

# **2024 Writing Assessment Exemplars and Teacher Rationale**

Grade 4

August 2024

## 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 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 4 (*meeting grade-level expectations with an enriched understanding (EU)*, *meeting grade-level expectations (M)*, *approaching grade-level expectations (A)*, *not yet meeting grade-level expectations (NY)*).
- 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.

## Grade 4 Writing Task



Look carefully at the picture.  
What does the picture make you think of?

You could write about yourself or others, real or imagined.

### **DIRECTIONS**

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

You will have up to 30 minutes to write.

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

## Grade 4 Sample A

Creak! The door opened and I found myself looking into a very dark room. "Are you sure this is a good idea?" I asked. "Of course it is!" said Sarah and Owen. For some reason, they really wanted to sleep over in this abandoned house. With that, we went inside.

When Owen turned on the lights, I could see the room better, although there wasn't much to see. There was no furniture except for a small, wooden, rocking chair. The paint was peeling off of the walls. Cobwebs covered every corner of the house.

If that wasn't creepy enough, the basement stairs seemingly went on forever, trailing off into the

darkness. In short, I DID NOT  
like this house. "Wow!" said Sarah.  
Owen stayed silent, but I could tell he was excited.  
We decided to go to sleep after a  
few hours of exploring the house.  
We placed our sleeping bags,  
and got into bed. I couldn't  
sleep, so I decided to walk around  
and check out the basement.  
Just then, I heard thunder crash  
outside. I jumped up in surprise.  
I ran straight back upstairs.  
A moment later, I heard a  
crackle of a fire!

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

Score	Reporting Category
2	<b>Organization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not yet organize by paragraphs</li> <li>Follows a logical order</li> </ul>
3	<b>Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has a strong beginning sentence</li> <li>Evidence of consistent sentence variety</li> <li>No evidence of paragraph use</li> </ul>
4	<b>Audience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catches the audience’s attention skillfully by using a sound effect and suspense</li> <li>Thoughtful consideration of audience engagement</li> </ul>
4	<b>Details</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong opening sentence</li> <li>Excellent word choice</li> <li>Sensory details were evident</li> <li>Strong use of dialogue</li> </ul>
4	<b>Capitalization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used capitalization effectively and accurately most of the time</li> </ul>
4	<b>Punctuation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently uses a variety of appropriate punctuation such as question marks, periods, and exclamation marks</li> <li>Dialogue is supported by appropriate punctuation</li> </ul>
4	<b>Grammar</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequent use of adjectives (i.e. covered, abandoned, placed)</li> <li>Uses conjunctions to connect sentences (i.e. although there wasn’t much to see).</li> <li>Consistent subject-verb agreement</li> </ul>
4	<b>Spelling Patterns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consistent in spelling known words and more difficult words as well</li> </ul>
4	<b>Spelling Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent and accurate spelling of compound words</li> <li>Included suffixes in writing (i.e. seemingly)</li> <li>Occasional errors that do not interrupt the meaning of the text</li> </ul>

**Next Instructional Steps:**

- The student may benefit from using a graphic organizer or other outlining tool to support with their understanding of paragraph organization.

## Grade 4 Sample B

It was a sunny day. On a Saturday, 7:15 in the morning, Mela was just waking up, she layed in her bed wondering what today would bring. Then her phone rang... It was her best friends group chat, Gem and Leah! "HEY wanna go to a abandoned house?" "ME and Gem are going." said Leah "Uh sure let me ask." said mela  
 A couple hours later... "MOM I'm leaving!" "OK honey are you sure you wanna go?" "Yes mom!" "Bye!" "Bye!" At the abandoned house... "Okay you guys ready for this?" said Gem. "Yes!" said Mela and Leah!  
 Little did they know daster was about to strike! "Huh I thought this place was a public place + theres none else!" said Leah... BAM... What was that? said mela... "A plate fell? And it shattered?" Hahhhe... "WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING?!" Yelled Leah to Gem... Then All the cutlery, plates, bowls, EVERYTHING FELL... What's happening? Gem said... Then they heard a gun shot and saw a weird looking face from the hall ahead! Wha - wha - what's that - that?! They were all speechless! Then the weird face started snorting rapidly! Bun! Yelled Gem mela and Leah! Jinx! said Leah! Now is not the time for jinxing each other... said mela! And that day those 3 girls did not go home... Noone knows what happen to them...

Grade 4 Level 3: *Meeting Understanding* Exemplar B – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Reporting Category
3	<b>Organization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The story follows a logical order, story arc and sense of time</li> <li>Developing transitions between beginning, middle and end of the story</li> </ul>
2	<b>Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some supporting details are evident in the story</li> <li>Ideas are inconsistently developed</li> <li>Occasional use of sentence variety (i.e. What's happening?, Wha-wha-what's t-t-that?)</li> </ul>
2	<b>Audience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occasionally difficult to follow</li> <li>Opening paragraph has room for improvement as it does not hook the reader and is inconsistent in keeping the reader engaged</li> <li>Some evidence of considering the reader (i.e. Little did they know disaster was about to strike!)</li> <li>Occasionally the story needed to be reread to follow and to understand what was going on</li> </ul>
3	<b>Details</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Word choice was good most of the time</li> <li>Beginning demonstrated some interesting use of words (i.e. wondering, abandoned)</li> <li>Occasional sensory details</li> <li>Some use of dialogue, however it wasn't consistent through the end of the story</li> <li>Punctuation was a strength of the writing piece as it generated interest and suspense</li> </ul>
3	<b>Capitalization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequently using capitalization accurately</li> <li>Some letter formation concerns that appear to be capitals where not needed</li> </ul>
2	<b>Punctuation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrated some use of commas in lists, however, sentences were lacking transition words</li> <li>Overall, punctuation was underutilized at the end of sentences</li> <li>Commas are used in lists, but does not utilize transition words</li> <li>Effective use of apostrophes, however inconsistent use of quotation marks</li> </ul>
2	<b>Grammar</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of subject-verb agreement</li> <li>Simple sentences are evident throughout the piece</li> <li>Working on combining multiple ideas into a complex sentence</li> </ul>
3	<b>Spelling Patterns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequent words are spelled accurately</li> <li>Occasional errors in spelling (i.e. daster, thoght)</li> </ul>
2	<b>Spelling Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>suffixes are not spelled correctly (ed/id)</li> <li>Has – ing most of the time</li> </ul>

**Next Instructional Steps:**

- The student will benefit from viewing and examining mentor text that engages or hooks a reader, and practicing using those techniques. Continued learning about organizing ideas into paragraphs, and transitioning between moments in the story will enhance clarity. It would benefit the student to practice expanding sentences from simple (who and what sentences) and adding more information (where, when or why).

## Grade 4 Sample C

One dark night 3 freinds, Kelly, David and John were driving to a camping spot in Montana. They had been driving for hours and they were very tired. Kelly was the only one driving. They made it to the cabin and began unpacking there things. "Let's hurry this up. I'm tired." John complained. As they finished unpacking Kelly saw a rabbit. Soon after they all flopped on there beds. Luckily there was a tv and power. At dawn the next morning they turned on the tv and looking for movies to watch. While cooking break first for themselves. David chose to put on the news instead. "Ay guys, you might want to see this. Now." David said calmly. The news reporter is talking about a killer in Montana.

Kelly and John walked toward David. "That's not good." Said John. And he's not to far from us. Added Kelly. They all then went back to cooking. An hour had passed and they had food. Knocking came from the door.

"I got it." Said Kelly quickly as she walked to the door. Kelly opened the slowly. No one was there. "Strange." Kelly said confused.

Kelly looked out both ways the door, then closed the door.

Grade 4 Level 3: *Meeting* Exemplar C – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Reporting Category
3	<b>Organization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition sentences were sufficient</li> <li>• Follows a logical order of events with some extraneous details (i.e. seeing the rabbit)</li> </ul>
3	<b>Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Range of sentence variety</li> <li>• Writes in paragraphs with adequate structure</li> <li>• Good sentence starters</li> </ul>
3	<b>Audience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement is maintained through the story</li> <li>• Has suspense built in throughout</li> <li>• Flow of story makes sense to keep reader engaged</li> </ul>
3	<b>Details</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word choice was interesting at times</li> <li>• Structured beginning that set a tone</li> <li>• Could have included more sensory details</li> <li>• Had dialogue which was used to add variety</li> <li>• An area that was developing for the student</li> </ul>
3	<b>Capitalization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct capitalization was frequently demonstrated, but not consistent</li> </ul>
3	<b>Punctuation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quotation marks were used frequently</li> <li>• Commas were not used for transition words</li> <li>• Apostrophes were used frequently; however, some errors were made (i.e. thing's)</li> </ul>
3	<b>Grammar</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject/verb agreement is frequent</li> <li>• Conjunctions were evident (i.e. and, for), however there could have been more variety</li> </ul>
3	<b>Spelling Patterns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words are typically spelled accurately, however, some simple mistakes occur (i.e. break fist, themself's)</li> </ul>
3	<b>Spelling Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affixes are typically spelled correctly</li> <li>• Working on spelling compound words accurately</li> </ul>

**Additional Notes**

- In the category of details, the readers determined that this student fell closely between a 2 and a 3. A score of 3 was awarded because of the use of dialogue.

**Next Instructional Steps:**

- The student will benefit from viewing and examining mentor text that engages or hooks a reader, and practicing using those techniques. Continued learning about organizing ideas into paragraphs, and transitioning between moments in the story will enhance clarity. It would benefit the student to practice expanding sentences from simple (who and what sentences) and adding more information (where, when or why). Please see the Layers of Writing resources for more information on sentence structure.

## Grade 4 Sample D

The story is call the Scream

One day there were three little  
named Mary Joe Jack

kids alone in the forest it

was midnight. They heard a little

girl scream ahahah so they ran

into the cabin just to be safe.

The little girl found them in the

dark! cabin. She was itching and twitching

a spider fell down the stairs.

Want to play said the creepy

girl they all said... no! the

creepy girl attack them. They

were gored! the little girl digged

into the ground and then she was gored. <sup>did then she was gone.</sup> the next day

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the saw the incident so they

investagat it <sup>it's dark</sup>

in the cabin said the polic

men. Roar and two polic men

died... the end! 😊

Grade 4 Level 2: *Approaching Understanding* Exemplar D – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Reporting Category
2	<b>Organization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes partial details after the beginning of the story</li> <li>Partially organized in the beginning, but loses flow toward the end of the story</li> </ul>
2	<b>Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of paragraph use</li> <li>Inconsistent use of a variety of sentence beginnings, lengths and types</li> <li>Plot is inconsistently maintained</li> </ul>
2	<b>Audience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initially catches the reader’s attention</li> <li>Evidence of a beginning that could be interesting to a reader</li> </ul>
2	<b>Details</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some interesting vocabulary was used (i.e. she was itching and twitching)</li> <li>Some dialogue was evident</li> <li>Little to no evidence of figurative language or creative expression through punctuation</li> </ul>
3	<b>Capitalization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequent use of capital letters where appropriate</li> </ul>
1	<b>Punctuation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not yet include a variety of punctuation in and at the end of sentences</li> </ul>
2	<b>Grammar</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some use of adjectives in the story (i.e. little, creepy)</li> <li>Subject-verb agreement was evident</li> <li>Some use of conjunctions (i.e. so) but not consistently evident</li> </ul>
2	<b>Spelling Patterns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some sounds are missing in words (i.e. digged)</li> <li>High frequency words were spelled correctly</li> </ul>
2	<b>Spelling Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no possessives</li> <li>Some compound words, no complex plural words.</li> </ul>

**Next Instructional Steps:**

- The student will benefit from practicing the use of dialogue to create interest in their writing. Use of graphic organizers or outlining tools may support this student in developing sensory details and supporting structure.

Grade 4 Sample E

name [redacted]

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one day I was walking throu the  
forest when I saw a caben.  
so I rapped on the door and no one anserd  
so I rapped agan still no anser so I went in.  
It was soooooo dusty crazy and nasty  
and broken glass everywa. I heard a CREEEEing  
coming from the dret when I went in.

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Grade 4 Level 1: *Not Yet Meeting* Exemplar E – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Reporting Category
1	<b>Organization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has included a beginning sentence</li> <li>Little to no evidence of supporting details to support the remaining story</li> </ul>
1	<b>Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cannot yet write paragraphs with topic and concluding sentences</li> <li>Little to no variation in sentence structures</li> </ul>
1	<b>Audience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partially catches the reader's attention, however, there was limited evidence to determine if this would continue</li> </ul>
1	<b>Details</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some interesting word choice (i.e. dusty and musty)</li> <li>Limited use of sensory details</li> <li>Does not yet use dialogue or punctuation to generate effects in their writing</li> </ul>
2	<b>Capitalization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I is capitalized, sentences sometimes begin with capital letters</li> </ul>
1	<b>Punctuation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of comma use</li> <li>Not a variety of punctuation (i.e. only used periods)</li> </ul>
2	<b>Grammar</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some adjectives were used in the story (i.e. dusty, broken)</li> <li>Subject-verb agreement is evident</li> <li>Some conjunction words were used (i.e. so, when)</li> </ul>
1	<b>Spelling Patterns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rarely applies a variety of spelling strategies or tools</li> </ul>
1	<b>Spelling Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writer rarely included compound words, possessives, plurals or contractions</li> </ul>

**Additional Information:**

- The story demonstrates a great opportunity for the beginning of a story, however written output was insufficient for a student at the end of grade four during the allotted time.

**Next Instructional Steps:**

- The student will benefit from opportunities to write regularly and increase their writing stamina. Practice and familiarity with high frequency words will support the clarity of the writing.