

CAREER CONNECTION

Linking Learning to Life.



WHAT IS EFFECTIVE WRITING?

**How the CTE Teacher Can
Cope with the *FLORIDA WRITES***

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WHAT IS EFFECTIVE WRITING?

A well-written piece can best be described as incorporation elements of writing in such a way that a reader can experience the writer's intended feeling, understand the writer's premise, and accept or reject the writer's point of view. Effective writing:

- is focused on the topic and does not contain extraneous information
- has an organizational pattern that enables the reader to follow the flow of ideas
- contains supporting ideas that are developed through the use of details, examples, and vivid language
- has sentence variety and follow the conventions of standard written English

Student success in writing can be enhanced by giving students frequent opportunities to express themselves through writing. A high school program that emphasizes the use of written language across all subject areas and grade levels will increase students' ability to write for a variety of purposes.

Positive Practices

1. We can make school a better place by making writing a tool for learning.
2. An emphasis on interpretive thinking complements an effective program in writing.
3. Only way to learn to write well is by writing, in all classes, at all grades levels.
4. Research on writing indicates that it is best taught by first emphasizing fluency, then emphasizing form, then emphasizing correctness.
5. If the amount that students write is limited by what teachers can physically read and correct, students will not write enough to develop fluency.
6. Writing evolves not through formal outlines but through a messy, recursive process of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing, in which people typically discover what they want to say by saying it.
7. Students need to write for themselves, for each other, for their teacher.
8. Because writing is the exposed edge of human thought, it helps teachers see what children know about subject matter.
9. In an Information Age, laser-like writing - clear, powerful, correct - is essential for the survival of not only our students but perhaps our democracy as well.

The Florida Writes tests two kinds of writing for tenth graders:

Expository - to give information, explain why or how, clarify a process, or define a concept

Example prompt:

Writing Situation: Everyone has jobs or chores. These may be things people do because they are asked to do them or because the jobs or chores make them feel good about themselves.

Directions for Writing: Before you begin writing, think about one of your jobs or chores.
Now explain why you do your job or chore.

Persuasive - to convince the reader that a point of view is valid or that the reader should take a specific action

Example Prompt:

Writing Situation: The principal of your school has been asked to discuss with a parent group the effect watching television has on students' grades.

Directions for Writing: Before you begin writing, think about the effect watching television has on your grades and your friends' grades.
Now write to convince your principal to accept your point of view on the effect watching television has on grades.

SCORING METHOD AND RUBRIC

Definition of Holistic Scoring

Holistic scoring is a method by which trained readers evaluate a piece of writing for its overall quality. The holistic scoring used in Florida requires readers to evaluate the work as a whole, while considering four elements: focus, organization, support, and conventions. Best papers are not overly concerned with any one aspect of writing but to look at a response as an entity.

Focus

Focus refers to how clearly the paper presents and maintains a main idea, theme, or unifying point. Best papers demonstrate a consistent awareness of the topic and do not contain extraneous information.

Organization

Organization refers to the structure or plan of development (beginning, middle, end) and whether the points logically relate to one another. It refers to the use of transitional devices to signal the relationship of the supporting ideas to the main idea/point. It also refers to the evidence of a connection between sentences by the use of a concluding sentence.

Support

Support refers to the quality of the details used to explain, clarify, or define. The quality of the support depends on word choice, specificity, depth, credibility, and thoroughness. Best papers provide developed examples and illustrations in which the relationship between the supporting ideas and the topic is clear.

Conventions

Conventions refers to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and variation in Sentence structure used in the paper. These conventions are basic writing skills that are required by Florida's Minimum Student Performance Standards and the Uniform Student Performance Standards of Language Arts. Best papers, with few exceptions, follow these basic standards of written English.

- 6 points Writing is focused and purposeful, and it reflects insight into the writing situation (prompt or assignment). There is a logical progression of ideas. Effective use of transitional devices contributes to a sense of completeness. The support is substantial, specific, relevant, and concrete. The writer shows commitment to and involvement with the subject and may use creative writing strategies. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language with freshness of expression. Sentence structure is varied, and few, if any, convention errors occur in mechanics, usage, punctuation, and spelling.
- 5 points Writing is focused on the topic, and its organizational pattern provides for a logical progression of ideas. Effective use of transitional devices contributes to a sense of completeness. The support is consistently developed through ample use of specific details and examples. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language, and there is variation in sentence structure. The response generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, punctuation, and spelling.
- 4 points Writing is focused on the topic and includes few, if any, loosely related ideas. An organizational pattern is apparent, and it is strengthened by the use of transitional devices. The support is consistently developed, but it may lack specificity. Word choice is adequate, and variation in sentence structure is demonstrated. The response generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, punctuation, and spelling.
- 3 points Writing is focused but may contain ideas that are loosely connected to the topic. An organizational pattern is demonstrated, but the response may lack a logical progression of ideas. Development of support may be uneven. Word choice is adequate, and some variation in sentence structure is demonstrated. The response generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, punctuation, and spelling.
- 2 points Writing addresses the topic but may lose focus by including extraneous or loosely related ideas. The organizational pattern usually includes a beginning, middle, and ending, but these elements may be brief. The development of support may be erratic and nonspecific, and ideas may be repeated. Word choice may be

limited, predictable, or vague. Errors may occur in the basic conventions of sentence structure, mechanics, usage, and punctuation, but commonly used words are usually spelled correctly.

1 point

Writing addresses the topic but may lose focus by including extraneous or loosely related ideas. The response may have an organizational pattern, but it may lack a sense of completeness or closure. There is little, if any, development of the support, which may consist of generalizations or fragmentary lists. Limited or inappropriate word choice may obscure meaning. Frequent and blatant errors may occur in the basic conventions of sentence structure, mechanics, usage, and punctuation, and commonly used words may be misspelled.

WRITING IDEAS FOR THE CTE TEACHER

Using graphics:

- translate info. on a graph, chart or map into sentences
- write titles for graphics
- make a list of "specifics" by examining a map
- explain a process of flow chart by writing a sequential paragraph
- create a time line of a particular process; then write a paragraph explaining it
- make a list of "specifics" by examining a picture; write a paragraph about the picture
- have students write captions for cartoons/subject related pictures or analyze the cartoonist's or photographer's purpose

Audio visual:

- when watching movies have students list 5 "specifics;" then combine into a class list. Distribute or post as a guide for writing about the movie.
- each student, when entering the classroom, to be given a different question about the film; collect all at the end; 1 student is to type up answers in chronological order of the film to be distributed as a study guide
- allow students to interview each other or resource people; then transcribe the interview
- have students write reviews of subject related TV programs
- collect some newspaper/magazine articles; have them paraphrase articles for simplification
- take pictures of class field trips; use pictures as basis for organizing writing about the experience

Strategies:

- group work - allow students to discuss their ideas for writing in groups; use these groups again for reading and reaction during the writing process
- publication of work is very important; post papers so students can view
- duplicate the best answers on essay tests and distribute
- keep learning logs with dated entries in which students summarize, react, and ask questions. Does not have to be graded (ex. credit for completion)
- writing from given information:
 - list with class key points of a concept or unit (ex. 4 food groups)
 - direct students to organize points in writing
 - do listing of key points in small group review of reading
 - write for quiz/test preparation

- personalized writing:
 - "Be" the person or thing (ex. the cow who needs to be taken care of)
 - create travel brochures for any unit
 - create a "time capsule" to the historical past of any subject
 - create story problems for other students to solve and then writing out solutions
 - writing letters to people for a particular purpose
- problem solving: present thought problems, have students talk about answers verbalize strategies in writing, use problem-solving steps

Helping students to generate ideas:

- set the purpose of the writing assignment
- define the audience for the assignment
- focus on a narrowed topic
- assist students in generating lists/ideas for support
- allow students time to create a "prewrite" for an assignment which can be checked by the teacher to make sure the student understands it; it can count as part of the assignment to ensure correctness

How to assign writing:

- when assigning any writing remember to identify:
 - the topic - must be clearly stated what the student is to write about
 - the purpose - students need to know the reason for writing (it's not why the teacher is assigning the writing)
 - a) to tell a story, to narrate
 - b) to describe
 - c) to explain ☺
 - d) to give an opinion ☺
 - the audience - students need to know who will be reading their writing
 - the writing - writing type they must illustrate (reflects their purpose)
 - a) narrative
 - b) descriptive
 - c) expository ☺
 - d) persuasive ☺

What is the student to write?

- There must be a restatement (not repetition word for word) of the topic
- Supportive details must be given to substantiate the topic - with elaboration
- A conclusion about the topic must be made in a concluding statement

What is Effective Writing?

Writing is a form of an individual's expression

- from the cave man's symbolic figures to the Internet's Instant Messaging, writing is one of man's more natural ways to communicate

treaties of surrender are written

any speech first has to be first written

thank goodness for Presidential speech writers!

newsmen must read a teleprompter

Dear John letters, pink slips, evaluations, operating instructions - are all written

- Writing must convey a thought or have meaning

Declaration of Independence

Civil Disobedience

Kennedy's "What can you do for your country?"

Grey's Anatomy

Textbooks?

- Stated in a simple enough manner to be understood

TOPIC - stated main idea

BODY - support, with elaboration

CONCLUSION - conclude main idea

ASSERTION - a statement, topic, thesis, point made - FOCUS

EVIDENCE - FIRES: supportative facts, incidents, reasons, examples, stats with...

ELABORATION: the use of facts, details, examples (even anecdotes and quotations) to develop an idea or support a statement

COMMENTARY - tying together; a conclusion, opinion, final comment

EXPOSITORY PARAGRAPH:

Dairy farms are no longer the "Mom and Pop" style industry that it once was. The average dairy farm in the East used to range anywhere from 30 to 40 head of milking cattle. Larger operations are now converting all these home-style farms into large productions. Currently, the average dairy farm contains about 1,000 head of milking cattle. Larger operations have continuously bought out the smaller family-owned farms, thus creating fewer, yet larger productions. This has helped the economic value, but has decreased the quality of the milking industry.

KEY: (A) assertion (E) evidence (C) commentary <i>italicized words indicate transitions</i> <u>underlining indicates elaboration</u>

(A) Dairy farms are no longer the "Mom and Pop" style industry that it once was. (E) The average dairy farm in the East used to range anywhere from 30 to 40 head of milking cattle. Larger operations are now converting all these home-style farms into large productions. Currently, the average dairy farm contains about 1,000 head of milking cattle. Larger operations have continuously bought out the smaller family-owned farms, thus creating fewer, yet larger productions. (C) This has helped the economic value, but has decreased the quality of the milking industry.

EXPOSITORY PARAGRAPH:

(1) Claming is at an all time high. (2) Due to the ban of gill net fishing in Florida about eight years ago, many local anglers have become unemployed. (3) In order to compensate for this misfortune, the state taught the anglers other aquatic industries. (4) One such industry is the wonderful world of clam farming. (5) Farmers were taught to set up their first lease and were then supplied with a certain amount of clam seed needed to get them started. (6) The species particular to these new farmers is the Northern Quahogs, or "Mercinaria mercinaria," in our salt-water estuaries. (7) Our area is one of the leading producers of this particular species. (8) The ban has helped our environment greatly by eradicating gill net fishing, which was responsible for the large-scale destruction of the habitat in the aquatic ecosystem.

ASSERTION (focus) -

EVIDENCE (supportative details) -

ELABORATION -

COMMENTARY -

ORGANIZATION (structure) -

TRANSITIONS -

CONVENTIONS -

PERSUASIVE PARAGRAPH:

(1) Due to the 2004 hurricane season, the East Coast beaches have been severely damaged. (2) The dunes on these beaches, which have also been brutally marred, serve a significant role in the environment. (3) Dunes serve as a natural sea wall keeping the water and tide controlled, allowing residents to develop for community purposes. (4) Native grass or sea oats, which finds its home on these sand dunes, is responsible for the formation of dunes. (5) As the wind blows sand across the beach, the sea oat grass catches sand and piles it to form dunes. (6) It takes approximately eight years to form a dune. (7) Our community is currently at risk due to the depletion of the sea oats, and the call for replacement is necessary. (8) Much of our community is at work replacing sea oats or natural grass. (9) For example, the NSBHS FFA Chapter contains an entire shade house full of replacement sea oats waiting to be replanted. (10) If this native species becomes extinct, many of our beachside homes as well as other commercial structures will be lost. (11) What it really comes down to is that if no restoration action takes place soon to insure stability, our economy, our personal investments, our beautiful beaches will be lost.

(each paragraph written by Joseph Guevara, NSBHS Class of 2006)

ASSERTION -

EVIDENCE -

ELABORATION -

COMMENTARY -

ORGANIZATION -

TRANSITION -

CONVENTIONS -