

English Language Arts Writing Rubrics Grades 1–12

Background:

The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) is a multi-year (2014-2020), province-wide plan developed collaboratively by the Deputy Minister of Education, the Assistant Deputy Ministers, provincial school division directors of education, and First Nation Education Authority representatives. The ESSP outlines several outcomes. (<http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/educations-strategic-sector-plan-matrix-2014-2020>)

The ESSP outcome that underpins the development of the writing rubrics is “By June 2020, 80% of students will be at grade level or above in reading, writing, and math.”

Outcome owners directed a group of educators from divisions and First Nations Authorities to create holistic, four-level writing rubrics, Grades 1–12, with levels 3 and 4 being at grade level. The result of that work is the attached rubrics.

Content:

The holistic writing rubrics are available for all grades, and teachers are encouraged to use the rubrics at all grade levels. However, provincial reporting of writing at grade level will be done for Grades 4, 7, and 9 only. Provincial reporting on writing (Grades 4, 7, 9) will be done once, at the end of the school year.

Grade 1			
4	3	2	1
The writing is thoughtful and conveys a message about a single topic. The writing includes details that add interest and clarify the topic. Letters are formed correctly and spacing, capitalization and punctuation are correct. Sentences use correct word order. Grade-appropriate high frequency words and some difficult, unfamiliar words are spelled correctly.	The writing is straightforward and shows an understanding that print conveys a message. The writing stays on topic and includes details related to the topic. Letters are formed correctly and spacing, capitalization and punctuation are appropriate. Sentences use correct word order. Grade-appropriate high frequency words are spelled correctly while difficult, unfamiliar words are spelled phonetically.	The message of the writing is limited. The writing may generally follow the topic but contain irrelevant or inaccurate information. The writing may include incorrect letter formation, capitalization, spacing and/or punctuation. Sentences may be incomplete. Students may interchange upper and lower case letters. Most words are spelled phonetically with some high frequency words spelled correctly.	The message may be conveyed in a drawing accompanied by random print and is difficult to understand. The writing may be off-topic and/or consist of unconnected words. The writing displays incorrect letter formation, capitalization, spacing and/or punctuation. Sentences have no recognizable structure. High frequency words may be spelled phonetically.

Grade 2			
4	3	2	1
<p>The writing is thoughtful and focused on a given topic. Relevant supporting details are included. The ideas are organized in a logical way and connecting words are used accurately in complete sentences within a paragraph. Letters are formed correctly, and capital letters and punctuation are used correctly. There are few spelling errors; only more difficult words are spelled phonetically. The writing includes specific descriptive words that add interest.</p>	<p>The writing is straightforward, and focused on a given topic. Relevant details are included. The ideas are logically organized, and simple connecting words and complete sentences are used within a paragraph. Correct letter formation and appropriate use of capital letters and punctuation are apparent. High frequency words are spelled correctly and more difficult words are spelled phonetically. The writing includes appropriate descriptive words.</p>	<p>The writing is limited and may include details that are off-topic. The ideas are general and may not be organized in a logical way. There are few, if any, connecting words or they may be repetitive. Sentences may be incomplete. Errors in letter formation, capital letters and punctuation may be apparent. Difficult words and high frequency words may be spelled phonetically. Word choices are limited unvaried.</p>	<p>The message of the writing is unclear and/or incomplete. The ideas are vague and/or unrelated to the topic. Communication is simplistic and lacks organization. Sentences are incomplete. There are errors in letter formation, capitalization, and punctuation. Difficult words and high frequency words are spelled phonetically. Vocabulary is basic.</p>

Grade 3			
4	3	2	1
The writing is thoughtful and has a clear main idea supported by relevant details. Ideas are linked and organized within the paragraph(s) using connecting words and phrases. Complete sentences include correct punctuation and capitalization and there is variety in sentence structure. The writing includes specific descriptive words that add variety and interest. Few spelling errors are present.	The writing is straightforward has a clear main idea, supported by relevant details. Ideas are linked within the paragraph(s) with connecting words and phrases. Complete sentences are used and contain correct punctuation and capitalization. Grade-appropriate words are spelled correctly. The writing includes appropriate descriptive words to enhance communication.	The writing has a main idea, but support for the main idea is general and limited. Ideas may be linked with simple connecting words, though these may be repetitive. Sentences may be incomplete or use incorrect punctuation and capitalization. Inaccurate spelling, inappropriate word choices, or generalized vocabulary may be present.	The writing is off-topic or unclear. The main idea is difficult to determine. Ideas are poorly supported or unconnected. Sentences are incomplete or use incorrect punctuation and capitalization. The writing contains inaccurate spelling, inappropriate word choices and generalized or repetitive vocabulary.

Grade 4			
4	3	2	1
The writing is focused on a central idea and is thoughtfully supported by relevant facts, details and/or explanations in paragraphs. The introduction, body and conclusion are logically sequenced and ideas are linked with connecting words and phrases. Sentences are varied by length and type. Word choice is precise and effective. Minor errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar do not interfere with meaning.	The writing has a clear and straightforward main idea supported by relevant facts, details and/or explanations. The text has an introduction, body and conclusion that are logically sequenced and follow the central idea. Common connecting words are used to link ideas within paragraph(s). Paragraph(s) include sentences of varying lengths and types, and word choice is varied and descriptive. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar do not interfere with meaning.	The writing has a main idea with limited support. Details, if present, are simple or unrelated to the main idea. The text may not include an introduction or conclusion. Words chosen may be overused or general and sentence structures are simple and/or repetitive. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar may interfere with meaning.	The writing has a vague or incomplete main idea with inadequate or unclear support. The order of ideas is not logically sequenced and the text lacks an introduction and/or conclusion. Words chosen are overused or vague. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar interfere with meaning.

Grade 5			
4	3	2	1
<p>The writing has a clear and thoughtful main idea, and is well-supported by relevant, facts, pertinent details and explanations in paragraphs. The introduction, body and conclusion are logically sequenced and ideas are effectively connected with transition words or phrases. Purposeful and varied word choice may express tone. The few errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar do not interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The writing has a clear and straightforward main idea supported by relevant facts, details and explanations in paragraphs. An introduction, body and conclusion are present, logically sequenced, and connected with transition words. Word choice is varied, descriptive, and purposeful and shows an awareness of audience. Paragraphs include simple, compound and complex sentences of varying lengths. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar do not interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The writing has a main idea with limited support and details. The text may be disorganized, or fail to include an introduction or a conclusion. Few transitional words are used to connect paragraphs. Word choice is generalized and sentence variety is limited. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar may interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The focus of the writing is unclear. The text may include irrelevant or vague details and/or explanations. The text is incomplete and is missing an introduction or conclusion. The writing lacks transition words and the ideas are disorganized. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar interfere with meaning.</p>

Grade 6			
4	3	2	1
<p>The main idea is thoughtful and supported with pertinent and varied facts, details, examples and/or explanations. The organization is specific to the purpose of the text. Language choices support the purpose and enhance and enrich meaning. The main idea is skillfully introduced; transitions effectively connect ideas and paragraphs. The conclusion summarizes ideas and creates a strong final impression. The few errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar do not interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The main idea is straightforward, and supported with varied facts, details, examples and/or explanations. The writing has a logical introduction and conclusion. Sentence structures are clear and varied. Transitions are used to connect ideas. Language choices are suitable for the purpose of the writing. Errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar do not interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The main idea is present but has limited support. The text may lack a logical introduction and/or conclusion. There are few transitions used within paragraphs and between paragraphs, and there is little variety in sentence structure. Word choice is basic and predictable. Errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar may interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The main idea is unclear and is unsupported. The text is incomplete and is missing an introduction or conclusion. The text lacks overall organization and transitions. Word choice is not suitable for the purpose of the text. Errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar interfere with meaning.</p>

Grade 7			
4	3	2	1
<p>The main idea is thoughtful, and supported by relevant and varied facts, details, examples and/or explanations. The writing is well-organized and includes a thought-provoking introduction and conclusion. Transition words and phrases effectively contribute to unity both within and between paragraphs. Word choice is skillful and goes beyond commonly used words and phrases. Sentence structure is varied for interest and effect. There are few errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation.</p>	<p>The main idea is straightforward and is supported by facts, details, examples and/or explanations. The text is coherent; it includes a logical introduction and conclusion and makes use of appropriate transitional words and phrases both within and between paragraphs. Sentence structures are varied. Word choice is specific, avoids overused or misused words, and is appropriate for audience and purpose. Errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation do not interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The main idea is limited and inadequately supported. The introduction and/or conclusion are generalized and simple or unrelated to the writing topic. The writing may lack coherence. Sentence structures lack variety and transitions may be absent or used inappropriately. Word choice may include overused or misused words. Errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation may interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The main idea is unclear and unfocused. Ideas are not developed, and the meaning is unclear. An introduction or conclusion and transitions are absent. Word choices are vague. Sentences are simple or incomplete. Errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation interfere with meaning.</p>

Grade 8			
4	3	2	1
The main idea is thoughtful and well-supported by pertinent details, examples and/or explanations. The text is thoughtfully developed with effective transitions connecting the ideas. The introduction, body and conclusion are skillfully presented. Word choices and phrases are precise, and varied for audience and purpose. There are few errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation.	The main idea is clear and straightforward, supported by relevant facts, details, examples and/or explanations. The text is logically developed and coherent and includes a logical introduction and conclusion. Transitions are used within and between paragraphs. Word choice is specific, and is appropriate for audience, purpose, and context. Errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation do not interfere with meaning.	The main idea is limited and inadequately supported. The text may lack coherence and the introduction or conclusion is minimal, unrelated, or ineffective. Sentence structures may lack variety and transitions may be absent or used inappropriately. Word choice is generalized, inconsistently achieving the purpose. Errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation may interfere with meaning.	The main idea is unclear, lacks focus and is unsupported. The text lacks coherence and an introduction and/or conclusion are absent. Sentence structures lack variety or sentences may be incomplete. Transitions are generally absent. Word choice is ineffective, not achieving the purpose. Errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation interfere with meaning.

Grade 9			
4	3	2	1
The message is thoughtful, compelling, and supported by interesting details. Precise and purposeful register and tone are established through skillful use of language. The introduction, body, and conclusion are well-connected and thought-provoking. Transitions effectively connect ideas. Word choices are varied and sentence structures are refined. There are few errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.	The message is straightforward, using the appropriate register, and the message is supported with details, examples, and explanations. The writing is coherent and contains a strong introduction, transitions, and an effective conclusion. Word choices and sentence structures are varied. Errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar do not interfere with meaning.	The message is limited and inadequately supported. An introduction and conclusion may be present, but rudimentary, and there is limited use of transitions. Sentences structures lack variety and word choice is limited. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar may interfere with meaning.	The message is unclear and/or vague. The introduction and conclusion are unrelated to the main idea. The text lacks coherence and unity. Word choices are ineffective and sentences are simple or incomplete. Incorrect spelling, grammar, and punctuation interfere with meaning.

Grade 10			
4	3	2	1
<p>The text is thoughtful and sophisticated, with a well-developed thesis and deliberate and carefully chosen supporting statements. The introduction skillfully identifies the topic, and the conclusion is thoughtful and compelling. Transitions are used to effectively connect ideas within and between paragraphs. Language used is sophisticated. There are few mechanical errors.</p>	<p>The text is straightforward, and includes a clear thesis or main idea and appropriate, relevant, supporting details. The introduction identifies the main idea. The text is coherent with a logical progression and a convincing conclusion. Transitions clearly connect ideas. Language used is appropriate for the message. Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation do not interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The text is limited and includes an unrefined thesis. The main idea is undeveloped and any supporting ideas are basic, predictable, and unconnected. The language is general. Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation may interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The text is unclear, and an introduction or conclusion may be nonexistent or inappropriate. Ideas presented may be irrelevant or vague. Language used is ineffective, and transitions are absent, simple, or incorrect. Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation interfere with the meaning.</p>

Grade 11			
4	3	2	1
<p>The text is thoughtful, and includes a well-developed thesis and thorough, carefully selected details. The introduction is effective and the conclusion thoughtfully synthesizes main ideas. Language choices are precise. Writing demonstrates confident control of language. There are few mechanical errors.</p>	<p>The text is straightforward and includes a clear thesis or main idea. Supporting details are appropriate and relevant. The introduction identifies the main idea and there is a logical progression to a supportive middle and a valid and justifiable conclusion. Language choices are straightforward and appropriate. The text has clear and varied sentences. Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation do not interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The text has a limited and unrefined thesis and supporting details are general and simplistic. The text may stray from the thesis and the introduction and conclusion may be repetitive or absent. Language choices are rudimentary. Sentence structure is simple. Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation may interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The text has an unclear, and/or vague thesis. Ideas are inaccurate or unrelated to the thesis. An introduction or conclusion may be absent or unrelated to key ideas from the text. Language choices are ineffective. Errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation interfere with meaning.</p>

Grade 12			
4	3	2	1
<p>The text is thoughtful, with a convincing thesis. The thesis is supported by well-developed ideas and carefully chosen details. The introduction is thought-provoking and the body of the text shows sophisticated and coherent organization and development. The conclusion thoughtfully synthesizes main ideas. Language choices are precise and effective. Writing demonstrates confident control of language. There are few mechanical errors.</p>	<p>The text is straightforward with a clear thesis. The text includes a main idea supported by relevant, appropriate details. The introduction identifies the main idea and there is a logical progression to a supportive middle and a coherent conclusion, summarizing key ideas. Language choices are straightforward and appropriate. Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation do not interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The text has a limited and generalized thesis and supporting ideas are unrefined. The focus of the text is inconsistent. The introduction and conclusion may be repetitive, formulaic or absent. Language is simplistic and unrefined. Sentence structure is simple. Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation may interfere with meaning.</p>	<p>The text is unclear, and has a vague thesis. Supporting details are absent or unrelated to the main idea. The introduction and conclusion do not effectively introduce or summarize the key ideas, or may be absent. Language choices are ineffective. Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation interfere with meaning.</p>