

**OKLAHOMA SCHOOL TESTING PROGRAM
OKLAHOMA CORE CURRICULUM TESTS**

ITEM SPECIFICATIONS

Writing
Grade 5



Oklahoma State Department of Education
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Revised
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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this test is to measure Oklahoma fifth-grade students' level of proficiency in the *Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS)* in Writing. Students provide a writing sample by responding to a specific topic in any one of four modes. Each student's writing sample is evaluated based on a group of six analytic rubrics. These scores, and a computed composite score, supply information about student performance in the following areas: composite writing; ideas and development; organization, unity, and coherence; word choice; sentences and paragraphs; grammar and usage; and mechanics.

2. PRIORITY ACADEMIC STUDENT SKILLS

WRITING CONTENT STANDARDS

Grade 5

Writing/Grammar/Usage and Mechanics. The student will express ideas effectively in written modes for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Standard 1: Writing Process. The student will use the writing process to write coherently.

1. Use the writing process to develop, extend, and refine composition skills by using a variety of prewriting strategies, such as brainstorming, clustering, illustrating, webbing, using graphic organizers, notes, and logs.
2. Understand and demonstrate familiarity with the writing process and format (beginning, middle, and ending) and structure of main idea, exposition, body, and conclusion.)
3. Use common organizational structures for providing information in writing, such as chronological/sequential order, cause and effect, or similarity and difference, and posing and answering questions.
4. Select a focus and an organizational structure based on purpose/mode, audience, and required format.
 - a. Write one or more drafts by categorizing ideas and organizing them into paragraphs.
 - b. Blend paragraphs with effective transitions into longer compositions.
5. Edit/proofread drafts, using standard editing marks, to ensure standard usage, mechanics, spelling, and varied sentence structure to improve meaning and clarity.
6. Review, evaluate, and revise selected drafts by adding, elaborating, deleting, combining, and rearranging text for meaning and clarity.
7. Publish and present writing to peers and adults.

Standard 2: Modes and Forms of Writing. Communicate through a variety of written forms, for various purposes, and to a specific audience or person.

1. Communicate through a variety of written forms and for various audiences to inform, persuade, entertain, describe, and reflect, while adjusting tone and style as appropriate.
2. Write narratives that establish a plot, point of view, setting, conflict, and are written to allow a reader to picture the events of a story. Example: Select a type of narrative to write that is modeled after a genre of literature that has been shared in the classroom such as folktale, myth, science fiction, or mystery. Be sure to include an interesting beginning, develop the central conflict of the story, and establish an ending that resolves the conflict.
3. With creative narratives and poems, use varied word choice, dialogue, and figurative language when appropriate (alliteration, personification, simile, and metaphor) to make writing engaging to the audience (e.g., inquired or requested instead of asked).
4. Write personal, persuasive, formal letters, thank-you notes, and invitations, including the date, greeting, body, closing, and signature.
5. Write expository (informational) pieces with multiple paragraphs that:
 - a. provide an introductory paragraph.
 - b. establish and support a central theme or idea with a thesis statement.
 - c. include supporting paragraphs with simple facts, details, and explanations.
 - d. present important ideas and events in sequence or in chronological order.
 - e. provide details and transitions to link paragraphs.
 - f. conclude with a paragraph that summarizes the points.
 - g. use correct indentation at the beginning of paragraphs.
 - h. use at least three sources of valuable and reliable information including books, newspapers, periodicals, online, and media sources.
6. Write research reports about important ideas, issues, or events that:
 - a. frame questions about an idea or issue to direct the investigation.
 - b. establish a main idea or topic.
 - c. develop the topic with simple facts, details, examples, and explanations to support the main idea.

- d. use at least three different types of information sources, including speakers, firsthand interviews, reference materials, and online information.
7. Write responses to literature that:
- a. demonstrate an understanding of a designated literary work.
 - b. support judgments by referring and connecting to prior knowledge.
 - c. develop interpretations and evaluations that exhibit careful reading and understanding.
8. Write persuasive compositions or letters that:
- a. state a clear position in support of a proposal.
 - b. support a position with relevant evidence and effective emotional appeals in order to persuade.
 - c. organize supporting statements from the most appealing to the least powerful.
 - d. include and address reader/audience concerns. Example: Interview several students in varying grades about the changes they would like to see in the monthly cafeteria menu choices. Compile the opinions and ideas to compose a persuasive article for the school newspaper.

Standard 3: Grammar/Usage and Mechanics. The student will demonstrate appropriate practices in writing by applying Standard English conventions to the revising and editing stages of writing.

1. Grammar/Usage: Students are expected to recognize and use nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and conjunctions in their writing.
- a. Singular and plural forms of nouns and pronouns
 - b. Nominative (subjective), objective, reflexive, and possessive pronouns
 - c. Relative, intensive, and intensive pronouns
 - d. Subject, indirect object, direct object, and object of prepositions
 - e. Transitive and intransitive verbs
 - f. Present, past, future, and present perfect verb tense
 - g. Positive, comparative, and superlative adjectives
 - h. Time, place, and manner and degree adverbs
 - i. Comparative forms of adverbs
 - j. Subject-verb agreement
 - k. Restrictive (essential) and nonrestrictive (nonessential) clauses and phrases

- l. Subordinate adverb, adjective, and noun clauses
- m. Pronoun antecedents and reference
- n. Coordinating, correlating, and subordinating conjunctions
2. Mechanics: Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate language mechanics in writing.
 - a. Capitalize correctly proper nouns such as titles of books, magazines, newspapers, stories, titles of respect, works of art, regions of the country, political parties, organizations, state colleges, universities, languages, races, nationalities, and religions.
 - b. Capitalize correctly proper adjectives.
 - c. Capitalize correctly conventions of letter writing.
 - d. Indent beginning lines of paragraphs.
3. Punctuation: Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate punctuation in writing.
 - a. Parentheses
 - b. Quotation marks
 - c. Terminal punctuation (period, exclamation mark, or question mark)
 - d. Punctuation after initials
 - e. Apostrophes in contractions and possessives
 - f. Conventions of letter writing
 - g. Colons, semi-colons, and commas
 - h. Hyphens and dashes
4. Sentence Structure: The student will demonstrate appropriate sentence structure in writing declarative, imperative, exclamatory, and interrogative sentences.
 - a. Create interesting simple, complete, compound, and complex sentences that describe, explain, or provide additional details and connections, such as adjectives, adverbs, appositives, participial phrases, prepositional phrases, simple, complete, and compound predicates, modifiers, pronouns, and conjunctions.
 - b. Create sentences with an understood subject.
 - c. Correct sentence fragments and run-ons.
5. Spelling: Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate application of spelling knowledge to the revising and editing stages of writing.

- a. Spell previously misspelled words correctly in final writing products.
 - b. Spell correctly roots, inflections (e.g., -s/es, -ing, -ly, -en, -er), suffixes (e.g., -ment, -ture, -ate, -able, -sion, -tion), and prefixes (e.g., dis-, in-, un-, re-, mis-, pre-), and syllable constructions (e.g., grad.u.a.tion).
 - c. Spell homophones correctly according to usage (e.g., to, too, two; there, their, they're) and other words that are commonly misspelled in the English language (e.g., until, our).
 - d. Use word reference materials including glossary, dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedia, and technology to check and correct spelling.
6. Handwriting: Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate, legible handwriting in the writing process.

3. SCORING

Scoring criteria are based on the above standards and objectives. In regard to Standard 2: Modes and Forms of Writing, the student may choose from any of the modes and forms to demonstrate a clear awareness of the audience and purpose for writing. Writing test papers receive two types of scores: a composite score and a series of analytic scores for specific writing skills. The composite score reflects how well the student can integrate writing techniques to produce a good paper. The analytic scores each focus on a specific aspect of the student's writing.

Papers that do not meet certain criteria cannot be scored. A zero overall score is given to papers that fall into the following categories:

- No response or just a restatement of the task
- Response in a language other than English
- Response that is illegible or incomprehensible
- Response about a topic different from the assigned task

ANALYTIC SCORES

Each piece of student writing is scored on five analytic characteristics that indicate specific writing skills. These scores range from 4 (the highest) to 1 (the lowest). Taken together, these scores provide a profile of the strengths and weaknesses of the student's writing. The following are the actual scoring rubrics used to assign the five analytic scores.

Score	Ideas and Development 30%
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content is well suited for the audience and purpose • The main idea or thesis is clear • Ideas are fully developed and elaborated using details, examples, reasons, or evidence • The writer expresses an insightful perspective towards the topic
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content is adequate for the audience and purpose • The main idea is evident but may lack clarity • Ideas are developed using some details, examples, reasons, and/or evidence • The writer sustains his/her perspective toward the topic throughout most of the composition
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content is inconsistent with the audience and purpose • The main idea is not focused and leaves the reader with questions and making inferences to understand the main idea • Ideas are minimally developed with few details • May simply be a list of ideas • The writer has difficulty expressing his/her perspective toward the topic
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content is irrelevant to the audience and purpose • The composition lacks a central idea • Ideas lack development or may be repetitive • The writer has little or no perspective on the topic

Score	Organization, Unity, and Coherence 25%
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction engages the reader• Sustained or consistent focus on the topic• Logical and appropriate sequencing and balanced with smooth, effective transitions• Order and structure are strong and move the reader through the text• Conclusion is satisfying
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evident introduction to the topic• Adequate focus• Adequate sequencing• Stays on topic with little digression• Uses limited but effective transitions• Order and structure are present• Conclusion is appropriate
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May lack a clear organizational structure• Weak evidence of unity• Little or limited sequencing and/or transitions• Details may be randomly placed
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lacks logical direction• No evidence of organizational structure

Score	Word Choice 15%
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate word choice which conveys the correct meaning and appeals to the audience in an interesting, precise, and natural way • The writing may be characterized by, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – lively verbs – vivid nouns – imaginative adjectives – figurative language – dialogue • No vague, overused, repetitive language is used (a lot, great, very, really)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words generally convey the intended message • The writer uses a variety of words that are appropriate but do not necessarily energize the writing • The writing may be characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – attempts at figurative language and dialogue – some use of lively verbs, vivid nouns, and imaginative adjectives – few vague, overused, and repetitive words are used
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word choice lacks precision and variety or may be inappropriate to the audience and purpose • May be simplistic and/or vague • Relies on overused or vague language (a lot, great, very, really) • Few attempts at figurative language and dialogue • Word choice is unimaginative and colorless with images that are unclear or absent
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word choice indicates an extremely limited or inaccurate vocabulary • No attempts at figurative language • General, vague words that fail to communicate meaning • Text may be too short to demonstrate variety

Score	Sentences and Paragraphs 15%
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing clearly demonstrates appropriate sentence structure• Writing has few or no run-on or fragment errors• Writing has a rich variety of sentence structure, types, and lengths• Ideas are organized into paragraphs that blend into larger text• Evidence of appropriate paragraphing
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing adequately demonstrates appropriate sentence structure• Writing may contain a small number of run-on or fragment errors that do not interfere with fluency• Writing has adequate variety of sentence structure• Ideas may be organized into paragraphs
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing demonstrates lack of control in sentence structure• Writing contains errors such as run-ons and fragments that interfere with fluency• Writing has limited variety of sentence structure• Writing may show little or no attempt at paragraphing
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inappropriate sentence structure• Many errors in structure (run-ons, fragments)• No variety in structure• No attempt at paragraphing

Score	Grammar Usage and Mechanics 15%
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The writer demonstrates appropriate use of correct:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- spelling- punctuation- capitalization- grammar- usage• Errors are minor and do not affect readability
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The writer demonstrates adequate use of correct:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- spelling- punctuation- capitalization- grammar- usage• Errors may be more noticeable but do not significantly affect readability
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The writer demonstrates minimal use of correct:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- spelling- punctuation- capitalization- grammar- usage• Errors may be distracting and interfere with readability
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The writer demonstrates very limited use of correct:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- spelling- punctuation- capitalization- grammar- usage• Errors are numerous and severely impede readability

COMPOSITE SCORE

A student's composite score in the writing prompt, **in part**, is derived by assigning various weights to the five analytic traits. The averaged Analytic Score for each category is multiplied by the appropriate weight (percentage) and summed. The sum is then multiplied by 15 to place the score on the appropriate scale. A transformation formula to adjust for prompt difficulty and scorer effect is applied, and the score is then rounded to the nearest whole number. The weights are assigned based on the importance of each trait and are supported by empirical evidence. Each student's composite score will range from 60 (the highest score) to 15 (the lowest score). The weights attributed to each analytic score are given in the table below.

Percentage	Analytic Score Category
30%	Ideas and Development
25%	Organization, Unity, and Coherence
15%	Word Choice
15%	Sentences and Paragraphs
15%	Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics

PERFORMANCE-LEVEL DESCRIPTORS**WRITING****Grade 5**

Advanced: Responses are fully developed using specific and detailed examples. The main idea is clear and gives an insightful perspective towards the topic. Organization is strong and logical moving the reader through the text using smooth transitions. The introduction and conclusion are satisfying. Word choice is rich and appeals to the audience. Writing demonstrates a variety of sentence structures, and ideas are organized into paragraphs. Grammar, usage, and mechanics are appropriate, and errors do not affect readability.

Satisfactory: Responses are adequately developed using some details and examples. The main idea is evident but may lack clarity. A perspective is sustained throughout most of the composition. Organization is evident and stays on topic using limited but effective transitions. The introduction and conclusion are appropriate. Word choice is varied but may not energize the writing. The writer uses a variety of sentence structures and small errors do not interfere with fluency. Ideas may be organized into paragraphs. Grammar, usage, and mechanics are adequate. While errors may be noticeable, they do not affect readability.

Limited Knowledge: Responses are minimally developed using few details. A perspective is not clearly expressed. Organization lacks appropriate structure, and details may be randomly placed. Limited transitions are evident. Word choice is simplistic or vague and is unimaginative. Sentence structure lacks control and errors interfere with fluency. Little or no paragraphing is attempted. Errors with grammar, usage, and mechanics distract from the readability.

Unsatisfactory: Responses lack development and show little or no perspective to the topic. Organizational structure is not evident. Word choice is extremely limited and fails to communicate meaning. Sentence structure contains many errors, and no sentence variety or paragraphing is attempted. Errors with grammar, usage, and mechanics severely impede readability. Students who score in this range should be given comprehensive writing instruction.

4. OVERVIEW OF ITEM SPECIFICATIONS

For each learning target, item specifications are organized under the following headings:

- a. Emphasis
- b. Content Limits
- c. Format

Universal Design Considerations

Universal design, as applied to assessments, is a concept that allows the widest possible range of students to participate in assessments and may even reduce the need for accommodations and alternative assessments by expanding access to the tests themselves. In the *Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests*, modifications have been made to some items that simplify and clarify instructions and provide maximum readability, comprehensibility, and legibility. This includes such things as reduction of language load in content areas other than Reading, increased font size, fewer items per page, and boxed items to assist visual focus. Reading tests will have vocabulary on grade level. In all other tests, the vocabulary level will be below the grade being tested except for content words (Grades 3 and 4 will be one grade below, grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 will be two grades below). These modifications are evident in the sample items included in this document.

5. ITEM SPECIFICATIONS

Emphasis:

The student reads a prompt silently while the teacher reads it orally. The student then produces a writing sample that focuses on the writing topic specified in the prompt. The prompt focuses on a topic that is common to a student’s everyday experiences or a topic that elicits a creative response.

Content Limits:

The writing prompts do not use topics that elicit personal values and responses in regard to religion, politics, or family issues.

A writing sample is considered “off topic” when there is no evidence that the student has made an attempt to somehow connect the writing with the topic. Such a response does not receive a score.

Format:

For the writing assessment, test administrators read directions orally to students as they read along silently. They direct the students to use the writing process: planning, writing, and editing/revising. They read the writing topic and instruct students to complete a planning activity by using the space provided in the test booklet. The planning activity is not scored. They then direct students to complete the writing sample. There are five pages provided for the writing sample. Additional pages inserted into the test booklet are not scored.

Students are also given a writer's checklist that is read orally to them as they read along silently. The checklist focuses the students on content and development of their ideas based on the topic and reminds them to edit for grammatical and mechanical errors. The checklist encourages the editing/revising process.

Students may proceed at their own pace in the writing process for the topic given. Throughout the assessment, the test administrator moves around the room to see that students understand the directions, answer any questions about procedure, and correct anyone who is not following directions. However, they are not to give examples, point out mechanical errors, or advise students about structure.

6. SAMPLE ITEMSample Directions:

Today you will write a composition on an assigned topic. Your writing will be scored on how fully you develop the topic and on how well you organize and express your ideas. Your composition will be scored by trained readers. As you work, keep in mind these three stages of the writing process:

- **Planning:** Take time to plan your writing by listing, outlining, or organizing your ideas in the space provided.
- **Writing:** Write about the topic in a clear and logical manner on the five lined pages following the *Planning Page*. You do not need to use all of the pages, but make sure your composition is as complete as possible. Be sure to include a beginning, a middle, and an ending for your composition.
- **Editing/Revising:** Take time to reread what you have written and decide if you need to add more details or change the organization of your composition. At the same time, look for and correct any errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. You may use the *Writer's Checklist* on the inside front cover of this book to help you revise your writing.

Most students will be able to complete the writing task within about 50 minutes, but you may take additional time, if needed. Make sure you take the time to edit and revise your composition. Your score will be based on your writing composition, not on your planning page.

Sample Writing Topic:

Think about a person that you know and admire. Describe that person so that someone else would like to meet him or her. Tell why you admire that person.

Note about the Item Specifications and Sample Topics:

The sample writing topic is not intended to be definitive in nature or construction. The stimulus actually given may differ from test form to test form, as may its presentation.