WIDA Writing Scoring Rubric
Grades 1–12

Use this rubric to score writing responses for **WIDA ACCESS** tests only.

To score **WIDA Screener,** refer to the WIDA Writing Scoring Scale Grades 1-12. The score points described below are **not** equivalent to WIDA English language proficiency levels.

Score point	Descriptors
7	Ideas are coherently organized, using language that connects ideas together smoothly throughout the response achieving a clear flow of text. Response clearly demonstrates features of the intended key language use (Narrate, Inform, Explain, Argue) and content area. Response contains a wide variety of sentence structures whose meaning is always clear. Response demonstrates control of complex sentence structures, though sentences may not always be error-free. Response uses a wide variety of words and phrases appropriately and precisely, with choices that are relevant to the task context.
6	Ideas are well organized and elaborated, using a variety of connectors to create some cohesion. Response demonstrates some features of the intended key language use (Narrate, Inform, Explain, Argue). Response contains a variety of sentence structures with consistently clear meaning, though occasional errors may be present. Response uses a variety of words and phrases with some precision that are usually appropriate to the task context.
5	Response has a clear organizational pattern with some elaboration. Response uses connectors that join ideas together and these are usually used appropriately. Response contains some compound or complex sentence structures with generally clear meaning, though they may include some errors. Response uses a range of words and phrases that are generally appropriate and show emerging precision, including some words and phrases related to the task context.

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Score point	Descriptors
4	Response uses connectors and may have some evidence of an organizational pattern, though longer responses in particular may lack coherence.
	Response contains some compound or complex sentences, though errors may obscure meaning.
	Response uses a range of words and phrases from beyond the stimulus that generally convey the intended meaning.
3	Response shows connected text, which may include some simple connectors (e.g., and, then, but), though they may be used repetitively and may not always be used accurately.
	Response contains some complete sentences, though frequent errors may obscure meaning.
	Response uses some original words and phrases, in addition to language drawn from the stimulus.
2	Response includes at least one clear, complete sentence, but does not include connected text.
	Response uses a small number of original words and phrases, in addition to language drawn from the stimulus.
1	Response includes at least one recognizable word in English, and may contain attempts at phrases or sentences, but does not include any clear, complete sentences.
0	Response contains no discernible words in English, though it may contain letters or scribbles. [I]
	Response consists only of text that is completely off-task and shows no understanding of or interaction with the prompt. [T]
	Response is entirely in a language other than English. [F]
	Response consists only of verbatim copied text with no reformulation or adaptation, though it may contain copying errors. [C]
	Response is entirely blank. [B]
	Response is partially or entirely plagiarized (copied or adapted) from an external source. [K]

Off-Task & Off-Topic Responses

An **off-task** response shows no understanding of, or no interaction with, the prompt. It may be a memorized response, indicate refusal or inability to answer the prompt, or appear to answer another, unrelated prompt. A response that is entirely off-task is scored at **Score Point 0.** A response that is partially off-task is scored by ignoring the off-task portion of the response and scoring only the on-task portion using the scoring rubric.

An **off-topic** response shows a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the prompt. It is related to the prompt in some way, but does not address it as intended. Whether entirely or partially off-topic, these responses are scored in their entirety using the scoring rubric.

Additional Scoring Notes

Scoring Materials
In addition to this scoring rubric, it is critical to utilize the relevant set of anchor responses and explanations provided in WIDA training materials, which demonstrate how to apply the rubric to the specific grade-level clusters and tasks being scored.

Scoring Process
Responses should be assigned the score point whose descriptors provide the best holistic description of the response. For example, if a response corresponds to most of the Score Point 3 descriptors, but also one of the Score Point 4 descriptors, it should still be scored a 3, as that provides the best fit. Similarly, if the response corresponds to most of the Score Point 3 descriptors, but one of the Score Point 2 descriptors, it should still be scored a 3. Responses should be scored a 0 if **one or more** of the descriptors at Score Point 0 apply.

Writing Mechanics
Responses may contain issues with mechanics, such as inconsistent or absent capitalization, inconsistent or absent punctuation, typos, and creative spelling. These aspects of mechanics are not considered central to the evaluation of multilingual learners' writing. Responses should not be penalized, in terms of the score awarded, as a result of mechanical errors.

Sentence Boundaries
Responses may lack traditional sentence boundaries, which are typically marked by the use of punctuation. Raters should evaluate responses without undue concern for this absence. Responses should be evaluated for how ideas are connected together within the response. If the connection of ideas is discernible, even without clearly marked sentence boundaries, credit should be given. Responses should not be penalized, in terms of the score awarded, as a result of a lack of clear sentence boundaries.

Languages other than English
Responses may be written in English and languages other than English. Raters should award scores based only on the English language used in the response. However, responses should not be penalized, in terms of the score awarded, for using languages other than English.

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Glossary

Errors
This refers to language errors. It does not refer to factual or mechanical errors.

Stimulus
This refers to the text that appears in front of the student, either in the test booklet or on the computer screen. It does not refer to language provided in the audio or test administrator scripting, or to elements depicted in the graphics.

Original words and phrases
These are any words or phrases that appear in a response, but which were not provided in the stimulus.

Sentence Types
There are three types of sentences: simple, compound, and complex.

- **Simple sentences** contain a single independent clause. Simple sentences can be short (e.g., *She sleeps.* or *The children got seeds.*) or long (e.g., *The hollow ball bounced highest on the wood floor in this experiment.*).
- **Compound sentences** contain two or more independent clauses, often linked with coordinating conjunctions such as and, so, but, or yet (e.g., *The boy cut some flowers and he gave them to the teacher.*).
- **Complex sentences** contain multiple clauses. The relationships among the clauses are not equal in that one of the clauses is independent and the others are dependent. A complex sentence is useful for conveying intricate and detailed relationships among ideas (e.g., *The hollow ball will bounce lower if the floor is covered in carpet. The experiment shows that hard floors result in higher bounces. They wanted to grow flowers. When the seeds began to sprout, the students gave them water. The teacher was happy because he got a thoughtful gift.*).

  Clauses in complex sentences are often, but not always, joined by subordinating conjunctions, for example: *after, as a result of, as if, as long as, as well as, although, because, before, besides, despite, even if, except for, if, in case, instead of, like, since, that, unless, until, when,* or *while.*

Clauses

- **Independent clauses** can stand alone to communicate a complete idea, and form a complete sentence. An independent clause usually has a subject (a noun) and a predicate (a verb), unlike a dependent clause.
- **Dependent clauses** depend on an independent clause for meaning and cannot stand alone.

Connectors

Connectors include text connectives, coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, and linking phrases used to connect ideas within and across sentences and signal different relationships (see examples below). Connectors create cohesion and support the logical development of ideas across a text.

Purpose	Example Connectors
addition	*and, and then, in addition, furthermore, besides, again, along with*
cause/consequence	*because, so, despite, nevertheless, even though, therefore, consequently, due to, because of this, as a result*
comparison/contrast	*but, for example, instead, in other words, however, in fact, in that case, while, although, on the other hand, despite*
concession	*while, although*
condition	*if, unless*
purpose	*in order to, so*
sequence	*first, second, finally, in the first place, to start with, at this point, to get back to the point, in short, all in all, to conclude*
time	*when, then, next, after, afterward, after a while, at the same time, at this moment, meanwhile, previously, before that, finally*

Key Language Uses consist of prominent genre families across academic content standards.

- **Narrate:** language to convey real or imaginary experiences through stories and histories. Narratives serve many purposes, including to instruct, entertain, teach, or support persuasion.
- **Inform:** language to provide factual information. As students convey information, they define, describe, compare, contrast, organize, categorize, or classify concepts, ideas, or phenomena.
- **Explain:** language to account for how things work or why things happen. As students explain, they substantiate the inner workings of natural, human made, and social phenomena.
- **Argue:** language to develop claims and counterclaims, and to provide evidence to substantiate them. Argue is also used to evaluate issues, advance or defend ideas or solutions, change the audience's point of view, or bring about action.