

Middle School Level Writing Assessment

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

- Look at the Domain Scoring Guide included in your handouts
- Look at the Sample Writing Prompt Sheets included here and practice
- Read the directions carefully
- Ask to have the directions translated if possible
- In ninth grade you will write using two of these three styles of writing:
 - 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 prompts
- Do your best and write what you can – you can get partial credit, 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, 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 Sufficiently developed content with adequate elaboration or explanation	Generic use of a variety of words and sentence structures that may or may not create writer's voice and tone appropriate to audience Limited word choice and control of sentence structures that inhibit voice and tone	Sufficient control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation Limited 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	Minimal variety in word choice and minimal control of sentence structures	Minimal control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation
1	Minimal evidence of a topic	Superficial and/or minimal content		

NON-SCORABLE	OFF-PROMPT
<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 9
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

Think about inventions that have affected our lives.

Select an invention and write to explain why this invention has been good or bad for society.

As you write your paper, remember to:

- ★ Identify an invention and clearly state why it has been good or bad for society.
- ★ Include specific facts, details, reasons and examples to explain your choice.
- ★ 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.



**PENNSYLVANIA SYSTEM OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT
FALL 2000**

**GRADE 9
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

Your community has been awarded money to build a monument in honor of a person. Decide who should receive this honor.

Persuade your community leaders to accept your choice.

As you write your paper, remember to:

- ★ Choose someone and clearly state why this person deserves this honor.
- ★ Use specific facts, details, examples and reasons to persuade community leaders to select your choice.
- ★ 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.