

WIDA ACCESS for ELLs

Writing Test Tips

About the Test:

Students listen to a script read aloud by the test administrator. You assign students taking the paper-based Writing test to the test tier you think is most appropriate to

their skills. Students then work from a paper test booklet in which they handwrite their responses to provided writing prompts. Students taking the test online are assigned to a tier of the Writing test automatically based on their performance on the Listening and Reading tests. These students view writing prompts on the computer and either type responses or handwrite them in a test booklet.



Reminders for your Students:

- Use scratch paper or the in-test sticky note tool to plan your writing.
- When you take the test online, use the Back button to re-read information or review your writing.
- Plan first, and then write. When you're done writing, re-read your work and fix any errors you find.
- Do your best with spelling and grammar.
- Use the word banks, example responses, and sentence starters if they're helpful. You don't have to use these words if you don't want to.

Grade 1, Tier A
60 minutes

All other grades,
all other tiers
90 minutes

Plan for Test Day: Giving the Writing test takes an hour or more.

Students taking the Grade 1, Tier A test complete four writing tasks. They have 5 minutes for the first two tasks, 10 minutes for the next two tasks, and 5 minutes to finish any task.

All other students complete three writing tasks. Students taking the Tier A test have 15 minutes plus an extra 5 minutes, if needed, for each task. Students taking the Tier B/C test have 10 minutes for the first task, 20 minutes for the second task, 30 minutes for the third task, and 5 minutes to finish any task.

Set aside enough time for students to write, plus time for you to get students settled, pass out and collect materials, and answer students' questions!

Remember, WIDA's test timing recommendations are not maximums. If students are working productively and local policies allow, you may give students as long as they need to complete the Writing test.

Visit wida.wisc.edu/assess/access/preparing-students for tips, test demos and sample items.



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About Test Scoring: Raters – those who review and score student responses – look at language use and communication. They look for precision, but they don't prioritize accuracy.

Raters evaluate responses as first drafts, not as polished pieces of writing, so typos, including incorrect spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, do not negatively affect student scores. Responses, particularly those of young learners, are expected to include hallmarks typical of emerging writing skills, such as inconsistent spacing and letter reversals.

When a student produces a response that does not interact with the prompt, or when a student produces only a memorized answer, the response score is zero. If a student misinterprets the prompt and produces a response that includes original writing, the student's work is scored as usual.

Test Scoring Resources: Raters use WIDA's Writing Scoring Scale to assign a score between 1 and 6 to a student response, based on an assessment of the language proficiency displayed at the discourse, sentence, and word/phrase levels. In other words, raters evaluate how organized and detailed the writing is, how much grammatical variety and complexity the response shows, and what the word choice indicates about the student's vocabulary range.

Score Point 5

D: Strong organization of text that supports an overall sense of unity, appropriate to context (e.g., purpose, situation, and audience)

S: A variety of sentence structures with very few grammatical errors

W: A wide range of vocabulary, used appropriately and with ease

In your class planning, you can use WIDA's Writing Interpretive Rubric. Like the scoring scale, the rubric breaks down language proficiency expectations with specific detail that can help you evaluate student writing and better understand student scores on the ACCESS test.

Discourse Level	Sentence Level	Word/Phrase Level
Linguistic Complexity	Language Forms and Conventions	Vocabulary Usage
Text is fully comprehensible and appropriate to purpose, situation, and audience; comparable to the writing of English proficient students meeting college- and career-readiness standards; and includes:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">extended connected text (single or multiple paragraphs) that is organized and shows tight cohesion in the precise expression of ideasclear evidence of consistency in conveying an appropriate perspective, register, and genre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a full range of sentence patterns and grammatical structures matched to content area topicsconsistent use of appropriate conventions to convey meaning, including for effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">consistent usage of just the right word or expression in just the right context related to content area topicsfacility with precise vocabulary usage in general, specific, or technical language

Reminders for Test Administrators:

- Students who handwrite their responses need plenty of space on their desks for response booklets.
- Sample writing in student response booklets shows one example of how a response might start. Scores don't depend on whether students use the sample writing or any words provided in a word bank.
- Responses that rely heavily on text copied from the prompt don't score as highly as original writing.
- The plan- and check-your-writing checklists are suggestions, not comprehensive lists of what to include in a response.
- The multi-part tasks in Tier A are scored as a whole. Encourage students to complete every part, but know that even if they skip an opportunity to respond, their score is based on the best writing they produce for any part of the task.
- Scratch paper is not scored. Students' whole answer must be in a test booklet or an online response box

For details on these and other scoring resources, visit wida.wisc.edu/assess/access/scores-reports



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