

Illinois Writing Assessment Framework Grades 3, 5, 6, and 8

Illinois State Board of Education

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Introduction to the Illinois Writing Assessment Framework Grades 3, 5, 6, and 8

The Illinois Writing Assessment Framework is designed to assist educators, test developers, policy makers, and the public by clearly defining those elements of the Illinois Learning Standards that are suitable for state testing. It is not designed to replace a local writing curriculum and should not be considered a state writing curriculum. The Framework defines the writing content that will be assessed in the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) beginning with the 2006-2007 school year.

Assessment Objectives

The Framework contains assessment objectives, clear and concise statements of testable material at each grade level. Each assessment objective aligns to the Illinois Learning Standards and, in some cases, to the Performance Descriptors posted on the Illinois State Board of Education Web site (www.isbe.net/ils). Each year's assessment will measure a sample of the content in the Framework with sufficient overlap from year to year to allow for annual comparisons. The assessment objectives listed for each grade level may be measured on any given assessment in any given year. One should not presume that every objective will be measured every year. The Framework communicates the range of objectives that may be assessed at a given grade level.

Content Emphasis

While the precise content on each year's tests will vary from year to year, the relative emphasis on the State Goals and Illinois Learning Standards will not. The proportion of each year's tests devoted to each category is clearly specified in the Reading Content Category Table on page 6. These percents are estimates used to guide the general distribution of items throughout the test. In addition to overall scores, as much information as possible will be reported for each content category, making the data useful for diagnostic analysis.

Framework Structure

This document employs a general organizational structure designed for ease of use. The State Goal for writing is the main organizer, followed by the Illinois Learning Standards for writing within this State Goal. Each assessment objective has a unique identifier with three components.

Example: 3.5.01

3	5	01
<i>State Goal</i>	<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>Objective Number</i>

The first component, "3," indicates the numbered State Goal as defined in the Illinois Learning Standards. The second component, "5," indicates the grade level. The third component, "01," indicates that this is the first assessment objective for this State Goal at this grade level.

Cognitive Complexity

Cognitive complexity refers to the level of reasoning called for by an assessment objective. For example, some assessment objectives require simple recall, while others may require more complex levels of reasoning. Writing requires students to apply knowledge and skills; therefore, writing tests address higher-level cognitive skills.

Populations

Unless exempted by law, all eligible public school students in grades 5 and 8 will take the ISAT writing test beginning with the spring of 2007. Sixth graders will take the test beginning with the spring of 2008, and third graders will take the test beginning with the spring of 2009.

Excerpt from *Illinois Learning Standards*¹

The *Illinois Learning Standards for English Language Arts* goals and standards were developed using the 1985 State Goals for Language Arts, various state and national standards drafts, and local education standards contributed by team members. Through the achievement of these goals and standards, students will gain proficiency in the language skills that are basic to all learning, critical to success in the workplace and essential to life as productive citizens.

English language arts includes reading, writing, speaking, listening and the study of literature. In addition, students must be able to study, retain and use information from many sources. Through the study of the English language arts, students should be able to read fluently, understanding a broad range of written materials. They must be able to communicate well and listen carefully and effectively. They should develop a command of the language and demonstrate their knowledge through speaking and writing for a variety of audiences and purposes. As students progress, a structured study of literature will allow them to recognize universal themes and to compare styles and ideas across authors and eras.

APPLICATIONS OF LEARNING

Through Applications of Learning, students demonstrate and deepen their understanding of basic knowledge and skills. These applied learning skills cross academic disciplines and reinforce the important learning of the disciplines. The ability to use these skills will greatly influence students' success in school, in the workplace and in the community.

SOLVING PROBLEMS

Recognize and investigate problems; formulate and propose solutions supported by reason and evidence.

Solving problems demands that students be able to read and listen, comprehend ideas, ask and answer questions, clearly convey their own ideas through written and oral means, and explain their reasoning. Comprehending reading materials and editing and revising writing are in themselves forms of complex problem solving. The ability to locate, acquire and organize information from various sources, print and electronic, is essential to solving problems involving research. In all fields—English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and others, the command of language is essential in stating and reasoning through problems and conveying results.

COMMUNICATING

Express and interpret information and ideas.

Communication is the essence of English language arts, and communication surrounds us today in many forms. Individuals and groups of people exchange ideas and information—oral and written—at lunch tables, through newspapers and magazines, and through radio, television and on-line computer services. From the simplest, shortest conversations to the most complex technical manuals, language is the basis of all human communication. A strong command of reading, writing, speaking and listening is vital for communicating in the home, school, workplace, and beyond.

¹ Illinois State Board of Education (1997). *Illinois Learning Standards*

USING TECHNOLOGY

Use appropriate instruments, electronic equipment, computers and networks to access information, process ideas and communicate results.

Computers and telecommunications have become basic means for creating messages and relaying information. In offices and homes, people write using word processors. Audio and visual media are used for both creative and practical forms of communication. The use of on-line services is now commonplace among researchers, authors, farmers and auto mechanics. Skilled use of these technologies provides students with necessary opportunities to search and process information, be in touch with experts, prepare documents, and learn and communicate in new, more effective ways.

WORKING ON TEAMS

Learn and contribute productively as individuals and as members of groups.

In sports, the workplace, family and elsewhere, teamwork requires skill in the use of language. People must speak clearly and listen well as they share ideas, plans, instructions and evaluations. In researching and bringing outside information to a team, individuals must be able to search, select and understand a variety of sources. Documenting progress and reporting results demand the ability to organize information and convey it clearly. Those who can read, write, speak and listen well are valuable contributors in any setting where people are working together to achieve shared goals.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Recognize and apply connections of important information and ideas within and among learning areas.

The parts of English language arts are closely interconnected. Reading and writing provide the means to receive and send written messages. Likewise, listening and speaking enable people to receive and send oral information. Speaking and writing are the creative components, while listening and reading are the receptive components of language through which people access knowledge and demonstrate its applications. Proficiency in these skills clearly supports learning in all academic areas.

STATE GOAL 3: Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.

Why this goal is important: The ability to write clearly is essential to any person's effective communication. Students with high-level writing skills can produce documents that show planning and organization, and effectively convey the intended message and meaning. Clear writing is critical to employment and production in today's world. Individuals must be capable of writing for a variety of audiences in differing styles, including standard rhetorical themes, business letters and reports, financial proposals, and technical and professional communications. Students should be able to use technology to enhance their writing proficiency and to improve their career opportunities.

STANDARD 3A

Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and structure.

STANDARD 3B

Compose well organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.

STANDARD 3C

Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes

Writing Content Category Table

Grade	3	5	6	8
State Goal 3 – Writing				
Standard 3A – Grammar, Sentence Structure, Spelling, Punctuation, and Capitalization	9%	9%	9%	9%
Grammar and Sentence Structure	4%	4%	4%	4%
Spelling	2%	2%	2%	2%
Punctuation and Capitalization	3%	3%	3%	3%
Standards 3B, 3C – Composition	91%	91%	91%	91%
Expository	91%	91%		
Focus	18%	18%		
Support	18%	18%		
Organization	18%	18%		
Integration	37%	37%		
Persuasive			45.5%	45.5%
Focus			9%	9%
Support			9%	9%
Organization			9%	9%
Integration			18.5%	18.5%
Narrative			45.5%	45.5%
Focus			9%	9%
Elaboration			9%	9%
Organization			9%	9%
Integration			18.5%	18.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Writing – State Goal 3

Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 8
STANDARD 3A – GRAMMAR, SENTENCE STRUCTURE, SPELLING, PUNCTUATION, AND CAPITALIZATION			
Grammar and Sentence Structure			
4%	4%	4%	4%
3.3.01 Write complete sentences (e.g., avoid fragments and run-on sentences).	3.5.01 Write complete sentences (e.g., avoid fragments and run-on sentences).	3.6.01 Write complete sentences (e.g., avoid fragments and run-on sentences).	3.8.01 Write complete sentences (e.g., avoid fragments and run-on sentences).
3.3.02 Use the correct form of regular verbs.	3.5.02 Use the correct form of regular and irregular verbs.	3.6.02 Use the correct form of regular and irregular verbs.	3.8.02 Use the correct form of regular and irregular verbs.
3.3.03 Write a variety of sentences (e.g., simple and compound).	3.5.03 Write a variety of sentences (e.g., simple, compound and complex).	3.6.03 Write a variety of sentences (e.g., simple, compound and complex).	3.8.03 Write a variety of sentences (e.g., simple, compound and complex).
3.3.04 Use correct subject-verb agreement.	3.5.04 Use correct subject-verb agreement.	3.6.04 Use correct subject-verb agreement.	3.8.04 Use correct subject-verb agreement.
3.3.05 Use pronouns correctly.	3.5.05 Write sentences with correct pronoun-antecedent agreement.	3.6.05 Write sentences with correct pronoun-antecedent agreement.	3.8.05 Write sentences with correct pronoun-antecedent agreement.
3.3.06 Demonstrate grade-appropriate use of the various parts of speech.	3.5.06 Demonstrate grade-appropriate use of the various parts of speech.	3.6.06 Demonstrate grade-appropriate use of the various parts of speech.	3.8.06 Demonstrate grade-appropriate use of the various parts of speech.
3.3.07 Use consistent verb tense in sentences (e.g., avoid “I took a bath and then I brush my teeth.”).	3.5.07 Use consistent verb tense.	3.6.07 Use consistent verb tense.	3.8.07 Use consistent verb tense.
Spelling			
2%	2%	2%	2%
3.3.08 Spell grade-appropriate words correctly.	3.5.08 Spell grade-appropriate words correctly.	3.6.08 Spell grade-appropriate words correctly.	3.8.08 Spell grade-appropriate words correctly.

Writing – State Goal 3

Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 8
STANDARD 3A – GRAMMAR, SENTENCE STRUCTURE, SPELLING, PUNCTUATION, AND CAPITALIZATION			
Punctuation and Capitalization			
3%	3%	3%	3%
3.3.09 Capitalize words correctly (based on grade-appropriate rules).	3.5.09 Capitalize words correctly (based on grade-appropriate rules).	3.6.09 Capitalize words correctly (based on grade-appropriate rules).	3.8.09 Capitalize words correctly (based on grade-appropriate rules).
3.3.10 Use correct end punctuation.	3.5.10 Use correct end punctuation.	3.6.10 Use correct end punctuation.	3.8.10 Use correct end punctuation.
3.3.11 Use grade-appropriate commas correctly.	3.5.11 Use grade-appropriate commas correctly.	3.6.11 Use grade-appropriate commas correctly.	3.8.11 Use commas joining two independent clauses.
3.3.12 Use grade-appropriate apostrophes correctly.	3.5.12 Use grade-appropriate apostrophes correctly.	3.6.12 Use grade-appropriate apostrophes correctly.	3.8.12 Use grade-appropriate apostrophes correctly.
3.3.13 Use quotation marks in direct quotations.	3.5.13 Use quotation marks in direct quotations.	3.6.13 Use quotation marks in direct quotations.	3.8.13 Use quotation marks in direct quotations.

Writing – State Goal 3

Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 8
STANDARDS 3B, 3C – COMPOSITION			
EXPOSITORY COMPOSITION Write an expository composition explaining or interpreting a specific topic based upon background experiences or information provided in the prompt.			
Expository (Focus) The clarity with which a composition presents and maintains a clear main idea or point view			
18%	18%		
3.3.14 Set the purpose of the composition through a thematic introduction or specific preview. (If previewed, address each point.)	3.5.14 Set the purpose of the composition through a thematic introduction or specific preview. (May be achieved inductively in the composition.)		
3.3.15 Maintain logic throughout.	3.5.15 Maintain logic throughout.		
3.3.16 Write a closing that relates to the topic. (May be a restatement of points in the introduction.)	3.5.16 Write an effective closing that relates to the topic. (May be a restatement of points in the introduction.)		
Expository (Support) The degree to which the main point or position is supported and explained by specific details and reasons			
18%	18%		
3.3.17 Use well chosen words that suit the message and occasion.	3.5.17 Use well chosen words that suit the message and occasion.		
3.3.18 Include specific details to support major points.	3.5.18 Include specific details to support major points.		
3.3.19 Build and connect ideas to create depth.	3.5.19 Build and connect ideas to create depth.		
3.3.20 Maintain consistent voice throughout.	3.5.20 Maintain consistent voice throughout.		

Writing – State Goal 3

Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 8
STANDARDS 3B, 3C – COMPOSITION			
EXPOSITORY COMPOSITION Write an expository composition explaining or interpreting a specific topic based upon background experiences or information provided in the prompt.			
Expository (Organization) The clarity of the logical flow of ideas and the explicitness of the text structure or plan (coherence and cohesion)			
18%	18%		
3.3.21 Include evident structure (beginning, middle, and end).	3.5.21 Include clear structure (beginning, middle, and end).		
3.3.22 Use appropriate paragraphing for major points.	3.5.22 Use appropriate paragraphing for major points.		
3.3.23 Use basic transitions to connect sentences and paragraphs.	3.5.23 Use appropriate transitions to connect sentences and paragraphs.		
3.3.24 Vary sentence structure.	3.5.24 Vary sentence structure.		
Expository (Integration) Evaluation of the composition based on a focused, global judgment of how effectively the composition as a whole fulfills the assignment			
37%	37%		
3.3.25 Fully develop the composition for grade level.	3.5.25 Fully develops the composition for grade level.		
3.3.26 Include a clear, purposeful focus and voice.	3.5.26 Include a clear, purposeful focus and voice.		
3.3.27 Write in-depth support.	3.5.27 Write in-depth, balanced support.		
3.3.28 Achieve coherence and cohesion	3.5.28 Achieve coherence and cohesion throughout the composition.		

Writing – State Goal 3

Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 8
STANDARDS 3B, 3C – COMPOSITION			
		PERSUASIVE COMPOSITION Write a persuasive composition by taking a position on a topic and developing one side of the argument.	
		Persuasive (Focus) The clarity with which a composition presents and maintains a clear main idea or point view	
		9%	9%
		3.6.14 Set the purpose of the composition through a thematic introduction, specific preview, or more sophisticated strategy. (May be achieved inductively in the composition.)	3.8.14 Write a sophisticated opening through the use of anecdotes, quotations, definitions, personal appeals or other effective strategies.
		3.6.15 Maintain logic throughout.	3.8.15 Clearly maintain logic and position throughout.
		3.6.16 Write an effective closing that relates to the topic. (May be a restatement of points in the introduction.)	3.8.16 Write an effective closing which unifies the essay.
		Persuasive (Support) The degree to which the main point or position is supported and explained by specific details and reasons	
		9%	9%
		3.6.17 Use well chosen words that suit the message and occasion.	3.8.17 Use well chosen words that suit the message and occasion.
		3.6.18 Include specific details to support major points.	3.8.18 Use multiple strategies to develop support. (e.g., explanation, evidence, examples)
		3.6.19 Build and connect ideas to create depth.	3.8.19 Build and connect ideas to create depth.
		3.6.20 Develop key points evenly (to the same degree of specificity).	3.8.20 Develop key points evenly (to the same degree of specificity).
		3.6.21 Maintain consistent voice throughout.	3.8.21 Maintain consistent voice throughout.

Writing – State Goal 3

Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 8
STANDARDS 3B, 3C – COMPOSITION			
		PERSUASIVE COMPOSITION Write a persuasive composition by taking a position on a topic and developing one side of the argument.	
		Persuasive (Organization) The clarity of the logical flow of ideas and the explicitness of the text structure or plan (coherence and cohesion)	
		9%	9%
		3.6.22 Include a clear structure (beginning, middle, and end).	3.8.22 Include a clear structure (appropriate to purpose).
		3.6.23 Use appropriate paragraphing for major points.	3.8.23 Use appropriate, purposeful paragraphing for major points.
		3.6.24 Use appropriate transitional words and phrases to connect and unify sentences and paragraphs.	3.8.24 Connect sentences and paragraphs through effective and varied transitions and other devices (e.g., repetition, pronouns, synonyms, parallel structure).
		3.6.25 Vary sentence structure.	3.8.25 Vary sentence structure and word choice.
		Persuasive (Integration) Evaluation of the composition based on a focused, global judgment of how effectively the composition as a whole fulfills the assignment	
		18.5%	18.5%
		3.6.26 Fully develop the composition for grade level.	3.8.26 Fully develop the composition for grade level.
		3.6.27 Include clear, purposeful focus and voice.	3.8.27 Include clear, purposeful focus and voice.
		3.6.28 Write in-depth, balanced support.	3.8.28 Write in-depth, balanced support.
		3.6.29 Develop lines of reasoning coherently and cohesively throughout the composition.	3.8.29 Develop lines of reasoning coherently and cohesively throughout the composition.

Writing – State Goal 3

Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 8
STANDARDS 3B, 3C – COMPOSITION			
		NARRATIVE COMPOSITION Write a personal narrative composition recounting and reflecting upon a significant experience, describing the action that occurs and the reactions of the participants involved.	
		Narrative (Focus) The clarity with which a narrative composition presents and maintains a unifying event or theme	
		9%	9%
		3.6.30 Maintain the subject and unifying event with the event commented upon by the end of the composition.	3.8.30 Clearly set the purpose of the composition through a successful introduction strategy.
		3.6.31 Include relevant reactions to the unifying event.	3.8.31 Include reactions that are effectively connected to the unifying event.
		3.6.32 Write an effective closing.	3.8.32 Write an effective closing which unifies the writing.
		Narrative (Elaboration) The degree to which the event is elaborated by specific details, descriptions, and reactions	
		9%	9%
		3.6.33 Develop major episodes/reactions with specific details and examples.	3.8.33 Develop all major episodes/reactions with specific details and examples (developed to the same degree of specificity).
		3.6.34 Describe relevant reactions to the unifying event.	3.8.34 Describe events/reactions through multiple strategies (e.g., points of view/perspective, others' reactions, dialogue, etc.).
		3.6.35 Use specific words to describe the event/reactions.	3.8.35 Write an effective closing which unifies the writing.
		3.6.36 Maintain consistent voice throughout.	3.8.36 Use specific words to describe the event/reactions.
			3.8.37 Maintain consistent voice throughout.

Writing – State Goal 3

Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 8
STANDARDS 3B, 3C – COMPOSITION			
		<p>NARRATIVE COMPOSITION Write a personal narrative composition recounting and reflecting upon a significant experience, describing the action that occurs and the reactions of the participants involved.</p>	
		<p>Narrative (Organization) The clarity of the logical flow of an experience and/or movement of an event through time (coherence and cohesion)</p>	
		9%	9%
		<p>3.6.37 Write a sequence of episodes that move through time with a beginning, a middle, and an end without noticeable gaps.</p>	<p>3.8.38 Write a sequence of episodes that move through time with a beginning, a middle, and an end without gaps.</p>
		<p>3.6.38 Use appropriate paragraphing.</p>	<p>3.8.39 Use appropriate, purposeful paragraphing (follow narrative structure).</p>
		<p>3.6.39 Use effective and varied devices to demonstrate coherence and cohesion (e.g., transitions, parallel structure, pronouns, etc.).</p>	<p>3.8.40 Use effective and varied devices to demonstrate coherence and cohesion (e.g., transitions, parallel structure, pronouns, etc.).</p>
		<p>3.6.40 Vary sentence structure to produce cohesion.</p>	<p>3.8.41 Present and interrelate episodes and reactions logically.</p>
			<p>3.8.42 Vary sentence structure to produce cohesion.</p>
		<p>Narrative (Integration) The evaluation of the composition based on a focused, global judgment of how effectively the composition as a whole fulfills the assignment</p>	
		18.5%	18.5%
		<p>3.6.41 Fully develop the composition for grade level.</p>	<p>3.8.43 Fully develop the composition for grade level.</p>
		<p>3.6.42 Maintain a clear and purposeful focus, an in-depth, balanced elaboration, and a consistent voice.</p>	<p>3.8.44 Maintain a clear and purposeful focus, an in-depth, balanced elaboration, and a consistent voice.</p>
		<p>3.6.43 Develop a sequence of episodes coherently and cohesively throughout.</p>	<p>3.8.45 Develop a sequence of episodes coherently and cohesively throughout.</p>