In the spring of 2006, a team of Illinois educators created the new Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) Frameworks. The purpose of the frameworks is to prioritize the skills and knowledge from the Illinois Learning Standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, in order to develop a new Illinois Alternate Assessment. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) contracted Pearson Educational Measurement (PEM), and their subcontractor partners, Beck Evaluation and Testing Associates, Inc. (BETA), and the Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment (ILSSA) group, to develop the new IAA in grades three through eight and 11 for Reading and Mathematics; in grades four, seven, and 11 for Science; and in grades three, five, six, eight, and 11 for Writing. BETA's responsibilities include providing event-based assessment activities linked to the IAA Frameworks, developing the assessment rubric, and incorporating principles of Universal Design for Learning. ILSSA's responsibilities include facilitating the development of the IAA Frameworks and providing statewide staff development on how to access grade-level curriculum. Pearson Learning Group (PLG) is a division of PEM and their responsibilities include providing a customized online scoring tool along with training to use this feature.

During the framework development meetings, educators were divided into development teams based on both content area and grade level focus. Addressing reading, writing, mathematics, and science, each content area had one development team for elementary school, one for middle school, and one for high school. Each team consisted of at least one general education teacher, one special education teacher, and one content expert. The process used by the development teams to create the Illinois Alternate Assessment Frameworks was as follows:

The development teams reviewed each of the assessment objectives (statements coded with numbers such as 3.3.01) in grades three through eight. For each assessment objective, the teams:
- Identified the critical function, or the main idea of the objective;
- Wrote an instructional activity that could be used to teach the skills needed to meet the assessment objective in the general education classroom;
- Wrote a modified instructional activity that could be used to teach students with the most significant cognitive disabilities the same skills; and
- Identified three assessment activities that could be used to assess students with the most significant cognitive disabilities on the skills described in the modified activity.

After the development teams examined the assessment objectives and wrote both instructional and assessment activities for each grade level, the teams prioritized the assessment objectives and selected the assessment objectives which are most suitable for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The leadership team at ISBE reviewed these priorities for further refinement. These pilot priorities will form the basis for the new IAA performance test items. Following the completion of the fall 2006 writing pilot, a review may be necessary in order to determine if the new IAA priorities are appropriate and provide a comparable assessment to the general statewide assessment.

Using grade-level curriculum as the focus, the development teams described the instructional and assessment supports, accommodations, and assistive technology required to ensure access to quality instruction.   The descriptions produced by the development teams were summarized into a set of statements designed to provide consistency across the content frameworks. These statements are as follows:
- Appropriate instruction must occur prior to the assessment activity.
- All activities must provide appropriate support, accommodations, and/or assistive technology during both the instructional activities and the assessment process. This may include the following:
  - The use of prompting strategies, ranging from minimum prompts to full physical assistance in order to create a learning continuum for correct responses.
  - The use of assistive technology, ranging from low tech to high tech.
  - The reduction of breadth, depth, and/or complexity.
- Specific instructional strategies and the instructional environment for the individual student vary and should be determined by the student's IEP team.
- During assessment activities, the students should use the mode of communication that they used to learn and practice the skills during instructional activities.

- Instruction should be presented to the student in a way that is authentic, accessible, and meaningful (e.g., tactile objects, picture symbols, or use of a text reader), to ensure the student has multiple opportunities to learn and demonstrate knowledge.
- Instruction should take place within the context of grade-level content, using age-appropriate activities and materials, regardless of the placement of the student.
- Instruction must incorporate age-appropriate activities and materials which represent the same grade level content as their peers without disabilities. However, the activities and materials may be adapted to meet the individual needs of the student (e.g., reduce the language requirements or difficulty of the task) as long as the context of the materials used by same age peers remains intact.

All instructional practices should occur using available resources and materials familiar to the learners.

Communication skills are essential to the assessment of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Symbolic communication skills form the foundation for reading, mathematics, and writing. Students with significant cognitive disabilities are very diverse in their communication ability. Some students communicate symbolically, while others communicate in highly individualized ways. There are some important considerations in the development of symbolic communication skills which include the following:

- All students communicate regardless of their level of symbolic language use.
- Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities can acquire generalized use of objects (or object selection) to communicate preferences (Hetzroni, Rubin, Konkol, 2002).
- Language learners must use symbols repeatedly, interactively, and generatively during meaningful and ongoing activities in language-rich environments (Goossens, Crain, & Elder, 1992; Cafiero, 1998; Goossens, et al., 1992; Romiski & Sevcik, 1996; Miller & Eller-Miller, 2002; Mirenda, 2003).
- Competent use of language for multiple purposes, audiences, and contexts facilitate the metalinguistic skills required for reading comprehension (Rankin, Harwood, & Mirenda, 1994).

The assessment activities in this document reflect three types of students who represent the continuum of communication skills within this student population.

- The first activity is designed for students who inconsistently respond to communication and inconsistently use words, objects, or gestures to communicate expressively.
- The second activity is for learners who are beginning to use understandable communication through gestures, pictures, objects/textures, points, etc., to clearly express a variety of intentions.
- The third activity is for students who are using verbal or written words, sign language, Braille, or any language-based augmentative system to request, initiate, and respond to questions, describe things or events, and express refusal.

Throughout the frameworks document, the suggested general education instructional and modified instructional activities are written in plural form, as instruction is typically provided to a whole class. However, the instruction for these activities may be provided in the context of whole class instruction, small group instruction, or individually based on student needs. Conversely, the assessment activities are written in the singular form, as the IAA is a standard assessment measuring individual performance.

The process of reviewing the frameworks and aligning the new IAA to the Illinois Learning Standards and regular assessment is an ongoing process. The activities in this document were created by Illinois teachers and are only suggested activities that may be used to teach the assessment objectives listed. The activities, materials, and techniques listed in the frameworks are just one possible way to teach these assessment objectives and should not to be considered the state-mandated strategy for teaching any given assessment objective. Teachers should feel comfortable in using other strategies, materials, or activities that may already be in place or familiar to the teacher. The IAA Frameworks and the IAA itself will continue to be reviewed and adjusted as changes occur with the Illinois Standards and/or the general assessment.

Priorities Grade 3

Goal 3: Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.

A. Grammar, Sentence Structure, Spelling, Punctuation and Capitalization: Grammar and Sentence Structure:

    3.3.01 Write complete sentences (e.g., avoid fragments and run-on sentences).
    3.3.09 Capitalize words correctly (based on grade-appropriate rules).
    3.3.10 Use correct end punctuation.

B. Expository Essay: 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.

    3.3.15 Maintain logic throughout.
    3.3.21 Include evident structure (beginning, middle, and end).

The rollout for the new IAA is as follows:
- **2007 Start with Grades Five, Eight, and 11**
- **2008 Add Grade Six**
- **2009 Add Grade Three**

State Goal 3: Write to Communicate for a Variety of Purposes

Grammar, Sentence Structure, Spelling, Punctuation and Capitalization (Standard A)
Grammar and Sentence Structure

3.3.01 Write complete sentences (e.g., avoid fragments and run-on sentences).

Critical Function	Suggested General Education Activity	Suggested Modified Instructional Activity	Possible Assessment Activity 1	Possible Assessment Activity 2	Possible Assessment Activity 3
Write a complete sentence.	The teacher will model the components of a complete sentence (e.g., subject, verb, capitalization, end punctuation marks). The students will write sentences using subject, verb, capitalization, and end punctuation marks. The students will work with a partner and determine whether or not their sentences meet the criteria.	The teacher will model simple subject/verb sentences, using visual cues. The teacher will model simple subject/ verb sentences. The students will create simple sentences.	Given simple subject/verb sentences and non-sentences, the student will select the complete sentence when presented with an example of each.	Given a sentence with the subject or the verb missing, the student will choose the subject or verb that correctly completes the sentence.	Given a word bank, the student will create a simple subject/verb sentence.

State Goal 3: Write to Communicate for a Variety of Purposes

Grammar, Sentence Structure, Spelling, Punctuation and Capitalization (Standard A)
Punctuation and Capitalization

3.3.09 Capitalize words correctly (based on grade-appropriate rules).

Critical Function	Suggested General Education Activity	Suggested Modified Instructional Activity	Possible Assessment Activity 1	Possible Assessment Activity 2	Possible Assessment Activity 3
Capitalize words correctly using grade-appropriate rules.	The teacher will model the correct use of capitalization (e.g., beginning of sentences, proper nouns). The students will be given sentences with incorrect capitalization and be asked to correct each sentence. They will work with a partner to determine whether or not the capitalization in their sentences is correct.	The teacher will use available resources familiar to the students to demonstrate the correct use of capitalization (e.g., beginning of sentences, proper nouns). The teacher will use interactive writing to guide the students in applying the rules of capitalization. The students will generate a writing piece that uses correct capitalization.	Given sentences with two words selected (e.g., highlighted or bolded), the student will indicate which word should be capitalized.	Given a sentence presented in all lower case letters, the student will use capital letters where appropriate.	Given a writing prompt, the student will construct two or more sentences using the correct rules for capitalization.

State Goal 3: Write to Communicate for a Variety of Purposes

Grammar, Sentence Structure, Spelling, Punctuation and Capitalization (Standard A)
Punctuation and Capitalization

3.3.10 Use correct end punctuation.

Critical Function	Suggested General Education Activity	Suggested Modified Instructional Activity	Possible Assessment Activity 1	Possible Assessment Activity 2	Possible Assessment Activity 3
Use correct punctuation.	The teacher will model the correct use of punctuation. The students will work in pairs using peer editing to determine if their sentences have correct punctuation. The students will write new sentences illustrating the proper use of punctuation.	The teacher will introduce the rules of punctuation using available resources familiar to the students. The teacher will use interactive writing to guide students in applying the rules of end punctuation. The students will write sentences illustrating the proper use of punctuation.	Given a statement or question and punctuation cards/cues, the student will select the correct end punctuation for the sentence.	Given two simple sentences, the student will identify the correct end punctuation for each sentence.	The student will be asked to write an example of a simple "question sentence" and use the correct end punctuation.

State Goal 3: Write to Communicate for a Variety of Purposes

Composition (Standards B & C)
Expository Essay: 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 of view.

3.3.15 Maintain logic throughout.

Critical Function	Suggested General Education Activity	Suggested Modified Instructional Activity	Possible Assessment Activity 1	Possible Assessment Activity 2	Possible Assessment Activity 3
Maintain the focus of the writing.	The teacher will share student expository writing samples that are good examples of staying on topic. The teacher will review the four characteristics from the state writing rubric with the students. In whole or small group(s), the students will evaluate two to three student samples of expository writing for staying on topics. Using level four of the rubric to assist them, they will write an evaluation of each writing sample. Finally, the students will complete a self-evaluation of their own expository writing, checking that they have stayed on topic and then conference with the teacher for feedback.	The teacher will share student expository writing samples that are good examples of staying on topic. The teacher will then review the four characteristics from the state writing rubric with the students. Using the interactive writing process, the teacher and students will generate an expository essay focused on the topic. The students will evaluate the samples of expository essays focused on a topic.	Given an idea and two choices, the student will select the choice that best goes with the idea, in order to maintain focus.	Given several sentences, some of which represent the same topic and the others representing a different topic, the student will select the series of sentences that maintains focus.	Given several sentences from two different paragraphs, the student will organize the sentences, using a graphic organizer or other available resource familiar to the student, in correct order to maintain logic of each paragraph.

State Goal 3: Write to Communicate for a Variety of Purposes

Composition (Standards B & C)
Expository Essay: 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).

3.3.21 Include evident structure (beginning, middle, and end).

Critical Function	Suggested General Education Activity	Suggested Modified Instructional Activity	Possible Assessment Activity 1	Possible Assessment Activity 2	Possible Assessment Activity 3
Write expository compositions that have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion (evident structure).	The teacher will share work samples of effective expository writing that have an "evident structure" (clear beginning, middle and end). The teacher will then review the characteristics of an evident structure using the state rubric. In whole or small group(s), the students will evaluate two to three other student samples of expository writing looking for evident structure and using the state rubric. Students will write a rationale for their evaluation. Finally, the students will complete a self-evaluation of their own expository writing targeting "evident structure," then conference with the	The teacher will share work samples of effective expository writing that have an "evident structure" (clear beginning, middle and end). The teacher will then review the characteristics of an evident structure using the state rubric. In whole or small group(s), the students will evaluate two to three other student samples of expository writing looking for evident structure and using the state rubric. The teacher and students will create an expository essay using an interactive writing procedure. The students will evaluate samples of "evident structure" in expository compositions.	Given a series of simple sentence captions that "tell" the introduction, body, and conclusion of an expository essay and a choice of two possible sequences, the student will identify the appropriate sequence that illustrates an "evident structure."	Given a series of simple sentence captions that "tell" the introduction, body, and conclusion of an expository essay, the student will sequence the introduction, body, and conclusion pictures/text in the correct order.	Given an expository essay topic that targets evident structure, the student will write an expository essay.

	teacher for feedback.			