The Thrills and Chills of the Alabama Direct Assessments of Writing
Overview

- In late February, Alabama fifth, seventh, and tenth graders participate in the Alabama Direct Assessments of Writing (ADAW).

- This criterion-referenced assessment measures levels of writing achievement ranging from Level I - Does not meet standards to Level IV - Exceeds standards.

- Administration time for fifth grade is fifty minutes, while administration time for seventh and tenth grades is sixty minutes.
Overview

• The focus of the assessment is first-draft writing rather than a finished product.
• The emphasis is placed on holistic writing
  – using meaningful, precise vocabulary vs. spelling
  – maintaining author control vs. capitalization
  – displaying an organizational plan vs. occasional run-on sentences
Assessed Modes of Writing

• Narrative Writing
  Grades 5, 7, and 10

• Descriptive Writing
  Grades 5 and 7

• Expository Writing
  Grades 5, 7, and 10

• Persuasive Writing
  Grades 7 and 10
Narrative Writing

- Meaningful narrative writing relates a clear sequence of events (fictional or non-fictional) that occurs over time.
  - Purpose
  - Audience
  - Setting
  - Characters
  - Plot
  - Conflict
  - Climax
  - Resolution
Descriptive Writing

- Descriptive writing is the clear depiction of people, places, objects, or events using appropriate details.
  - An effective description will contain sufficient and varied elaboration of details.
  - Sensory details describe what the writer sees, hears, smells, touches, and tastes.
Descriptive Writing

• When describing an object, concentrate on physical appearance.
• When describing a person, focus on behavior, movement, and physical appearance.
• When describing a place, concentrate on people and surroundings.
• Use exact vivid words.
• Employ figurative language to create vivid word pictures.
Expository Writing

- Expository writing is defined as presenting reasons, explanations, or steps in a process.

- Logical order / sequencing of events

- Main idea

- Supporting details

- Conclusion

- Transitional words
Persuasive writing is defined as presenting reasons and examples to influence action or thought.

- Use strong persuasive words.
- Use appropriate transitional words.
- Use logical order.
- End with a strong summary statement.
Grade 5 Test

Grade 5 has a blue band.

Notice the logo.

Pre-ID Label Placement

Barcode number

Lithocode number
Grade 7 Test-Answer Document

Grade 7 has a brown band. Notice the logo.

Pre-ID Label Placement

Barcode Number

Lithocode Number
Grade 10 has an orange band.

Notice the logo.
Explanations of Scoring

• Each paper is scored independently by two readers on a 4-point scale that ranges from a low of one to a high of four.

• The scores of the two readers are added to yield an overall score ranging from two to eight.

• A score of 0 is not rated.

• Papers that are not rated are considered Level I papers.
Explanation of Scoring

- If the scores of the readers differ by more than one point, the score is resolved by a master reader.

- The paper’s score is the master reader’s score doubled.
Reporting of Scores

• Level IV (7-8 points): This writing is thorough with a strong sense of audience and purpose and is precise, consistent, and elaborated with details that are clear and coherent.

• Level III (5-6 points): This writing indicates a good understanding of the writing task and is sufficiently developed with a sense of audience, purpose, and author control.

• Level II (3-4 points): This writing reflects some understanding of the writing task but more author involvement than author control.

• Level I (0 or 2 points): This writing shows little understanding of the writing task. A score of 0 is not rated.

• Not rated: To receive this score, papers may be blank, insufficient, off topic/off mode, illegible, incomprehensible, in a foreign language, copied verbatim from the prompt, or refusal to write.
Group Holistic Scores

- The group reports provide the number and percent of students scoring at the various levels of achievement for each mode of writing as well as the mean for each mode.

- The Mean Raw Score across modes shows the average for all students’ responses across the three or four modes of writing.
Group Analytic Scores

- Keep in mind that the analytic score is not a part of the overall holistic score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS</th>
<th>WRITING MECHANICS</th>
<th>SENTENCE FORMATION</th>
<th>GRAMMAR AND USAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL IV (4 points)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeds Standard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL III (3 points)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets Standard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL II (2 points)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Meets Standard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL I (0-1 points)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Meet Standard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Individual Student Report provides a score and an explanation of the student’s performance on both the Focused Holistic Rubric and the Alabama Analytic Rubric.
Annotated Student Response Packets

• An Annotated Packet provides critical commentary on sample student responses in each mode and each achievement level.
Annotated Student Response
Packets

Accessing the Packets:
• Go to www.alsde.edu.
• Locate “Sections” in the left, blue margin.
• Scroll and click “Student Assessment.”
• Locate “Publications” in the left, blue margin.
• Scroll and click “Annotated Packets 2006-2007.”
Annotated Student Response Packets

• There are three categories of information provided in the Annotated Packets.
  – Overview
  – Rubrics
  – Annotated Student Responses
An overview of the Alabama Direct Assessments of Writing includes background information on the assessment, training of readers, explanation and reporting of scores, sample reports, and an interpretation of the scores.
The Focused Holistic Rubric and the Alabama Analytic Rubric are included for Level I (Does not meet standards) through Level IV (Exceeds standards).

The Focused Holistic Rubric explains the four areas of concentration: purpose, content, audience, and organization/clarity.
Annotated Student Response Packet: Rubrics

- The Alabama Analytic Rubric focuses on writing mechanics, sentence formation, and grammar and usage. Keep in mind that students’ overall scores are based on the Focused Holistic Rubric.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing: Grade Five</th>
<th>Alabama Analytic Rubric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WRITING MECHANICS</strong></td>
<td><strong>SENTENCE FORMATION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level IV</td>
<td>Level IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Few if any errors in mechanics said</td>
<td>• Few if any errors in sentence formation and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Success with use of advanced techniques</td>
<td>• Success in the use of varied and advanced sentence structure or formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level III</td>
<td>Level III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Few errors in mechanics said</td>
<td>• Few errors in sentence formation and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some use of advanced techniques</td>
<td>• Some use of varied and or advanced sentence structure or formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level II</td>
<td>Level II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some or no errors in mechanics said</td>
<td>• Some or no errors in sentence formation and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No use of advanced techniques</td>
<td>• No variety in sentence structure or formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level I</td>
<td>Level I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frequent, serious errors in mechanics said</td>
<td>• Frequent, serious errors in sentence formation and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No use of advanced techniques</td>
<td>• No variety in sentence structure or formation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **GRAMMAR AND USAGE**                         |
| Level IV                                      |
| • Few if any errors in grammar and usage and  |
| • Expressive, powerful, creative word choice  |
| Level III                                     |
| • Few errors in grammar and usage and         |
| • Meaningful, precise word choice             |
| Level II                                      |
| • Some or no errors in grammar and usage and  |
| • Appropriate, basic-functional word choice   |
| Level I                                       |
| • Frequent and/or serious errors in grammar and usage and |
| • Inappropriate, repetitive, vague word choice |
Annotated Student Responses

- The Annotated Packets provide a definition of each mode assessed, the prompt, and sample student responses. There are several annotated student responses provided for each level of achievement.
Sample Annotated Student Response

1. Paper #73920

With both writer control and subject involvement, this response shows an "old, cut-down tree" which exhibits a good understanding of the writing task. The descriptive details are precise (around it there are dozens of more surrounding it as it sits on its base) and meaningful (the tree lays in the woods right behind my house). I love that it is so close that I can view it even), therefore the topic is sufficiently developed. The response also establishes a satisfactory organizational plan through the use of topic sentences that begin each cluster of descriptive information. Although this writer does make some errors in grammar and mechanics, they do not interrupt the flow of communication.

2. Paper #21606

An effective appeal to the reader about the desirability of a window seat is at the start and finish of the response, shows good awareness of audience. This effective framework, along with details that fit where they are placed and appropriate transitions (e.g., "same time"); this, when combined, demonstrates a satisfactory organizational plan. The writer develops ideas sufficiently with a mix of general (I usually sit at my window seat and read or write) and specific (the curtains are a dark red in color so we can see the behind them). A variety of sentence structure enhances the smooth presentation of ideas. Therefore, this response displays a good understanding of the descriptive writing task.

3. Paper #51606

This sufficiently developed response about the zoo, the writer creates an adequate organizational plan, choosing the descriptive details by the voice of the speaker). The vocabulary is quite precise, although the overuse of adjectives in places (e.g., black and white, striped coat; colorful, vibrant, bright rainbow) shows but does not halt the flow of communication. Some sensory details are clear and effective (you can feel the soft brush of a goat or the hairs lightly tickle the upper part of your palm). There is some variety of sentence structures, and only a few errors in mechanics. This response indicates a good understanding of the descriptive writing task.
• Writing is a process that cannot be learned overnight.

• Each LEA should have a writing program in place that begins in kindergarten.

• **ALL** students must be assessed on the same day.
• Encourage mock assessments for all grades throughout the year.

• Remember, this assessment is just a “snap shot” of a student’s writing ability.

• Make sure that a student has only one completed test/answer document. Every test/answer document sent to the vendor will be scored.
Conclusion

• If there are any questions concerning this assessment, contact Kanetra Germany, Assessment and Accountability, State Department of Education, (334) 242-8038 or kgermany@alsde.edu.