What is Writing?

- ELA–Writing is the use of a student’s primary mode of communication to recount/retell, explain, clarify, argue, persuade, create, or express, based on a text or topic (ELA Resource Guide).

What does ELA–Writing assess?

- ELA–Writing assesses expressive communication by the student:
  - sharing experiences, opinions, ideas, and/or facts
  - discussing books, articles, stories, poetry, video
  - sharing knowledge with an audience

- ELA–Writing does not assess a student’s ability to:
  - hold a writing instrument
  - copy or trace letters or words
  - circle answers on a worksheet

Bathroom activities will not be scored!
**Required Elements for Writing**

1. **Baseline Sample:**
   - The baseline should be the student's first attempt at the writing process and dated prior to the final samples.
   - Baseline can be a brainstorming activity, graphic organizer, outline, or draft.

2. **3 Final Samples:**
   - 3 distinct writing samples with valid dates, plus 3 pre-scored rubrics for each sample.
   - Final samples can either be the final version of the baseline or any other text types. (all the same text type is also okay).
   - Final samples for students using access skills will include a written product produced by the teacher, noting student participation.

**Pre-Scoring the Writing Samples**

- Teachers will pre-score each of their students’ final writing samples, using standardized scoring rubrics.
  - Include completed scoring rubric with each final writing sample.
  - Scorers will verify the teacher’s scores.
  - Use the scoring rubrics provided for each text type.

- Scoring rubrics include the following:
  - Level of Complexity
  - Demonstration of Skills and Concepts (DSC)
    - Expression of Ideas and Content (clarity)
    - Text Structure (words, phrases, sentences)
    - Conventions (mechanics)
    - Vocabulary (appropriate, related)
  - Independence (frequency of prompts)
  - Self-Evaluation
When Might a Scorer Change a Pre-Scored Rubric?

• If the pre-scored rubric contained scores of 3’s or 4’s for DSC, AND
• If the writing sample included only:
  o single words, pictures, phrases, or list of words; OR
  o fill-in-the-blank, matching, true/false, circled responses; OR
  o text provided by the teacher (i.e., no evidence of student input or involvement);

THEN
• The score was lowered to 1 or 2.

Examples: Why rubric scores were lowered by scorers

- Fill-in-the-blank
  My favorite season is ___________.
  I like ___________ because it is ___________.
  I like to ___________ in ___________.
  Summer is a fun season.

- Multiple-choice (circling correct responses)
  Multiple-choice questions with correct answers.

- Text provided by teacher, with no student expression
  Text provided by the teacher, no student expression.
Look at the writing sample below...

The book *Ralph Help the Lion* is Scholastic. Written by Susan Hartley. She wrote the book because she wants kids to learn to help. The problem in this story is Ralph's. He wants to help his family, "Ralph Help the Lion," because he's too small to help. So, he goes out to help. In order to solve this problem, Ralph promises to help. The lion got caught in the net. Ralph went to set the lion free. Ralph was brave and strong. Ralph learns a valuable lesson. Money is good at helping love.

77%  

Look at the criteria for each area and score this student's sample.

A student working on Access Skills should score 1's in DSC.

**Brief Description of the activity:**
The student activated a switch in response to materials used in the creation of a written product.

Scoring Independence for Writing by either:

**The Word...**

6/9 = 66% Ind

**OR**

By the Sentence...

50% Ind

Independence for writing should be based on prompting provided at the word, sentence, or paragraph level.
One Method of Scoring Independence for a Student using a Communication Device

Let’s Recap!

What is Writing?

- Expressive Communication

What is required for the ELA—Writing MCAS-Alt Portfolio?

- 1 baseline sample in any text type
- 3 final different samples in any text type
- 3 completed scoring rubrics

Recap (Continued)

How are writing samples scored?

- By the teacher, in each rubric area, based only on the student’s responses.
- Use only the state-provided scoring rubric.
- Meet all criteria specified in the rubric before moving ‘up’ to the next higher score.
- Document the independence of the student’s responses at the word or sentence level.

Hint: Use online forms and graphs for ease and clarity.

THANK YOU

Debra Hand, MCAS-Alt Coordinator

781-338-3625
dhand@doe.mass.edu
www.doe.mass.edu
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148