ACT® Aspire™

Exemplar Test Items

Writing

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ACT Aspire™ Writing Assessments Writing Framework

The ACT Aspire Writing Assessments

The ACT Aspire Writing Assessments consist of 30-minute summative writing tasks for grades 3 through 8, plus early high school. They ask students at each grade level to respond in essay form to a single writing prompt. The assessments are designed to provide a strong indication of whether students have the writing skills they will need in order to succeed as they begin work at their next grade level. Student responses are evaluated according to analytic rubrics that assess the generation, development, organization, and communication of ideas in standard written English.

Taken as a whole, the ACT Aspire Writing Assessments are intended to describe an integrated continuum of writing ability that advances in skill and complexity grade by grade. This continuum culminates in the ACT® Writing Test, which provides a measure of student readiness for the writing demands of college. The ACT Aspire assessments align to Common Core State Standards that pertain to writing and language, as well as Career and College Readiness Standards derived from ACT research.

Foundations

The ACT Aspire assessments represent an extension into earlier grades of the philosophy of writing and assessment found in established ACT high school writing tests—the ACT Writing Test and the ACT QualityCore® English writing assessments.

The ACT Writing Test was designed from extensive research identifying the essential skills needed for success in entry-level college writing. Data validate that test takers who perform adequately on the Writing Test are likely to succeed in their first-year college composition courses. Thus our claim that the ACT Writing Test is a reliable measure of a student's readiness for college-level writing is supported with empirical evidence.

The ACT QualityCore End of Course assessments are designed to help more high school students achieve the level of writing readiness they will need for college and career success. ACT QualityCore took shape from the ACT *On Course for Success* research project, which examined the curricula of high schools whose students excel despite socioeconomic challenges. We then built the ACT QualityCore End of Course assessments around the high academic standards found in these schools, with the intention of helping more schools understand and incorporate into their classrooms the level of academic rigor needed for their students' success. There are four ACT QualityCore Writing Tests, one at each grade from 9 through 12. The demanding, 45-minute exams measure critical thinking and accomplished composition in the modes of reflective narrative (grade 9), literary analysis (grade 10), persuasive writing (grade 11), and expository writing (grade 12).

The ACT Aspire Writing Assessments draw upon this rich research basis for their design, and reflect the same principles of writing that are found in the ACT Writing Test and in the ACT QualityCore writing assessments.

One key to ensuring this continuity is our Writing Competencies Model.

ACT Writing Competencies Model

Our Writing Competencies Model derives from the ACT Writing Test, the ACT QualityCore English writing assessments, and all of the research, standards, experience, and evidence these tests embody. It serves as the means by which we have extended our philosophy of writing and writing assessment into the ACT Aspire tests.

The model provides a high-level description of the features of writing that we believe are essential to assess in order to support our claims about student readiness. The ACT Aspire tasks and rubrics are derived from the Competencies Model in that that they reflect, in a grade-appropriate way, the portrait of competent writing broadly depicted there.

One key assertion that emerges from the model is that *ideas* are the underlying currency of the competent writing students need to be able to produce in their academic careers and future work-lives. As reflected in the model, competent student writing entails generating, developing, sustaining, organizing, and communicating ideas. This model of writing has basic similarities to other widely accepted models, including the Six + 1 model (Culham 2003) that has been adopted by the National Writing Project (Swain and LeMahieu 2012). The ACT model also finds many parallels with the 2011 NAEP Writing Framework used by the National Assessment of Education Progress (Persky 2012)[1]—which was also developed by ACT's Writing Test Development group.

Generating Ideas. Regardless of the topic or content of a piece of writing, the writer must think of something to say *about* her subject. That "something" consists of ideas that the writer formulates, in response to a rhetorical situation that prompts her to explain, to persuade, or to give a narrative account. The quality of the ideas generated by the writer can be judged according to how acutely they address the rhetorical situation, and by how productive they are of judgment, analysis, or reflection.

Competent writers understand the rhetorical situation—the issue or question they are invited to respond to; the purpose for which they are writing; the audience for their work—and they generate ideas that are pertinent and fitting given the situation. Writers with greater levels of ability generate ideas in consideration of the implications and complications surrounding their topic, the values that underlie particular positions or actions, or the multiple perspectives that complicate an issue. It does not matter as much whether the focus of the student's ideas is grand or mundane, familiar or highly original; rather, what matters most is the degree to which the student's ideas lead to astute judgment, insightful analysis, or meaningful reflection.

Developing Ideas. A writer makes his ideas clear to his reader by explaining and exploring them, discussing their implications, or illustrating them through example. In developing his ideas, the competent writer draws general principles from specific, detailed discussion. As readers, we discover how apt and productive the writer's ideas are through his development and support of those ideas. Development is the means by which a writer supports his thesis, arrives at insights into his topic, or conveys the meaning and significance of his narrative.

Sustaining Ideas. For a piece of writing to succeed in its purpose, it must keep its ideas in focus. A competent writer is judicious in establishing continuity to the ideas she presents in her essay, and will make productive use of all of them. Her reader will grasp the relationships among the ideas in her essay and will understand her purpose throughout. From beginning to end, her essay will comprise a sustained treatment of relevant ideas.

Organizing Ideas. A competent piece of writing is skillfully organized. Its ideas are presented in a sequence that makes clear their relationship to one another and that guides the reader through the essay in a purposeful way. A writer must organize her ideas successfully in order to build a logical argument, provide a clear explanation, or relay a coherent sequence of events. More skillful writers organize ideas in ways that create unity in the essay and that enhance purpose: for example, an argumentative essay that persuades through the momentum it achieves in sequencing logical inferences; an expository essay that arrives at insight through progressively finer distinctions; a narrative essay that braids the author's reflection throughout its telling of a story. Organizational choices are integral to effective writing.

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[1] Regarding the 2011 NAEP Writing Assessment framework, Hilary Persky writes, "Although the draft guides in the framework are similar to the previous guides in their holistic nature and emphasis on development, organization, and language use, they do focus more on how well students cope with ideas, not just in terms of clarity and level of detail, but also in terms of level of insight and approach. Further, the guides explicitly state that the three broad domains of writing be assessed in terms of how well a specific purpose and audience are addressed; this includes the interesting addition in the language domain of voice and tone." (Persky 2012, p. 81).

Communicating Ideas. At the minimum, competent writing must make effective use of the conventions of grammar, syntax, word usage, and mechanics. Better writers vary their sentence structures, use more precise vocabulary, and generally demonstrate greater command of language to enhance their readers' understanding and express nuanced ideas.

Competent writers are also intentional about the style and tone of their writing, reflecting awareness of how the rhetorical situation shapes readers' expectations of what is appropriate and effective. Style and tone are used by skilled writers to enhance their purpose and ethos. Persuasive writing, for example, may call upon pathos as well as logos; expository writing may build ethos through a measured, dispassionate tone of voice; and the skillful use of narrative techniques may greatly enhance a recounting of events. Good writers make thoughtful choices about style and tone in light of their writing aims.

The Writing Competencies Model identifies these ideas-centered features of competent writing across the modes of Persuasive/Argumentative, Analytical Expository, and Reflective Narrative writing.

Modes

Writing instruction and assessment has trended toward a "rhetorical" approach over the last few decades, emphasizing the need to provide students with a context and audience for their work (see Britton et al, 1975). Three primary modes of writing have emerged from this approach, broadly identified as Argumentative, Expository, and Narrative. These general modes are used in the Common Core State Standards, in the NAEP assessments, in classroom instruction, and in many other places as a way to categorize and differentiate writing skills.

Often these modes are taken as genres, with their own inviolate conventions and boundaries. From this perspective, student writers learn the techniques of the argumentative genre and employ them whenever they are asked to write in the argumentative mode; likewise for exposition and narrative writing.

In our view, however, the modes are best perceived as purposes rather than genres: a writer may make use of any combination of writing approaches to achieve her purpose. Thus, while appeals to reason or values are associated with persuasive writing, for example, they should not be confined to that mode. Good expository writing necessarily calls upon the skills of argumentation to make and bolster a case for the value of its explanation. Likewise, argumentative writing can use narrative techniques in making its persuasive appeals, and strong narratives often rely on the expository techniques of description and distinction.

Thus, while the ACT Aspire Writing Assessments at each grade level are primarily associated with either Argumentative, Expository, or Narrative modes, these labels are best understood as writing purposes, in the fulfillment of which students may employ any of the approaches to writing that are at their disposal. In fact, in our view, becoming a competent writer necessarily entails learning to make wise and effective decisions about which techniques to use in order to achieve a given writing purpose. In this sense, then, the identification of an ACT Aspire Writing task as Narrative, Argumentative, or Expository serves primarily to bring into relief a particular purpose for writing, but does not dictate or circumscribe the approach and techniques the student may bring to the assignment.

Further, ACT Aspire expands the mode labels to reflect the opportunities the assessments afford for demonstrating advanced skills and thinking. The Narrative mode becomes Reflective Narrative in ACT Aspire, signaling that an ability to think critically about the meaning of a recounted event is an essential dimension of narrative writing competence. Similarly, the ACT Aspire Analytical Expository mode reflects the expectation that competent explanation entails analysis in the service of depth of understanding and insight. The Persuasive/Argumentative label recognizes that effective rhetorical skills include not just logos, but also pathos and ethos.

The Reflective Narrative mode appears at grades 3 and 6. The assessments at grades 4, 7, and early high school are in the Analytical Expository mode. The grade 5 and grade 8 assessments are in the Persuasive/Argumentative mode, as is the ACT Writing Test. The ACT Aspire assessments are designed to give students at every grade level an opportunity to display the higher order thinking skills needed for meaningful reflection, analytical explanation, and persuasive argument. The means for evaluating students' abilities to display these skills are built into the ACT Aspire rubrics.

Rubrics

The ACT Aspire Rubrics embody the principles and philosophy discussed to this point. Each grade level has its own rubric, but there is a great deal of continuity as one moves across grades and modes. Each comprises four domains. The first, whether labeled "Reflective Narrative," "Analysis," or "Argument," corresponds to the Generate Ideas competency found in the Writing Competencies Model. In this domain we evaluate how acutely the student's ideas address the rhetorical situation, and how productive they are of meaningful reflection, explanatory analysis, or persuasive force. This domain measures important critical thinking skills and the ability to generate ideas with complexity and insight.

The "Development," "Organization," and "Language" domains correspond to the similarly named competencies in the Writing Competencies Model. The Sustaining Ideas competency, which describes a student's ability to focus her ideas on the given assignment and sustain a treatment of them throughout her essay, is folded into each of the four rubric domains. That is, the rubrics do not allow for a separate "Sustaining Ideas" score; rather, the student's ability to sustain ideas is demonstrated in her ability to keep her ideas focused on the prompt topic; to develop those ideas without veering off into digressive or non-essential territory; to organize her ideas in a focused, purposeful way; and to use language with precision and control, so as to convey meaning with clarity.

At each grade level, and in each domain, a score of 4 is associated with "adequacy," indicating that a student who achieves this score is on track for succeeding as she enters the next grade level. At grades 6 and above, the rubrics differentiate among six performance levels; this allows for two degrees of differentiation above "adequate." A score of 5 at these grades indicates an advancing level of skill in identifying and addressing the complexities of the topic; in exploring ideas and using detailed discussions to draw out and support larger observations; in organizing with intention, aware of the effects of the sequencing of ideas; and in using strong, vivid language and effective style. A score of 6 indicates an even more advanced ability in each of these areas.

The 5-point rubrics for grades 3 through 5 indicate only one degree of performance above adequate. Finer distinctions above adequacy in the younger grades are not evident in the students' responses. Nevertheless, even third graders can demonstrate higher order thinking skills by reflecting in a meaningful way on their own experiences, or those of others. The 5-point ACT Aspire rubric provides a means for recognizing that ability.

The rubrics are analytic in that they delineate four dimensions of writing. However, they are designed for "focused-holistic" scoring within each domain. That is, the performance level descriptors within each rubric domain are not intended to function as independent features separately assessed; rather, they are interdependent elements that collectively describe what we mean by generating, developing, organizing, or communicating ideas at each performance level, in each grade. Evaluating a student's performance in the language domain, for example, is not a matter of determining the presence or absence of each specific feature of language found in the rubric description—style and tone; grammar, usage, and mechanics. Rather, it is a matter of using those elements collectively to form a holistic evaluation of the student's ability to communicate her ideas. In this sense, then, we evaluate student writing in ACT Aspire via holistic scoring within analytic domains.

Task Templates

The ACT Aspire writing tasks are built from task templates that have been carefully designed to elicit the writing competencies discussed above. Through these templates we strive to generate writing prompts that give students with a wide range of abilities a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate their best writing. Thus, the templates call for writing topics that are *accessible in language and concept* to a large majority of students at a given grade level; that are *free from cultural bias*; and that do not require of students any preexisting *specialized or background knowledge*. At the same time, each template is designed to provide an opportunity for students to think critically if they are able to, and to demonstrate the upper range of their composition skills.

ACT Aspire Writing

Early High School Analytical Expository Writing

It is wise to weigh our options carefully before making decisions, but waiting too long to decide can lead to missed opportunities. Write an essay in which you explain both the value and the challenge of carefully considering our options before deciding. Be sure to support your analysis with reasons and examples.

ACT Aspire Grade 10 Analytical Expository Writing

	Analysis	*Development*	*Organization*	*Language Use*
Score: 6 Responses at this scorepoint demonstrate effective skill in writing an analytical essay	The writer generates an analysis that critically engages with the expository writing task. The response presents a complex analysis by critically addressing (a) implications and complications of the issue and/or (b) underlying values.	Ideas are thoroughly explained, with skillful use of supporting reasons and specific details. The writer's claims and specific support are well integrated.	The response exhibits a purposeful organizational strategy. Connections between and within paragraphs consistently clarify the relationships among ideas. A logical progression of ideas increases the effectiveness of the writer's argument.	The response demonstrates the ability to effectively convey meaning with clarity. Word choice is precise. Sentence structures are varied and clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the analytical purpose and are maintained throughout the response. While a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics may be present, they do not impede understanding.
Score: 5 Responses at this scorepoint demonstrate capable skill in writing an analytical essay	The writer generates an analysis that capably engages with the expository writing task. The response presents a somewhat complex analysis by discussing (a) implications and complications of the issue and/or (b) underlying values.	Ideas are capably explained, with purposeful use of supporting reasons and specific details. The writer's claims and specific support are sometimes integrated.	The response exhibits a clear organizational strategy. Connections between and within paragraphs clarify the relationships among ideas. A logical sequencing of ideas contributes to the effectiveness of the writer's argument.	The response demonstrates the ability to capably convey meaning with clarity. Word choice is sometimes precise. Sentence structures are often varied and clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the analytical purpose and are maintained throughout most of the response. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics may be present, they do not impede understanding.
Score: 4 Responses at this scorepoint demonstrate adequate skill in writing an analytical essay	The writer generates an analysis that adequately responds to the expository writing task. The response presents a clear but mostly simple analysis that may only recognize (a) implications and complications of the issue and/or (b) underlying values.	Ideas are adequately explained, with satisfactory use of supporting reasons and specific details.	The response exhibits a clear but simple organizational structure. Connections between and within paragraphs clarify the relationships among ideas. Ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates the ability to adequately convey meaning. Word choice is usually clear. Sentence structures are occasionally varied and usually clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the analytical purpose, but may be inconsistently maintained. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, they rarely impede understanding.
Score: 3 Responses at this scorepoint demonstrate some developing skill in writing an analytical essay	The writer generates a somewhat appropriate analysis in response to the expository writing task. The response may present analysis that is simplistic and somewhat imprecise.	Explanations of ideas are limited, but include some use of supporting reasons and relevant details.	The response exhibits some evidence of organizational structure. Connections between and within paragraphs sometimes clarify the relationships among ideas. Some ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates some developing ability to convey meaning. Word choice is general and occasionally imprecise. Sentence structures show little variety and are sometimes unclear. Voice and tone are somewhat appropriate for the analytical purpose but are inconsistently maintained. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they sometimes impede understanding.
Score: 2 Responses at this scorepoint demonstrate weak or inconsistent skill in writing an analytical essay	The writer generates an unclear or incomplete analysis in response to the expository writing task. The response demonstrates an unclear or partial understanding of the expository writing task.	Explanations of ideas are unclear or incomplete, with little use of supporting reasons or relevant details.	The response exhibits only a little evidence of organizational structure. Connections between and within paragraphs are often missing or poorly formed. Few ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates a weak ability to convey meaning. Word choice is rudimentary and frequently imprecise. Sentence structures are often unclear. Voice and tone may not be appropriate for the analytical purpose. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they impede understanding.
Score: 1 Responses at this scorepoint demonstrate little or no skill in writing an analytical essay	The writer does not generate an analysis that responds to the expository writing task. The response demonstrates little or no understanding of the expository writing task.	Ideas lack explanation, with virtually no use of supporting reasons or relevant details.	The response exhibits no evidence of organizational structure. Connections between and within paragraphs are rare. Ideas are not logically grouped.	The response demonstrates little or no ability to convey meaning. Word choice is imprecise and difficult to comprehend. Voice and tone are not appropriate for the analytical purpose. Sentence structures are mostly unclear. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are pervasive and significantly impede understanding.
Score: 0 Unscorable	The response is blank, voided, off-topic, illegible, or not written in English.			

Grade 8 Persuasive/Argumentative Writing

Kim loves learning to speak French. In addition to her French class, she takes lessons after school. Kim does well in these after-school lessons, but they don't leave her much time to do homework for her other classes. Kim wants to keep taking the extra French lessons, but she doesn't want to do poorly in her other classes.

Should Kim keep taking extra French language lessons?

- **Yes–It is wise to focus on excelling in one area.**
- **No–It is better to be a well-rounded student.**

Consider the positions above as you think about this question. Now, take a position on this question, and write a persuasive essay in which you argue for your position. Be sure to use details and examples to support your reasons.

	Argument	*Development*	*Organization*	*Language Use*
Score: 6 Responses at this score-point demonstrate effective skill in writing a persuasive essay	The writer generates an argument that critically engages with the persuasive writing task. The response presents a complex argument by critically addressing: (a) implications and complications of the issue, (b) counterarguments to the writer's position, and/or (c) underlying values.	Ideas are thoroughly explained, with skillful use of supporting reasons and specific details. The writer's claims and specific support are well integrated.	The response exhibits a purposeful organizational strategy. Connections between and within paragraphs consistently clarify the relationships among ideas. A logical progression of ideas increases the effectiveness of the writer's argument.	The response demonstrates the ability to effectively convey meaning with clarity. Word choice is precise. Sentence structures are varied and clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the persuasive purpose and are maintained throughout the response. While a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics may be present, they do not impede understanding.
Score: 5 Responses at this score-point demonstrate capable skill in writing a persuasive essay	The writer generates an argument that capably engages with the persuasive writing task. The response presents a somewhat complex argument by discussing: (a) implications and complications of the issue, (b) counterarguments to the writer's position, and/or (c) underlying values.	Ideas are capably explained, with purposeful use of supporting reasons and specific details. The writer's claims and specific support are sometimes integrated.	The response exhibits a clear organizational strategy. Connections between and within paragraphs clarify the relationships among ideas. A logical sequencing of ideas contributes to the effectiveness of the writer's argument.	The response demonstrates the ability to capably convey meaning with clarity. Word choice is sometimes precise. Sentence structures are often varied and clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the persuasive purpose and are maintained throughout most of the response. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics may be present, they do not impede understanding.
Score: 4 Responses at this score-point demonstrate adequate skill in writing a persuasive essay	The writer generates an argument that adequately responds to the persuasive writing task. The response presents a clear but mostly simple argument that may only recognize: (a) implications and complications of the issue, (b) counterarguments to the writer's position, and/or (c) underlying values.	Ideas are adequately explained, with satisfactory use of supporting reasons and specific details.	The response exhibits a clear but simple organizational structure. Connections between and within paragraphs clarify the relationships among ideas. Ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates the ability to adequately convey meaning. Word choice is usually clear. Sentence structures are occasionally varied and usually clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the persuasive purpose, but may be inconsistently maintained. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, they rarely impede understanding.

ACT Aspire Grade 8 Argumentative Writing Analytic Rubric (*continued*)

Score: 3 Responses at this score-point demonstrate some developing skill in writing a persuasive essay	The writer generates a somewhat appropriate argument in response to the persuasive writing task. The response presents an argument that is simple and somewhat imprecise.	Ideas are ineffectively explained, with some use of supporting reasons and relevant details.	The response exhibits some evidence of organizational structure. Connections between and within paragraphs sometimes clarify the relationships among ideas. Some ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates some ability to convey meaning. Word choice is general and occasionally imprecise. Sentence structures show little variety and are inconsistently clear. Voice and tone are somewhat appropriate for the persuasive purpose but are inconsistently maintained. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they sometimes impede understanding.
Score: 2 Responses at this score-point demonstrate weak or inconsistent skill in writing a persuasive essay	The writer's argument may be unclear or incomplete as a response to the persuasive writing task. The response demonstrates an unclear or partial understanding of the argumentative writing task.	Explanations of ideas are unclear or incomplete, with little use of supporting reasons or relevant details.	The response exhibits only a little evidence of organizational structure. Connections between and within paragraphs are often missing or poorly formed. Few ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates a weak ability to convey meaning. Word choice is rudimentary and frequently imprecise. Sentence structures are often unclear. Voice and tone may not be appropriate for the persuasive purpose. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they impede understanding.
Score: 1 Responses at this score-point demonstrate little or no skill in writing a persuasive essay	The writer may take a position, but does not generate an argument that responds to the persuasive writing task.	Ideas lack explanation, with virtually no use of supporting reasons or relevant details.	The response exhibits no evidence of organizational structure. Connections between and within paragraphs are rare. Ideas are not logically grouped.	The response demonstrates little or no ability to convey meaning. Word choice is imprecise and difficult to comprehend. Voice and tone are not appropriate for the persuasive purpose. Sentence structures are mostly unclear. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are pervasive and significantly impede understanding.
Score: 0 Unscorable	The response is blank, voided, off-topic, illegible, or not written in English.			

Grade 7 Analytical Expository Writing

You are going to write an essay to explain how an invention can have an effect on our lives.

Think about one invention that influences the way you live. What is this invention and how does it affect your life? Write an essay to explain how this invention influences your life, and discuss how inventions can change the way people live. Be sure to use reasons and details in your explanation.

	Analysis	*Development*	*Organization*	*Language Use*
Score: 6 Responses at this score-point demonstrate effective skill in writing an expository essay	The writer generates an analysis that effectively engages with the expository writing task. The analysis addresses the significance of the subject by establishing rich connections between specific details and general principles, and addresses implications, complications or underlying values.	Ideas are thoroughly explained, with skillful use of supporting reasons and specific details. The writer's claims and specific support are balanced and integrated.	The response exhibits a purposeful organizational strategy. Connections between ideas consistently clarify the relationships among them. A logical progression of ideas increases the effectiveness of the writer's analysis.	The response demonstrates the ability to effectively convey meaning with clarity. Word choice is precise. Sentence structures are varied and clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the expository purpose and are maintained throughout the response. While a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics may be present, they do not impede understanding.
Score: 5 Responses at this score-point demonstrate capable skill in writing an expository essay	The writer generates an analysis that capably engages with the expository writing task. The analysis addresses the significance of the subject by offering thoughtful connections between specific details and general principles, and discusses implications, complications, or underlying values.	Ideas are successfully explained, with competent use of supporting reasons and specific details. The writer's claims and specific support are mostly balanced and may be integrated.	The response exhibits a clear organizational strategy. Connections between ideas clarify the relationships among them. A logical sequencing of ideas contributes to the effectiveness of the writer's analysis.	The response demonstrates the ability to capably convey meaning with clarity. Word choice is sometimes precise. Sentence structures are clear and often varied. Voice and tone are appropriate for the expository purpose and are maintained throughout most of the response. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics may be present, they do not impede understanding.
Score: 4 Responses at this score-point demonstrate adequate skill in writing an expository essay	The writer generates an analysis that adequately responds to the expository writing task. The analysis recognizes the significance of the subject by offering clear connections between specific details and general principles, and recognizes implications or complications.	Ideas are adequately explained, with satisfactory use of supporting reasons and specific details. The response provides adequate support for the writer's claims.	The response exhibits a clear but simple organizational structure. Connections between ideas usually clarify the relationships among them. Ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates the ability to adequately convey meaning. Word choice is usually clear. Sentence structures are occasionally varied and usually clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the expository purpose, but may be inconsistently maintained. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, they rarely impede understanding.

ACT Aspire Grade 7 Expository Writing Analytic Rubric (*continued*)

Score: 3 Responses at this score-point demonstrate some developing skill in writing an expository essay	The writer generates a somewhat appropriate analysis in response to the expository writing task. The analysis offers simplistic or imprecise connections between specific details and general principles, and may only partially recognize implications and complications.	Ideas are ineffectively explained, with some use of supporting reasons and details. The response provides only some support for the writer's claims.	The response exhibits some evidence of organizational structure. Connections between ideas sometimes clarify the relationships among them. Some ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates some ability to convey meaning. Word choice is general and occasionally imprecise. Sentence structures show little variety and are inconsistently clear. Voice and tone are somewhat appropriate for the expository purpose but are inconsistently maintained. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they sometimes impede understanding.
Score: 2 Responses at this score-point demonstrate weak or inconsistent skill in writing an expository essay	The writer generates an unclear or incomplete analysis in response to the expository writing task. The analysis offers unclear or incomplete connections between specific details and general principles.	Explanations of ideas are brief, unclear or incomplete, with little use of relevant supporting reasons or details. The response provides minimal or irrelevant support for the writer's claims.	The response exhibits only a little evidence of organizational structure. Connections between ideas are often missing or poorly formed. Few ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates a weak ability to convey meaning. Word choice is rudimentary and frequently imprecise. Sentence structures are often unclear. Voice and tone may not be appropriate for the expository purpose. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they impede understanding.
Score: 1 Responses at this score-point demonstrate little or no skill in writing an expository essay	The writer does not generate an analysis that responds to the expository writing task. The response lacks connections between specific details and general principles, and demonstrates little or no understanding of the task.	Ideas lack explanation, with virtually no use of supporting reasons or details. The response provides no meaningful support for the writer's claims.	The response exhibits no evidence of organizational structure. Connections between ideas are rare. Ideas are not logically grouped.	The response demonstrates little or no ability to convey meaning. Word choice is imprecise and difficult to comprehend. Voice and tone are not appropriate for the expository purpose. Sentence structures are mostly unclear. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are pervasive and significantly impede understanding.
Score: 0 Unscorable	The response is blank, voided, off-topic, illegible, or not written in English.			

Grade 6 Reflective Narrative Writing

You are going to write a reflective narrative.

As you get older, people expect more of you. Think about a new responsibility that you have taken on in the past year. What were some of the challenges you faced as you assumed this new responsibility, and how did you deal with those difficulties? Write a story to show what it was like to take on a new responsibility, and reflect on what you learned from this experience. Be sure to use descriptive details to show what this experience means to you.

ACT Aspire Grade 6 Reflective Narrative Writing Analytic Rubric

	Reflective Narrative	*Development*	*Organization*	*Language Use*
Score: 6 Responses at this score-point demonstrate effective skill in writing a reflective narrative essay	The writer effectively engages with the reflective narrative writing task by recounting a meaningful experience and thoughtfully reflecting on its significance.	The experience is effectively narrated, with skillful use of narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, descriptive details). Ideas are well explained. Reflection on the experience and narration of the experience are mostly integrated and balanced.	The response exhibits a purposeful organizational strategy. Connections between the elements of the story are clear and purposeful. A logical progression of ideas increases the effectiveness of the writer's narrative.	The response demonstrates the ability to effectively convey meaning with clarity. Word choice is sometimes precise. Sentence structures are varied and clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the narrative purpose and are maintained throughout the response. While a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics may be present, they do not impede understanding.
Score: 5 Responses at this score-point demonstrate capable skill in writing a reflective narrative essay	The writer capably engages with the reflective narrative writing task by recounting a well-chosen experience and capably reflecting on its significance.	The experience is capably narrated, with mostly successful use of narrative techniques (e.g. dialogue, descriptive details). Ideas are clearly explained. Reflection on the experience and narration of the experience may be integrated and balanced.	The response exhibits a clear organizational strategy. Connections between the elements of the story are clear. A logical sequencing of ideas contributes to the effectiveness of the writer's narrative. Essay successfully connects	The response demonstrates the ability to capably convey meaning with clarity. Word choice is clear. Sentence structures are clear and often varied. Voice and tone are appropriate for the narrative purpose and are maintained throughout most of the response. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics may be present, they do not impede understanding.
Score: 4 Responses at this score-point demonstrate adequate skill in writing a reflective narrative essay	The writer adequately responds to the reflective narrative writing task by recounting an appropriate experience and reflecting on its significance.	The experience is adequately narrated, with some satisfactory use of narrative techniques (e.g. dialogue, descriptive detail). Ideas are adequately explained.	The response exhibits a clear but simple organizational structure. Connections between the elements of the story are usually clear. Ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates the ability to adequately convey meaning. Word choice is usually clear. Sentence structures are occasionally varied and usually clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the narrative purpose, but may be inconsistently maintained. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, they rarely impede understanding.

ACT Aspire Grade 6 Reflective Narrative Writing Analytic Rubric (*continued*)

Score: 3 Responses at this score-point demonstrate some developing skill in writing a reflective narrative essay	The writer generates a somewhat appropriate response to the reflective narrative writing task by recounting a somewhat appropriate experience and reflecting on its significance only briefly or with limited success.	The experience is partially narrated, with only some use of narrative techniques (e.g. dialogue, descriptive details). Ideas are only somewhat explained.	The response exhibits some evidence of organizational structure. Connections between the elements of the story are somewhat clear. Some ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates some ability to convey meaning. Word choice is general and occasionally imprecise. Sentence structures show little variety and are inconsistently clear. Voice and tone are somewhat appropriate for the narrative purpose but are inconsistently maintained. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they sometimes impede understanding.
Score: 2 Responses at this score-point demonstrate weak or inconsistent skill in writing a reflective narrative essay	The writer generates a limited response to the reflective narrative writing task by poorly choosing or failing to establish the relevance of the experience. Reflection on its significance is missing or unclear.	The experience is mostly reported rather than narrated, with little use of narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, descriptive detail). Ideas are under-explained, or explanations may be unclear.	The response exhibits only a little evidence of organizational structure. Connections between the elements of the story are often missing or poorly formed. Few ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates a weak ability to convey meaning. Word choice is rudimentary and vague. Sentence structures are often unclear. Voice and tone may not be appropriate for the narrative purpose. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they impede understanding.
Score: 1 Responses at this score-point demonstrate little or no skill in writing a reflective narrative essay	The writer does not generate a narrative that responds to the reflective narrative writing task. If it recounts an experience, there is no successful reflection.	The experience is poorly recounted, with no use of narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, descriptive detail). Reflective ideas are absent or are not explained.	The response exhibits no evidence of organizational structure. Connections between the elements of the story are rare. Ideas are not logically grouped.	The response demonstrates little or no ability to convey meaning. Word choice is imprecise, making ideas difficult to comprehend. Sentence structures are mostly unclear. Voice and tone are not appropriate for the narrative purpose. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are pervasive and significantly impede understanding.
Score: 0 Unscorable	The response is blank, voided, off-topic, illegible, or not written in English.			

Grade 5 Persuasive/Argumentative Writing

You are going to write an essay in which you express and support your opinion.

Your principal wants to invite a special guest to speak to all the students about the value of hard work, and is trying to decide which person to bring in: a scientist *or* an athlete. Which speaker would you pick to come to your school to talk about the value of hard work, and why?

Write an essay in which you give reasons for your choice and explain why your choice is better than the other option. Be sure to include details and examples to support your reasons.

ACT Aspire Grade 5 Argumentative Writing Analytic Rubric

	Argument	*Development*	*Organization*	*Language Use*
Score: 5 Responses at this score-point demonstrate capable skill in writing a persuasive essay	The writer capably engages with the persuasive writing task by establishing a clear position on the issue and generating thoughtful reasons for that position. The essay may address counterarguments, implications or complications of the issue.	Ideas are capably explained, with consistent and effective use of supporting reasons and specific details. The writer's claims and specific support are sometimes integrated.	The response exhibits a clear beginning, middle, and end or a clear organizational strategy. Connections between ideas clarify the relationships among them. Some sequencing of ideas contributes to the clarity of the writer's argument.	The response demonstrates the ability to capably convey meaning with clarity. Word choice is sometimes precise. Sentence structures are clear and often varied. Voice and tone are appropriate for the persuasive purpose and are maintained throughout most of the response. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics may be present, they do not impede understanding.
Score: 4 Responses at this score-point demonstrate adequate skill in writing a persuasive essay	The writer adequately responds to the persuasive writing task by establishing a position on the issue and generating appropriate reasons for that position.	Ideas are adequately explained, with satisfactory use of supporting reasons and specific details.	The response contains discernible beginning, middle, and end, with a clear but simple organizational structure. Connections between ideas usually clarify the relationships among them. Ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates the ability to adequately convey meaning. Word choice is usually clear. Sentence structures are occasionally varied and usually clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the persuasive purpose, but may be inconsistently maintained. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, they rarely impede understanding.
Score: 3 Responses at this score-point demonstrate some developing skill in writing a persuasive essay	The writer generates a somewhat appropriate response to the persuasive writing task by taking a somewhat clear position on the issue and/or generating somewhat appropriate or simplistic reasons for that position.	Ideas are ineffectively explained, with some use of supporting reasons and relevant details.	The response exhibits some evidence of organizational structure. Connections between ideas sometimes clarify the relationships among them. Some ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates some ability to convey meaning. Word choice is general and imprecise. Sentence structures are not varied and are often not clear. Voice and tone are somewhat appropriate for the persuasive purpose but are inconsistently maintained. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they sometimes impede understanding.

Score: 2 Responses at this score-point demonstrate weak or inconsistent skill in writing a persuasive essay	The writer's argument may be unclear or incomplete as a response to the persuasive writing task. The writer's position is vague or unclear, and/or the reasons provided for that position are not appropriate or clear.	Ideas are only briefly or unclearly explained, with little use of supporting reasons or relevant details.	The response exhibits only a little evidence of organizational structure. Connections between ideas are often missing or poorly formed. Few ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates a weak ability to convey meaning. Word choice is rudimentary and vague. Sentence structures are often unclear. Voice and tone may not be appropriate for the persuasive purpose. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they impede understanding.
Score: 1 Responses at this score-point demonstrate little or no skill in writing a persuasive essay	The writer does not generate an appropriate response to the persuasive writing task, in that the writer does not take a clear position on the issue or does not provide sufficient reasons for the position.	Ideas lack explanation, with virtually no use of supporting reasons or relevant details.	The response exhibits no evidence of organizational structure. Connections between ideas are rare. Ideas are not logically grouped.	The response demonstrates little or no ability to convey meaning. Word choice is imprecise and difficult to comprehend. Voice and tone are not appropriate for the persuasive purpose. Sentence structures are mostly unclear. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are pervasive and significantly impede understanding.
Score: 0 Unscorable	The response is blank, voided, off-topic, illegible, or not written in English.			

Grade 4 Expository Writing

You are going to write an essay to explain the qualities of a good friend.

Think about your best friend. Think about what makes this person a good friend. Here are some questions to help you think about your essay and plan it:

- **Who is this person, and what do you like to do together?**
- **Why is this friend important to you?**
- **What makes this person your best friend? Why not someone else?**
- **What kinds of things do all good friends have in common?**

Now, write an essay in which you describe your best friend and explain the qualities of a good friend. Be sure to include reasons and details that help your reader understand what makes this person a good friend and what qualities all good friends have.

ACT Aspire Grade 4 Expository Writing Analytic Rubric

	Analysis	*Development*	*Organization*	*Language Use*
Score: 5 Responses at this score-point demonstrate capable skill in writing an expository essay	The writer generates an analysis that engages with the expository writing task. The analysis addresses the significance of the subject by offering thoughtful connections between specific details and general principles, and discusses implications, complications, or underlying values.	Ideas are successfully explained, with capable use of supporting reasons and specific details. The writer's claims and specific support may be integrated.	The response exhibits a clear beginning, middle, and end, and some ideas are logically sequenced. Connections between ideas clarify the relationships among them. Capable use of transitions signals an order of ideas.	The response demonstrates the ability to clearly convey meaning. Word choice is consistently appropriate. Sentence structures are clear and may be varied. Voice and tone are appropriate for the expository purpose and are maintained throughout most of the response. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics may be present, they do not significantly impede understanding.
Score: 4 Responses at this score-point demonstrate adequate skill in writing an expository essay	The writer generates an analysis that adequately responds to the expository writing task. The analysis recognizes the significance of the subject by offering clear connections between specific details and general principles, and recognizes implications or complications.	Ideas are adequately explained, with satisfactory use of supporting reasons and specific details. The response provides adequate support for the writer's claims.	The response contains a discernible beginning, middle, and end, and ideas are logically grouped. Connections between ideas sometimes clarify the relationships among them. Adequate use of transitions signals an orderly structure of ideas.	The response demonstrates some ability to clearly convey meaning. Word choice is mostly appropriate. Sentence structures are mostly accurate and clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the expository purpose, but are inconsistently maintained. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, they mostly do not impede understanding.
Score: 3 Responses at this score-point demonstrate some developing skill in writing an expository essay	The writer generates a somewhat appropriate analysis in response to the expository writing task. The analysis offers simplistic or imprecise connections between specific details and general principles, and may only partially recognize implications.	Ideas are ineffectively explained, with some use of supporting reasons and details. The response provides only some support for the writer's claims.	The response exhibits some evidence of organization, and some ideas are logically grouped. Connections between ideas are often missing or poorly formed. Some transitions signal a division of ideas.	The response demonstrates an inconsistent ability to convey meaning. Word choice is sometimes vague or inaccurate. Sentence structures are often unclear. Voice and tone are inconsistently appropriate for the expository purpose. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they regularly impede understanding.

ACT Aspire Grade 4 Expository Writing Analytic Rubric (*continued*)

Score: 2 Responses at this score-point demonstrate weak or inconsistent skill in writing an expository essay	The writer generates an unclear or incomplete analysis in response to the expository writing task. The analysis offers unclear or incomplete connections between specific details and general principles.	Explanations of ideas are brief, unclear or incomplete, with little use of relevant supporting reasons or details. The response provides minimal or irrelevant support for the writer's claims.	The response exhibits only a little evidence of organization, and most ideas are not logically grouped. There are very few connections between ideas. Transitions are infrequently used.	The response demonstrates a weak ability to convey meaning. Word choice is often vague and inaccurate. Sentence structures are unclear. Voice and tone may not be appropriate for the expository purpose. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they frequently impede understanding.
Score: 1 Responses at this score-point demonstrate little or no skill in writing an expository essay	The writer does not generate an analysis that responds to the expository writing task. The response lacks connections between specific details and general principles, and demonstrates little or no understanding of the task	Ideas lack explanation, with virtually no use of supporting reasons or details. The response provides no discernible support for the writer's claims.	The response exhibits no evidence of organization. There are no connections between ideas. Transitions are not used.	The response demonstrates little or no ability to convey meaning. Word choice is consistently inaccurate, making ideas difficult to comprehend. Voice and tone are not appropriate for the expository purpose. Sentence structures are inaccurate and hard to follow. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are pervasive and significantly impede understanding.
Score: 0 Unscorable	The response is blank, voided, off-topic, illegible, or not written in English.			

Grade 3 Reflective Narrative Writing

You are going to write a story about a time when you tried something new.

Think about how you felt when you tried something new, and what you learned about trying new things. Here are some questions to help you think about your story and plan it:

- **What did you try and did anyone help you?**
- **How did you feel while trying this thing?**
- **Did you ever want to give up?**
- **Will you try more new things in the future? Why or why not?**
- **How did this change the way you think about trying new things?**

Now, write a story that describes a time when you tried something new. Your story should tell your reader what you learned about trying new things.

ACT Aspire Grade 3 Reflective Narrative Writing Analytic Rubric

	Reflective Narrative	*Development*	*Organization*	*Language Use*
Score: 5 Responses at this score-point demonstrate capable skill in writing a reflective narrative essay	The response demonstrates a clear understanding of the reflective narrative task by recounting a well-chosen experience and capably reflecting on its meaning in relation to the narrative writing task.	The experience is successfully narrated, with use of narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, descriptive detail). Ideas are clearly explained and they may be integrated with the narration of the experience.	The response exhibits a clear beginning, middle, and end, and ideas are logically sequenced. Connections between the elements of the story are clear. Capable use of transitions signals a clear order of events.	The response demonstrates the ability to clearly convey meaning. Word choice is consistently appropriate. Sentence structures are clear and may be varied. Voice and tone are appropriate for the narrative purpose and are maintained throughout most of the response. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics may be present, they do not significantly impede understanding.
Score: 4 Responses at this score-point demonstrate adequate skill in writing a reflective narrative essay	The response demonstrates a mostly clear understanding of the reflective narrative task by recounting an appropriate experience and adequately reflecting on its meaning in relation to the narrative writing task.	The experience is sufficiently narrated, with some use of narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, descriptive detail). Ideas are usually explained.	The response contains a discernible beginning, middle, and end, and ideas are logically grouped. Connections between the elements of the story are only sometimes clear. Adequate use of transitions signals an order of events.	The response demonstrates some ability to clearly convey meaning. Word choice is mostly appropriate. Sentence structures are accurate and mostly clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the narrative purpose, but are inconsistently maintained. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, they mostly do not impede understanding.
Score: 3 Responses at this score-point demonstrate some developing skill in writing a reflective narrative essay	The response demonstrates some understanding of the reflective narrative task by recounting a somewhat appropriate experience and reflecting on the experience with limited success.	The experience is partially narrated, and may show some use of narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, descriptive detail). Ideas are only somewhat explained.	The response exhibits some evidence of organization, and some ideas are logically grouped. Connections between the elements of the story are often missing or poorly formed. Some transitions signal an order of events.	The response demonstrates an inconsistent ability to convey meaning. Word choice is sometimes vague or inaccurate. Sentence structures are often unclear. Voice and tone are inconsistently appropriate for the narrative purpose. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they regularly impede understanding.

ACT Aspire Grade 3 Reflective Narrative Writing Analytic Rubric (*continued*)

Score: 2 Responses at this score-point demonstrate weak or inconsistent skill in writing a reflective narrative essay	The response demonstrates an unclear understanding of the reflective narrative task by recounting a poorly chosen or irrelevant experience, and reflection on the experience is unclear or incomplete.	The experience is reported rather than narrated, with little use of narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, descriptive detail). Ideas are only briefly explained, or explanations are unclear.	The response exhibits only a little evidence of organization, and most ideas are not logically grouped. There are very few connections between the elements of the story. Transitions that signal an order of events are infrequently used.	The response demonstrates a weak ability to convey meaning. Word choice is often vague and inaccurate. Sentence structures are unclear. Voice and tone may not be appropriate for the narrative purpose. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they frequently impede understanding.
Score: 1 Responses at this score-point demonstrate little or no skill in writing a reflective narrative essay	The response demonstrates little or no understanding of the reflective narrative task. It does not recount a relevant experience, or contains no successful reflection on the meaning of the experience.	The experience, if one is recounted, is reported without narrative techniques and may contain confusing gaps in the order of events. Reflective ideas are absent or are not explained.	The response exhibits no evidence of organization. There are no connections between the elements of the story. The response lacks transitions that signal an order of events.	The response demonstrates little or no ability to convey meaning. Word choice is consistently inaccurate, making ideas difficult to comprehend. Voice and tone are not appropriate for the narrative purpose. Sentence structures are inaccurate and hard to follow. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are pervasive and significantly impede understanding.
Score: 0 Unscorable	The response is blank, voided, off-topic, illegible, or not written in English.			

Mode:	**Persuasive/Argumentative**	**Analytical Expository**	**Reflective Narrative**
Competencies: **Generate ideas**	*Judgment*	*Analysis*	*Narration and Reflection*
	▪ Evaluate an issue – Recognize complexity – Multiple perspectives – Implications and complicating factors – Counterarguments ▪ Take a position – Present a thesis	▪ Comprehend a subject/situation – Recognize complexity – Multiple perspectives – Implications and complicating factors – Underlying assumptions, ideas, or values ▪ Provide an explanation – Articulate insight/depth of understanding	▪ Select a relevant event, experience, or situation to recount – Recognize complexity – Situated perspectives – Implications and complicating factors – Multiple meanings ▪ Reflect on the meaning/significance
Develop ideas	*Develop a Position*	*Support an Explanation*	*Give an Account*
	▪ Support thesis using persuasive – Evidence – facts, experience, authority – Reasoning/logic – Appeals to emotion/feeling ▪ Move between general statements and specific reasons, examples and details	▪ Identify and explain elements essential for understanding ▪ Identify and explore relevant underlying assumptions, ideas, or values ▪ Arrive at insight/deeper understanding through well-reasoned discussion	▪ Describe event, experience, or situation – Identify and convey elements essential for understanding – Select and convey relevant supporting details ▪ Identify and convey connected abstract ideas ▪ Arrive at insight/deeper understanding through thoughtful consideration
Sustain ideas	*Focus*	*Focus*	*Focus*
	▪ Maintain focus on – Elements of issue relevant to thesis – Persuasive purpose and context	▪ Maintain focus on – Elements of subject/situation essential to understanding and analysis – Expository purpose and context	▪ Maintain focus on – Relevant event, experience, or situation – Abstract ideas relevant to reflection – Narrative purpose and context

(continued)

ACT Aspire Writing Competencies Model (*continued*)

Mode:	**Persuasive/Argumentative**	**Analytical Expository**	**Reflective Narrative**
Competencies: **Organize ideas**	*Organization*	*Organization*	*Organization*
	▪ Group ideas logically ▪ Sequence ideas in progression ▪ Use transitions to clarify relationships among ideas ▪ Provide an effective introduction and conclusion	▪ Group ideas logically ▪ Sequence ideas in progression ▪ Use transitions to clarify relationships among ideas ▪ Provide an effective introduction and conclusion	▪ Group ideas logically ▪ Sequence narrative elements effectively ▪ Use transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and narrative elements ▪ Provide an effective introduction and conclusion
Communicate ideas	*Language Use*	*Language Use*	*Language Use*
	▪ Use a variety of sentence structures ▪ Employ conventions of standard written English ▪ Use varied and precise vocabulary ▪ Use appropriate voice and tone	▪ Use a variety of sentence structures ▪ Employ conventions of standard written English ▪ Use varied and precise vocabulary ▪ Use appropriate voice and tone	▪ Use narrative techniques ▪ Employ conventions of standard written English ▪ Use descriptive vocabulary ▪ Use appropriate voice and tone

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