

Elementary Level Writing Assessment

The PSSA Writing Assessment is given in grades 5, 8, and 11.

- Look at the Domain Scoring Guide included at the end of your handout
- Look at the sample Writing Prompt Sheets included here and practice
- Read the directions carefully
- Ask to have the directions translated if possible
- You have to write using two of these three styles of writing in the sixth grade assessment:
 - informational – share knowledge, instructions, or ideas – reporting, explaining, summarizing, cause and effect
 - narrative – series of events, reflect on experiences
 - persuasive – support a position, defend your opinion, or convince the reader
- You must complete both writings
- Do your best and write what you can – you can get partial points, but if you leave it blank you will receive no points
- You may not use a dictionary or thesaurus
- Get involved and interested in what you will write
- Use prewriting skills
 - brainstorm
 - list
 - map
 - outline and organize
- Use a topic sentence and organize the body of your essay
- Restate your topic sentence and summarize it in your ending
- Be sure to edit your writing when you are finished – look for content, organization, and proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- You will be scored in five domains or areas: focus, content, organization, style, and conventions
- You may use the Domain Scoring Guide – you may also ask to have this translated or explained in simpler language

PENNSYLVANIA WRITING ASSESSMENT DOMAIN SCORING GUIDE

FOCUS	CONTENT	ORGANIZATION	STYLE	CONVENTIONS
4	The single controlling point made with an awareness of task (mode) about a specific topic. Sharp, distinct controlling point made about a single topic with evident awareness of task (mode)	The order developed and sustained within and across paragraphs using transitional devices including introduction and conclusion. Sophisticated arrangement of content with evident and/or subtle transitions	The choice, use and arrangement of words and sentence structures that create tone and voice. Precise, illustrative use of a variety of words and sentence structures to create consistent writer's voice and tone appropriate to audience	The use of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation. Evident control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation
3	Apparent point made about a single topic with sufficient awareness of task (mode)	Substantial, specific and/or illustrative content demonstrating strong development and sophisticated ideas Functional arrangement of content that sustains a logical order with some evidence of transitions	Generic use of a variety of words and sentence structures that may or may not create writer's voice and tone appropriate to audience	Sufficient control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation
2	No apparent point but evidence of a specific topic	Limited content with inadequate elaboration or explanation Confused or inconsistent arrangement of content with or without attempts at transition	Limited word choice and control of sentence structures that inhibit voice and tone	Limited control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation
1	Minimal evidence of a topic	Superficial and/or minimal content Minimal control of content arrangement	Minimal variety in word choice and minimal control of sentence structures	Minimal control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation

NON-SCORABLE	OFF-PROMPT
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is illegible; i.e., includes so many indecipherable words that no sense can be made of the response • Is incoherent; i.e., words are legible but syntax is so garbled that response makes no sense • Is insufficient; i.e., does not include enough to assess domains adequately • Is a blank paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is readable but did not respond to prompt



**PENNSYLVANIA SYSTEM OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT
FALL 2000**

**GRADE 6
WRITING PROMPT SHEET**

PROMPT #1

You will have one class period (but no more than 60 minutes if your class is longer) to plan, write and proofread your response, making any necessary corrections.

Planning:

- Think about what you want to write.
- Reread the prompt to make sure you are writing about the topic.
- Make notes. Use your prewriting skills, such as mapping or outlining.
- Carefully read the five statements below the prompt. Each statement refers to one of the scorable domains: focus, content, organization, style and conventions.

Writing:

- Write your essay on pages 5 and 6 of your writing booklet.
- Proofread your essay and make necessary corrections.

READ THE ENTIRE PROMPT CAREFULLY

At different times in their lives, people face situations in which they need to be brave.

Write about a time when someone needed to be brave and why bravery was needed.

As you write your paper, remember to:

- ★ Write about this time and why bravery was needed.
- ★ Use specific details to develop your narrative.
- ★ Present your ideas in a clear and logical order, including an introduction, body and conclusion.
- ★ Use a variety of words and well-constructed sentences.
- ★ Correct any errors in grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.



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**GRADE 6
WRITING PROMPT SHEET**

PROMPT #2

You will have one class period (but no more than 60 minutes if your class is longer) to plan, write and proofread your response, making any necessary corrections.

Planning:

- Think about what you want to write.
- Reread the prompt to make sure you are writing about the topic.
- Make notes. Use your prewriting skills, such as mapping or outlining.
- Carefully read the five statements below the prompt. Each statement refers to one of the scorable domains: focus, content, organization, style and conventions.

Writing:

- Write your essay on pages 7 and 8 of your writing booklet.
- Proofread your essay and make necessary corrections.

READ THE ENTIRE PROMPT CAREFULLY

You have just learned that your favorite television show is being taken off the air.

Write to persuade the broadcaster to keep your favorite show on the air.

As you write your paper, remember to:

- ★ Clearly state why your favorite television show should stay on the air.
- ★ Include specific facts, details, reasons and examples to convince the broadcaster to keep your favorite television show on the air.
- ★ Present your ideas in a clear and logical order, including an introduction, body and conclusion.
- ★ Use a variety of words and well-constructed sentences.
- ★ Correct any errors in grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.