

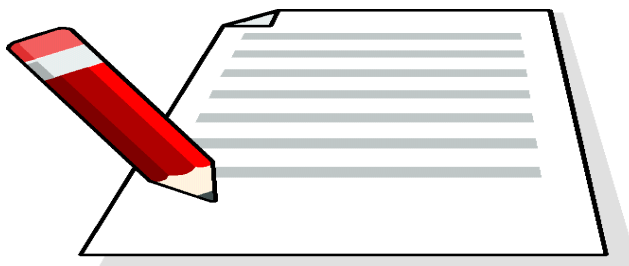


Writing Standards Assessment Portfolio

Grades 6-8

TEACHER DIRECTIONS PACKET:

**How to use the New Writing Portfolios
for 2002-03**



September, 2002

Directions on how to use the new Writing Portfolios for 2002-03

I. Purpose of the Writing Portfolio

Why do we have this type of portfolio?

The Writing Standards Assessment Portfolio is a standards-based assessment data communication tool. It provides the student, parent, and teacher with evidence of the student's progress toward meeting the standards throughout the school year. The **student should fill in the information** on this portfolio; the teacher should instruct students on how to do this. Having students fill in scores after each writing piece is completed will help generate the necessary self-awareness that will help the student to set and attain individual writing goals in a teacher conference (see section VI). This type of awareness and goal-setting is a proven method for improving student progress.

In order to foster this communication on student progress throughout the school year, each time that a score is recorded, the student work (or entire portfolio) may be sent home for parent review and returned. Or, parents may review their child's portfolio in the classroom on a periodic basis. Teachers may use the portfolio as a visual tool to assist them with sharing information with a student's family during progress conferences, Back-to-School Night, and Open House. The student work in the Portfolio is an important component when determining writing grades for report cards at the end of each reporting period.

The writing content standards which are assessed through the portfolio pieces include:

- 1.0 Writing Strategies
- 2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)
- 1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions

The different genre requirements required for each grade level in the district and state standards are defined in section II below.

II. Teaching Writing that will be Assessed for the Portfolio

On the inside cover of the Writing Portfolio are different genre grids printed which reflect the genres required for each grade level. Teachers must provide thorough instruction in their grade level's genres (see section III). For definitions of each writing genre (Narrative, Expository, etc.), see the district's Writing Instruction Teacher's Guide.

For the Writing Portfolio, a student's learning in these genres must be assessed through timed Writing Tasks.

What is a Writing Task?

A Writing Task (formerly called a "prompt") entry for the portfolio is an "on-demand" writing assessment chosen by the teacher and completed independently by the student. Students are given a focused task to respond to in a given genre, and within 45-60 minutes produce their best first draft. (See section III for more detailed information.) Sample tasks are found in the district's Writing Instruction Teacher's Guide, Curriculum Embedded Assessments, or teachers may choose to create their own writing tasks based on the required genres.

How do I prepare students for a Writing Task?

In the weeks prior to the administration of a Writing Task assessment, teachers are to provide instruction, guided practice, feedback, and support on the skills and strategies required by the specific genre. Teachers may model how to:

- read and understand a Task
- address all parts of the writing task
- organize and include the components of that specific genre
- incorporate other qualities of good writing
- budget time in a timed writing task

During this period, *untimed* Writing Tasks may be used as an initial assessment of knowledge to provide baseline data and instructional information. The Writing Tasks should also be used for guided practice in which students collaborate with peers and the teacher to receive feedback on their full or partial drafts, in order to refine their skills.

However, at the culmination of this instructional unit, the Writing Task assessment that is produced for the genre grid section of the portfolio **must be a timed piece** that is written **independently by the student** (without peer or teacher collaboration or input), for formal assessment purposes.

Should I include process writing pieces in the portfolio?

Teacher instruction on the specific genres and the writing process is ESSENTIAL to the culminating product ---The Timed Writing Task. Therefore, including process writing pieces (see Portfolio Components page for definition) would only complement and supply additional information to the final "Timed Writing Task" data.

*Be sure to have students record process writing tasks using a different symbol or color to distinguish from the required timed writing tasks.

For more information on writing instruction, see the district's Writing Instruction Teacher's Guide. Be sure to see your principal if you do not already have a copy of this guide.

What about additional writing products?

The teacher may choose to include additional writing products in the Writing Standards Assessment Portfolio. This writing reflects a topic and/or genre chosen by the student or teacher. The student may have chosen to produce this piece (e.g., during Writers' Workshop), or it may be the result of a teacher assignment. This product may or may not have been taken through the writing process. This type of writing may be formal (e.g., a poem, brochure, essay, thank you letter, etc.) or informal (e.g., quickwrites, journal entries, graphic organizers, learning log entries, etc). The student should describe these writing products on the back cover of the folder if they are included in the portfolio. A teacher-created scoring instrument or a district genre rubric, whichever is appropriate, may be used to assess this product.

III. **Assessment Information for Timed Writing Tasks**

What is a Timed Writing Task?

A Writing Task (formerly called a "prompt") entry for the portfolio is a focused, "on-demand" writing assignment that is chosen by the teacher and completed independently by the student.

How much time do students have to respond?

Students are given a focused task to respond to in a given genre, and within 45-60 minutes produce their best first draft.

Where do I find Timed Writing Tasks?

The Timed Writing Tasks for each genre may be found in the district's Writing Instruction Teacher's Guide, Curriculum Embedded Assessments. Be sure to choose writing tasks that are **not** marked "process writing", as those are dependent on specific teacher instruction, student research, or even previous student reading that do not factor into a 45-60 minute timed writing session.

Narrative - At least one Writing Task entry is required in this genre, **Grades 6-8**

Expository - At least one Writing Task entry is required in this genre, **Grades 6-8**

Response to Literature - At least one Writing Task entry is required in this genre, **Grades 6-8**

Persuasive - At least one Writing Task entry is required in this genre for **Grades 6-8**

Summary - At least one Writing Task entry is required in this genre for **Grade 7**

Business Letter - At least one Writing Task entry is required in this genre for **Grade 8**

How often do I administer a Timed Writing Task?

At least one entry per genre is required this year, in the genres assigned to the particular grade level. It is not expected that each student will write in each genre each month. The grids are merely intended to record WHEN a piece of writing was finished. As a rule of thumb, spend the majority of time on instruction, modeling proficient writing and revision, and immersing students in examples of proficient writing. Assign formal Timed Writing Tasks only when you feel students have had sufficient instruction to perform well on these tasks.

How do I plan for Timed Writing Tasks?

Teachers may find it helpful to meet with colleagues to plan writing instruction for their grade level on a curriculum map for the school year, and to revise this plan periodically throughout the year. Again, teachers should spend the majority of time on quality writing instruction, and assign formal Timed Writing Tasks only when you feel students have had sufficient instruction to perform well on these tasks.

IV. **Scoring**

How are the Timed Writing Tasks scored?

Timed Writing Tasks are to be scored using the district genre rubrics. These 4-point scoring rubrics that describe the proficiency criteria for all of the genres can be found in the district's Writing Instruction Teacher's Guide.

Each piece is to receive two scores: a rhetorical score, using the appropriate genre rubric, and a conventions score, using the Conventions Rubric. All rubrics are located in the Writing Instruction Teacher's Guide.

V.

Who scores the Timed Writing Tasks?

Teachers may score their own students' work for portfolios. If a teacher is undecided on a score, s/he may have a colleague provide input. Some school sites routinely score each other's student work at department or grade level sessions in order to maintain a more objective perspective on students' progress and to plan next steps for instruction.

What are anchor papers? Where can I find them?

Anchor papers are student writing pieces that have been scored and singled out as anchors because they strongly represent the rubric criteria for the score point which they received. Proficient anchor papers can be used as models for instruction and to help calibrate scoring. Anchor sets for Persuasive and Response to Literature writing (which include detailed commentary) are available at your site or the 6-12 Literacy Office (x2955). Future sets in other genres will be available soon.

What about Analytical Checklists?

Analytical checklists can be used to help students revise their writing on a specific writing piece. These checklists can be found in the district's Writing Instruction Teacher's Guide, Curriculum Embedded Assessments. As a reminder, students must be instructed on the individual components of a checklist before they can be expected to apply them. Also, the analytical checklists are designed for the teacher to use as an instructional tool to help students move their writing to proficiency. Therefore, **teachers should complete** and attach the checklist to student writing, **not the student**. Student Checklists (Self Evaluation, see Writing Instruction Teacher's Guide) may be used by students for self-reflection and peer revision work.

How does the Writing Portfolio relate to report card grades?

The student work in the Writing Portfolio will provide important information for determining the report card grade in writing, as the Portfolio requirements represent many of the critical standards and objectives for the grade level.

Recording Information in the Portfolio

Who fills in the Writing Portfolio?

It is the student's job to record the score received after each writing piece is completed and scored; it is the teacher's responsibility to instruct the students on how to do so. A sample filled-in grid has been included in this packet, which may be helpful as a transparency when showing students how to record a score.

Because it is the students who are taught how to record their scores, the Writing Portfolio should not represent double record keeping for a teacher. Filling in the portfolio is an important step for the student, as it is part of the self-awareness that will help the student set and attain individual writing goals in a teacher conference (see section VI). This type of awareness and goal-setting is a proven method for improving student progress.

What is recorded?

Each required writing piece should receive two scores: a rhetorical score recorded on the appropriate genre grid, and a conventions score recorded on the conventions grid. The conventions grid collects scores for the different genres for the grade level, therefore, the conventions grid will look more "crowded" than the genre grids by year's end. The rubrics in the Writing Instruction Teacher's Guide define what is meant by Advanced Proficient, Proficient, etc.

Again, at least one entry per genre is required this year, in the genres assigned to the particular grade level. It is not expected that each student will write in each genre each month. The grids are merely intended to record WHEN a piece of writing was finished.

It is strongly suggested that a Timed Writing Task *and* a process writing piece for each genre be recorded to show evidence of learning and “end of learning”.

How do the students fill it in?

Students are to place a symbol, such as a dot, +, ✓, a **T** for Timed Writing, or a **P** for Process Writing, on the appropriate genre grid in the appropriate column to indicate in which month the piece was finished. If more than one scored Timed Writing Task in a particular genre was administered, place as many marks on that grid as apply. (Teachers may decide whether to include more than one scored piece in a genre, or the best score from that genre.) A sample filled-in grid has been included in this handout, which may be helpful as a transparency when showing students how to record a score.

VI. **Writing Goals – “My Writing Goals” Insert Sheet**

What is the purpose of the “My Writing Goals” insert sheet?

The purpose of the “My Writing Goals” insert sheet is to help the student reflect on his or her unique writing strengths and areas of need to set future writing goals. This helps students take responsibility for their own learning and feel “in charge of” their own improvement over time. Students can then be actively involved in communicating with their teacher and family about their writing progress and improvement. This makes the Writing Portfolio a valuable tool for the assessment of student learning and monitoring instruction, as well as for articulation of progress in student and family conferences.

A master copy of the “My Writing Goals” insert sheet is included in this handout. If a teacher has a similar reflection/student goal-setting system for writing that is effectively revisited periodically throughout the school year, it may be used instead of the “My Writing Goals” sheet.

VII. **Communicating Portfolio Information to Others**

Who sees the Writing Portfolio?

The student, parent, and teacher may review the Writing Portfolio periodically throughout the school year (at least once a reporting period, to record/review scores and to revisit writing goals). In addition, an administrator, coach, or intervention teacher might review the Portfolio for instructional purposes.

Where does the Writing Portfolio go at the end of the year?

Individual school sites may decide what to do with the Writing Portfolios at the end of the school year.