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 3.6.01) 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 6

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

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

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

B/C. Composition
Persuasive Essay: 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 of view.

3.6.15 Maintain logic throughout.
3.6.22 Include a clear structure (beginning, middle, and end).

Narrative Essay: 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 Organization: The clarity of the logical flow of an experience and/or movement of an event through time (coherence and cohesion).

3.6.37 Write a sequence of episodes that move through time with a beginning, a middle, and an end without noticeable gaps.

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

3.6.01 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 construction of a complete sentence. The students will write complete sentences on a given topic. The students will work with a partner and determine whether or not their sentences meet the criteria.	The teacher will model the construction of a complete sentence. Given an incomplete sentence, the students will complete the sentence. The teacher will model a sentence with correct capitalization and punctuation. Given a sentence without capitalization or punctuation, the students will provide the correct capitalization and punctuation. The students will also write sentences and use correct punctuation and capitalization.	Given complete and incomplete sentences, the student will select those statements that create a complete sentence.	Given a sentence with either the subject or verb missing, the student will choose the subject or verb that correctly completes the sentence. The student will also underline the capital letter and the end punctuation that correspond to a complete sentence.	Given a word bank, the student will create a simple subject/verb sentence with correct capitalization and punctuation.

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

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

3.6.09 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
Use capital letters appropriately throughout writing.	The teacher will use direct instruction to demonstrate appropriate situations for using capitalization. The students will create a writing sample using correct capitalization.	The teacher will demonstrate appropriate situations for using capitalization. The teacher will provide a sentence for students to correct. The students will correct the capitalization in the sentence.	Given two versions of a familiar proper noun, one with a capital first letter and one with a lower-case first letter, the student will select the correct version.	Given a sentence with incorrect capitalization, the student will correct the capitalization in the sentence.	Given a writing prompt, the student will create a simple sentence using the correct capitalization.

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

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

3.6.10 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 use direct instruction to demonstrate the different types of sentences: imperative, interrogative, and declarative. The students will proofread sentences with incorrect punctuation and correct the punctuation for each sentence.	The teacher will demonstrate the different types of sentences: imperative, interrogative, and declarative. The students will apply the correct end punctuation to sentences without punctuation.	Given a sentence and two choices, the student will add the correct end punctuation.	Given two to three sentences, the student will add the correct end punctuation.	The student will write sentences demonstrating the different types of sentences by applying the correct end punctuation to each sentence.

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

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

3.6.15 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 topic/focus throughout a composition.	The teacher will give students persuasive essays and review step-by-step elements of the essay (e.g., introductory statement, relevant details, closing statement). The students will determine if all elements maintain the topic/focus throughout the composition.	The teacher will provide sample sentences and the students will identify if the sample sentences are related or maintain topic.	Given an introductory sentence and sentences that maintain topic and sentences that do not maintain topic, the student will identify the sentences that maintain topic.	Given a topic and an introductory statement, the student will write two related sentences.	Given a writing prompt, the student will create an introductory sentence and three sentences that relate to the introduction.

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

Composition (Standard B & C)
Persuasive Essay: 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).

3.6.22 Include clear 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
Demonstrate correct sequence in a composition (beginning, middle, and end).	The teacher will model a multi-paragraph composition (including the layout of the different parts of a composition's beginning, middle and end). The students will then write a composition.	The teacher will create a multi-paragraph composition (including the layout of the different parts of a composition's beginning, middle and end). The students will then write a single paragraph and identify the beginning, middle and end.	Given a short composition, the student will sequence the events and identify the beginning, middle and end of the composition.	Given a partially completed persuasive paragraph, the student will fill in the missing part(s) or the beginning, middle or end of the paragraph.	Given a writing prompt, the student will create a short persuasive composition containing a beginning, middle, and end.

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

Composition (Standards B&C)
Narrative Essay: 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 (Organization): The clarity of the logical flow of an experience and/or movement of an event through time (coherence and cohesion).

3.6.37 Write a sequence of episodes that move through time with a beginning, a middle, and an end without noticeable gaps.

Critical Function	Suggested General Education Activity	Suggested Modified Instructional Activity	Possible Assessment Activity 1	Possible Assessment Activity 2	Possible Assessment Activity 3
Demonstrate correct sequence in a composition (beginning, middle, and end).	The teacher will model how to create a multi-paragraph composition (including the layout of the different parts of beginning, middle and end). The students will write a narrative composition.	The teacher will model how to create a multi-paragraph composition (including the layout of the different parts of beginning, middle and end). The students will write a single paragraph narrative and identify the beginning, middle and end.	Given the beginning, middle and end of a narrative composition, the student will sequence the composition.	Given a partially completed narrative paragraph, the student will fill in the missing part(s) or the beginning, middle or end of the paragraph.	Given a writing prompt, the student will write a narrative composition containing a beginning, middle, and end.