



2025 Writing Assessment Exemplars and Teacher Rationale

Grade 6

Spring 2025

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 2025, 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 6 (*meeting curricular outcomes with an enriched understanding, meeting curricular outcomes, approaching curricular outcomes, 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 6 Writing Prompt



Image Generated with Canva



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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 40 minutes to write.

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

Grade 6 Level 4: *Enriched Understanding* – Exemplar A

The unexpected

My dad and I have always loved football. It was always such great game play. Touchdowns, field kicks, tackles, it's always been great. This year me and my dad saved up enough money to go see a game. The Chicago Bears have been our favorite for three years now. So as I was saying, we have saved up enough money to go to the big game. The superbowl finals.

"Well buddy, are you excited? First game with your dad." My father said as he made a sharp right turn. I almost fell into the window!

"Haha! Yeah. I mean it is our first one. I just hope nothing goes wrong." I glared at my dad.

"Oops. My fault, I guess I'm going to have to drive a bit slower huh?" He playfully punched my arm. I grabbed my arm.

"You think?" I looked out the window of the backseat. It was a huge dome just crowded with fans from everywhere! I thought I even saw Taylor Swift! But I guess if I did that would make sense seeing how the Bears are playing the Chiefs.

My father came to a stop across the street from the Walmart by the football stadium so he didn't have to pay for parking. My dad has always avoided paying for parking. One time we parked 5 miles away and me and my cousins had to walk 5 miles just to get to where we were going. And we were going on a hike!

"So bud. Ready to walk to the stadium?"

"Practically born ready." I said, confident.

We started walking and my legs were already falling weak. I was so excited for this game. So why was I shaking? Something inside of me knew this wasn't right. But I couldn't figure out if it was my brain telling me that something was wrong or that gut feeling when you know something is not right. I was beginning to get scared but my dad told me it would be fine and we just continued walking. While we were walking he tried coming up with distractions to help me feel better.

"I heard the hotdogs here were massive! We are going to have to try one."

"Yeah, yeah. That would be awesome." I could tell my tone hurt my dad a bit so I tried acting like I felt better. "Woah! Is that the stadium? It's huge!"

The walls were coated with red and white. You could see the light from the inside shining out because it was starting to get dark. Every fan was wearing a jersey

from their favorite sports team. And I saw at least four celebrities on my way to the parking lot. Me and my dad paid for the game then walked inside.

"Let's go find our seats." My dad said with a smile from ear to ear.

"Sounds good dad!" I said, excited.

My dad's smile faded when he looked over at the big screen TV.

"What's wrong dad?" I asked, concerned.

"Nothing Ted. It'll be alright."

I had no idea what my dad was talking about but I decided to trust him anyway.

"Alright. What aisle are we in?" I asked my dad.

"46. The very top one." My dad said, still looking at the screen.

My dad wouldn't move and I looked around and also saw people staring at the screen. One by one more and more people came to look at it. I decided to do the same. But I deeply regretted it.

"Attention all viewers! Zombies have taken over the city and are headed for the football fields. If you are there. Leave immediately!" Just as the reporter finished saying that she was trampled by four, maybe five zombies all at once!

"Son, we have to go." My dad picked me up and threw me onto his back. He ran faster than I've ever seen anyone run before. He ran like the wind, like water. And before I knew it we were back at the car. But before we could get moving. *CLASH! POW! THUMP!* Zombies were attacking the car from all different directions. I didn't know what to do. Didn't know what to say. But before I could react my dad opened the roof and climbed out. *What is he doing?* I wondered. I didn't know what he would do or say but I hoped he would be okay. He said.

"I love you son." And then jumped off the car and ran towards the supermarket. But he wasn't fast enough! The zombies caught up to him. I watched my dad get eaten right before my eyes. But now was my chance to run. I jumped out of the car and ran towards the alley. I made it there but was already a zombie there. I picked up a hammer I saw beside me for protection and before I knew it the zombie noticed me. And now I feel more fear than ever before.

I was standing face to face with death.

Grade 6 Level 4: *Enriched Understanding Exemplar A* – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
4	<p>Organization and Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effectively develops a main idea supported by details, examples, and explanations • skillfully expresses personal ideas through multiple paragraphs for the purpose of engaging an audience
4	<p>Creative Expression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses an effective tone to express a clear attitude or feeling about the topic and audience • skillful use of foreshadowing throughout • skillfully uses “the walls were coated with red and white” and “playfully punched my arm” • skillfully uses dialogue and questioning technique “so, why was I shaking?” and “<i>What is he doing?</i>”
4	<p>Capitalization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistently applies capitalization appropriately to create a variety of effects
4	<p>Punctuation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistently applies punctuation appropriately to create a variety of effects
4	<p>Grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistently uses grammar to support communication
4	<p>Spelling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skillfully applies knowledge of spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar words, including basis and affixes through the use of “aisle,” and “immediately” and “practically”

Additional Information:**Instructional Next Steps:**

- transitions between paragraphs and connecting ideas
- selection of words/vocabulary to create emphasis and effect
- subordinating conjunctions and comma use

Grade 6 Level 3: Meeting – Exemplar B

PORTALS

One sunny California morning, a boy named Alex was sitting in his bed, bored out of his mind. There was nothing to do this early in the morning. Alex groaned before slowly getting up from his messy bed. He peeked out of his large window that looked over all of California, the bright yellowish, orange sun started to rise over the large buildings in the distance. Alex took a long breath before walking out of the small bedroom in his apartment. He walked out the door and down to the kitchen.

“Why did I leave all of these windows open?” Alex said, squinting his eyes.

Alex scurried over to the extensive windows to close the blinds. He closed the blinds but it didn't do much. He was still struggling to open his eyes but kept closing them again and again.

“I really need better blinds!” he exclaimed before walking over to his coffee machine.

Alex walked over to his coffee machine, put a mug under and walked away. He plopped himself down on the small sofa he had and sighed. Alex still didn't know what to do. He looked out the window in his living room.

“The beach!” he said, his face lit up as he ran upstairs to change.

He returned downstairs quickly wearing a sweater and shorts. He ran out of the house with a smile from ear to ear. Alex jumped in the elevator and once he got to the parking lot he continued to run. He jumped in his car and drove as fast as he could. Alex drove to the beach and then realized he forgot his surfboard at his apartment. He sighed but soon saw a shop and they ended up renting out surfboards. It was Alex's lucky day! He ran to the shop, rented out a board and then he was out on the water.

Hours had passed and Alex was still enjoying himself! He got out of the water and put his board down. Everyone had already left the beach, so Alex had it all to himself. He took a break and layed down on the sand. Soon after, Alex felt the ground beneath him shake. He didn't think it was a big

deal. He continued to lay down and rest but then, a black hole formed under him and before he could say anything he was gone.

Alex felt uneasy, his stomach was spinning faster than ever. Alex started to shake, his face turned purple and body went numb. Alex tried to scream but he couldn't even say a word. It was almost like his mouth was taped shut. The hole got smaller and smaller until he was squished. He flew through the tunnel for hours and hours. He was being thrown around the small tunnel. He started to get lightheaded, he hadn't eaten anything yet and probably would never eat again.

His stomach grumbled, he was hungry but thought he would never live to eat again. He then blacked out. And no one saw him EVER again.

THE END!

Grade 6 Level 3: Meeting Exemplar B – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
3	<p>Organization and Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skillfully expresses personal ideas throughout multiple paragraphs of the purpose of engaging an audience • effectively develops a main idea supported by details • adequate transitions between paragraphs
3	<p>Creative Expression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective use of tone to express clear attitude or feeling about the topic and audience • thoughtfully creates texts using a selection of words/vocabulary to create emphasis for effect • thoughtful use of imagery and figurative language through the use of “it was almost like his mouth was taped shut. The hole got smaller and smaller until he was squished” and “he closed his eyes but kept closing them again and again.”
4	<p>Capitalization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistently applies capitalization appropriately
4	<p>Punctuation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistently applies punctuation appropriately to create a variety of effects
4	<p>Grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistently uses grammar to support communication
4	<p>Spelling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skillfully applies knowledge of spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar words “scurried,” and “crumbled” and “lightheaded.”

Additional Information:

- when marking for organization and structure, the lacking conclusion was discussed. Markers wondered if time might have been the issue.

Instructional Next Steps:

- will benefit from varying sentence starters
- focus on rising action – slowing down the moment
- placement of important details for effect
- build vocabulary repertoire

Grade 6 Level 3: Meeting – Exemplar C

“Again?” I say, my head pounding from the impact. “It’s happened so many times before, but I’m still not used to it.”

Life isn’t as great as most people say it is. I know what you’re thinking, ‘Dax, you’re only thirteen, you know nothing about life’. I know lots, way more than the average teenager, and when you’ve died as many times as I have you’ll understand what I’m saying. Every time you die you end up in the same Dang stadium, with the same people, it gets boring after a while, honestly the best time to die is when you get to your twenties, that’s when life comes crashing down.

“Theo, what’s up man?” I say as I start to walk to the exit. Theo is an old death, he died many years ago and didn’t even try to live his life again. He was 16 when it happened, Cancer took him but he is somehow always annoyingly happy.

“I’m good, how about you bro? You die from another car? Or was it a fall from your tree house?” He says with that stupid smile on his face. He always sits by the gate, sending people off from the afterlife.

“I’m fine. Just annoyed Damion again and got a hit to the face, nothing much really” Of course he laughed, And then smiled Again.

“I told you to stop getting into fights, especially over that girl. What’s her name again? Tarrie? Tammy?”

I roll my eyes at him, he may still be a teenager but he can be a real mom sometimes, “It wasn’t over her, and her name is Liana, Not tammy, Idiot.”

Yeah, you may have already guessed it, it was over Liana, but he doesn’t deserve her. Damion is a bully, a freak even. He isn’t nice to anybody. Not even his own girlfriend, Liana. I wouldn’t say I’m obsessed with her, but I do have a Huge crush on her, like the whole

poetic stuff, or whatever it is. But she is Beautiful, long black hair, green eyes, everything a teen boy could ever want in a girl. But she's kinda nerdy, she's a bookworm, loves to draw, always wears oversized hoodies, and has The best grades in class. If I'm being honest here, I can't even speak to her, I'm really shy and she just makes it way worse.

"Yeah sure" Theo replies. I've told Theo all about her, and in his words 'She does sound pretty cute'. "Just get back to your little girlfriend" He laughs then waves, as I step through the gates between the worlds.

And of course I wake up in the office again. When I die most people think I'm just sleeping or I fainted. I always wake up in a bed or chair, I'm not complaining, waking up on the ground would be pretty crappy, I'd hate it.

"Daxton Lenards, do you know why you're here?" Mr. Fadstin says, while glaring at me.

"I punched Damion because he called a girl fat." I smile at him crossing my arms.

"Yes you did. You put another student in danger, and now he has a black eye, you are lucky we don't suspend you."

Grade 6 Level 3: Meeting Exemplar C – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
3	<p>Organization and Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sufficiently develops a main idea supported by facts and details • adequately expresses ideas using organizational structures. Lacks in sentence length and structure as well as transitions
3	<p>Creative Expression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective tone is used to express a clear attitude or feeling about the topic • thoughtfully created a text with a strong plot and tone, “It wasn’t over her, and her name is Liana, Not tammy, Idiot” and “Not even his own girlfriend, Liana.”
3	<p>Capitalization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frequently applies capitalization appropriately to create a variety of effects
3	<p>Punctuation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frequently applies punctuation appropriately to create a variety of effects
3	<p>Grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frequently uses grammar to support communication
3	<p>Spelling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frequently applies knowledge of spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar words, including bases and affixes

Additional Information:

- scorers commented on the unique writing style and format of the text through the use of dotted lines to show the change in “worlds”
- it was a delightful read
- scorers suspect that the unexpected upper-case letters are intended for emphasis

Instructional Next Steps:

- would benefit from showing and not always telling through dialogue
- enhancing vocabulary usage
- comma usage

Grade 6: Level 2 Approaching – Exemplar D

The bright days

Before those days everything was dark and I was ok with that you would wake up and there was no light until June 14. It was all over the news, a ball of light in the sky. Nobody knew what it was, people all from all over the world crowded into the biggest stadium in st brook and gasped in wonder as a light appeared slowly rising over the stadium. My eyes burnt because I was not used to it but I got used to it...

well not really it still hurts my eyes when I look at it oh by the way i'm jack and i'm on a mission to find an elder named george are you asking why I would want to find some random old guy? well it's because he was alive when there was sun before it disappeared.

I need to find him because things are happening like the owner of a convenience store that I go to Mr. Bob went blind out of nowhere and people think that it has to do with the sun. Also it's really hot things are starting to light on fire out of nowhere oh yeah and things are growing out of the ground. it's a good thing I just got my driver license because from what my grandma told me he might live halfway across the world.

Slam! Finally I made it to the airport, yawn. That was a long drive but it's going to be an even longer flight sigh woosh.

wow i've never been to florida before but its way hotter than home people are starting to leave because it's so hot ok this should be his house bang bang hello is anybody home creak "yes" hi are you george "maybe who are you?" jack i'm here about the sun "the sun?" yes i was told that you were alive when it disappeared and that you might know some stuff about it "hmm I suppose I could tell you some stuff like that you shouldn't look at it because it will hurt you eyes" really? well that explains why mr.bob went blind because he was staring at it all the time what about the heat was it always this hot "no it used to be cooler in some places then it is now and I know that you can grow stuff with something called photosynthesis" grow stuff like outside and not in the fruit factories? "Sigh yes in fact I have a mission for you. These are seeds of five instinct trees, find someplace not too hot but also not cold and plant them in the right soiland it could save the world from an apocalypse" uhh what!

Grade 6 Level 2 Approaching Exemplar D– Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
2	<p>Organization and Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> partially develops a main idea of “the sun has just come out” remains throughout the story partially expresses personal ideas through multiple paragraphs
2	<p>Creative Expression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses simplistic tone to express an attitude or feeling about the topic and audience partially selects words/vocabulary and partially develops setting and plot and suspense
2	<p>Capitalization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sometimes applies capitalization to create a variety of effects
2	<p>Punctuation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sometimes applies punctuation to create a variety of effects
2	<p>Grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sometimes uses consistent tense and independent and dependent clauses
3	<p>Spelling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> frequently applies knowledge of spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar words, including bases and affixes

Additional Information:

- markers were impressed with the uniqueness of the ideas
- writes in dialogue and feels like it could make a good graphic novel

Instructional Next Steps:

- sentence structure and conclusions
- consistent use of capitalization
- break lines to isolate ideas

Grade 6: Level 2 Approaching – Exemplar E

The big game

Once upon a time there was this kid named Ethan he went to his first ever soccer game a little did he know this was no ordinary soccer game it was the World Cup final argentina Versus france So the game started and both teams started off well but Argentina started off very well because they scored right before it hit 10 minutes So the score was now 1 to 0 to Argentina as time when by no one was scoring there where having a lot of good plays but still no one could score where in the 45 minute of the game this was the last play argentina had the ball in frances half and **BOOM!** Argentina scored its half time now both teams are in there locker room me and my dad went to the shop we got a hotdog,frise and two drinks and we bought a france jersey so now were heading to our seats but the game already started we're back at our seats suddenly the whole stadium went quite me and my dad were confused because we didn't know suddenly argentina had a brake away number 10 chip it over the keeper so now the score was 3 to 0 but france isn't done yet they started attacking more and **BOOM!** Penalty for france number 10 is talking the pen 3 2 1 and then **POW!** France scored so now the score was 3 to 1

Grade 6 Level 2 Approaching Exemplar E – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
2	Organization and Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> partially develops a main idea - a soccer game simplistic expression of main ideas simplistic transitions “so the game started”
2	Creative Expression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriate tone is present simplistic selection of words/vocabulary “suddenly” rarely develops elements of imagery, rhyme, dialogue, emphasis, or effect to enhance text use of onomatopoeia with “BOOM!” and “POW!”
1	Capitalization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> rarely applies capitalization
1	Punctuation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> rarely applies punctuation
1	Grammar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> rarely uses consistent tense and changes throughout rarely uses independent and dependent clauses
2	Spelling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sometimes applies knowledge of spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar words

Additional Information:

- when discussing capitalization, scorers noted that the use of “BOOM!” and POW!” were perhaps used correctly due to auto correct.

Instructional Next Steps:

- organization of ideas
- word choice and spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

Grade 6: Level 1 Not Yet Meeting – Exemplar F

I saw my first game!

One day i was laying down in my bed, i was looking at the wall wondering who would win the soccer game the bananas vs the gorillas game tomorrow. I think my favorite team would win, (the bananas.) then all of a sudden my dad smashed the door open, he shouted 'where are going to the soccer game tomorrow!' I was shocked. I would never think we could go to a game, BUT WE ARE!!! The next day we ran out the door in excitement. We got there and we got popcorn, pop, chips, and cotton candy. We started to watch the game... and... My team lost, well i don't care i was at a real soccer game! I had a blast!

Grade 6 Level 1: Not Yet Meeting Exemplar F – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
1	<p>Organization and Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simplistically expresses ideas using organization structures such as - introduction is present, some details in sequential order and some variety in sentence length – listing items in a series. • rarely expresses personal ideas through multiple paragraphs for the purpose of engaging an audience • superficially develops a main idea or topic with facts, details, examples and explanations
1	<p>Creative Expression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rarely creates excitement through specific word choice and effects “smashed” and “wondering” and “...and...” • simplistic conversational tone is present • rarely expresses ideas through multiple paragraphs for the purpose of engaging an audience
1	<p>Capitalization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rarely applies capitalization appropriately to create a variety of effects
2	<p>Punctuation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sometimes applies punctuation to create a variety of effects
2	<p>Grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sometimes uses grammar to support communication such as subject verb agreement present and consistent use of tense
2	<p>Spelling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rarely applies knowledge of spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar words, including basis and affixes

Additional Information:

- when scoring punctuation, scorers noted some proper use of punctuation. The writer is taking a risk with punctuation use and is often used incorrectly.
- when scoring spelling, a two was awarded and it was noted that the student played it safe and did not use unfamiliar words.

Instructional Next Steps:

- writing stamina and exploring ideas

Grade 6: Level 1 Not Yet Meeting – Exemplar G

The day he came

“Tyler wake up it’s your birthday day” “okay mom i’ll get dressed what’s for breakfast” “come on you should know its our tradition pancakes with some berries and whipped cream” ok mom” 20 minutes later “can open my presents now” “of course you can” why is this one so small and thin” find out and open it” ok then” rip “oh my god you got my baseball tickets thank you so much”

Grade 6 Level 1: Not Yet Meeting Exemplar G – Evidence of Graded Criteria

Score	Evidence of Graded Criteria
1	Organization and Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not yet develop a main idea or topic • does not yet express ideas using organizational structures • does not yet express personal ideas through paragraphs
1	Creative Expression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not yet use tone to express an attitude or feeling about the topic • rarely creates a text using passage using emphasis or effects
1	Capitalization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not yet apply capitalization
1	Punctuation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ineffectively applies punctuation
1	Grammar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rarely uses grammar to support communication
2	Spelling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sometimes applies knowledge of spelling patterns

Additional Information:

- the text is heavy on dialogue allowing the tense to remain consistent rather than an intentional choice

Instructional Next Steps:

- proper use of dialogue
- graphic organizer to be provided to assist with text organization and development of main idea and supporting details and examples
- sentence structure