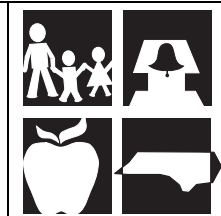


Assessment Brief



Public Schools of North Carolina • State Board of Education • Howard Lee, Chairman

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Participation in the North Carolina Writing Assessments at Grades 4, 7, and 10

March 6, 2007 • Vol. 8, No. 1

This brief is available on the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Testing Program Web site, <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/writing/>.

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North Carolina Writing Assessment Program

North Carolina began a statewide writing assessment program in the 1983–84 school year. Since that time, the North Carolina Writing Assessment Program has undergone significant changes. Changes within the program continue to reflect the importance of writing as a part of quality instruction.

Currently, all students in membership at grades 4, 7, and 10, including students who are repeating the grade, must participate in the standard administration of the North Carolina General Writing Assessment or a state-designated alternate assessment. The only exceptions to this policy are students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) who score below Intermediate High on the state-identified English language proficiency reading test and are in their first year in U.S. schools. These students are not required to participate in the standard administration of the North Carolina General Writing Assessment or a state-designated alternate assessment of writing.

Alternate Assessments for Writing

Beginning with the 2005–06 school year, the writing program expanded to include the *NCEXTEND2* Writing Assessment at grades 4 and 7. The *NCEXTEND2* Writing Assessment uses a modified test format and measures student performance against modified grade level achievement standards. It is the expectation that all students who participate in *NCEXTEND2* are receiving instruction in the grade level *Standard Course of Study* for the subject(s) in which the students are being assessed.

Parents of *NCEXTEND2* students, as part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team and as participants in the IEP process, are to be informed that their child's achievement will be measured in writing based on modified achievement standards.

Beginning with the 2006–07 school year, the *NCEXTEND2* OCS Writing Assessment (OCS 10) is available for students at grade 10 who are participating in the Occupational Course of Study.

NCCLAS may be administered for writing at grades 4, 7, and 10 to eligible students with disabilities and to students identified as limited English proficient that have been assessed on the state-identified English language proficiency tests as below Superior in writing and are in their first 2 years (24 months) in U.S. schools.

Writing Modes

For the 2006–2007 school year, the North Carolina General Writing Assessment at grades 4, 7, and 10 and the *NCEXTEND2* Writing Assessment at grades 4, 7, and OCS 10 assess writing using the following modes:

Grade Level	General Writing Assessment
4	Extended narrative response (personal or imaginative)
7	Extended argumentative response (problem/solution or evaluative)
10	Extended informational response (definition or cause/effect)

Grade Level	<i>NCEXTEND2</i> Writing Assessment
4	Extended narrative response (personal or imaginative)
7	Extended argumentative response (problem/solution or evaluative)
OCS 10	Expressive mode (letters or journal entries)

The extended **narrative response** at grade 4 tells a story or what happened. The narrative focuses on the sequencing of events within the overall action. In the *personal narrative*, the student recounts events that he or she has experienced, read, or heard about. In the *imaginative narrative*, the student writes about a situation or story based upon his or her imagination.

The extended **argumentative response** at grade 7 focuses on the student’s selection of evidence that justifies his or her position on a given issue. The specific types of argumentative writing assessed at grade 7 include problem/solution and evaluation. With *problem/solution*, the student identifies a problem, a conflict, or an issue of concern and presents one or more possible solutions. With *evaluative writing*, the student proposes a possible solution for an identifiable problem.

The extended **information response** at grade 10 involves the explanation and analysis of relationships. The specific types of informational writing assessed at Grade 10 include definition and cause/effect. With *definition* writing, the student identifies a key word or concept, explains it to the reader, and answers the question “What is it?” The student goes beyond the dictionary definition and elaborates on details and characteristics. With *cause and effect*, the writing focus may be on cause, effect(s), or both as appropriate to the specific task.

The *NCEXTEND2* OCS Writing Assessment at Grade 10 assesses **expressive** writing. With *expressive* writing, the student’s primary purpose is to explore and/or communicate his or her personal experiences and insights.

Scoring Model

The North Carolina Writing Assessment Program scoring model is comprised of two components: a content component and a conventions component. The content rubric concentrates on four features:

- **Focus** is the topic/subject established by the writer in response to the writing task.
- **Organization** is the progression, relatedness, and completeness of ideas.

- **Support and elaboration** is the extension and development of the topic/subject.
- **Style** is the control of language that is appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context of the writing task.

The conventions rubric concentrates on the grammatical structure. Conventions involve correctness in sentence formation, usage, and mechanics.

It is important to recognize that although the rubrics and the features of the *NCEXTEND2* Writing Assessment at grades 4 and 7 do not differ from the General Writing Assessment, it is in the application of those rubrics and criteria that a modified assessment is designed. The *NCEXTEND2* OCS Writing Assessment at grade 10 does differ from the General Writing Assessment and the rubrics and criteria are developed based on the North Carolina *Occupational Course of Study*.

Writing Scores in the ABCs and AYP

For the 2006–07 school year, the North Carolina General Writing Assessment results at grades 4, 7, and 10 will be included in the performance composite of the ABCs. The *NCEXTEND2* writing assessment results at grades 4 and 7 will be included in the performance composite of the ABCs. The general writing assessment at grade 10, in combination with the English I end-of-course assessment, will be included in AYP. The *NCEXTEND2* OCS Writing Assessment at Grade 10 will also be included in AYP; however, scores will be delayed. These scores will be released pending results of the standard setting process and the approval of the standards by the State Board of Education.

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