



# **2023 Writing Assessment Exemplars and Scoring Rationale**

**Grade 10**

**August 2024**

Note: This document does not reflect updates made to the year-end rubrics in Spring 2025.

## Using this Resource

### About the Process

In the Spring of 2023, teachers from across the division gathered for two days to participate in a writing calibration protocol. A calibration protocol is a collaborative process for bringing teachers together to discuss student work to reach consensus about how to score writing based on set criteria. The calibration process makes scoring student work more consistent among a group of teachers and more aligned to the outcomes upon which rubrics and scoring criteria are based. The purpose of calibration is to ensure that a group of educators evaluate student work consistently and in alignment with the scoring rubric. This increases the reliability of the assessment data.

### About the Exemplars

- Exemplars are samples of student writing selected to represent a range of responses that illustrate the scoring criteria at each level of performance for Grade 10 (*meeting curricular outcomes with an enriched understanding, meeting curricular outcome, approaching curricular outcome, not yet meeting curricular outcomes*).
- These exemplars are just a small sampling of successful approaches to the writing task, and the students' edits, misspellings and other idiosyncrasies are retained in the scanned documents.
- In some exemplars the names of people, places or things have been removed to protect the identity of the writer.

### Rationale for the Exemplars

- Teachers may use the rationale for exemplars to apply the scoring criteria consistently and impartially.
  - The rationale for each exemplar consists of "Scoring" and "Evidence of Graded Criteria." Each rationale serves to:
    - provide evidence as to why the writing sample is considered representative of a particular performance outcome.
    - provide evidence representative of a specific grade level.
    - demonstrate the use of criterion-referenced language to explain judgments of student writing.
    - demonstrate that a range of responses are possible within each performance outcome.
  - The rationale that accompanies each response may assist teachers to apply the scoring criteria consistently and impartially.
  - The rationale may include descriptors to describe the quality of the criteria shown in the student response.
  - Scoring rationale about each exemplar is provided by teachers involved in the selection of the student exemplars and serve to:
    - describe qualities of each student sample writing response as it relates to scoring criteria.
    - Allow for variation within an outcome.
    - Indicate whether the exemplar provided more or less evidence of each criterion and still be representative of the performance outcome.
  - Teachers should use their professional judgment and consider differing levels of evidence when assigning an overall score.
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**Grade 10 Writing Prompt**



**Consider this image. What does this image make you think of?  
You can respond personally, critically, or creatively.**

**DIRECTIONS**

You have 15 minutes to plan **alone or with a partner or small group**.

You will have up to 60 minutes to write.

You may show changes and corrections on your writing, as it is a first draft.

Grade 10 Level 4: *Enriched Understanding* – Exemplar A

Sample of Student Work

All I see is dust. It clouds around me like a swarm of bees trying to get into the hive, it's frantic. Two large arms grip around me in a large bear hug and I am slammed into the ground, my body goes limp on impact as my other brother's body lays on top of me shielding me from the dangers my once home has become.

Two days earlier,

I am walking home from school, the smell of freshly cut grass wafts around me as I make my way closer to home. It's not very big, although it's as white as snow and has red flowers all around the yard that mother grows every year. My home is peaceful and happy, I can hear mother and father talking in the kitchen about something serious when I walk inside.

"It's getting worse... what if..." father stops talking as I walk into the kitchen. What is happening? Where is my mothers soft smile?

I slowly walk into the kitchen and ask what is happening.

"Nothing for you to worry about sweetheart." My mother says, but I can see the stress and lack of sleep in her eyes. She must not be sleeping again. But why?

"Mother, I am six now. I can handle grown up things." I say and stand up squaring my shoulders, letting her know I can handle what is coming our way. All she does is shake her head and slowly walk off to her room. I can't help but wonder why all the adults seem so worried now. It's not like war is coming for us, or that aliens are coming down from the sky so why are they scared?

Giving up, I go upstairs and walk into the brightly lit yellow room that is my sanctuary. My rockets are lined up along the wall and my race car bed is in the corner by the window looking out into the grassy hill tops. The big rocket, my jeremiah, named after my big brother, calls out to me just waiting for me to play with it. I grab it and begin to assemble the last few pieces that will make the rocket complete for me to finally give to my brother for his late late birthday.

Just as I put the last red light on the top of the rocket and blast from the hills causes me to crash forward onto the rocket impaling me. I scream out in pain, it burns through me like a red hot light. My wall is gone! What happened? Where is my mother? A million thoughts race through my mind, but I am unable to move. Another blast goes off and I feel the walls crumble around me like a tower of rocks being knocked over. I'm completely crushed under rubble and I can't hear a thing. Looking down I see ruby red blood has soaked through my spiderman shirt.

"Jeremiah!" I scream out, my lungs seem to get smaller and smaller with every breath I take. Where is he?! He's the only one strong enough to help me, he's going into the military he's supposed to save me!

But no one comes.

The world has slowed down, I feel every blast getting closer and closer to my home.

Finally, I feel the concrete being lifted off of me. All those sayings about a weight being lifted off your shoulders does not even come close to explaining the relief I feel when the boulder comes off of me.

"Archie?!" Says my savior. I know that voice, it's my brother's voice. He's here, I am safe. But then I feel the pain in my stomach all over again when my brother begins to lift me up. I scream out in pain, if there were anymore glass windows I could have broken them.

"Archie, hold still and stop screaming. I can only help you if you stop moving and keep breathing okay?" Jeremiah asks, I would do anything in my power to listen but I can't. The pain is only getting worse and I can't keep my eyes open for much longer.

"Someone help!" Jeremiah yells startlingly, causing my body to seize up and go stiff as a board. He's shaking me, my stomach is getting wetter and wetter from blood oozing out of me like a river. I feel myself being lifted up, I'm in the air now. But then it happens.

A blast, it's right next to the house, dust is everywhere and Jeremiah is laying on top of me. Dead weight. That's all I can think of. Dead weight equals dead right?! No, no, no this can't be happening. My savior, my angel.

Maybe if I try to move he will wake up. It doesn't work. Please lord give me strength. I begin to pray to god that he will save me and my brother from this treacherous world.

Everything goes black, I am ready to be with my brother.

I can't tell how long it's been but all of a sudden I feel my brother's weight being lifted off of me. Air fills my lungs, but it's dusty and cold.

"We got him!" I hear an unfamiliar voice sound above me. He starts speaking mumbo jumbo about me that makes no sense. I am being lifted from the ground and I reach out for my brother.

"Jer..iah.. help..." I squeak out.

"Let me help you first little man." Says the unfamiliar voice. I shake my head but it's no use. I am being carried away from my brother, away from the home I once knew, away from my sanctuary.

They put me on a hard bed and put something around my neck. I don't like it, but I don't have the energy to fight against them. I drift off back to the memories of playing with my brother when he came home from training, and eating dinner with the family, and being loved. It's a warm feeling. I feel as though I can actually feel the warmth, so I open my eyes.

I am not at home though. All I see is a tent surrounding me, no joy, happiness, or love come to mind when I look around. There are other little boys and girls laid on the same hard cold bed that I am on.

Where am I? How did I get here? Millions of questions circling around my mind makes me tired and I fall asleep hoping it's one big nightmare.

When I wake up again, I'm still in this strange place. I look over and see a nice looking lady sitting next to me checking the beeping machine.

"Where is Jeremiah?" I croak out. The lady looks over at me, surprised to see that I am awake.

"You were the only person in your neighborhood that survived and came here." She says looking down. I can see she's being honest.

"That can't be true! Big brother came and saved me! He's alive! He has to be!" I scream and scramble out of the bed. The aching pain in my side does not slow me down. I need to go find my brother.

Two large men come and scoop me up and put me back into the bed.

"You have to stay here or you will get hurt again." Says the one man. He is muscled and has too much facial hair. I shake my head and begin to cry.

"I need my brother. Please. Please. Please." I cry out. Why is this happening to me?! What did I do to deserve this?!

"He's gone, little man." He says to me while holding down my shaking body. He says something to the lady and she sticks some sharp thing in my arm. My eyes begin to water but then they get heavy and I doze off to sleep.

Two days later.

I am finally allowed to walk around, they even encourage me to do so. But I'm stuck in this place without my brother. I don't have anywhere to go and no energy to do anything. All I can do is look around. There are other children here just like me, some are fortunate enough to still be with their siblings, although most are alone like me.

How long will I be here? I guess it does not matter. Whatever I do, wherever I go, it won't make a difference.

Without my brother I will forever be lost.

Grade 10 Level 4: *Enriched Understanding Exemplar A* – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
4	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skillfully crafts and maintained one small insular story explored on various levels.</li> <li>• The writing is engaging throughout. It is evident that the writer made an effort to keep the audience engaged.</li> <li>• Consistent tone and voice of the 6-year-old is maintained throughout.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing is skillfully organized complimented by intentionally developed supporting ideas and details.</li> <li>• Unity of the writing is strengthened by the skillfully passage of time and cyclical nature of the plot.</li> <li>• Ending is skillfully and intentionally bleak.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Word Choice &amp; Audience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skillfully uses diction to create impact.</li> <li>• Skillfully uses figurative language – simile, metaphor, hyperbole.</li> <li>• Skillfully uses supporting details, such as enriched dialogue to show not tell.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Sentence Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skillfully uses a variety of sentence types.</li> <li>• Sentences are intentionally chosen and placed such as the stand-alone sentences. For example, “But no one comes.” and “Without my brother I will forever be lost”.</li> <li>• Dialogue is skillfully constructed. When different characters were speaking, it was clear to the reader.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Conventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Errors were minimal when length and complexity are considered.</li> <li>• Errors did not impede the story.</li> </ul>

**Additional Information:**

- Scorers had consensus on awarding this piece of writing a 4 across all categories.

## Grade 10 Level 3: Meeting – Exemplar B

## Sample of Student Work

***This is a letter a little boy named Senad wrote while getting taken away from a refugee camp about 24 years ago. He sent this letter to his Grandfather in Albania after fleeing the war between Bosnia and Herzegovina. He does not understand why they had to flee their country.***

To; Grandfather

*June 24, 1994: Today I woke up in Hungary to Nana waking me up in the tent to get some rice. I don't know how she still has a smile on her face whenever I see her. It's not like this is a good thing. I want to go back home to play with the street dogs and hangout with my friends on the street. I want to go to nana and your shop again and hold the door for people coming in.*

*June 25, 1994: It is so boring here. At least my sisters have each other to talk to. They're all older and whenever I try to talk to them they say I'm "not old enough". So I tried talking to the boys here and playing outside in the puddles. They're all older and think they're big and tough. They aren't compared to me though, I literally got run over by a bus! No one is tougher than me, just like you always said. Besides, mama and baba keep getting into arguments about where we are going to stay? I don't understand why we are having this sleepover for so long with all these random people. I just want to go back to Albanian.*

*June 26, 1994: Today, I asked Nana why she seems so happy and relieved to be in this yucky tent sheltered place. She kept on avoiding the question until I started crying. I knew crying would make her feel bad for me but she kept on saying "Dashuria ime" (my love). Then I started screaming while I was crying asking her to take me home. She said that we can't and that we will not be going for a long time. Then I just stood there. I wasn't crying, or screaming, it didn't even feel like I was blinking. I asked her why and she said because "it's bad there right now, bad things are happening". But how could anything be bad in Albania? We have our family, our shop, our animals. It is all so fun! But i'm going to go to bed, sleeping means we're closer to coming back!*

*June 30, 1994: I'm sorry Baba for not writing to you these past days. Mama and Baba have been making me stay inside with them in the tent and I don't want to write in front of them in case they see I'm complaining. They said I just just be grateful that I'm here and safe. But what do they mean safe? I'm very safe at home. We have you and baba and mama and my three sisters. But they said we have something fun planned for tomorrow so I will write to you what it is soon! Une Te dua! (i love you)*

*July 11, 1994: I write to you from Canada. Apparently the plane we got on was not going home, it was going to "our new home". We are staying with our auntie right now and I hate it here in*

*Canada. I would rather be in Hungary right now. But on the plane to Canada they gave us pretzels and coloring books. I have never seen those before. They are pretty cool. I guess I will have to adapt to this new life and accept the fact that it will not go back to the same old. I still do not understand why we fled but apparently it's for the better! I miss you and hope I see you soon! Une Te Dua! (I love you)*

**This story is actually based on what happened to my dad when he was 8 years old and fled the Bosnian war in the late 1990s.**

## Grade 10 Level 3: Meeting Exemplar B – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
3	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing is engaging to the reader.</li> <li>• Consistently incorporates effective and specific examples - “I literally got run over by a bus.”</li> <li>• Effectively develops content appropriate to purpose and audience. For example, “But how could anything be bad in Albania? We have our family, our shop, our animals.” The use of the rhetorical device creates empathy with the reader.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently organized and maintained the selected writing type “this is a letter.”</li> <li>• Relationship among ideas and details was clear. Each day built from the previous entry.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Word Choice &amp; Audience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently used language to create different effects. For example, the use of a second language was effective and “today, I asked Nana why she seems so happy and relieved to be in this yucky tent sheltered place.”</li> <li>• The reader consistently experiences the voice of a child and the voices of immigrants.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Sentence Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A variety of effective sentence patterns can be found throughout the piece.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Conventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Errors do not distract or impede communication and readability of the piece.</li> </ul>

**Additional Information**

- Scorers reached consensus on awarding this piece a 3 in organization, sentence structure, and conventions. Scorers were split between a 3 and a 4 in word choice & audience and content. Through calibration, scorers decided on a 3 for word choice & audience and content as the writing was more effective than skillful.

Grade 10 Level 3: *Meeting* – Exemplar C

Sample of Student Work

Life with muddy days with rain coming down  
Children in boots running around  
The puddle is what the children love  
Finding things fun to busy the young

Children dirty from waist below  
Days almost over and ready to go  
The night is almost here  
Waiting for the next day so children can cheer

Anything to keep busy in the mud  
Maybe even finding a big large bug  
Sharing a tent that's crowded all around  
Sleeping can be hard when people make a sound

Almost no green plant in sight  
Even when the sun is shining bright  
Many clothing being dropped off  
So children don't get a cold or cough

Food may not be gourmet  
Children still having a good day  
They may be poor  
But they have tough armor

## Grade 10 Level 3: Meeting Exemplar C – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
3	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic was effectively crafted and maintained throughout.</li> <li>• Consistently incorporates effective examples geared toward the audience and purpose.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information is consistently organized into stanzas.</li> <li>• Unity of the writing is consistent and the relationship between ideas is strengthened with a distinct shift in stanza 4 bringing the reader back to the darkness of a refugee camp.</li> <li>• Rhyme scheme is consistent. For example, “almost no green plant in sight, even when the sun is bright, many clothing being dropped off, so children don’t get a cold or cough.”</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Word Choice &amp; Audience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively uses language, image, and structure.</li> <li>• Rhyme scheme and word choice are effective. For example, “almost no green plant in sight, even when the sun is bright, many clothing being dropped off, so children don’t get a cold or cough.”</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Sentence Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent use of a variety of sentences patterns.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Conventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently applied correct conventions.</li> </ul>

**Additional Information**

- Scorers reached consensus on awarding this piece of writing a 3 across all categories. Scorers felt that overall, this piece was meeting grade level outcomes. For this piece to receive a 4, the word choice needs to be more skillful and intentional manipulation of punctuation would show an enriched understanding of skillful application of conventions.

## Grade 10: Level 2 Approaching – Exemplar D

## Sample of Student Work

One can make joy out of nothing with the right mindset. The source shows a photo of some young children enjoying themselves in a pool of mud. Most people look at a pile of mud and say "ew, gross" however, these kids view it very differently. They see enjoyment in this pool of mud unlike most people because they have a positive attitude. The tents in the background of the image may mean these kids are in a shelter which may mean they aren't very fortunate. Despite being less fortunate, they can still enjoy themselves in the puddle of mud.

When my friends and I are hanging out and feel like we have nothing to do, we always find a way to enjoy ourselves. No matter what, we always can turn a bad situation into a good one. Sometimes you just need a bit of motivation because if everyone's lazy and saying "there's nothing to do" it won't work out. You just need at least one person who can come up with something creative to do. A tiny little spark can create a fire. The spark in the source is the puddle and all the kids playing in it creates a "fire". Last week my friends and I were hanging out at my house, and we all got bored, and we couldn't find something to do. That was until one friend suggested we go for a walk which turned out to be a great idea because we were out having fun for a long time.

## Grade 10 Level 2 Approaching Exemplar D– Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
2	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequately crafts a topic that is occasionally engaging.</li> <li>• Occasionally incorporates examples, but the development is sometimes ineffective.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequately organizes information.</li> <li>• Adequately strengthens the relationship among ideas, however the unity of the writing falters at times.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Word Choice &amp; Audience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively uses language to create different effects through metaphors and specific word choice. For example, use of the word “spark” and “they can still enjoy themselves in the puddle of mud” and “pool of mud.”</li> <li>• Effective use of voice and word choice to enhance the purpose and impact the audience.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Sentence Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently crafts correct sentences. For example, “Despite being less fortunate, they can still enjoy themselves in the puddle of mud” and “Most people look at a pile of mud and say ‘ew, gross’ however, these kids view it very differently”.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Conventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently applied correct conventions.</li> </ul>

**Additional Information**

- Scorers had consensus on awarding this piece a 2 in content and organization. Scorers also had consensus on awarding this piece a 3 in word choice & audience, sentence structure and conventions.
- This piece has been awarded a 2 overall as the content and organization are approaching grade level rather than meeting grade level. The justification for an overall score of 2 is that content and organization are crucial to the development and cohesion of the overall piece of writing and these elements are lacking.

**Grade 10: Level 1 Not Yet Meeting – Exemplar E**

Sample of Student Work

This image makes me think of how grateful i am to be living in Canada with All of the first world privileges like a Roof over my head And good education and that there's always something to be grateful for no matter your circumstance or situation in the image the kids are making the best out of their situation They are in the middle of nowhere playing in a Puddle with their friends But it doesn't matter where they are or how much money they have they are still having fun. joy can be made from anything you do not need nice stuff to be happy. It makes me feel almost over privileged that people in First World countries get so much and give so little to people who are less fortunate. And yet we still complain about how hard our life is. When there are people with 20 times less stuff than us and they are still just enjoying life.I think it doesn't matter your situation you should still make the best of every moment.

Grade 10 Level 1: *Not Yet Meeting Exemplar E* – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
2	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequately crafts topic with cohesive examples.</li> <li>• Writing is occasionally engaging to the reader.</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The content is focused on one topic and is unified.</li> <li>• Rarely uses supporting details to support the controlling idea.</li> <li>• Relationship between ideas and details is rare and lacks overall unity.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Word Choice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occasionally uses language to create different effects. For example, effective use of “privilege,” “circumstance,” “grateful”.</li> <li>• Writing is clear and easy to understand.</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Sentence Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rarely crafts syntactically correct sentences.</li> <li>• Rarely uses a variety of student patterns.</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Conventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rarely applies correct conventions.</li> </ul>

**Additional Information**

- Scorers had consensus on awarding this piece a 2 in content and word choice & audience. Scorers also had consensus on awarding this piece a 1 in organization, sentence structure, and conventions.

**Grade 10 Level 1: Not Yet Meeting – Exemplar F**

Sample of Student Work

To be polite to these kids, who are isolated from today's comfort, we must use all your opportunities.

Many people say: "He took my spot at work" or "He's very lucky to be like this" and continue doing nothing. Those people are not happy with what they got already. Big mistake.

Turn on your imagination, if for example you lost hand 3 years ago, how has your life built up to this day? Do you think you will be in the same spot in social ierarhi? Do you think you will still be yourself?

No, sense to talk about this anymore, human never gonna be happy before human lose everything in it's life one time.

Grade 10: Level 1 *Not Yet Meeting Exemplar F* – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
1	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content developed is not appropriate to purpose and/or audience.</li> <li>• Examples are ineffective to writer’s purpose and/or audience.</li> <li>• Writing lacks engagement due to lack of purpose and control.</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rarely organizes information, supporting ideas, and supporting details.</li> <li>• Writing lacks unity.</li> <li>• Rarely strengthens relationships between ideas.</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Word Choice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writer’s purpose and audience are unclear based on word choice.</li> <li>• Occasionally abrasive.</li> <li>• Rarely uses effective structure. Evidence of a colon to signify listing and one rhetorical question throughout.</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Sentence Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rarely crafts syntactically correct sentences.</li> <li>• An attempt was made to vary the sentence patterns; however, they were not correct or effective.</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Conventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rarely applies correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.</li> </ul>

**Additional Information**

- Scorers had consensus on awarding this piece of writing a 1 across all categories.