

Delaware

Student

Testing

Program

**State Report for 2003 DSTP
Writing Assessment**

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State Report of the 2003 DSTP Writing Assessment

Introduction

Each year, the Department of Education publishes a report for the results of the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) writing assessment. The report provides detailed information of writing performance for students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 and comparison results across years. The objective of the report is to help teachers, administrators, and parents understand student performance in writing and use writing scores with cautions in evaluating educational programs.

In this report, descriptive statistics for the total writing scores as well as scores on the text-based and stand-alone writing are presented by grade, gender, and selected racial/ethnic groups (African American and Caucasian). Students' writing scores on the 2003 DSTP are compared with 2001 and 2002 DSTP by grade. Student writing samples that were used for the 2003 benchmarking are also included in this report. Unlike the state summary report which uses the aggregation rules for inclusion of test scores, the analyses for this report are based on all students who received a valid score in writing.

DSTP Writing Assessment

In March 2003, all public school students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 took the DSTP writing assessment. Each student responded to a text-based writing task and a stand-alone writing prompt. The text-based writing (TBW) is linked to a passage in the DSTP reading test; the stand-alone writing (SAW) is an independent writing prompt. Students are encouraged to use prewriting skills to develop, organize, and draft their writing. Only the final draft was scored.

A 5-point holistic scoring rubric was used to evaluate student writing (See Attachment A). The text-based writing was scored by one trained reader; the stand-alone writing was scored by two trained readers. Adjacent scores between the two readers were acceptable. The third reader was used only if the two scores differed by more than one point. The lowest score for the text-based writing is 0 and the highest possible score is 5; the lowest score for the stand-alone writing is 0 and the highest possible score is 10. The writing score is a composite score of the text-based writing score and the stand-alone writing score, ranging from 1 to 15. If a student receives a 0-point on both parts, the student does not have a valid writing score.

Student writing samples (anchors) that represent each score-point are presented in Attachment B. These papers were used for the 2003 scoring. For a full presentation of writing anchors with comments made by experienced writing teachers from the Delaware Writing Project, please log-in the Delaware Department of Education Web Page: www.doe.state.k12.de.us.

Using the predetermined cut-scores shown below by grade student performance in writing was reported in five proficiency levels: Distinguished, Exceeds the Standard, Meets the Standard, Below the Standard, and Well below the Standard.

Cut-Scores for DSTP Writing*

Grade	Distinguished	Exceeds	Meets	Below	Well Below
3	12-15	10-11	7-9	5-6	1-4
5	12-15	10-11	8-9	5-7	1-4
8	12-15	10-11	8-9	5-7	1-4
10	12-15	10-11	8-9	5-7	1-4

* The cut-scores were modified in 2001 from the original ones.

Results of 2003 DSTP Writing Assessment

Instead of using the aggregation rules, the analyses conducted for this report were based on all students who had a valid writing score. Discrepancies of number of students and some statistics between this report and the State Summary Report are expected.

To make a more meaningful comparison of writing scores across years, effect size (standard mean difference) was used in this report. The measure of effect size (ES) varies from zero. If there is no difference, ES is zero; if the 2003 average score is higher than previous years, for example, ES is positive; if the 2003 average score is lower, ES is negative. If the average score is higher for female or African American students than their counterparts, ES is positive; if the average score is higher for male or Caucasian students, ES is negative. The effect size is comparable from measure to measure, even if the score scales on the measures are different. A widely used criterion for the interpretation of ES as proposed by Cohen (1988): evaluates .20 - .49 as a small difference, .50 - .79 as medium, and .80 or higher as large. Many researchers, however, strongly encourage using these criteria as a reference only and consider the particular situation of a given test to avoid misleading interpretations (Willingham and Cole, 1997; Glass et al, 1981; Holland, 2001). In this report, the effect size is interpreted in the latter way.

Overall Writing Performance

Table 1 shows means and standard deviations and type of writing for the 2003, 2002, 2001, and 2000 writing assessments for grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. The average writing score is 5.69 for grade 3, 7.21 for grade 5, 8.06 for grade 8, and 8.12 for grade 10 in 2003. Comparing 2003 with 2002 test scores, the near-zero effect size (-.04 for grade 5; .06 for grade 8) suggests that the average performance in 2003 remained similar to the 2002's for grades 5 and 8 without significant changes. However, the average performance for students in grade 3 (SE=-.34) is about one-third of a standard deviation lower in 2003

than their counterparts in 2002. Comparing 2003 with 2002 writing scores for grade 10, the magnitude of the effect size ($SE=.49$) suggests that the average writing score was nearly one-half of a standard deviation higher for students in 2003 than students in 2002.

Although the numbers of students at each performance level show fluctuations across years for all four grades (Table 2), the percent of meeting the standard in writing has increased since 2001. For example, the percent of meeting the standard increased from 33% in 2001 to 37% in 2003 for grade 3 and from 67% in 2001 to 76% in 2003 for grade 8. Cross-year fluctuations of writing scores are also observed on the frequency distributions of writing scores shown in Tables 3a and 3b.

Performance on Stand-Alone Writing

The average score for the 2003 stand-alone writing (Tables 4a and 4b) is 3.92 for grade 3, 5.11 for grade 5, 5.86 for grade 8, and 5.54 for grade 10. The frequency distributions show that the highest proportion of students received a score of 4 (33%) in grade 3 and a score of 6 in grades 5 (50%), 8 (64%), and 10 (41%). Comparing the 2003 scores with the 2002 scores, the near-zero effect size (shown in Table 1) suggests that student performance on the stand-alone writing remained similar for grades 5 ($SE=.06$) and 10 ($SE=.11$), but increased by a quarter of a standard deviation for grade 8 ($ES=.27$) and dropped for grade 3 ($ES=-.40$).

Performance on Text-Based Writing

The average score for the 2003 text-based writing (Tables 5a-5b) is 1.76 for grade 3, 2.12 for grade 5, 2.20 for grade 8, and 2.65 for grade 10. The frequency distributions show that the highest proportion of students received a score of 1 for grade 3 (42%); a score of 2 for grades 5 (43%) and 8 (42%), and a score of 3 for grade 10 (56%) on the text-based writing. Comparing the 2003 scores with the 2002 scores, the near-zero effect size (shown in Table 1) suggests that student performance on the text-based writing remained similar for grade 3 ($SE=-.09$), dropped slightly for grades 5 ($SE=-.18$) and 8 ($SE=-.20$), but increased by nearly one standard deviation in grade 10 ($SE=.99$).

Correlation Matrix

Table 6 shows the inter-correlations among writing scores (writing scores, SAW scores and TBW scores) and reading scores (reading scale scores and SAT9 reading NCE scores) by grade. The relationships between SAW and TBW are moderately low to moderate, ranging from .48 to .60 across grades. The data also suggest that writing scores are moderately associated with reading scale scores and SAT9 NCE scores, ranging from .61 to .71 and .48 to .58, respectively. Both stand-alone and text-based writing are moderately associated with the reading scale scores ($r=.56$ to $.64$ for TBW; $r=.52$ to $.63$ for SAW).

Differential Performance between Sub-Groups

Means, standard deviations, and effect sizes of the 2003 writing scores are presented in Table 7 by grade and sub-group. The results of comparisons suggest: (1) female students consistently scored higher in writing than males across the four grades; (2) female students scored about one-third to two-fifth of a standard deviation higher than their counterparts; (3) Caucasian students consistently scored higher in writing than African American students across the four grades; and (4) Caucasian students scored about one-third to one-half of a standard deviation higher than their counterparts. The differences in the percent of meeting the standard between female and male students are about 13% to 18% and the differences between Caucasian and African American students are about 18% to 20% for the four grades.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Writing Scores (2000-2003)

Grade		Writing	2003 SAW	TBW	Writing	2002 SAW	TBW	Writing	2001 SAW	TBW	Writing	2000 SAW	TBW
3	N.	9020	9058	9010	8950	8996	8926	8699	8690	8541	7886	7892	7766
	Mean	5.69	3.92	1.76	6.31	4.45	1.83	5.89	4.27	1.66	5.88	4.40	1.50
	S. D.	1.86	1.36	0.81	1.8	1.32	0.79	1.68	1.15	0.77	1.81	1.45	0.67
	Effect Size Discourse				-0.34	-0.40	-0.09	-0.11	-0.28	0.12	-0.10	-0.34	0.35
					<i>Inf.</i>	<i>Persu.</i>		<i>Persu.</i>	<i>Inf.</i>		<i>Exp.</i>	<i>Inf.</i>	
5	N.	9000	9000	8927	8729	8720	8660	8423	8404	8294	7560	7552	7404
	Mean	7.21	5.11	2.12	7.29	5.04	2.27	7.34	5.26	2.12	6.57	4.90	1.70
	S. D.	1.86	1.22	0.86	1.73	1.21	0.79	1.94	1.39	0.75	1.91	1.39	0.82
	Effect Size Discourse				-0.04	0.06	-0.18	-0.07	-0.11	-0.01	0.34	0.16	0.50
					<i>Exp.</i>	<i>Persu.</i>		<i>Exp./Inf.</i>	<i>Inf.</i>		<i>Exp.</i>	<i>Persu.</i>	
8	N.	9755	9775	9637	9150	9133	8914	8567	8530	8379	8177	8136	7813
	Mean	8.06	5.86	2.2	7.97	5.58	2.36	7.92	5.56	2.44	7.18	5.49	1.80
	S. D.	1.72	1.12	0.88	1.53	0.96	0.71	1.68	1.06	0.76	1.67	1.13	0.68
	Effect Size Discourse				0.06	0.27	-0.20	0.08	0.28	-0.29	0.52	0.33	0.50
					<i>Inf.</i>	<i>Persu.</i>		<i>Persu.</i>	<i>Inf.</i>		<i>Exp.</i>	<i>Inf.</i>	
10	N.	7806	7776	7643	8145	8129	7820	7927	7840	7588	7435	7343	7043
	Mean	8.12	5.54	2.65	7.18	5.36	1.91	7.38	5.50	2.02	7.06	5.29	1.94
	S. D.	2.07	1.41	0.77	1.73	1.73	0.72	1.82	1.30	0.58	2.01	1.28	0.84
	Effect Size Discourse				0.49	0.11	0.99	0.38	0.03	0.92	0.52	0.19	0.88
					<i>Inf.</i>	<i>Persu.</i>		<i>Exp.</i>	<i>Inf.</i>		<i>Persu.</i>	<i>Inf.</i>	

The Effect Size is calculated to define the differences in writing scores between 2003 and the previous years. Thus, the positive values indicate a higher mean for 2003; the negative values indicate a lower mean for 2003.

The calculation is based on all students who received a valid score.

Table 2
Comparison of Frequency Distributions for Performance Levels

Grade	Performance Level	2003		2002		2001	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
3	<i>Well Below the Standard</i>	2589	28.14	1117	12.49	1575	18.1
	<i>Below the Standard</i>	3166	34.41	3818	42.70	4271	49.1
	<i>Meets the Standard</i>	3367	36.59	3847	43.03	2818	32.4
	<i>Exceeds the Standard</i>	76	0.83	146	1.63	35	0.4
	<i>Distinguished</i>	3	0.03	13	0.15	0	0
	<i>Total</i>	9201	100.00	8941	100.00	8699	100.0
5	<i>Well Below the Standard</i>	756	8.42	470	5.39	1423	16.9
	<i>Below the Standard</i>	2943	32.76	4021	46.09	2729	32.4
	<i>Meets the Standard</i>	4905	54.60	3561	40.81	3925	46.6
	<i>Exceeds the Standard</i>	356	3.96	630	7.22	328	3.9
	<i>Distinguished</i>	23	0.26	43	0.49	17	0.2
	<i>Total</i>	8983	100.00	8725	100.00	8423	100.0
8	<i>Well Below the Standard</i>	403	4.13	327	3.58	651	7.6
	<i>Below the Standard</i>	1942	19.90	2390	26.14	2150	25.1
	<i>Meets the Standard</i>	6040	61.89	5869	64.19	5423	63.3
	<i>Exceeds the Standard</i>	1229	12.59	527	5.76	334	3.9
	<i>Distinguished</i>	146	1.50	30	0.33	9	0.1
	<i>Total</i>	9760	100.00	9143	100.00	8567	100.0
10	<i>Well Below the Standard</i>	465	5.96	465	5.71	1070	13.5
	<i>Below the Standard</i>	1780	22.83	3730	45.82	2338	29.5
	<i>Meets the Standard</i>	3901	50.04	3462	42.53	4344	54.8
	<i>Exceeds the Standard</i>	1375	17.64	449	5.52	174	2.2
	<i>Distinguished</i>	275	3.53	35	0.43	8	0.1
	<i>Total</i>	7796	100.00	8141	100.00	7927	100.1

Table 3a
Comparison of Frequency Distributions for Writing Raw Scores

Grade	Score	2003		2002		2001	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
3	1	142	1.57	118	1.32	25	0.29
	2	122	1.35	128	1.43	212	2.44
	3	937	10.39	354	3.96	505	5.81
	4	1204	13.35	525	5.87	834	9.59
	5	1961	21.74	1692	18.91	1728	19.86
	6	1207	13.38	2127	23.77	2541	29.21
	7	1909	21.16	1554	17.36	1413	16.24
	8	1029	11.41	1486	16.60	951	10.93
	9	430	4.77	807	9.02	376	4.32
	10	63	0.70	118	1.32	77	0.89
	11	13	0.14	28	0.31	24	0.28
	12	2	0.02	10	0.11	10	0.11
	13	0	0.00	2	0.02	0	0.00
	14	1	0.01	1	0.01	2	0.02
	15	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.01
		Total	9020	100.00	8950	100.00	8699
	Mean	5.69		6.31		5.89	
	S.D.	1.86		1.8		1.68	

Grade	Score	2003		2002		2001	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
5	1	17	0.19	26	0.30	33	0.39
	2	91	1.01	47	0.54	48	0.57
	3	255	2.83	185	2.12	238	2.83
	4	402	4.47	215	2.46	303	3.60
	5	963	10.70	676	7.74	801	9.51
	6	1599	17.77	1632	18.70	1264	15.01
	7	388	4.31	1714	19.64	1461	17.35
	8	2857	31.74	2048	23.46	1912	22.70
	9	2049	22.77	1513	17.33	1460	17.33
	10	274	3.04	520	5.96	556	6.60
	11	82	0.91	110	1.26	254	3.02
	12	21	0.23	40	0.46	73	0.87
	13	2	0.02	2	0.02	19	0.23
	14	0	0.00	1	0.01	1	0.01
	15	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
		Total	9000	100.00	8729	100.00	8423
	Mean	7.21		7.29		7.34	
	S.D.	1.86		1.73		1.94	

Table 3b
Comparison of Frequency Distributions for Writing Raw Scores

Grade	Score	2003		2002		2001	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
8	1	31	0.32	19	0.21	19	0.22
	2	66	0.68	52	0.57	40	0.47
	3	78	0.80	68	0.74	75	0.88
	4	203	2.08	187	2.04	167	1.95
	5	457	4.68	397	4.34	354	4.13
	6	779	7.99	772	8.44	956	11.16
	7	720	7.38	1227	13.41	1193	13.93
	8	3468	35.55	2893	31.62	2389	27.89
	9	2577	26.42	2978	32.55	2278	26.59
	10	886	9.08	418	4.57	759	8.86
	11	344	3.53	109	1.19	249	2.91
	12	111	1.14	25	0.27	82	0.96
	13	26	0.27	4	0.04	5	0.06
	14	9	0.09	1	0.01	1	0.01
	15	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
		Total	9755	100.00	9150	100.00	8567
	Mean	8.06		7.97		7.92	
	S.D.	1.72		1.53		1.68	

Grade	Score	2003		2002		2001	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
10	1	15	0.19	72	0.88	39	0.49
	2	77	0.99	49	0.60	134	1.69
	3	159	2.04	87	1.07	141	1.78
	4	215	2.75	258	3.17	287	3.62
	5	366	4.69	855	10.50	466	5.88
	6	966	12.38	1208	14.83	983	12.40
	7	456	5.84	1670	20.50	1354	17.08
	8	1673	21.43	2358	28.95	2690	33.93
	9	2229	28.55	1104	13.55	1157	14.60
	10	865	11.08	337	4.14	499	6.29
	11	510	6.53	112	1.38	156	1.97
	12	242	3.10	29	0.36	17	0.21
	13	21	0.27	5	0.06	4	0.05
	14	11	0.14	1	0.01	0	0.00
	15	1	0.01	0	0.00	0	0.00
		Total	7806	100.00	8145	100.00	7927
	Mean	8.12		7.18		7.38	
	S.D.	2.07		1.73		1.82	

Table 4a
Comparison of Frequency Distributions for Stand-Alone Writing Scores

Grade	Score	2003		2002		2001	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
3	0	243	2.68	210	2.33	27	0.31
	2	1163	12.84	412	4.58	620	7.13
	3	1630	18.00	685	7.61	876	10.08
	4	2964	32.72	3643	40.50	4174	48.03
	5	1999	22.07	1866	20.74	1687	19.41
	6	993	10.96	2014	22.39	1113	12.81
	7	59	0.65	131	1.46	156	1.80
	8	5	0.06	31	0.34	30	0.35
	9	1	0.01	2	0.02	4	0.05
	10	1	0.01	2	0.02	3	0.03
	Total		9058	100.00	8996	100.00	8690
	Mean			4.45		4.27	
	S.D.			1.32		1.15	

Grade	Score	2003		2002		2001	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
5	0	31	0.34	49	0.56	37	0.44
	2	326	3.62	258	2.96	306	3.64
	3	401	4.46	288	3.30	331	3.94
	4	2215	24.61	2383	27.33	1878	22.35
	5	1267	14.08	1984	22.75	1646	19.59
	6	4481	49.79	3284	37.66	3057	36.38
	7	209	2.32	377	4.32	766	9.11
	8	68	0.76	93	1.07	327	3.89
	9	2	0.02	2	0.02	50	0.59
	10	0	0.00	2	0.02	6	0.07
	Total		9000	100.00	8720	100.00	8404
	Mean			5.04		5.26	
	S.D.			1.21		1.39	

Table 4b
Comparison of Frequency Distributions for Stand-Alone Writing Scores

Grade	Score	2003		2002		2001	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
8	0	74	0.76	19	0.21	9	0.11
	2	77	0.79	98	1.07	85	1.00
	3	117	1.20	139	1.52	158	1.85
	4	719	7.36	1004	10.99	1259	14.76
	5	973	9.95	1547	16.94	1547	18.14
	6	6210	63.53	5796	63.46	4529	53.09
	7	1111	11.37	418	4.58	736	8.63
	8	418	4.28	100	1.09	198	2.32
	9	59	0.60	8	0.09	8	0.09
	10	17	0.17	4	0.04	1	0.01
		Total	9775	100.00	9133	100.00	8530
	Mean	5.86		5.58		5.56	
	S.D.	1.12		0.96		1.06	

Grade	Score	2003		2002		2001	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
10	0	3	0.04	92	1.13	31	0.40
	2	260	3.34	77	0.95	208	2.65
	3	239	3.07	132	1.62	257	3.28
	4	1388	17.85	1582	19.46	1132	14.44
	5	1242	15.97	1780	21.90	1478	18.85
	6	3146	40.46	3691	45.41	3469	44.25
	7	822	10.57	570	7.01	902	11.51
	8	633	8.14	180	2.21	352	4.49
	9	23	0.30	22	0.27	8	0.10
	10	20	0.26	3	0.04	3	0.04
		Total	7776	100.00	8129	100.00	7840
	Mean	5.54		5.36		5.50	
	S.D.	1.41		1.73		1.30	

Table 5a
Comparison of Frequency Distributions for Text-Based Writing Scores

Grade	Score	2003		2002		2001	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
3	0	147	1.63	226	2.53	630	7.38
	1	3760	41.73	2890	32.38	2549	29.84
	2	3305	36.68	4046	45.33	4487	52.53
	3	1725	19.15	1673	18.74	835	9.78
	4	71	0.79	89	1.00	37	0.43
	5	2	0.02	2	0.02	3	0.04
	Total	9010	100.00	8926	100.00	8541	100.00
	Mean	1.76		1.83		1.66	
	S.D	0.81		0.79		0.77	

Grade	Score	2003		2002		2001	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
5	0	294	3.29	12	0.14	18	0.22
	1	1662	18.62	1271	14.68	1647	19.86
	2	3877	43.43	4262	49.21	4086	49.26
	3	2840	31.81	2580	29.79	2372	28.60
	4	253	2.83	531	6.13	169	2.04
	5	1	0.01	4	0.05	2	0.02
	Total	8927	100.00	8660	100.00	8294	100.00
	Mean	2.12		2.27		2.12	
	S.D	0.86		0.79		0.75	

Table 5b
Comparison of Frequency Distributions for Text-Based Writing Scores

Grade	Score	2003		2002		2001	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
8	0	396	4.11	33	0.37	29	0.35
	1	1382	14.34	893	10.02	664	7.92
	2	4072	42.25	4078	45.75	3927	46.87
	3	3432	35.61	3698	41.49	3107	37.08
	4	348	3.61	209	2.34	651	7.77
	5	7	0.07	3	0.03	1	0.01
	Total	9637	100.00	8914	100.00	8379	100.00
	Mean	2.20		2.36		2.44	
	S.D	0.88		0.71		0.76	

Grade	Score	2003		2002		2001	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
10	0	53	0.69	23	0.29	46	0.61
	1	519	6.79	2274	29.08	1048	13.81
	2	2145	28.06	3999	51.14	5233	68.96
	3	4246	55.55	1449	18.53	1233	16.25
	4	672	8.79	71	0.91	25	0.33
	5	8	0.10	4	0.05	3	0.04
	Total	7643	100.00	7820	100.00	7588	100.00
	Mean	2.65		1.91		2.02	
	S.D	0.77		1.22		0.58	

Table 6
Correlation Matrix of Writing and Reading Scores

Grade	SCORE	Writing Score	Text-Based	Stand-Alone	Reading Score	SAT9 Reading
3	<i>Writing Raw Score</i>	1.00	*	*	0.61	0.49
	<i>Text-Based Writing</i>		1.00	0.48	0.56	0.44
	<i>Stand-Alone Writing</i>			1.00	0.52	0.43
	<i>Reading Score</i>				1.00	0.87
	<i>SAT9 Reading NCE</i>					1.00
Grade	SCORE	Writing Score	Text-Based	Stand-Alone	Reading Score	SAT9 Reading
5	<i>Writing Raw Score</i>	1.00	*	*	0.64	0.48
	<i>Text-Based Writing</i>		1.00	0.56	0.56	0.41
	<i>Stand-Alone Writing</i>			1.00	0.57	0.44
	<i>Reading Score</i>				1.00	0.86
	<i>SAT9 Reading NCE</i>					1.00
Grade	SCORE	Writing Score	Text-Based	Stand-Alone	Reading Score	SAT9 Reading
8	<i>Writing Raw Score</i>	1.00	*	*	0.69	0.55
	<i>Text-Based Writing</i>		1.00	0.51	0.62	0.48
	<i>Stand-Alone Writing</i>			1.00	0.60	0.50
	<i>Reading Score</i>				1.00	0.85
	<i>SAT9 Reading NCE</i>					1.00
Grade	SCORE	Writing Score	Text-Based	Stand-Alone	Reading Score	SAT9 Reading
10	<i>Writing Raw Score</i>	1.00	*	*	0.71	0.58
	<i>Text-Based Writing</i>		1.00	0.60	0.64	0.52
	<i>Stand-Alone Writing</i>			1.00	0.63	0.53
	<i>Reading Score</i>				1.00	0.85
	<i>SAT9 Reading NCE</i>					1.00

* Due to confound effect, the correlation coefficient is not presented.

Table 7a
Comparison of Writing Scores for Sub-Groups

Grade	Statistics	Female			Male			African American			Caucasian		
		SAW	TBW	WRITING	SAW	TBW	WRITING	SAW	TBW	WRITING	SAW	TBW	WRITING
3	N	4465	4446	4452	4593	4564	4568	3029	3006	3014	5016	4994	5008
	Mean	4.15	1.88	6.05	3.69	1.63	5.34	3.66	1.60	5.27	4.11	1.87	5.97
	SD	1.31	0.82	1.82	1.37	0.78	1.83	1.32	0.77	1.78	1.34	0.81	1.85
	Minimum	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Maximum	10	5	14	8	4	11	7	4	10	10	5	14
	Effect Size				0.35	0.31	0.39				-0.34	-0.34	-0.39
5	N	4390	4365	4393	4610	4562	4607	3019	2983	3017	5065	5046	5068
	Mean	5.35	2.29	7.62	4.88	1.96	6.83	4.84	1.94	6.76	5.31	2.25	7.54
	SD	1.10	0.85	1.73	1.28	0.83	1.89	1.26	0.85	1.89	1.12	0.83	1.73
	Minimum	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Maximum	9	5	13	8	4	12	8	4	12	9	5	13
	Effect Size				0.39	0.39	0.43				-0.40	-0.37	-0.44
8	N	4691	4676	4683	5084	4961	5072	3145	3068	3133	5718	5674	5723
	Mean	6.03	2.37	8.40	5.71	2.05	7.74	5.56	1.99	7.53	6.07	2.33	8.38
	SD	1.05	0.84	1.60	1.16	0.89	1.77	1.20	0.90	1.80	0.96	0.82	1.55
	Minimum	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Maximum	10	5	14	10	5	14	10	5	14	10	5	14
	Effect Size				0.29	0.36	0.39				-0.48	-0.41	-0.51
10	N	3958	3928	3966	3818	3715	3840	2257	2174	2270	4888	4849	4901
	Mean	5.82	2.81	8.59	5.25	2.49	7.63	5.15	2.44	7.45	5.74	2.76	8.45
	SD	1.32	0.71	1.88	1.44	0.78	2.15	1.43	0.79	2.15	1.34	0.72	1.91
	Minimum	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Maximum	10	5	15	10	5	14	10	4	14	10	5	15
	Effect Size				0.41	0.43	0.48				-0.43	-0.43	-0.50

Table 7b
Comparison of Performance Levels for Sub-Groups

Grade	Performance Level	Female		Male		African American		Caucasian	
		N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
3	<i>Well Below the Standard</i>	959	21.19	1630	34.87	1113	35.86	1160	22.85
	<i>Below the Standard</i>	1531	33.83	1635	34.97	1154	37.18	1658	32.66
	<i>Meets the Standard</i>	1979	43.73	1388	29.69	825	26.58	2205	43.43
	<i>Exceeds the Standard</i>	54	1.19	22	0.47	12	0.39	51	1.00
	<i>Distinguished</i>	3	0.07	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	0.06
	<i>Total</i>	4526	100.00	4675	100.00	3104	100.00	5077	100.00
5	<i>Well Below the Standard</i>	212	4.84	544	11.82	366	12.13	282	5.57
	<i>Below the Standard</i>	1195	27.28	1748	37.98	1193	39.54	1428	28.18
	<i>Meets the Standard</i>	2684	61.26	2221	48.26	1407	46.64	3067	60.53
	<i>Exceeds the Standard</i>	273	6.23	83	1.80	48	1.59	274	5.41
	<i>Distinguished</i>	17	0.39	6	0.13	3	0.10	16	0.32
	<i>Total</i>	4381	100.00	4602	100.00	3017	100.00	5067	100.00
8	<i>Well Below the Standard</i>	115	2.46	288	5.66	233	7.39	118	2.06
	<i>Below the Standard</i>	653	13.97	1289	25.34	866	27.45	858	15.00
	<i>Meets the Standard</i>	3049	65.25	2991	58.80	1825	57.84	3735	65.30
	<i>Exceeds the Standard</i>	758	16.22	471	9.26	217	6.88	900	15.73
	<i>Distinguished</i>	98	2.10	48	0.94	14	0.44	109	1.91
	<i>Total</i>	4673	100.00	5087	100.00	3155	100.00	5720	100.00
10	<i>Well Below the Standard</i>	122	3.08	343	8.94	235	10.33	181	3.69
	<i>Below the Standard</i>	683	17.25	1097	28.59	718	31.57	896	18.28
	<i>Meets the Standard</i>	2065	52.16	1836	47.85	1041	45.78	2607	53.19
	<i>Exceeds the Standard</i>	894	22.58	481	12.54	249	10.95	997	20.34
	<i>Distinguished</i>	195	4.93	80	2.08	31	1.36	220	4.49
	<i>Total</i>	3959	100.00	3837	100.00	2274	100.00	4901	100.00

Attachment A

Writing Scoring Rubric

Delaware Student Testing Program - General Rubric for Writing

The following characteristics determine the success of the response in meeting the needs of the audience and fulfilling the writing purpose.

Score of 5	Score of 4	Score of 3	Score of 2	Score of 1
<p>Score point 5 meets all the criteria listed in score point 4. In addition, a paper receiving this score shows an exceptional awareness of readers' concerns and needs.</p> <p>The student may have shown an exceptional use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development strategies specific to the purpose for writing • Distinctive style, voice, tone • Literary devices • Compositional risks 	<p>Unified with smooth transitions, a clear and logical progression of ideas, and an effective introduction and closing.</p> <p>Sufficient, specific, and relevant details that are fully elaborated.</p> <p>Consistently complete sentences with appropriate variety in length and structure.</p> <p>A consistent style with precise and vivid word choice.</p> <p>Few, if any, errors in standard written English that do not interfere with understanding.</p>	<p>Generally unified with some transitions, a clear progression of ideas, and an introduction and closing.</p> <p>Specific details but may be insufficient, irrelevant, or not fully elaborated.</p> <p>Generally complete sentences with sufficient variety in length and structure.</p> <p>Some style and generally precise word choice.</p> <p>Some errors in standard written English that rarely interfere with understanding.</p>	<p>Minimally unified and may lack transitions or an introduction or closing.</p> <p>Some specific details but may be insufficient, irrelevant, and/or not elaborated.</p> <p>Some sentence formation errors and a lack of sentence variety.</p> <p>Sometimes general and repetitive word choice.</p> <p>Several kinds of errors in standard written English that interfere with understanding.</p>	<p>Lacks unity.</p> <p>No or few specific details that are minimally elaborated.</p> <p>Frequent and severe sentence formation errors and/or a lack of sentence variety.</p> <p>Often general, repetitive, and/or confusing word choice.</p> <p>Frequent and severe errors in standard written English that interfere with understanding.</p>

For non-scorable responses see below:

- Blank
- Off topic
- Written in a language other than English
- Refusal
- Illegible
- Insufficient

Attachment B

Writing Samples

DIRECTIONS

Read the writing prompt in the box below.

Writing Prompt
Think about something really funny that made you or someone else laugh and laugh and laugh. Write a paper telling what happened and why it was funny.

Thinking about the following will help you focus and plan your writing.

- **What is one funny thing that happened to you or someone else?**
- **Why did you or someone else think it was funny?**

I know who makes me laugh.
A Person makes me laugh.
A jungle makes me laugh.
A monkey makes me me laugh.
A teacher makes me laugh.
My Dad is funny. Xxxx is
funny. My sister makes me laugh.
My cousin is funny. Xxxx
makes me really laugh.
I make myself laugh.
I love to see my mom laugh.

Comments:

This response demonstrates a somewhat limited understanding of the prompt because it lists funny “things” rather than focuses on a humorous incident. The response is a listing of unconnected ideas. While there are no obvious errors in standard written English, the piece is lacking detail, precise word choice, and sentence variety (e.g., “A Person makes me laugh. A jungle makes me laugh...A teacher makes me laugh.”).

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Organize writing around a central idea with a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- Work on varying sentence length and structure.
- Focus on developing and elaborating one of the ideas presented in the writing.

I going to tell you what made my friend laught and laught.

What makes my friend laught is "fork." I f yous say fork she would laught. She was always hipper. So she laught at almost anything. I f you were to smile she would laught. I f you laught she would laught also. I f you smile she would laught and laught.

You could never get her to stop. Her name is Xxxx. Her sister Xxxx (Xxxx) would do the same as Xxxx. She would make me laught when she laught. She'd always laught at something some times. When ever she laught I would laught because she laughts funny.

She would some times stop, but it is kind of hard. The way they laught it was so so so funny. That was about my friend, her sister, and me. (We laught a lot)

Comments:

Although there is evidence of an introduction and conclusion, organization is weak. The response is minimally developed. Repetitive word choice ("laught"), repetitive ideas, and lack of elaboration make this a typical 2. The use of quotation marks ("forks") and parenthesis ("We laught a lot") demonstrates a developing awareness of audience and readers' needs. Errors in standard written English do not interfere with understanding.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Expand and develop the introduction and conclusion.
- Expand and elaborate details.
- Work on varying word choice.
- Work on clarifying pronouns (overuse of "she").

The Kittens

My grandmother's kittens are very funny. They are funny eating, drinking, sleeping, and playing. Their names are Xxxx, Xxxx, Xxxx, Xxxx, and Xxxx. Xxxx got sold last week but that's O.K. The kittens are going to be really funny in this paper.

When the kittens were eating cat food it was very hard. So, when they tried to eat it you could hear them chewing. When they would eat cat food they would get their paws in it. When they would drink they would make a slurping noise. They would get their paws in the water too.

Sometimes they would roll on the porch. Then they roll off the porch and just keep on rolling until they hit a tree and then they would scratch their head. When they would hunt they would hunt in a line. One time the one in the back wasn't watching where he was going and when they stopped he ran into everybody and needs them fall into a pile.

When I would pick a kitten up it would squirm so I put it down. After I put it down it would want me to pick it up again. They would climb trees and they would get scared. So when they did they would jump and do flips in the air. Then they would land on their feet.

When they would take a nap they would sleep on the porch. Then you would look out the window they would be all piled up.

Comments:

This response shows adequate organization but lacks a clear conclusion. While the details are specific, they do not offer an explanation of humor. The sentence beginnings lack variety (e.g., "When they...", "Then they...") and pronouns are overused (e.g., they).

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Develop concluding paragraphs.
- Look for ways to completely elaborate details (e.g., what makes the kittens' actions funny).
- Work on sentence variety and structure.
- Work on clarifying pronouns.

My dog Xxxx was really funny for the first couple of days I had her. She is a very good comedian.

The first second I saw her she looked cute. We let her out to watch her. She then started to howl to the moon in the dark, calm night. She would put her head up and in a high pitch she would howl. When everyone saw her, we all laughed.

The next day I called my cousin up to come over my house so she could see her. When she finally got there I took her to Xxxx's box so she could see her. She was sleeping. I told my cousin (Xxxx) not to tap her but she did. Then Xxxx jumped out of her box and pried on the floor. After I cleaned it up we put Xxxx on the rocking chair. I put my arm on the chair while I was picking a movie. I leaned the chair back then when I got the movie the chair threw Xxxx off it and landed on all of her feet. Then she went away with her tail in between her legs. It was funny because when she was flying her ears were flapping. As scared as she was, she was funny.

She was really funny but I hope she wasn't too scared. Well she's funny and I want her to stay that way. It was really funny when she flew off the chair and howled to the full moon in the dark, calm night sky.

Comments:

This response is unified with some transitions and a clear progression of ideas. Ending is repetitive of ideas already stated. Specific and relevant details offer a clear picture of the humorous events. Successful attempts to explain the humor fully address the prompt. While word choice was generally precise, the pronoun "she" and the word "funny" were somewhat overused.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Continue to use specific details.
- Work on varying word choice.
- Expand and develop conclusions.

Everybody has thier funniest moment at one point in thier life. Lots of times people forget or don't notice thier funniest moment. I'll always remember mine. I think it's the funniest ever. I want to share it with the world!☺

Like any other ordinary day, my friend Xxxx came over to my house. She lives around the corner. We were playing Super Nintendo when my cat Xxxx came crashing trough the cat flap on the door. He looked terrified! That's when I knew Xxxx, my dog, was chasing him. I went to open the door because she was too fat to get through. Too late!☺ Xxxx was stuck in the hole. I was laughing so hard I felt like I was going to barf up my insides! She looked so funny just hanging in the door.

Xxxx came galloping through the hallway. She yelled, "What's so funny!?" I was laughing so hard I couldn't speak a word, so all I did was point at the door. She stared screaming with laughter. We laughed so hard the house shook.

About twenty minutes later we stopped laughing. We ran over to the door. We tried pulling Xxxx out, but that didn't work. We tried pushing her out, but that didn't work either. We tried pushing and pulling at the same time, but that didn't work. What were we to do?

We thought about chopping the door down and then got an expert to saw her out. Too much money. We thought about prying her out, but that would hurt to much. Right then my dad walked into the hallway. He laughed really hard, too. Next we all tried pushing her out the doorway. Finally she popped out and rolled down the stairs. I t was hilarious! We ran out the front door to see if she was O.K. She was fine. Thank goodness! I thought for sure she'd broken a bone. But all she got was a couple of bruises.

Wasn't it outrageiously funny? I thought so. I mean chasing a cat right through a cat flap and getting stuck and not able to come out; and when she finally came out she got a couple of bruises rolling down the front steps. It was quiet a bit of adventure for Xxxx. I t was for me!☺

Comments:

This well-organized response has an adequate introduction, a clear progression of ideas, and an effective conclusion. Consistent style and varied sentence length and structure give the piece a distinct voice ("*We tried* pulling Jewll out.... *We tried* pushing her out..."). The use of questions ("Wasn't it outrageiously funny?") and dialogue demonstrate an awareness of audience.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Consider challenging organizational formulas.
- Develop word choice and the use of figurative language.
- Encourage compositional risks (e.g., narrative, dialogue...).

My Dad's Weird Dream

During the elections, George Bush and Al Gore were really fighting hard to become president of the United States, even though it was past election day. Every state but Florida had decided, but Florida's 25 Electoral votes was needed by both the candidates to win. The only problem was that Florida had done their votes without machines. Instead they used paper ballots. Florida had been suffering lawsuits because the ballots didn't work right. The nation was in distress. Some people wanted hand counts, while others wanted others wanted

them to be counted by a machine. Days passed, but still Florida couldn't decide. We went to sleep and woke the next day. My dad looked like something really weird had happened to him, and he told me that he dreamt he was a living paper ballot and people were deciding what to do with him. "They were poking me, and squeezing me, and only fed me raw carrots," he told me. "Then Bush came along and tried to dispose of me since the person that had voted on me was pro-Gore. But I jumped, and ran, and dodged through the voting booth. Then Al Gore came along and hit Bush over the head with a hammer," he said and went on: "Days passed, and they still only kept me in the cage, only feeding me carrots. I then decided it's time to escape!" I waited until it was dark, and crept through the cage bars, since I was so thin. I crept under the door and became a fugitive," he told me, and went on. "There were wanted signs everywhere I went, and I had no idea what was going on. I then went into a forest, and built a house of twigs. I lived there for a day, eating plants, using all my knowledge and wits to survive. When I was swimming in the stream... I looked up and saw a big hand reach down for me. But a voice said "You're gonna get counted, don't worry," and we left," He said happily. I laughed and laughed. Who else but my dad would dream that?

Comments:

This response shows an exceptional use of compositional risks through the retelling of the dream and the use of dialogue. Sentence structure and word choice create a distinctive style, voice, and tone (e.g., "Instead they used paper ballots. Florida had been suffering lawsuits because the ballots didn't work right"). While there was no explicit humor, the implied explanation demonstrates the writer's skill.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Continue to take compositional risks.

DIRECTIONS

Read the writing prompt in the box below.

Writing Prompt
The local newspaper is sponsoring a contest called “Children Are Teachers, Too.” Write a paper for the contest about what you taught to someone and how you felt about being a teacher.

Thinking about the following will help you focus and plan your writing.

- **What did you teach someone?**
- **How did you feel about being a teacher?**

The kitten that I'm going to writ about is my kitten and her name is Xxxx She dose not lisen and dose not stay off of things at home. I tote her to go to the restroom in kitty litter by putting her in to the litter box.

Comments:

Although the writer addresses the prompt, the response is minimally developed. The few details such as “the cat does not listen and does not stay off things” could be elaborated with how the cat gets in trouble and what the writer will do to teach the cat to behave. Although there is an introduction, the piece lacks a conclusion.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Look for places to expand and elaborate ideas.
- Work on developing a conclusion.
- Work on sentence variety.

If I was a teacher I would be a language Arts teacher. I will teach them spelling and english. I would give them a spelling test every 2 weeks. I would have computer games, like Mavis Beacon for them to play. I wouldn't give them home if they finished all there work.

I would be the after school detention teacher. and I would be a reading teacher and make them bring in any book Reading level 6 and up. I would also give them candy If they got an A or B.

Comments:

This paper is minimally unified, lacks transitions, and has no closing. Although there are some specific details they are not elaborated or explained. The lack of sentence variety ("I would...I would") is typical of a "2" paper.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Look for places to expand and elaborate ideas. For example the author might want to explain why he or she wants to teach spelling and English.
- Work on writing a conclusion.
- Connect ideas by using transitions.
- Work on sentence variety.

I'm going to tell you about when I had to teach. In my paper I am going to tell you about when I won the Bass Master Casting Kid Competition at the fair, and when I came home and told my parents about what had happened. I had to teach my parents about the Bass Master Casting Kid Competition.

I taught them how to play. I told them that you first got to practice. Then I had to cast from different places in the room, from different distances. I told my parents that you had to try to get the highest points on the mat like 50.

Then I told my parents the rules. I told them that I had to start by flipping the rod from 5 feet away. Then I had to pitch from 15 feet away. Finally I had to do an overhand cast from 30 feet away. I told my parents that I got two tries for each place I was at, and the higher score of the two was the score I got.

I told them that there was two age groups. One was from 5 to 15, and the other age group was from 11 to 14. I told them I was in the older age group. I told them what I scored, which was 120 points.

As I told them what had happened I felt smarter than the people in my family that did not know about the competition. I also was feeling special to teach about the competition, and to know something that my family did not know about.

After I was finished talking and teaching about the Bass Master Casting Kid Competition, I took place in, I answered any question that my family had about the competition. My family had no questions about the competition, because I guess I did a fair job explaining it.

That's when I taught my family about the Bass Master Casting Kid Competition.

Comments:

The paper is well organized with a clear progression of ideas. It has an introduction, closing, and transitions. The word choice is generally suitable for the topic ("flipping the rod, overhand cast"). Overall the piece lacks sentence variety.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Work on creating an effective introduction and closing.
- Use a variety of sentences to avoid the repetition of phrases such as "I taught, I told, I had to".
- Explore different ways to elaborate by "showing" rather than "telling".

One day I asked my neighbor, Xxxx, if he wanted to play football. He replied, "Sure, let's go." When he said sure he had a nervous tone in his voice. I could tell why when the game started. I said, "Lets play two hand touch." Xxxx said, "OK.....sure." The thing he didn't tell me was he didn't know how to. He didn't even know how to throw or catch a football. I told him I would teach him how to play. Happily, he said, "OK, good, let's start."

We started out by just playing catch. None of his throws were catchable and he dropped every pass I threw to him. So I thought I should teach him how to throw first. I started by telling him how to hold the ball. I said, "Put you middle finger on the first lace, your ring finger on the second lace, then skip a lace and put your pinky on the lace immediately behind the skipped one. You put

your index finger in front of the laces and your thumb on the bottom of the football." I let him try and he held it perfectly. Next, I told Xxxx to bring the ball back to his ear and throw it foward in a straight, powerful motion. Xxxx tried and he threw it perfectly. I was very pleased.

He asked me if I would teach him how to catch now. This part was a lot easier. The first thing I told him was to not be afraid of the ball. Then I simply told him that on a pass to keep running and to catch the ball with his hands, not his body. Now he knew how to throw good and catch good. This also made me very happy.

Next, I taught him some good running moves like jukes, spins, hurdles, and dives. Now it was time for me to teach him the rules of two hand touch football. The first thing I said was wherever he touched me with two hands was where I was down at. He understood so I gave him some tips. One was to be very fast and to use the running moves I taught him. He was now ready to play me in a game of one on one two hand touch. He did very good, losing by only one point. I was very proud for teaching him.

In conclusion, when you teach someone it makes you feel really good. Now, every day we play football games. He has won a couple of times. I am very glad and happy that I taught Xxxx how to play football.

Comments:

This response is unified with smooth transitions, a logical progression of ideas, and an effective introduction. The introduction captures the reader's sense of curiosity with the phrase "When he said sure he had a nervous tone in his voice." The details are sufficient, specific, relevant and fully elaborated. For example the author's descriptions of how to hold, pass, and catch a football are precise. The writer's ability to teach is clearly evident in instructions such as "...bring the ball back to his ear and throw it forward in a straight, powerful motion."

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Work on an effective conclusion.
- Revise for repetitive and vague words such as good and happy.

"Bicycle Guru"

How have I ever taught someone? That's a good question. I would have to say that the only time I ever taught someone was when my best friend didn't know how to ride a bike, and I had to become the bicycle guru for a week. What haunts me the most is the way the kids laughed at him. Or, it might be the fact that I spent an entire week coaching him. Possibly the fact that he moved a week from the day he beat all of the kids at racing is eating at me the most.

Yes, my friend Xxxx... I can still see his humiliated face in my head. We were both four years old, but there was a big difference between us. I, like most kids my age, knew how to ride a bike, while Xxxx, well... didn't.

The neighborhood kids laughed, teased, and poked fun at his flaw, while I sat and did nothing. I still get a chill when I think of how I should have stood up for him, but just stood there, silent. After a somewhat heated argument with my conscience, I took Xxxx, and his little training-wheel bike, into my backyard. I showed Xxxx the basics (turning, breaking, etc.). As he suited up for his first training wheel-less ride, I unhinged and threw those wretched training wheels off. He sat on his bike as if he had done it a million times, and pedaled himself right into a fence. So, four days and a gallon of iodine later, he had gotten it, and rode like I've never seen anyone ride before. Now it was time to face the crowd of ridiculing children.

Finally after alot of sarcasm and put-downs, the "gang" agreed to a downhill race. Now, seeing as how I was the best biker of them all, I sat that one out. Oh, boy, let me tell you, all I saw was a blur and some blood, when everyone was on the ground except my apprentice, who had, surprisingly, won.

In conclusion, kids can teach anyone, as long as their heart is in it. My younger pupil moved a week after that epic race, yet I feel that my legacy still lives in him whenever he sits on a bike seat. I often find myself awake at night, wondering how he won that race, but at the same time I feel proud of my friend, and student, Xxxx...

Comments:

The writer's consistent and distinctive style, voice, and tone are attributes of a 5. The gentle humor mixed with sensitivity is an example of compositional risk. Original phrases, such as "...and pedaled himself right into a fence" and "...I feel my legacy still lives in him whenever he sits on a bike seat...", are memorable and set this paper apart from others. The exceptional word choice and effective use of literary devices make this essay a pleasure to read.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Continue to take compositional risks!
- Continue to experiment with the use of literary devices.

DIRECTIONS

Read the writing prompt in the box below.

Writing Prompt
Your school newspaper is sponsoring a special issue entitled “Our Favorite Possessions.” Write an article describing a personal possession that is significant to you, and explain why it is significant.

Thinking about the following will help you focus and plan your writing.

- **What personal possession is significant to you?**
- **Why is this personal possession significant to you?**

My pok'emon cards are my significant possessions because they are worth money. I enjoy collecting them and selling them. The holographics are worth more. That is why I like them.

Comments:

This response indicates that the writer understood the prompt. Convention errors are not a concern. Although there is a clear but abbreviated introduction and conclusion, the few details provided are not elaborated and confirm the score of one.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Work on a more effective introduction and conclusion.
- Look for ways to expand and elaborate details.

My Grandfather's Ring

My favert person possession is my grandfathers ring he got it when he was finished the war. I don't remember wich war it was but befor he died he gave it to me. His last words was to me when he gave me the ring was never to let go of him or lose that ring. I keep that ring close to my hart for one hole year and it still did not leave the spot were I put it. It is something about that ring that I can't let go. Everyday I look at that ring it still is something of him that is still thire. I want to go into the army when I get out of school. I can see him now when I go to the army.

Comments:

Although this '2' paper has a definite voice and is unified, the ideas presented are minimally elaborated. While the spelling errors are distracting, overall they do not interfere with understanding.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Organize writing with a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- Look for ways to expand and elaborate details.
- Work on developing an effective conclusion.
- Incorporate transitions into writing.

What is so significant to you? Well to me, I guess almost everything in my life is significant to me. Even though there are many things that are significant to me, only one thing is the most significant. The one thing are my dolls. I guess your wondering why it is something like my dolls. Well in the rest of this article it will tell you just why they are significant to me.

One reason is that the dolls are very old. They have been passed down from generation to generation. My grandmother gave them to my mother, my mother gave them to me, and I will give them to my children. That is another reason they are so significant, because my mom gave them to me. Because my mom gave them to me, to me they are priceless.

Another reason is that the dolls have been in our family for a long time. They have been in our family for about 50 years. They are old, huh. To me those dolls are the most important things in our family. They are also the oldest things in our family that have been passed down from generation to generation.

The last reason they are so significant is that they are glass dolls. The dolls are so old they are made of glass and could break very easily. They have their own case that just sits in our office at our house. Also they are worth a lot of money. That is why we never play with them and they just sit in the case and collect dust.

So what is so significant to you? Those were the reasons that make my dolls so significant to me. Go on and tell me about what is so significant to you. If I could choose just one possession, out of the many possessions that are significant to me, than I think you can.

Comments:

This formulaic 3 paper has repetitive ideas (paragraphs 2 and 3 are essentially the same) and word choice ('old' and 'significant'). It does address the audience ('What is so significant to you?') and exhibits sentence variety.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Develop a more varied word choice that promotes a more distinctive style and voice.
- Work on a more effective introduction and conclusion.
- Identify distinct details to elaborate.

In an old cigar box hidden behind the door of my room sits my most prized possession, a memory box. This memory box holds things that are the most memorable to me, including pictures of my loved ones, things made for me by loved ones, knick knacks, greeting cards, and accomplishments I've made.

The most abundant thing in my memory box is pictures of my loved ones. Pictures of my family at gatherings or at home are scarce, mainly because most are in photo albums belonging to the family. My Mom, Dad, stepmom, stepdad, two half brothers, and one

half sister are all included in the small amount of family pictures in my memory box. There are a few shots of my pet cats, Xxxx, Xxxx, and Xxxx in there, too. Most of my pictures have to do with my friends – Xxxx, Xxxx, Xxxx, Xxxx, Xxxx, Xxxx, and Xxxx, whom we all call Xxxx, are a few to name. I also happen to have one ripped up picture of my old best friend, Xxxx, which symbolizes our broken friendship.

The second most abundant thing in my memory box is greeting cards. My Dad and stepmom's wedding invitation from 1995 is in there. I was their flowergirl. The wedding invitation from my Mom and stepdad's long anticipated wedding, in which I was a bridesmaid last year, is also a memorable thing in the cigar box. When I graduated from 8th grade last year, my mom-mom gave me a graduation card. I kept that, too. There is also a handmade card in my box from Xxxx, thanking me for being her friend.

My favorite things in my memory box are my poems and songs that I've written myself. They describe important times in my life, events that I will hold dear until I reach my grave. I have hopes that my songs will be number one hits someday.

Things are in my memory box that help me remember past events. For instance, I have kept a hospital bracelet from my tonsil surgery for almost 3 years. Last year, when I missed out on buying a yearbook, Xxxx made one for me with pictures and sayings from my closest friends. I also have a knick-knack of an exercising bear in an orange jumpsuit, which represents the friendship Xxxx and I once had. She has one, too, but in a blue jumpsuit.

A memory box, my most prized possession, sits behind my door, untouched unless a memory is added to it. My family respects it and I respect it. One day, when I am old, I will open the old cigar box and remember all the things I've gotten to live for, including life itself.

Comments:

This response is unified with specific sensory details that are fully elaborated. Precise word choice (“long anticipated,” “scarce,” “abundant”) conveys writer’s conversational style. Meets the needs of the audience and satisfies the purpose for writing.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Consider challenging organizational formulas.
- Work on more subtle and sophisticated transitions.
- Experiment with word choice and use figurative language.

For the last four years, every time I walk into my room, it's right there in front of me. For in my trophy case lies my favorite possession, a baseball. This isn't just any baseball though, this is the game ball from a shut-out I pitched in a little league game when I was 11. This has so much value to me because for the last ten years, baseball has been my life. This is one of my few times spent in the limelight in my baseball career. I can still remember that day vividly.

It was a quite chilly Saturday morning to be playing a baseball game. On my way to the field I could not help but think of how tough today's game would be. There I was, a 4' 8 inch, 80 pound, 11 year old playing with kids twice my size. Some of the kids I played against in my first game were from 5'5 to 5'8, and weighed from 150-190, and there I was.

My hopes of winning were not very high after what I saw our previous game. I arrived at the field around 9:30 for the game. I started to go through my pre-game routine when I was notified I would be the starting pitcher for that game. I was in shock. For I had never pitched before in a game in my life. Many of the older players on my team thought it was a joke having the team's smallest player pitch. I was so nervous that I went to the dugout and stared at the empty field until game time arrived.

In what seemed like hours later, the game began. Luckily, my team was the road team, which means we batted first. I was also the first batter for my team, so I thought this at least would take my mind off what lied ahead. I walked p to the plate, and the pitcher walked me on four pitches. I went to first base, and on the very next pitch my teammate doubled and I scored to give us the lead. My team would end up scoring four times in the first inning, which calmed me down a little.

I was literally shaking as I made my way out to the mound. I picked up the ball and threw a few nervous tosses to the plate. Not one of them was even close to being a strike. I believe that my assistant coaches and other parents questioned the move to make me the starting pitcher, but my coach stood calm and relaxed almost as if he knew what would happen next.

The first batter I faced was a tall, skinny kid that I'd known. He walked into the batters box with a grin thinking he would have an easy hit. My first three pitches weren't even close, but somehow my next three were all strikes for a strike-out. I was shocked that I did that, but at the same time I knew that that was only one out. The next two batters both grounded out to end the inning.

The next five innings were very similar, and my team won 15-0. My team would finish the year with a 4-13 record, even though I would throw another shut-out win later that year. Every time I stop and look at the ball I remember how what I thought at the time would be a nightmare turned into a story to tell my children. I wouldn't tell my children this to make them think of me as a baseball player, but someone that showed that size doesn't matter. That ball and that memory I will hold onto forever.

Comments:

This response shows exceptional use of a compositional risk by successfully using narrative as a developmental strategy. A consistent voice and tone further contribute to the distinguished writing level. The effective conclusion reflects depth of thought in the writer's selection of this possession. Wonderful details with vivid word choice and imagery also contribute to the distinctive style.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Continue to experiment with compositional risks and literary devices.
- Continue to select precise words that promote voice.

DIRECTIONS

Read the writing prompt in the box below.

Writing Prompt

You have been selected to speak at an assembly for the new student orientation. Write the text of your speech giving advice to the incoming students based on the following quotation regarding success by Don Shula (former coach of the Baltimore Colts and the Miami Dolphins football teams), “Success is not forever and failure isn’t fatal.”

Thinking about the following questions will help you focus and plan your writing.

- **What does the quotation “Success is not forever and failure isn’t fatal” mean?**
- **What advice would you give incoming students based on this quotation?**

The quotation "Success is not forever and failure isn't fatal." Don Shula means that success does not last forever and if you mess up it won't be fatal. That quote is a very good quote so you should follow that quote.

Comments:

This response indicates that the writer understood the prompt, as well as the significance of the quote. There are no errors in standard written English, and there is unity. However, there are few specific details (e.g., "if you mess up it won't be fatal"). Furthermore, there is almost no elaboration of the details. For example, "That quote is a very good quote" needs specific examples for support. The lack of elaboration and specific details confirm the score of 1.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Provide more specific and elaborated details.
- Organize writing with a clear introduction, body, and closing.

I am here today to speak amongst all of the new students in behalf of the school. I welcome all of you as well as your parents to this high school. Xxxx high school has a very high reputation. We are known to have the best football, and baseball team as well as academics. We rank very high on state tests, and also we have many students with high honors. We here at Xxxx carry our heads up high because of our reputation.

One major factor all of you must remember is success. Our school has a lot of success, and we hope with a new class coming up we will still carry success. Success is not always something that you will always have in life. Though you must remember failure is not fatal. You can and always will be able to pick yourself back up.

Since all of you are just coming from middle school this is all new for you. But, once you adjust you will be just fine. Xxxx has very high expectations for their students, and we hope you can strive to success. Even though it is all new and might seem scary it is just another day at school.

Many of the students here end up going to Yale, Harvard, or Penn State. Then there are some students that just go to a community college. Yet no matter what college they attend they will know they got a proper education.

As of right now I am a junior in high school. I enjoy coming to school everyday because of the great atmosphere. I hope you to will feel the very same way. Xxxx is a very successful highschool, and I really hope you have a good four years. Thank you.

Comments:

This response has an introduction, but it lacks focus. This contributes to the meandering progression of ideas throughout the paper. The writer does exhibit an attempt at voice, but this attempt does not make up for the overall lack of unity. Repetitive sentence formation and general and repetitive word choices (“always,” “success”) contribute to the paper’s choppy style.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Develop a tighter focus.
- Provide clearer transitions to promote unity.
- Work on varying sentence length and structure.
- Explore more vivid and precise word choice.

As new students in a new school, it may be difficult to adjust. The first year of a new school, is always the hardest. There are new teachers, harder classes, and different people. It will take time to adjust, but you will. "Success is not forever and failure isn't fatal." This quote said by Don Shula basically summarizes your work in school and life

The success, that you earn at some point, is not going to last forever. If, for the first marking period, a student receives straight A's, that is a huge accomplishment. However, he or she may think that receiving those A's, automatically guarantee's the same for next marking period. Unfortunately, it doesn't. To gain those A's, hard work is essential. Even when school is over, and a student is CEO of a major company, their success can come to an unexpectant halt. He or she could lose it all, because he believed that the success would never leave. School and the real world does not work that way. To gain success that lasts, hard work, everyday is necessary. There are no shortcuts with success.

To make a mistake, or to fail at something is not the end of the world. Failing a test only means that you have to work twice as hard to get the A. All that you can do is to try again, with more effort. Some say that there is no try, only do or do not. However, if you see your mistakes, then you can pass and succeed the next time. For some, it is harder to put themselves back on top. Some believe that all of that hard work is a waste of time; but it isn't. In the end knowing that you climbed to the top is all worth it.

The advice given to new students is to do your best. Try your hardest to excel. That is all that you can really do. Failing at things is part of life. Always work up to your full potential, never say that you can't do it. You can if you put your mind to it, and if you believe you can.

When it comes down to it, failure is the key to success. Even the best of students have one bad test grade in their pile of good ones. Trying to do your best and earning honors is a good way to go about school life. When a failure occurs in your life, you know not to make the same mistake again. That is the way that school life should be lived.

Comments:

This unified response has a generally clear, although formulaic, progression of ideas. The writer's elaboration and use of details, however, is uneven, predictable, and repetitious. The paper generally meets expectations in the areas of sentence formation, word choice, and conventions.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Choose an organization plan that will promote the effective and consistent elaboration of ideas.
- Continue working on vivid word choice to promote a more distinctive style.

Staff and students:

Welcome to the student orientation assembly. This year promises to be a great year for everyone. I hope everyone is as excited as I am to start a brand new year. Often in time, we as people focus too much on the past instead of the future. Don Shula, former NFL football coach, once said a great quote that many of us should hear: "Success is not forever and failure isn't fatal." This quote can be broken down into two, and can really help build the correct mentality for a new year.

The first half of the quote states that "success is not forever". Past achievements do not necessarily guarantee future ones. Hard work and dedication are vital in continual success. For example, in high school soccer, there is one team in this state that won four consecutive state championships. However, in this past year, another school finally defeated them. Their success did not last forever, and after their major loss, they resolved to accept it and to just work harder in the next season. This attitude is the absolute correct attitude everyone in this auditorium

should maintain. The incorrect reaction would have been to mourn and continuously complain. However, they took the correct approach by accepting their loss, using it to learn from, and focusing on what they can do to improve from there. I am sure everyone in this room has made mistakes in the past, including myself. We should all approach this new year by using Don Shula's quote as our foundation. The second half of the quote states that "failure isn't fatal". I think most of us forget this sometimes. Natural human reaction is to quit at something we fail. However, we need not use that mentality. The quote tells us exactly what we need to hear: failing will not kill us. I'm sure most of us have heard the quote, "If at first you don't succeed, try again." This is exactly what not enough of us do. Our nation and our world would not be where they are without trying again at things we have failed. I imagine if everyone who helped invent the space shuttle quit the first time they tried. We would not have photos, images, moon rocks, or any idea what was in our solar system. If anything, failing should make us want to achieve more than anything. Basically, Don Shula's quote is advising us to not rely on past events as the basis of what is held for us in our future.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you all with a few words of my own wisdom. The reason I came today and read you that quote is because I hope you all follow it. As incoming students, I hope you all use this advice to achieve in everything you desire and live your dreams. Do not continue to live in the past over past glories and failures. Use this advice to remember to still keep working hard to stay on top of past achievements and to also work especially hard on past failures. This is a brand new year, so let's all get into the correct mentality and make this year our best! That you all for your time.

Comments:

This response is unified with smooth, although obvious, transitions and an effective introduction and closing. Sentences are written with a variety of length and structure. The writer uses specific and relevant details (space shuttle, soccer team) that could be more fully elaborated. The somewhat formal tone is consistent but may engulf the writer's voice. Word choice is specific ("resolved", "mourned") but is sometimes repetitive ("attitude", "exactly").

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Elaborate ideas more thoroughly.
- Explore word choice that consistently demonstrates variety.
- Work on transition of ideas rather than using just words.
- Experiment with tone to meet the needs of the audience and fulfill the writing purpose.

Growing up is such a scary thing yet somehow it seems so much more fun and easy, if you are prepared for it. High school is a big transition with a lot more responsibility. To help you adjust to all of this, a quote comes to mind. Don Shula, a former Miami Dolphins football coach once said, "Success is not forever and failure is not fatal." This quote means that success does not last forever and that you must continuously earn it. It is also reminding us that it is alright to fail, we just must pick ourselves back up and keep trying even harder than we did before. High school seems to be the place where success and failure come hand in hand and we must understand and accept that as students.

Success is an important part of life that all people want to have. Yet in high school, as well as in life it varies on how hard people work to obtain that success. Success is a great accomplishment, not something you are born with. It feels wonderful when you have completed or are successful in

something, but unless you keep working with that same intensity that success will slowly drift away. A great story is that of []. She was on junior varsity of the field hockey team. Her level of play was fairly high so she would often get frustrated with her team. However, she kept working hard and eventually was moved up to varsity. Yet, she did not stop working hard once she was on varsity because she knew if she had she would have moved back down to where she started. This is also true for academics. Just because you get an A in English the first marking period, do not just expect to get it the next time. You must continue to try your hardest to continue getting that A. Just because you are successful once does not mean you will always be that way. Be proud of your successes, just remember to stay on task.

With all of this talk about success I am probably making it sound like failure is the end of the world, and that people who failed do not try. I am not saying that at all. Failure is a part of life. It is merely a bump in the road. In high school everyone fails, whether it be a test, failure to make a sports team, or something else. It is what one does with failure that is the key. A perfect example of this is when [] received an F on his first major test in math. This did disappoint him but also gave him a bigger drive to want to do very well on the next test. Failure gives us an opportunity to identify our mistakes and fix them. High school will bring each and every one of us failure. We just need to learn how to overcome it and turn the negativity of failure into something positive.

As I said before high school brings you many successes and many failures. You have things pulling you from all angles, therefore, success and failure are inevitable. One just must keep a smart perspective. Be passionate but do not make yourself crazy. Work hard, but have fun, and learn to accept what happens. The only true failure in life is the failure to try. So whatever happens in life, remember, it all depends on how you react to it and what you do with it.

Comments:

This response is focused with a clear and logical progression of ideas and an effective introduction and closing. The writer exhibits a consistent style with good word choice ("success" is often repeated) and an appropriate variety of sentence structure. Details are fully elaborated (use of personal anecdotes) and are relevant to the writing purpose and needs of the audience ("A great story is...").

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Consider challenging organizational schemes.
- Continue exploring subtle and sophisticated transitions.
- Experiment with word choice and literary devices that promote a more distinctive voice.

Good afternoon. My name is Xxxx and I am a junior at Xxxx High School. I welcome all of you to this new school. I hope you are all ready to start this new and exciting chapter of your life. But before you begin, what would any orientation speech be without discussing success. This is why I am here today.

I would like to begin with a quote by Don Shula, former football coach to both the Baltimore Colts and Miami Dolphins. According to Shula, "Success is not forever and failure isn't fatal." This quote may be true in football, but as far as life goes, it doesn't quite score a touchdown.

In this quotation, Shula says, "Success is not forever." This theory all depends on how you view it. I'm sure all of you remember the children's story The Little Engine That Could. The story is about a little train engine that kept trying to get up a hill. During his struggle, he repeats to himself, "I think I can, I think I can." After trying and trying, the little engine finally makes it up and over the hill. Even though the story ends there, had

it been real life, the engine's journey is probably not over. Although his feeling of accomplishment may wear off, there is bound to be another hill on his path. If he repeats what he did the first time, there is a good possibility the little engine will overcome this obstacle as well. In other words, his success may not initially feel like it lasts, but in reality, it sets him up for a lifetime of achievement.

The other part of the quote on success by Don Shula discusses failure. Shula states, "Failure isn't fatal." Although true, (unless of course you failed at safely landing a ski jump) this part of his quote can be very misleading. It seems that Mr. Shula, quite possibly unintentionally, euphemized failure suggesting people should not worry about failing. After all, if it won't kill you, why bother trying to succeed? Unfortunately, Mr. Shula forgot the adage "Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger." Therefore, even though it is almost impossible to avoid failure at some point in your life, you shouldn't always accept it as an option. Failure should make you want to achieve your goal even more. This will make you work harder and harder until you achieve success.

Let me quickly tell you a story that sums up all of my feelings about success and Mr. Shula's quote. Around a century ago, a man sat at a table with a goal in his mind. He failed over a hundred times. However, he kept working and tried harder after each failure. Finally, he succeeded. You could say a light went on for him. In fact, one did. The man is Thomas A. Edison and the story is when he perfected the electric lightbulb. A success that has lasted for one hundred years and more.

What does all of this mean for you? No you're not train engines or 19th century inventors, but it does mean a lot for you as students attending a brand new school. You are sitting here, in a new school, with a myriad of opportunities in front of you. Don't let failure become a staple in your life. Success is a beautiful thing. Your self-esteem, confidence, and outlook on life depends on it. I think what Mr. Shula should have said was, "Yeah, sometimes success isn't everlasting, but the more you strive for it, the happier your life will be."

Thank you all, and best of luck to you in this new school. Have a wonderful day... and I wish you all a "success full" life.

Comments:

The writer's skillful connection of ideas ("What does all of this mean for you?") and sophisticated approach is carefully and intentionally controlled. Specific and relevant examples are fully elaborated and demonstrate a consistent connection to the audience (*The Little Engine that Could*). In addition, the use of figurative language ("doesn't quite score a touchdown") and precise and vivid word choices ("myriad", "adage", "euphemized") help earn the writer a high 4.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- Work on a more effective introduction and conclusion to demonstrate a more even tone and style.
- Continue to experiment with word choice and figurative language to further develop a distinctive style, voice, and tone.
- Consider taking other compositional risks.