content standards for Writing Strategies and Written Conventions of English. These criteria are used to evaluate written responses in all genres for their clarity of purpose, central idea, and organization and for their use of supporting evidence, sentence variety, and writing conventions. The criteria under "Narrative writing," "Summary writing," and "Response to literature writing," adapted from the grade four Writing Applications academic content standards for these genres, are used to evaluate student writing in the specific genres to which they apply.

On pages II-19 through II-24 in this section, alternate format versions of the grade four rubric are presented to indicate how all the scoring criteria are applied to student responses in each genre.

4

The writing—

- *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.

Narrative writing—

- 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.

Summary writing—

- Is characterized by paraphrasing of the main idea(s) and *significant* details.

Response to literature writing—

- Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of the literary work.
- Provides *effective* support for judgments through *specific* references to text and prior knowledge.

3

The writing—

- 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.

Narrative writing—

- 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.

Summary writing—

- Is characterized by paraphrasing of the main idea(s) and *significant* details.

Response to literature writing—

- Demonstrates an understanding of the literary work.
- Provides *some* support for judgments through references to text and prior knowledge.

2

The writing—

- 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 in 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.

Narrative writing—

- 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.

Summary writing—

- Is characterized by *substantial* copying of key phrases and *minimal* paraphrasing.

Response to literature writing—

- Demonstrates a *limited* understanding of the literary work.
- Provides *weak* support for judgments.

1

The writing—

- 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.

Narrative writing—

- *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.

Summary writing—

- Is characterized by substantial copying of *indiscriminately selected* phrases or sentences.

Response to literature writing—

- Demonstrates little understanding of the literary work.
- *Fails* to provide support for judgments.

Alternate Format Versions of the Grade Four Scoring Rubric

In the following charts, the grade four scoring rubric is presented in an alternate format to indicate how all the scoring criteria in the rubric—those derived from the academic content standards for Writing Strategies and Written Conventions as well as those derived from the academic content standards for Writing Applications—are applied to student responses in each genre.

The column under "Genre" contains the scoring criteria derived from the grade four academic content standards for Writing Applications. The column under "Organization and Focus" contains scoring criteria derived from the subset of Organization and Focus standards within the grade four academic content standards for Writing Strategies. The column under "Sentence Structure" contains the scoring criterion derived from the subset of Sentence Structure standards within the grade four academic content standards for Written and Oral English Language Conventions. The column under "Conventions" contains the scoring criteria derived from the subsets of Grammar, Punctuation, Capitalization, and Spelling standards within the grade four academic content standards for Written and Oral English Language Conventions. Although some columns contain more bullets than others, this is not meant to imply that columns with more bullets are more important in the scoring than those with fewer. References to the writing standards from which each scoring criterion is derived are presented in coded form following each criterion for score point four.

Grade Four Writing Rubric: Narrative Writing

	Genre	*Organization and Focus*	*Sentence Structure*	*Conventions*
4	■ Provides a *thoroughly developed* sequence of significant events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories. (WA 2.1 a, d) ■ Includes *vivid* descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to visualize the events or experiences. (WA 2.1 b, c)	■ *Clearly* addresses all parts of the writing task.* ■ Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of purpose. (WS 1.1) ■ Maintains a *consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. (WS 1.1; 1.2 a, c, e; 1.3) ■ Includes a *clearly presented* central idea with *relevant* facts, details, and/or explanations. (WS 1.2 b, c)	■ Includes a *variety* of sentence types. (WC 1.1; 1.2)	■ 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. (WC 1.3–1.7)
3	■ 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.	■ 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.

* *Since this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.*

WA: Writing Applications standards **WS:** Writing Strategies standards **WC:** Written Conventions standards

	Genre	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
2	■ Provides a *minimally developed* sequence of significant 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.	■ 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 in 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.
1	■ *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.	■ 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.

Grade Four Writing Rubric: Summary Writing

	Genre	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
4	■ Is characterized by paraphrasing of the main idea(s) and *significant* details. (WA 2.4)	■ *Clearly* addresses all parts of the writing task.* ■ Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of purpose. (WS 1.1) ■ Maintains a *consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. (WS 1.1, 1.2 a, c, e; 1.3) ■ Includes a *clearly presented* central idea with *relevant* facts, details, and/or explanations. (WS 1.2 b, c)	■ Includes a *variety* of sentence types. (WC 1.1; 1.2)	■ 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. (WC 1.3–1.7)
3	■ Is characterized by paraphrasing of the main idea(s) and *significant* details.	■ 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.
2	■ Is characterized by *substantial* copying of key phrases and *minimal* paraphrasing.	■ 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 in 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.

* *Since this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.*

WA: Writing Applications standards **WS:** Writing Strategies standards **WC:** Written Conventions standards

	Genre	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
1	■ Is characterized by substantial copying of *indiscriminately selected* phrases or sentences.	■ 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.

Grade Four Writing Rubric: Response to Literature Writing

	Genre	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
4	■ Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of the literary work. (WA 2.2 a) ■ Provides *effective* support for judgments through *specific* references to text and prior knowledge. (WA 2.2 b)	■ *Clearly* addresses all parts of the writing task.* ■ Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of purpose. (WS 1.1) ■ Maintains a *consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. (WS 1.1; 1.2 a, c, e; 1.3) ■ Includes a *clearly presented* central idea with *relevant* facts, details, and/or explanations. (WS 1.2 b, c)	■ Includes a *variety* of sentence types. (WC 1.1; 1.2)	■ 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. (WC 1.3–1.7)
3	■ Demonstrates an understanding of the literary work. ■ Provides *some* support for judgments through references to text and prior knowledge.	■ 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.
2	■ Demonstrates a *limited* understanding of the literary work. ■ Provides *weak* support for judgments.	■ 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 in 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.

* *Since this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.*

WA: Writing Applications standards **WS:** Writing Strategies standards **WC:** Written Conventions standards

	Genre	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
1	■ Demonstrates little understanding of the literary work. ■ *Fails* to provide support for judgments.	■ 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.

Section III—Grade Seven

Writing Tasks

Sample Student Work

Teacher Commentaries

Scoring Rubrics

Grade Seven Persuasive Writing Task Administered on March 16 and 17, 2004

The writing task below was administered to students in grade seven who took the *CST* in writing on March 16 or 17, 2004. The prompt used for the May 11 and 12 administration is shown on page III–10 in this section. Sample student responses and teacher commentaries are included for both tasks.

Persuasive Writing Task

Directions:

- In this writing test, you will write a persuasive letter in response to the writing task on the following page.
- You will have time to plan, write, and proofread.
- Only what you write on the lined pages in this booklet will be scored.

Scoring:

Your writing will be scored on how well you:

- state your position on the topic;
- describe the points in support of your position, including examples and other evidence;
- anticipate and address readers' concerns and arguments against your position; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. You may include a salutation and closing, but the format of the letter will not count as part of your score.

Writing the Persuasive Letter:

Imagine that you have decided to start an after-school activity club and want to recruit new members. Think about the club you would like to start at your school. Then write a letter to persuade students your age to join the club. Be sure to include specific reasons and details that would make students want to join your club.

Remember that your writing will be scored on how well you:

- state your position on the topic;
- describe the points in support of your position, including examples and other evidence;
- anticipate and address readers' concerns and arguments against your position; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. You may include a salutation and closing, but the format of the letter will not count as part of your score.

Persuasive Writing Task—Grade Seven

Student responses to this persuasive writing task and to the task on page III–10 in this section were scored using the Grade Seven Scoring Rubric shown on pages III–19 and III–20 in this section. This rubric incorporates portions of the English-language arts academic content standards for Writing Strategies and Written Conventions that address writing in general and includes criteria specific to persuasive writing.

Standard

Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

2.4 Write persuasive compositions:

a. State a clear position or perspective in support of a proposition or proposal.
b. Describe the points in support of the proposition, employing well-articulated evidence.
c. Anticipate and address reader concerns and counterarguments.

Grade Seven Focus

For the writing tasks in grade seven, students were expected to state a clear position or perspective and support this position with well-articulated evidence. Students who did well used organized and relevant arguments to support their positions. The most effective persuasive compositions provided thoroughly developed supporting evidence and clearly addressed readers' concerns, biases, or expectations.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on March 16 and 17, 2004

Score Point 4 Essay

Student Work

Attention All Students!

Volleyball season is right around the corner and how many of you plan on trying out? Well, if you need a little extra help or just want to refresh your memory, sign up for Volleyball Club! Volleyball Club is on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:00-5:00 p.m. free of charge. Learn all the basic skills and even a few tricky tips! After the first three weeks of this club, we will be holding a tournement where you can win all types of prizes. Joining Volleyball Club will help you become a better player and teach you better sportsmanship.

Most kids have very little knowledge of volleyball, especially boys since they are not allowed to try out for school teams. However, over this two month period, you can learn all the fundamentals of the game. For serving we will teach you correct foot placement, how to hit the ball, and even tricks like how to get the ball to go in a certain area on the court. For spiking we will do the same things but also teach you how to put power on the ball without hitting it out of bounds. Setting will be one of the most complicated thig we will teach you since it takes time to do correctly. Once you have mastered the basics, you can move to the more challenging objects of volleyball such as faking out the other team. When you are done with volleyball camp, you'll be ready for anything on the court.

We do realize that cost is a big factor for some students and their families. For this reason, participating in the club is free. However, at the end of the club you will be able to purchase sweaters with your name on it if you desire. If you would like one but feel you cannot afford it, please speak with me in private and we can work something out.

Some students think that all sports are about winning. This is obviously not true. Volleyball Club is a great opportunity for students to build a better attitude towards sports and get the help they need to develop great sportsmanship whether they win or lose. Good sportsmanship makes everyone a winner!

If you want to learn how to play volleyball, build a better character, or have something fun to do after school, be in the gym after school on Monday for your first Volleyball Club meeting. In this meeting we will go over the rules, give everyone their uniforms, and discuss where everyone sees themselves playing. On Wednesday we will pick up a ball and be ready to start! If you do not attend the meeting on Monday, you will be unable to attend Volleyball Club for the remainder of the year. So don't forget be in the gym Monday. Welcome boys and girls.

Commentary

This persuasive response is characterized by an authoritative defense of a position in which precise and relevant evidence is used to convincingly address readers' concerns and expectations. The response illustrates a clear understanding of the purpose and audience for a persuasive letter.

The writer clearly addresses all parts of the writing task by presenting a clear central idea ("Joining Volleyball Club will help you become a better player and teach you better sportsmanship"), supporting it with well-developed examples and evidence, and anticipating and addressing readers' concerns and expectations.

Concentrating on the advantages of joining the Volleyball Club, the writer maintains a consistent focus and organizational structure through most of the response. The writer begins with an explanation of what participants will learn in the club, continues with a discussion of why the club is free, moves to a discussion of how the club promotes sportsmanship, and ends with a conclusion that strays when the writer explains the consequences of missing the first meeting but for the most part focuses on what will happen at the initial meetings.

The writer uses a variety of transitional techniques to move the reader from sentence to sentence. In the second and third sentences of paragraph three, for example, the writer uses a modifying phrase ("For this reason") and a transitional word ("However") to move the reader along. In paragraph five, the writer repeats language from the paragraph's first sentence to lead the reader smoothly into the second sentence ("… be in the gym after school on Monday for your first Volleyball Club meeting. In this meeting …"). Transitions are less effective where the writer uses imprecise wording ("Well, …" [paragraph one, sentence two], and "For serving …" and "For spiking …" [paragraph two, sentences three and four] for transitional purposes.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on March 16 and 17, 2004

Score Point 4 Essay (continued)

Commentary

Relevant details and explanations are used to defend the writer's position. To support the idea that "you can learn all the fundamentals of the game," for example, the writer explains that club members will learn to serve, spike, and set, as well as other skills.

This response illustrates a clear understanding of the audience through a convincing, enthusiastic tone. In the first paragraph, for example, the writer emphasizes the timeliness of the club by reminding readers that "Volleyball season is right around the corner …" and guarantees that after participating in the club, readers will "be ready for anything on the court."

In the third paragraph, the writer acknowledges the potential concern that "cost is a big factor" and convincingly addresses this concern by saying that the club is free. In the fourth paragraph, the writer appeals to students who may be deterred by an emphasis on winning and argues that not all sports breed an obsession with winning. The writer suggests that "sportsmanship makes everyone a winner!"

The response demonstrates a variety of sentence types, ranging from short, simple sentences used for persuasive impact ("This is obviously not true") to complex sentences that provide information ("Most kids have very little knowledge of volleyball, especially boys since they are not allowed to try out for school teams. However, over this two month period, you can learn all the fundamentals of the game").

This response contains occasional errors in subject-antecedent agreement ("give everyone their uniforms, and discuss where everyone sees themselves playing") and spelling ("tournement" and "thig" [instead of "things"]). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are consistent with what would be expected in first-draft writing.

This response represents writing in the middle range of score point 4.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on March 16 and 17, 2004

Score Point 3 Essay

Student Work

Do you like adventure? How about outdoor activities? If you do, come join the Outdoors Club. The cost of the activities are affordable. You are going to learn plenty of outdoor skills. We will explore the outside and have fun! We are going to go biking, camping, fishing, and hiking.

The cost of the activities are affordable. If you need money, don't worry. We have fund raisers to help you get the money you need. If I were you, I would not mind the cost. You might say, you are flat broke. However, the club has fundraisers and the members might even chip in some few dollars.

You are going to learn plenty of outdoor skills. You need skills to survive a night in the woods. The Club will teach you things like that. You may say, you already know survival techniques. However, you can practice your skills and improve them.

As a member of the Outdoor's Club, you get to explore the wild and most importantly have fun! You get to see animals and meet new people. You might not agree on some of the ideas the club has. However, you are not forced to do an activity you don't like.

In conclusion, you should join the Outdoor's Club right now. The cost of the activities are cheap, you might learn outdoor techniques, and we get to go outside and have fun. Want to have adventure? Join the Outdoor's Club.

Commentary

This response is characterized by a general defense of the idea that one should join the Outdoors Club. The writer uses relevant but general evidence and addresses readers' concerns, illustrating a general understanding of the writing task's purpose and audience.

The writer addresses all parts of the task by inviting readers to join the Outdoors Club, using mostly relevant explanations to make clear why readers should join, and addressing possible concerns.

The writer demonstrates a general understanding of purpose by opening with questions designed to arouse the audience's interest ("Do you like adventure? How about outdoor activities?"). The rest of the first paragraph communicates the writer's central idea (that interested readers should join the club) and three main supporting points ("If you do, come join the Outdoors Club. The cost of the activities are affordable. You are going to learn plenty of outdoor skills. We will explore the outside and have fun").

In the final paragraph, the reader is reminded of the three main points in defense of the writer's position, and the writer makes an effective final appeal ("Want to have adventure? Join the Outdoor's Club"). However, the evidence used throughout the essay to support the main ideas is general rather than precise and convincing, and consequently demonstrates a general rather than a clear understanding of audience.

The writer defends the central idea through a mostly consistent organizational structure. Each paragraph, for example, begins with an assertion that elaborates on one of the three main supporting points presented in the introduction. In paragraph three, for example, the writer supports the idea that club members will "learn plenty of outdoor skills" by explaining that "You need skills

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on March 16 and 17, 2004

Score Point 3 Essay (continued)

Commentary

to survive a night in the woods. The Club will teach you things like that."

Transitions are sometimes used effectively ("However," for example, is used effectively in places), but a number of sentences shift abruptly between ideas without transitions. These shifts usually occur when the writer neglects to develop one idea before moving to another. The most glaring example occurs in paragraph four, where the writer says in the second sentence that club members "get to see animals and meet new people," and in the next sentence shifts abruptly to "You might not agree on some of the ideas the club has."

Following the main assertion in each paragraph, the writer introduces and briefly counters a reader concern. In the third paragraph, for example, the writer says, "You may say, you already know survival techniques. However, you can practice your skills and improve them." The organization becomes inconsistent in the second paragraph, however, when the writer repeats the previously stated idea that the club has fundraisers.

This response demonstrates some sentence variety through a mixture of simple sentences ("The Club will teach you things like that") and complex sentences ("If I were you, I would not mind the cost").

This response contains errors in subject-verb agreement ("The cost of the activities are affordable") and punctuation ("You may say, you already know survival techniques"; "As a member of the Outdoor's Club"). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are consistent with what would be expected in first-draft writing.

This response represents writing in the middle range of score point 3.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on March 16 and 17, 2004

Score Point 2 Essay

Student Work

Dear _____ Middle School students, my name is _____ and I am in 8th grade. I am in ASB and other criculatory school activities. I am looking for students with 3.5 to 4.0 grade point averages who would like to join my club. The club I am going to start is called the F.F.H. club (Food For Homeless) club to be exact. In this club, we will raise money and even donate money or food (perhaps canned food would be best) from ourselves and others.

I am trying to make a meaning to the world and trying to tell them that this world (including us) really do care for others and the struggle people and kids of all ages are going through. This club needs very kind and elegable students inbetween ages 12-14, in grades 6th through 8th. Club sessions will be on Mondays, Wednsday's, and Thursdays. Saturday's and Sunday's will be optional. We will be opened from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm and will have to work hard for the whole three straight hours. Snacks and a dinner which will include something different every club session, including (Taco Bell, Burger King, Albertoes, etc.) will be provided by ___.M.S.. Sign up's start on Tuesday, December 4 and will go on until December 14 which will give you 10 days to talk to parent and get other students to join.

Please notify other ___.M.S. students about this add, and please join—for the homeless. Further information about when it all starts will be provided after sign ups have ended. It will be lots and lots of fun.

Sincerely, your Friend,
_____, ASB
representatives and _____
Middle School

Commentary

This response demonstrates little understanding of the purpose and audience for persuasive writing. The writer defends a position (students should join the Food For Homeless Club) with limited facts, details, and explanations and without addressing readers' concerns.

The writer addresses only parts of the writing task. In the first paragraph, the writer describes the purpose of the club ("we will raise money and even donate money or food") and supports this statement with further explanation apparently intended to persuade readers to join ("I am trying to make a meaning to the world and trying to tell them that this world [including us] really do care for others and the struggle people and kids of all ages are going through"). By the next sentence, however, the writer has strayed from the purpose of the task (persuading readers to join the club), and the response begins to lose its focus. Rather than continuing to provide reasons for joining the club, the writer devotes the rest of the response to explaining the needs of the club, when it will meet, and what food will be served.

The writer includes both simple and complex sentences, as is illustrated by the final paragraph: "Please notify other ___.M.S. students about this add, and please join—for the homeless. Further information about when it all starts will be provided after sign ups have ended. It will be lots and lots of fun."

This response contains several errors in the conventions of the English language. These include errors in the use of apostrophes ("Saturday's and Sunday's will be optional"), a lack of commas to set off a date and to separate main and subordinate clauses ("Sign-up's start on Tuesday, December 4 and will go on until December 14 which will give you time to talk to parent and get other students to join"), mistakes in spelling ("criculatory," "elegable," "add"), and use of an inappropriate form of the modifier ("We will be opened"). Some errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are more than would be expected in first-draft writing.

This response represents writing in the middle range of score point 2.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on March 16 and 17, 2004

Score Point 1 Essay

Student Work

Dear student,

Me and a couple of other students have started a club called Skating Rights, and we are trying to get people to Join this club who know how to skate. because we know how hard it is to skate without people telling you to get off their property. So we made this club so you could skate without worrying about getting your board tooken away. but there is some money involved. and that's because we will be going To skate compititions! tryout's will be November 4th see you there.

Commentary

This response fails to defend a position with any evidence and fails to address readers' concerns, biases, and expectations. The writer provides no evidence of understanding the purpose and audience for persuasive writing.

The writer addresses one part of the writing task in the opening sentence by suggesting that the topic of the letter is the Skating Rights Club and by implying that interested readers should join. Immediately after this sentence, the writer presents two pieces of evidence to support the idea that readers should join ("because we know how hard it is to skate without people telling you to get off their property" and "we made this club so you could skate without worrying about getting your board tooken away"). Because the writer fails to explain what the club will do to protect skateboarders from getting chased off people's property and from losing their skateboards, however, these pieces of evidence appear only marginally related to the writer's persuasive purpose.

The statement, "but there is some money involved" may be intended to acknowledge the reader's concerns. Since the writer makes no attempt to elaborate on the question of money, however, it is impossible to know the purpose of the sentence.

This response demonstrates little variety in sentence types. The first sentence is compound, but subsequent sentences consist of fragments ("because we know how hard it is to skate without people telling you to get off their property"), run-ons ("tryout's will be November 4th see you there"), and simple sentences.

This response contains serious errors in the conventions of the English language. Errors include incorrect pronoun case ("Me and a couple of other students have started a club called Skating Rights"), mistaken verb tense ("tooken"), incorrect use of apostrophes ("tryout's will be November 4th"), mistakes in capitalization ("we are trying to get people to Join this club"), and incorrect spelling ("compititions"). Some of these errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are more than would be expected in first-draft writing.

This response represents writing in the middle range of score point 1.

Grade Seven Persuasive Writing Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

The writing task below was administered to students who took the CST in writing on May 11 or 12, 2004. Sample student responses and teacher commentaries are presented on the pages following the task shown below.

Persuasive Writing Task

Directions:

- In this writing test, you will write a persuasive letter in response to the writing task on the following page.
- You will have time to plan, write, and proofread.
- Only what you write on the lined pages in this booklet will be scored.

Scoring:

Your writing will be scored on how well you:

- state your position on the topic;
- describe the points in support of your position, including examples and other evidence;
- anticipate and address readers' concerns and arguments against your position; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. You may include a salutation and closing, but the format of the letter will not count as part of your score.

Writing the Persuasive Letter:

Imagine that your cafeteria manager is considering removing all fast-food items (for example, hamburgers, pizza, and french fries) from your cafeteria menu. After thinking about this issue, write your cafeteria manager a letter persuading him or her to accept your views on the removal of all fast foods from the cafeteria. Be sure to include specific reasons and details in support of your position.

Remember that your writing will be scored on how well you:

- state your position on the topic;
- describe the points in support of your position, including examples and other evidence;
- anticipate and address readers' concerns and arguments against your position; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. You may include a salutation and closing, but the format of the letter will not count as part of your score.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

Score Point 4 Essay

Student Work

Dear Cafeteria Manager,

Obesity has become a quickly growing issue all across America. This is because Americans in this day and age are led to make unhealthy eating decisions by the fast-food industry. Should our cafeteria be supporting this horrible ailment? Our cafeteria serves many fast-food items. These items are quite popular with children my age because of their delicious taste; however, studies show that they can lead to health problems if they are not eaten in moderation. I believe that all fast food items should be removed from our menu because it will encourage students to develop healthier eating habits and drasticly increase pupils' energy during the lengthy school day.

If all fast-food choices were wiped from our menu, it would be more convenient for students to choose more beneficial options. If students were to choose these healthier options on a regular basis then we could raise a generation with less obesity then ever before. This would make our generation less at risk of falling victim to chronic diseases; therefore, we would lead a less painful life then the plethora of obese Americans today. Also, we would be much more active and spend less time vegging out in front of the TV mindlessly or doing other unproductive activities. Another benefit of making healthier choices is that we will, out of habit, make healthier choices for the rest of our life. This will lead to a generation of people who live significantly longer than those who made unhealthy choices. Also when you have a generation of nutritionally sound adults their children will have less dangerous medical complications that are inherited. You may think that children will just pass up healthy choices if we put them on the menu; however, I believe that we can produce choices that are not only nutritional but delicious too! We could hire a nutritionist who would be able to come up with splendid ideas such as smoothies. With children that will be less obese and continue on their healthy choices for life, having nutritional choices would be beneficial.

Every day, students are eating foods high in unhealthy items that are proven to lower energy levels, think of how much smarter we would be if we put all that wasted energy to work. A benefit of having more energy during the school day is that we could put that excess energy toward our education and learn more! This could boost the test scores and give our

Commentary

This response clearly addresses all parts of the writing task. It presents a firm position on the issue, describes the points in support of this position, includes supporting examples and evidence, and anticipates and addresses readers'concerns.

The writer demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose and audience by opening with a clearly presented central idea ("all fast food items should be removed from our menu because it will encourage students to develop healthier eating habits and drasticly increase pupils' energy during the lengthy school day") and authoritatively defending it with fully developed paragraphs that present precise and relevant evidence. In paragraph two, for example, the writer develops the idea that removing fast food would reduce obesity and consequently reduce obesity-related disease and improve health. In paragraph three, the writer develops the idea that healthier eating would increase energy levels, which would, in turn, benefit students, their schools, and their communities.

The writer maintains a consistent organizational structure, presenting explanations to support removal of fast food early in paragraphs two and three and addressing potential concerns in the latter parts of these paragraphs. The concern expressed in paragraph two is the more convincingly addressed. There the writer argues that readers need not worry that students would pass up healthy foods, because a good nutritionist could create healthy dishes that are flavorful. In paragraph three, the writer attempts to address the concern that students might dissipate their increased energy by expressing certainty that students would use their energy productively, rather than presenting evidence to support this conviction. The writer provides a satisfying conclusion by reiterating that healthier eating will reduce obesity and produce more active students, an idea that has been convincingly defended in the preceding paragraphs.

Transitions are used effectively to indicate a shift in thought ("however, studies show …") in paragraph one and consequence ("therefore, we would lead …") and

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

Score Point 4 Essay (continued)

Student Work

school a better reputation. This also could put our students into a better college, and on the path to a better life. Another benefit of having more energy is that we could use it to be more involved in the world around us. In the long run, we will have a generation that is more politically aware and are able to make wiser voting choices. Also our community will benefit because more and more people will have the extra energy to give back to our community through volunteer work. You may think that students would just use this excess energy for trivial activities such as mindless video games; however, I firmly believe that my peers would make excellent choices of how to productively use their time. More energy in the community would truly benefit everyone.

Obesity is on its way to being the biggest killer in America if it isn't stopped now, and the power to stop it is in our hands. Cutting fast food from our menu will lead to healthier students who can better be an active part of the world around them. Together we can end obesity by getting the right message about food into the minds of the vulnerable youth of America.

Commentary

addition ("Also, we would be …" and "Another benefit of making…") in consecutive sentences in paragraph two.

One minor organizational lapse occurs in paragraph two when the writer states that if students ate a healthier diet, they "would be much more active and spend less time vegging out in front of the TV mindlessly or doing other unproductive activities"). As the sentence is written, it is not clear whether this information would fit more logically in paragraph two, which focuses on obesity, or in paragraph three, which focuses on the increased energy resulting from a healthy diet. Rephrasing the information so that it more clearly supports the idea of reducing obesity would remove any sense of incoherence.

The response includes a variety of sentence types, including simple sentences ("Obesity has become a quickly growing issue all across America"), complex sentences ("If all fast-food choices were wiped from our menu, it would be more convenient for students to choose more beneficial options"), and compound-complex sentences ("These items are quite popular with children my age because of their delicious taste; however, studies show that they can lead to health problems if they are not eaten in moderation").

Conventions in this response are sound, including those that are typically difficult for students to master at this grade level. For the most part, the writer uses semicolons correctly to separate independent clauses ("These items are quite popular with children my age because of their delicious taste; however, studies show that they can lead to health problems if they are not eaten in moderation"), apostrophes correctly to indicate plural possessives ("increase pupils' energy during …"), and hyphens correctly to create two-word modifiers ("fast-food industry"; "fast-food choices). Among the few mistakes are a misspelling ("drasticly"), use of "then" where "than" should be used ("… less obesity then ever before"), lack of consistency between plurals ("… we will…make healthier choices for the rest of our life"), and a comma splice (Every day, students are eating foods high in unhealthy items that are proven to lower energy levels, think of how much smarter we would be if we put all that wasted energy to work"). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are consistent with what would be expected in first-draft writing.

This response represents writing in the upper range of score point 4.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

Score Point 3 Essay

Student Work

I believe that fast-food should only be allowed to students twice a week. The greasy french fries and pizza served on a daily basis are unhealthy. The large amounts of fat in such foods will build up in a person's body and possibly cause a blood clot if too much of it is consumed. Greasy foods can also cause students to break out in pimples. All students are pressurized to look, act, even think a certain way. Although fast-food are cool to eat, the outcome after eating is not. Oily skin and pimples are not desirable. If fast-foods can cause pimples and even much worse, why should we take the risk?

Students may argue that fast-food should stay, that is why it should only be allowed sometimes. Fast-food is appealing because it's tasty and looks delicious, but foods go beyond taste. Students already have enough fast food at home with their families; therefore, they do not need any more of it at school. Some may argue that the numerous foods to choose from are mostly fast-foods. If fast food are removed from the cafeteria, new foods that are healthier can be available to students. If healthy meals can be served in our school cafeteria, taste and choice are not a concern.

Fast-foods are proven to be popular. But healthier foods will help students concentrate and excel in academics. If students can succeed in their schoolwork, their incentive can be fast-food energy now and then. But overall, fast-food is simply a craving. To enforce the no fast food policy, teachers should not eat fast-food on campus, either. So the next time you want to eat a pizza, think of oily skin and blood clots.

After eating cartons of french fries and cans of soda, you'll probably tire of fast-food. Statistics show that 98% of the United States population eats fast-food at least three times a week. Students at schools enjoy having fast food at school; however, most do not think of the effects. I promote the decision to rid fast-food from daily school menus.

Commentary

This persuasive response demonstrates a general defense of a position and a general understanding of purpose and audience.

The writer addresses all parts of the task by stating a clear position, supporting it with mostly relevant examples and evidence, and anticipating and addressing readers' concerns.

In the first and second sentences of the response, the writer presents the central idea that "fast-food should only be allowed to students twice a week" because fast foods "served on a daily basis are unhealthy." The organizational structure that follows the presentation of this idea, however, is not completely consistent and reflects only a general understanding of the needs of the audience.

In the first paragraph, for example, the writer explains that fast foods should not be served because they are unhealthy and cause oily skin. Rather than developing and supporting these points in subsequent paragraphs, the writer immediately adds further reasons for limiting the availability of fast foods. Similarly, in paragraph two the writer devotes two sentences to arguing that students get enough fast food at home and two subsequent sentences to arguing that removing fast foods would make room for healthier foods. In paragraph three the writer states that healthier eating will enable students to excel in school, then quickly adds several other reasons for limiting fast foods. Although these details and explanations are mostly relevant to the writer's position and reflect a mostly consistent focus on the central idea, the organization would be more consistent if each point were developed more thoroughly.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

Score Point 3 Essay (continued)

Commentary

The writer addresses several reader concerns ("Students may argue that fast-food should stay"; "Fast-food is appealing because it's tasty and looks delicious"; "Some may argue that the numerous foods to choose from are mostly fast-foods") and counters each briefly in a sentence or two.

Most sentences are connected through varied structures. These structures include subordinated complex sentences ("After eating cartons of french fries and cans of soda, you'll probably tire of fast-food"), compound sentences that connect independent clauses with a conjunction ("Fast-food is appealing because it's tasty and looks delicious, but foods go beyond taste"), and compound sentences that link independent clauses with a semicolon ("Students at schools enjoy having fast food at school; however, most do not think of the effects").

This response contains some errors in the conventions of the English language (for example, use of hyphens where they are not needed: "Fast-foods are proven to be popular"), but these errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing. For the most part, the conventions are very sound.

This response represents writing in the middle range of score point 3.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

Score Point 2 Essay

Student Work

Dear Luncheon lady

You know all that fat and greasy foods that you give out. I think they should be removed from the menu because its not healthy and it doesn't even help us concentrate better in school. All it does is add cholestrolol. We need something more healthy and nutrious. I have many reasons why we should exclude all the fast food. Many of our students over a year are overweight and out of shape because of fast food in the cafeteria. We need more healthy foods like salad, tacos, pretzels, and Bagels. We also should do more exercises in P.E.. Some of our students will be dissapointed about this but its for the best.

Dominos pizza can stay though. We can have it every other day so you don't have it constantly. I think this will have a big impact on other schools. It can be one of our new goals, to get the kids in Physical Shape for the future.

These are my reasons why we should dump that stuff and get into the more halthy foods. It would the right choice to make for the kids of the future.

Commentary

This response states a position that is supported with little evidence related to the central idea and fails to address readers' concerns. It addresses only parts of the writing task (i.e., the writer states a position and supports it with minimal examples) and demonstrates some understanding of purpose and audience.

The writer states a position in the second sentence ("I think [fat and greasy foods] should be removed from the menu because its not healthy and it doesn't even help us concentrate better in school"). This position, however, is supported with limited facts and details. The writer supports the statement that fast food items are "not healthy," for example, only by adding that "all [fast food] does is add cholestrolol" and that "Many of our students over a year are overweight and out of shape …." The writer does not support the statement that "it doesn't even help us concentrate better in school."

Supporting evidence that fast food adds cholesterol is presented in the introductory paragraph where it disrupts the organizational structure rather than in a subsequent paragraph where it might be grouped with other evidence to support the writer's position. The writer further disrupts the focus on fast food by stating in the opening paragraph, "We also should do more exercises in P.E.."

At the beginning of the second paragraph, the writer qualifies the central idea by saying, "Dominos pizza can stay though. We can have it every other day so you don't have it constantly." Inserted at this point in the response, such a statement further disrupts the organizational structure and appears to undercut the writer's position.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

Score Point 2 Essay (continued)

Commentary

The writer introduces one reader concern ("Some of our students will be dissapointed about this"), but addresses this vaguely ("its for the best").

The response demonstrates some variety in sentence types. Most sentences are simple ("All it does is add cholestrolol. We need something more healthy and nutrious"). When the writer tries to use compound structures, they tend to be simplistic ("We can have it every other day so you don't have it constantly"). Although the writer sometimes uses complex structures, they often are awkward and imprecise ("These are my reasons why we should dump that stuff and get into the more halthy foods").

This response contains several errors in the conventions of the English language. These include errors in punctuation ("because its not healthy"), capitalization ("like salad, tacos, pretzels, and Bagels"), and spelling ("cholestrolol," "nutrious," and "halthy"). Some errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are more than would be expected in first-draft writing.

This response represents writing in the middle range of score point 2.

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

Score Point 1 Essay

Student Work

To who it may consern,
I am writing this Letter to Let the cafeteria, Know that all the Student at . . . Middle School, disagree with taking a way the fast-food. One of the reason is we don't like school food tha the distric give us, and we perfer buying fast-food because it taste better than school food. and if you already read my letter I hope you change your mind.
Thank you,
David . . .

Commentary

This response fails to defend a position with any evidence and fails to address readers' concerns, biases, and expectations.

The writer addresses part of the writing task by stating a position on the issue ("Student at … Middle School, disagree with taking a way the fast-food"). The writer then presents a marginally related explanation for opposing removal of fast food ("we don't like school food tha the distric give us, and we perfer buying fast-food because it taste better than school food"). The writer provides no evidence, however, to support this explanation.

This response demonstrates a lack of understanding about audience by addressing the audience in the first sentence as "the cafeteria" and by expressing the hope that this letter will convince the reader to "change your mind" without offering evidence to persuade the reader to do so.

The statement of a position in the first sentence, a rationale for that position in the second sentence, and a closing appeal in the third sentence suggests that the writer has some sense of organizational structure.

Sentences vary from complex ("and if you already read my letter I hope you change your mind") to compound-complex ("One of the reason is we don't like school food tha the distric give us, and we perfer buying fast-food because it taste better than school food"). These sentences are considerably weakened, however, by the initial "and" that makes the complex sentence read like a fragment and by numerous conventions errors in the other two sentences.

Errors in conventions include inappropriate punctuation and capitalization ("I am writing

Sample Student Work and Teacher Commentaries for Grade Seven Persuasive Task Administered on May 11 and 12, 2004

Score Point 1 Essay (continued)

Commentary

this Letter to Let the cafeteria, Know that"), mistakes in spelling ("consern," "tha [that]," "distric," and "perfer"), and lack of subject-verb agreement ("because it taste better …"). These errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing and are more than would be expected in first-draft writing.

This response represents writing in the middle range of score point 1.

Grade Seven Scoring Rubric

The scoring rubric that follows is used to assign scores to students' written responses on the grade seven writing tests. This rubric includes two sets of criteria. The criteria under "The writing" are adapted from the English-language arts academic content standards for Writing Strategies and Written Conventions of English. These criteria are used to evaluate written responses in all genres for their clarity of purpose, central idea, and organization; their coherence; and their use of supporting evidence, sentence variety, and writing conventions. The criteria under "Fictional or autobiographical narrative writing," "Response to literature writing," "Persuasive writing," and "Summary writing," adapted from the grade seven academic content standards for Writing Applications for these genres, are used to evaluate student writing in the specific genres to which they apply.

On pages III–21 through III–28 in this section, alternate format versions of the grade seven rubric are presented to indicate how all the scoring criteria are applied to student responses in each genre.

4

The writing—

- *Clearly* addresses all parts of the writing task.
- Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of purpose and audience.
- Maintains a *consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the *effective* use of transitions.
- 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.

Fictional or autobiographical narrative writing—

- Provides a *thoroughly developed* plot line, including major and minor characters and a *definite* setting.
- Includes *appropriate* strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).

Response to literature writing—

- Develops interpretations that demonstrate a *thoughtful,* comprehensive grasp of the text.
- Organizes *accurate and coherent* interpretations around *clear* ideas, premises, or images from the literary work.
- Provides *specific* textual examples and details to support the interpretations.

Persuasive writing—

- *Authoritatively* defends a position with precise and relevant evidence and *convincingly* addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

Summary writing—

- Is characterized by paraphrasing of the main idea(s) and *significant* details.

3

The writing—

- Addresses all parts of the writing task.
- Demonstrates a *general* understanding of purpose and audience.
- Maintains a *mostly consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the *effective* use of some transitions.
- 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.

Fictional or autobiographical narrative writing—

- Provides an *adequately developed* plot line, including major and minor characters and a *definite* setting.
- Includes *appropriate* strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).

Response to literature writing—

- Develops interpretations that demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of the text.
- Organizes accurate and *reasonably* coherent interpretations around *clear* ideas, premises, or images from the literary work.
- Provides textual examples and details to support the interpretations.

Persuasive writing—

- *Generally* defends a position with relevant evidence and addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

Summary writing—

- Is characterized by paraphrasing of the main idea(s) and *significant* details.

2

The writing—

- Addresses *only parts* of the writing task.
- Demonstrates *little* understanding of purpose and audience.
- Maintains an *inconsistent* point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure, which may include *ineffective or awkward* transitions that do not unify important ideas.
- *Suggests* a central idea with *limited* facts, details, and/or explanations.
- Includes *little* variety in 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.

Fictional or autobiographical narrative writing—

- Provides a *minimally developed* plot line, including characters and a setting.
- *Attempts* to use strategies but with *minimal* effectiveness (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).

Response to literature writing—

- Develops interpretations that demonstrate a *limited* grasp of the text.
- Includes interpretations that *lack* accuracy or coherence as related to ideas, premises, or images from the literary work.
- Provides *few, if any,* textual examples and details to support the interpretations.

Persuasive writing—

- Defends a position with *little, if any,* evidence and *may* address the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

Summary writing—

- Is characterized by *substantial* copying of key phrases and *minimal* paraphrasing.

1

The writing—

- Addresses *only one part* of the writing task.
- Demonstrates *no* understanding of purpose and audience.
- *Lacks* a point of view, focus, organizational structure, and transitions that unify important ideas.
- *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.

Fictional or autobiographical narrative writing—

- *Lacks* a developed plot line.
- *Fails* to use strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).

Response to literature writing—

- Demonstrates *little* grasp of the text.
- *Lacks* an interpretation or *may* be a simple retelling of the passage.
- *Lacks* textual examples and details.

Persuasive writing—

- *Fails* to defend a position with *any* evidence and *fails* to address the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

Summary writing—

- Is characterized by substantial copying of *indiscriminately selected* phrases or sentences.

Alternate Format Versions of the Grade Seven Scoring Rubric

In the following charts, the grade seven scoring rubric is presented in an alternate format to indicate how all the scoring criteria in the rubric—those derived from the academic content standards for Writing Strategies and Written Conventions as well as those derived from the academic content standards for Writing Applications—are applied to student responses in each genre.

The column under "Genre" contains the scoring criteria derived from the grade seven academic content standards for Writing Applications. The column under "Organization and Focus" contains scoring criteria derived from the subset of Organization and Focus standards within the grade seven academic content standards for Writing Strategies. The column under "Sentence Structure" contains the scoring criterion derived from the Sentence Structure standard within the grade six academic content standards for Written and Oral English Language Conventions. The column under "Conventions" contains the scoring criteria derived from the subsets of Grammar, Punctuation, Capitalization, and Spelling standards within the grade seven academic content standards for Written and Oral English Language Conventions. Although some columns contain more bullets than others, this is not meant to imply that columns with more bullets are more important in the scoring than those with fewer. References to the writing standards from which each scoring criterion is derived are presented in coded form following each criterion for score point four.

Grade Seven Writing Rubric: Fictional or Autobiographical Narrative Writing

	Genre	*Organization and Focus*	*Sentence Structure*	*Conventions*
4	■ Provides a *thoroughly developed* plot line, including major and minor characters and a *definite* setting. (Gr. 7 WA 2.1 a, b) ■ Includes *appropriate* strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action). (Gr. 7 WA 2.1 c)	■ *Clearly* addresses all parts of the writing task.* ■ Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of purpose and audience.** ■ Maintains a *consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the *effective* use of transitions. (Gr. 7 WS 1.1) ■ Includes a *clearly presented* central idea with *relevant* facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 7 WS 1.2)	■ Includes a *variety* of sentence types. (Gr. 6 WC 1.1)	■ 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. (Gr. 7 WC 1.1; 1.2; 1.4–1.7)

* *Since this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.*
** *This criterion is based on standards for previous grade levels that students must learn in order to write more complex responses required at grade seven.*

WA: Writing Applications standards **WS:** Writing Strategies standards **WC:** Written Conventions standards

	Genre	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
3	■ Provides an *adequately developed* plot line, including major and minor characters and a *definite* setting. ■ Includes *appropriate* strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).	■ Addresses all parts of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates a *general* understanding of purpose and audience. ■ Maintains a *mostly consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the *effective* use of some transitions. ■ 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.
2	■ Provides a *minimally developed* plot line, including characters and a setting. ■ *Attempts* to use strategies but with *minimal* effectiveness (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).	■ Addresses *only parts* of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *little* understanding of purpose and audience. ■ Maintains an *inconsistent* point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure, which may include *ineffective or awkward* transitions that do not unify important ideas. ■ *Suggests* a central idea with *limited* facts, details, and/or explanations.	■ Includes *little* variety in 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.
1	■ *Lacks* a developed plot line. ■ *Fails* to use strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; narrative action).	■ Addresses *only one* part of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *no* understanding of purpose and audience. ■ *Lacks* a point of view, focus, organizational structure, and transitions that unify important ideas. ■ *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.

Grade Seven Writing Rubric: Response to Literature Writing

	Genre	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
4	■ Develops interpretations that demonstrate a *thoughtful*, comprehensive grasp of the text. (Gr. 7 WA 2.2 a) ■ Organizes *accurate* and *coherent* interpretations around *clear* ideas, premises, or images from the literary work. (Gr. 7 WA 2.2 b) ■ Provides *specific* textual examples and details to support the interpretations. (Gr. 7 WA 2.2 c)	■ *Clearly* addresses all parts of the writing task.* ■ Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of purpose and audience.** ■ Maintains a *consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the *effective* use of transitions. (Gr. 7 WS 1.1) ■ Includes a *clearly presented* central idea with *relevant* facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 7 WS 1.2)	■ Includes a *variety* of sentence types. (Gr. 6 WC 1.1)	■ 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. (Gr. 7 WC 1.1; 1.2; 1.4–1.7)
3	■ Develops interpretations that demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of the text. ■ Organizes accurate and *reasonably* coherent interpretations around *clear* ideas, premises, or images from the literary work. ■ Provides textual examples and details to support the interpretations.	■ Addresses all parts of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates a *general* understanding of purpose and audience. ■ Maintains a *mostly consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the *effective* use of some transitions. ■ 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.
2	■ Develops interpretations that demonstrate a *limited* grasp of the text. ■ Includes interpretations that *lack* accuracy or coherence as related to ideas, premises, or images from the literary work. ■ Provides *few, if any,* textual examples and details to support the interpretations.	■ Addresses *only parts* of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *little* understanding of purpose and audience. ■ Maintains an *inconsistent* point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure, which may include *ineffective or awkward* transitions that do not unify important ideas. ■ *Suggests* a central idea with *limited* facts, details, and/or explanations.	■ Includes *little* variety in 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.

* *Since this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.*

** *This criterion is based on standards for previous grade levels that students must learn in order to write more complex responses required at grade seven.*

WA: Writing Applications standards **WS:** Writing Strategies standards **WC:** Written Conventions standards

	Genre	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
1	■ Demonstrates *little* grasp of the text. ■ *Lacks* an interpretation or *may* be a simple retelling of the passage. ■ *Lacks* textual examples and details.	■ Addresses *only one* part of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *no* understanding of purpose and audience. ■ *Lacks* a point of view, focus, organizational structure, and transitions that unify important ideas. ■ *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.

Grade Seven Writing Rubric: Persuasive Writing

	Genre	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
4	■ *Authoritatively* defends a position with precise and relevant evidence and *convincingly* addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations. (Gr. 7 WA 2.4 a, b, c)	■ *Clearly* addresses all parts of the writing task.* ■ Demonstrates a *clear* understanding of purpose and audience.** ■ Maintains a *consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the *effective* use of transitions. (Gr. 7 WS 1.1) ■ Includes a *clearly presented* central idea with *relevant* facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 7 WS 1.2)	■ Includes a *variety* of sentence types. (Gr. 6 WC 1.1)	■ 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. (Gr. 7 WC 1.1; 1.2; 1.4–1.7)
3	■ *Generally* defends a position with relevant evidence and addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.	■ Addresses all parts of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates a *general* understanding of purpose and audience. ■ Maintains a *mostly consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the *effective* use of some transitions. ■ 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.
2	■ Defends a position with *little, if any*, evidence and *may* address the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.	■ Addresses *only parts* of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *little* understanding of purpose and audience. ■ Maintains an *inconsistent* point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure, which may include *ineffective or awkward* transitions that do not unify important ideas. ■ *Suggests* a central idea with *limited* facts, details, and/or explanations.	■ Includes *little* variety in 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.

* *Since this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.*

** *This criterion is based on standards for previous grade levels that students must learn in order to write more complex responses required at grade seven.*

WA: Writing Applications standards **WS:** Writing Strategies standards **WC:** Written Conventions standards

	Genre	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
1	■ *Fails* to defend a position with *any* evidence and *fails* to address the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.	■ Addresses *only one* part of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *no* understanding of purpose and audience. ■ *Lacks* a point of view, focus, organizational structure, and transitions that unify important ideas. ■ *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.

Grade Seven Writing Rubric: Summary Writing

	Genre	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
4	■ Is characterized by paraphrasing of the main idea(s) and *significant* details. (Gr. 7 WA 2.5 a, b, c)	■ *Clearly* addresses all parts of the writing task.* ■ Demonstrates *a clear* understanding of purpose and audience.** ■ Maintains a *consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the *effective* use of transitions. (Gr. 7 WS 1.1) ■ Includes a *clearly presented* central idea with *relevant* facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 7 WS 1.2)	■ Includes a *variety* of sentence types. (Gr. 6 WC 1.1)	■ 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. (Gr. 7 WC 1.1; 1.2; 1.4–1.7)
3	■ Is characterized by paraphrasing of the main idea(s) and *significant* details.	■ Addresses all parts of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates a *general* understanding of purpose and audience. ■ Maintains a *mostly consistent* point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the *effective* use of some transitions. ■ 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.
2	■ Is characterized by *substantial* copying of key phrases and *minimal* paraphrasing.	■ Addresses *only parts* of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *little* understanding of purpose and audience. ■ Maintains an *inconsistent* point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure, which may include *ineffective or awkward* transitions that do not unify important ideas. ■ Suggests a central idea with limited facts, details, and/or explanations.	■ Includes *little* variety in 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.

* *Since this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.*

** *This criterion is based on standards for previous grade levels that students must learn in order to write more complex responses required at grade seven.*

WA: Writing Applications standards **WS:** Writing Strategies standards **WC:** Written Conventions standards

	Genre	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
1	■ Is characterized by substantial copying of *indiscriminately selected* phrases or sentences.	■ Addresses *only one* part of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates *no* understanding of purpose and audience. ■ *Lacks* a point of view, focus, organizational structure, and transitions that unify important ideas. ■ *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.