

## **Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP)**

By June 30, 2020 80% of student will be at or above grade level in reading, writing and math.\*  
“Math” refers to number strand only.

# **Grade 4 Writing Exemplars**

**May 2019**

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## Acknowledgement

The Provincial Leadership Team and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education would like to thank the teachers who contributed to the development of scoring rubrics and student prompts and to the selection of exemplars. Thanks are also extended to school divisions and First Nations education organizations for allowing educators to participate in this project. Parents and students, who have contributed immeasurably to this project by sharing their writing, deserve a special thank you.

\*\*Any errors, such as spelling and punctuation errors, are presented exactly as they appear in the original student work. Please note, however, that any identifying information students may have included in their writing, such as names of individuals or communities, has been altered in order to maintain student anonymity.

## Preamble

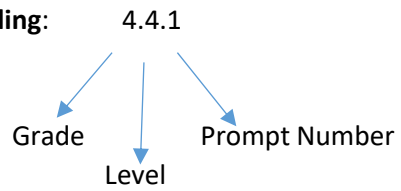
To support the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) outcome that “by June 30, 2020, 80% of students will be at or above grade level in reading, writing and math,” representative student samples of Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 writing have been gathered.

The exemplar package contains the following information:

- **Provincial rubrics**
  - The English language arts curricular outcomes informed Saskatchewan teachers as they worked with the Ministry of Education to develop rubrics for each grade level.
  - The teachers involved in the development of rubrics were directed to develop four-level, holistic rubrics.
  - It is important to keep in mind that holistic rubrics require teachers to look at the student’s writing “as a whole” rather than at the component parts of the student’s writing. Holistic rubrics should not be sub-divided into various elements of writing; rather, the holistic rubrics should help the scorer determine “the big picture.” If teachers determine a student response straddles two levels of the rubric, the teacher should select the level that is MOST reflected in the student response.
  - When determining the writing level of your students as per the provincial writing rubric for provincial reporting purposes, you may wish to consider the students’ work over the course of the year. You may also wish to consider a variety of writing genres. While the prompts focus more on expository writing, expository texts are not the only texts that can be considered when determining the writing level. The provincial rubric is general enough that it can apply to a variety of writing.
  - Teachers are expected to use the provincial rubric when reporting to the ESSP outcome.
- **Writing prompts**
  - English language arts teachers developed writing prompts that are connected to curricular outcomes and contexts or units.
- **Student samples**
  - Teachers met in spring 2019 to review student work and determine rubric levels.
  - Samples of each of the levels of the rubric are accompanied by rationales for the level determination.
  - Teachers were encouraged to employ their usual classroom practices when working with their students to gather responses to the provincial prompts.

Level 4 samples are the first set of samples, followed by samples from Levels 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The rubric for the level is inserted before the student samples. The prompt precedes each student response.

**Prompt Coding:**



## Grade 4 Rubric

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 4 Writing Prompts

Prompt	Context
<b>4.1</b> Friendships are important in everyone's life. Describe the character traits that make a good friend. Explain why these character traits are important in a friendship.	Personal and Philosophical
<b>4.2</b> Saskatchewan people live in many different locations throughout the province. Communities are unique, and people need different skills and knowledge, depending on where they live. What does someone from another community need to know to live in your community? Explain why it would be important to learn.	Social, Cultural, and Historical

## Grade 4 Level 4

### Grade 4 Level 4 Rubric

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.

**Prompt 4.1** Friendships are important in everyone's life. Describe the character traits that make a good friend. Explain why these character traits are important in a friendship.

Sample 4.4.1

### Friendship

Friendship is a very important thing in peoples lives. Without friends people would be very unhappy. I personally value friendship a lot, so I will be writing about some qualities that a friend should have so you and your friend have a nice friendship. The qualities I will be writing are about are:

- 1) Caring
- 2) honesty
- 3) Forgiveness
- 4) Cheerfulness

#### 1) Caring

Caring is a quality that means almost taking care of someone or something. It would be a great quality your friend should have, because if you got hurt they would be there to comfort you. Imagine you fell and hurt your knee and at that time your friend was walking by; if your friend was not caring they would thing "he'll get up himself."

If your friend was caring they would think "oh no he got hurt. I should help him."

Caring is one of the most essential qualities in friendship.

#### 2) Honesty

Honesty means being truthful and I think everybody wants to be told the truth. When your friend tells a lie and after a while tells the truth it might hurt your fellings (It would hurt mine). Honesty is a great quality that friends should use.

#### 3) Forgiveness

I recommend forgiveness very much because without forgiveness fights would go on for a very long time and the people in the fights; their hearts wouldn't feel good. If you and your friend had a playdate coming up and before it you had a fight with them; if they weren't forgiving they would keep on fighting and you and your friend wouldn't get that playdate, but if they were forgiving they would forgive you, you get that playdate, and you both live happily ever after.

#### 4) Cheerfulness

Cheerfulness is a great quality friends should have. I say that because if one day you were sad, they would be there to lighten up your day. Everyone wants a nice day, and cheerfulness is right quality for that.

So I wrote about four virtues caring, honesty, forgiveness, and cheerfulness. I hope these might somewhat help you.

**Rationale:**

The text reflects thoughtful ideas that all relate clearly to the main idea. The ideas are presented in logical sequence and provide good support for the main idea. The student is able to make good connections with the text, with self, and with the reader. The response has a strong introduction and excellent organization. The vocabulary shows a degree of maturity, and the few mechanical errors do not interfere with meaning.

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## Grade 4 Level 3

### Grade 4 Level 3 Rubric

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.

**Prompt 4.1** Friendships are important in everyone's life. Describe the character traits that make a good friend. Explain why these character traits are important in a friendship.

### Sample 4.3.1

Friendship is something I value very much. I really take friendship seriously. I think that you should show kindness to everyone. You have to be kind to your to make a friend. If you are kind than they will be kind back to you.

I really value friends that are caring. You should be caring to your friends. If they are hurt you should be caring and help them out. If you are caring than they will be caring back. Everything will eventually turn back on you.

I look for loyalty in my friends. If your friend just signed up for a sport that she or he is not good at than you should be loyal and say stuff that will make them feel good about themselves.

I look for people that have trust for friends. If you have trust than other people can trust you with things. If you don't do what you said you would do than other people will find it hard to trust you again. You should always do what you say you would do.

I value friends with friendliness very much. You should always be friendly. If there is a new kid in the classroom than you should go and be friendly. You should say stuff that is nice and invite them to play stuff with you at recess.

### Rationale:

This response demonstrates some mature thinking. Supporting evidence for the main idea is provided, but a conclusion is absent. The student uses a variety of sentence structures, but needs to learn the difference between "then" and "than."

**PROMPT 4.2** Saskatchewan people live in many different locations throughout the province. Communities are unique, and people need different skills and knowledge, depending on where they live. What does someone from another community need to know to live in your community? Explain why it would be important to learn.

#### Sample 4.3.2

My name is Tiffany. I live in Town A, Sk and I will tell you about my community.

#### Transportation

Transportation in Town A is different then the city's. There is no buses or taxis. You will need to know that when you are here you should have a vehicle.

#### School

In Town A we have one school from kindergaten to grade 12. We learn lots of Subjects in Town A like Math, Science, Social Studies, ELA, Art and gym. We have fun activities like School Skating and Snowshoing. At Christmas we have fun Christmas games for the last few days of School before Christmas brake. I think this is the best School ever.

#### Jobs

Jobs here might be different than other places. There's a credit union, grocery store, two hair places, a clothing store, a puplic library, a post office and farming. We have lots of farming in our community.

#### Weather

The weather here can be a little odd. In winter it can be so cold sometimes it feels like you are going to freeze. In summer it feels so hot sometimes it can feel like you are melting. In spring it feels perfect for me maybe not for everybody. In fall it gets a little chilly.

That is my community and I am proud where me and my family live.

#### **Rationale:**

The main idea is clearly presented. The student outlines various characteristics of the community and keeps the prompt in mind; there are frequent references to the intended audience and the things the individual will have to know to live in Town A. While the introduction may be a little abrupt, the reader appreciates following the student through the description of Town A. The spelling errors do not interfere with meaning.

### Sample 4.3.3

**Prompt 4.1** Friendships are important in everyone's life. Describe the character traits that make a good friend. Explain why these character traits are important in a friendship.

One of the character traits in friendship that I find most important is loyalty because you want your friend to stand up for you. You would also want your friend to be with you in times good or bad. If your friend is loyal to you you can feel special. Another character trait in friendship that I find most important is honesty because you want them to tell you the truth. Its also important because you don't want them to lie about you. The last character trait that I find most important is love because you want your friend to love and care for you. Its also important because you can feel loved.

**Rationale:**

Overall, the main idea is clear and adequate supporting details are provided. Smooth transitions are evident as the reader moves from one characteristic of friendship to another. The main idea is clear and straightforward. The introduction seems somewhat abrupt. The main ideas are supported by relevant explanations. The minor errors in spelling do not interfere with meaning.

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#### Sample 4.3.4

**Prompt 4.1** Friendships are important in everyone’s life. Describe the character traits that make a good friend. Explain why these character traits are important in a friendship.

Do you ever wonder what a good friend is? A good friend is kind. That is important because they won’t hurt my feelings. Another one is honesty because they will always tell you the truth. They should be funny because they make everything fun. Helpful is because they help you when I need help for example, when you’re hurt they will help you. Weirdness is important because they are their own person.

A good friend is like a piece of my heart. Like I can’t live without them. A good friend is respectful they will always respect your space. They will be respectful of you. Also I can help them like to remember things like inside shoes or homework, outdoor clothes and other things too.

Examples like they want to call 911 or something. I will tell them not to. Even just prank calling people. Or even stealing peoples stuff. Also doing something inappropriate.

**Rationale:**

This response shows characteristics of both Level 2 and Level 3. It has a promising beginning as it invites the reader into the text by asking a question. The student begins to answer that question by providing a number of characteristics of good friends. The student also reveals a mature insight into human behaviour by lauding “weirdness” because it demonstrates people being true to themselves. The student seems to have had a fairly clear focus throughout the text, but then veers off into a disjointed discussion of pulling pranks, stealing things and behaving inappropriately in the conclusion. While this is not a strong example of a Level 3 response, it does show a straightforward main idea, there is some support and there is some sentence variety. The errors, like the incomplete sentences, do not impede understanding.

### Sample 4.3.5

**Prompt 4.1** Friendships are important in everyone's life. Describe the character traits that make a good friend. Explain why these character traits are important in a friendship.

Friendships are great. I have had lots of friends. Sometimes you have short friendships. That reminds me in my old school I had a friend that I was friends with for one day! Then I saw him bullying some kids so I decided he wasn't the best friend.

So what makes a good friend? Well after that I had a friend that loved soccer I love soccer we were great friends! Once I fell over and he helped me up. So what is a friend and not a friend? I would say that a friend is someone that helps you and sticks up for you. Someone that bosses you around is not a friend.

So what are good character traits of a friend? I would like someone to help me when I am stuck and someone that sticks up for you because you never know when a bully's around. Someone that is honest and makes you laugh! Everyone needs to laugh. So that's why I think friends are one of the most important things in life. I like friends so that's why I try to be a good friend. I have four friends since I moved to this new school.

**Rationale:**

This response is a good example of a response with characteristics of both Level 2 and Level 3. The student seems to have some trouble focusing in the opening paragraph or presenting ideas clearly. In paragraph two the student begins to address the prompt more specifically. As the text proceeds, the focus is sharpened as the student provides some qualities of a good friend. The writing is, on the whole, clear and straightforward. Because most of the facts presented are relevant (Level 3) rather than simple or unrelated (Level 2), and because of varying sentence types, this response is a Level 3 response.

## Grade 4 Level 2

### Grade 4 Level 2 Rubric

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.

**Prompt 4.1** Friendships are important in everyone’s life. Describe the character traits that make a good friend. Explain why these character traits are important in a friendship.

### Sample 4.2.1

Friendships are good to have because if you are bored or don’t know what to do you can play with your friend or ask them what to do.

A friend is someone who you meet and make friends with you play with them if you see them a lot then you can have like sleepovers, playdates maybe if you meet them at school you can see them every day.

Good friends are nice, they play with you, they help you, they don’t have to be as old as you are they can be older, or younger, they talk with you, they invite each other to their birthday parties and playdays, and sleepovers, if they go to your school you can work with them, play outside and inside with you, your parents, brothers, and sisters can meet them and if your friend has brothers or sisters they can make friends, they are friendly.

If you make a new friend and you and them have other friends then you can make friends with their friends and they can make friends with your friends and then all of you can gang up and play games that will need a lot of people like soccer, and sports and stuff like that.

### Rationale:

The prompt is not specifically addressed. The focus is more on what friends DO rather than what traits they possess. The words chosen are overused. Details are repetitive and the lack of punctuation is problematic.

### Sample 4.2.2

**Prompt 4.1** Friendships are important in everyone's life. Describe the character traits that make a good friend. Explain why these character traits are important in a friendship.

Freindship is important. There are many important things about friends. One thing thats important about a friend is helpful. When a friend needs help a friend can help them. If a friend is helpful it encourages me be helpful. Another good thing about friendship is loving. A loving friend makes me feel good. Another good thing about friendship is kindness. A friend that is kind makes me want to be kind.

**Rationale:**

The text has simple details, limited support, over-used words, and pedestrian sentences. The text is repetitive. A conclusion is missing.

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### Sample 4.2.3

**Prompt 4.1** Friendships are important in everyone's life. Describe the character traits that make a good friend. Explain why these character traits are important in a friendship.

Freindship is important it is important to me Because you can play base Ball and lots of sports like soccer and hokey and to talk to them.

Frend ship is important so you can hav fun at scool and have fun at reases and help you with work and on your birhdy you will have more fun with them then your self and you can play vidio gams with them.

And you can chare seekrits with your Best friend and play games like hide and seek and sword fight with stikes and tag, doge Ball, haveing races.

**Rationale:**

The text has a main idea with limited support. A list of things an individual can do with friend is not really an explanation of why friendships are important. Repetition is a problem, sentence structure is poor, and errors in spelling and punctuation interfere with meaning.

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**4.2 PROMPT** Saskatchewan people live in many different locations throughout the province. Communities are unique, and people need different skills and knowledge, depending on where they live. What does someone from another community need to know to live in your community? Explain why it would be important to learn.

Sample 4.2.4

Someone coming from a different community need to know that thier are some legal and illegal drugs in our community. Some drugs are legal but they cannot be smoked or vaped while driving. If you come to Canada you need to learn either English or French. Also it is also illegal to hunt without a hunting license. On the other hand it is illegal to drive without a Canadian drivers license. And that is all you need to know if you come to Canada.

**Rationale:**

The main idea has limited support, and the reader really only knows what the main idea is after reading the final statement. The response is a list without much explanation as to how or why these particular points are important to know when coming to this new community.

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## Grade 4 Level 1

### Grade 4 Level 1 Rubric

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.

**Prompt 4.1** Friendships are important in everyone's life. Describe the character traits that make a good friend. Explain why these character traits are important in a friendship.

Sample 4.1.1

#### Important traits for Friends

I think that character traits are good because it will help you be active to a friend or make new friends. It will help you be trust worthy to someone or be kind to someone. You could make them laugh and be good friends or make new friends that your good friend knows. Being a good friend is good.

It is really important to you and your friends. When you fight with someone its ok, to fight with your friends. Its important that your still friends. Or trust and be kind to each other. It is awesome to have friends.

### Rationale:

The text is difficult to follow. Ideas are muddled, and word choice is vague or unclear. The student struggles to address the prompt.

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### Sample 4.1.2

**Prompt 4.1** Friendships are important in everyone’s life. Describe the character traits that make a good friend. Explain why these character traits are important in a friendship.

Friendships are important in everyone’s life. Especially if your going through something you want to get out of. That reminds me of a friend in Town A, her name is Cindy. I went to Town A when I was at my cousins house in Town B. My moms brother, Alec and his wife Shawna and their 3 kids, Louis, Bella, and Brian. They also brought my older sister Anne, Jarret, and I with them to Town A. It was a long 2 and a half hour drive.

When we arrived in Town A I was sooo excited to see Cindy. When we got in the house I met my three older sisters and my older brother. We played hide and go seek one of the days we were in Town A. My younger cousin Bella was it, and she’s sorta scared of the dark, so I asked if she wanted me to help, and she said “sure,” so helped her and then she was geting kinda scared! So I why don’t you go up stairs and not play with us until were done and she got really mad and said “I am going to tatttle tale on you, and so she did. By the time the day was done she had tatttle-taled on us about 20 times!! Our feelings were so hurt that we didn’t want to go to sleep. When it happend again, Louis told his mom, I didnt have my mom to talk to because she was still in Town B. So I talke to my sisters, and they helped a lot, they told Bella to stop and, it sorta worked. Then when it was Monday lunch time we left to go home. I couldn’t wait to see my mom, and when I did I gave her a huge hug!!

**Rationale:**

This response shows very little difference from Sample 4.1.3, other than it is longer. The additional information does not support the main idea. This text has inadequate support for the main idea. The ideas are difficult to follow.

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### Sample 4.1.3

**Prompt 4.1** Friendships are important in everyone’s life. Describe the character traits that make a good friend. Explain why these character traits are important in a friendship.

Friends are important to everyone should be a nice friend a friend should be fun a friend should share

**Rationale:**

The main idea lacks supporting details. The ideas are limited to a short and simple list of characteristics of a friend, a list that lacks any elaboration as to why these particular characteristics are significant. There seems to be no logical order to the list. Words are overused. Much-needed end punctuation is missing.