

Grades 3-5 Writing Assessment: Prompts & Protocol

The writing assessment for Grades 3-5 will be in a Pretest/Posttest format. The prompts and rubrics will remain the same for both testing periods (October and May). Each grade level contains 2 prompts. Students must CHOOSE 1 of the prompts provided for each assessment. They are free to choose either prompt for each testing period. Please thoroughly review the information provided on pages 2-3 of this document to maintain consistent and appropriate testing and scoring practices.

Grade 3: Narrative Writing (Writing Standard 3)

Prompt #1: *Most people have a special place. Describe a time when you took another person to your special place. This could be somewhere like your grandparent's house, a park, or a tree in your back yard. Write a narrative essay that describes your thoughts and feelings so well that your reader can imagine being there with you. Include some dialogue between you and the friend you took. You could include what it looks like, what you do there, and why it is so important to you. Be sure to include an introduction that sets the scene, and a clear sequence of events. End your narrative in a way that lets your reader know your narrative is complete.*

(*If a student states that they have never actually taken someone to their special place, you can prompt them to "imagine a time when they will and write about what that will be like".)

Prompt #2: *There are many special people in our lives. Choose one of them and describe a time when the two of you got together. This could be a time when you did something really exciting, or were just sitting around and talking. Describe where you were, what you were doing, and why that person is so special to you. Write a narrative essay that describes your thoughts and feelings so well that your reader can imagine being there with you. Include some dialogue between you and the special person. Be sure to include an introduction that sets the scene, and a clear sequence of events. End your narrative in a way that lets your reader know your narrative is complete.*

Grade 4: Informational/Explanatory Writing (Writing Standard 2)

Prompt #1: Harriet Tubman

History is filled with great leaders. Harriet Tubman is one of them. Why was she a great leader? What is important to remember about her? Write an essay you could give to younger students about why Harriet Tubman should be remembered. Your writing should be informational and engaging and should contain words that paint a rich picture in the reader's mind. Even if you know other information about Harriet Tubman, make sure to use only what you read about in the article. You may refer to the article but do not copy. Start your essay with an introduction, include facts and ideas about your topic, and end with a conclusion.

Prompt #2: Sleep More. Get Sick Less

Sleep is important. This article taught you that it can even help you get sick less often. Write an essay you could give younger students about why getting sleep is important for your health. Your writing should be informational and engaging and should contain words that paint a rich picture in the reader's mind. Even if you know other information about the importance of sleep, make sure you only use the information from the article. You may refer to the article but do not copy. Start your essay with an introduction, include facts and ideas about your topic, and end with a conclusion.

Grade 5: Persuasive Writing (Writing Standard 1)

Prompt #1: *Your principal wants to put a stop to bullying in your school. Write an essay or letter to your principal explaining what changes you think need to be made to help your school become "bully free". Give examples with details that will persuade him/her to choose your suggestions. You must also give reasons to support the changes you suggest. Your writing needs to start with an introductory statement that states your opinion and persuades the reader to think the way you do. Remember to end with a concluding statement.*

Prompt #2: *Most elementary schools have a policy against using cell phones at school. Some students think that cell phones should be allowed in the classroom. Write an essay or letter to the teachers in your school to convince them to let students have and use cell phones during the school day. Your writing needs to start with an introductory statement that states your opinion and persuades your readers to think the way you do. Remember to end with a concluding statement.*

Assessment Format and Time:

This assessment is designed to provide an on-demand writing sample and should be administered in 2 consecutive sittings during the time allocations listed below. *Individualized testing accommodations should be provided as directed in and IEP or 504 plan.*

Day 1 - Total 30 Minutes

Read prompt, clarify expectations, and review checklist (5-10 minutes)

*(** Grade 4 will require an extra 10 minutes to read articles to students.)*

Begin writing assignment (15-20 minutes)

Day 2 - Total 30 Minutes

Re-read, revise and complete writing assignment (An additional piece of paper may be provided if students choose to re-write. They can also make revisions on the original piece.)

Directions (read aloud to students):

The following checklist will be used to score your writing (Display and Read Checklist – you may also provide each student with their own copy of this checklist).

Day 1

You will have two days to complete this writing assignment. Today, we will go over the prompt, clarify expectations, and think about the writing prompt. You will then have 20 minutes to write. I will collect your papers. Tomorrow you will have additional 30 minutes to finish your writing.

Teacher reads and displays both prompts.

*(**Grade 4 – Read both articles and prompts to students. Provide a paper copy of the article chosen.)*

Day 2

Yesterday you began your writing assignment. Today you will have another 30 minutes to reread your writing, make any necessary revisions and complete your piece.

I will tell you when there are 5 minutes remaining to finish. At that time you should quickly finish writing and use any remaining time to read over what you have written and make any changes you think will improve your writing.

Assessment Practices:

Below are guidelines to consider while administering this assessment. This chart was created to respond to frequently asked questions and to support greater consistency of our assessment practices.

Appropriate Assessment Practices	Assessment Practices to Avoid
Allow students to choose from the 2 provided prompts.	Do not pre-select the prompt for students.
Encourage students to individually brainstorm their thoughts and ideas before writing.	Do not brainstorm ideas during whole group instruction.
Make available any graphic organizers that are commonly used during your writing instruction.	Do not instruct students to use a graphic organizer or teach students how to use the graphic organizer during this assessment time.
Provide students with many varied writing opportunities within this genre as well as other genres (reference curriculum guide for guidance).	Do not practice either of the provided prompts ahead of time.
Encourage students to go back and check over their work and review the rubric expectations.	Do not require students to have a “set number” of paragraphs.
Provide time for students to revise and edit their work (in accordance with the instructions above).	Do not revise, edit, or give suggestions to students during this assessment.
<i>**Grade 4 Only – Read the Articles to Students and provide a paper copy of the article chosen to each student.</i>	<i>**Grade 4 Only – Do not provide additional instruction or elaborate on the articles or the topic or each article.</i>

Scoring the Writing Assessment:

Rubrics are provided for each grade level. The criteria listed for each grade level is established by the Iowa Common Core Writing Standards. The rubric can and should be shared with students throughout the year.

Each grade level rubric is divided out into a 4 point scale. A score of zero should only be entered if the student did not engage in the writing assessment. The “Proficient” column is designed to be used as a checklist for students while they engage in the writing assessment. A separate checklist document can be located on DataDirector with the other assessment materials. The language of this checklist may be modified to support student understanding of the expectations of their writing task.

While the language of the “Proficient” column was designed to be as objective as possible, you will notice that the language of the “Exceeding” column is more subjective. A score of 4 or “Exceeding” should only be awarded if a student goes beyond the grade level expectation.

The Scores for each portion of the rubric will be entered into DataDirector. A score of 0 (if not administered), 1, 2, 3, or 4 should be entered. Student who receive a 3 in each category are considered to be proficient, as they have demonstrated success with the criteria established for the grade level standard. Students who receive a combination of 2’s and 3’s will be considered close to proficient.