

Grade 7 Writing Sample Assessment

Common Formative Assessment for Grade 7 Writing

Assessment Topic: *Writing Strategies (Essays)*

“Unwrapped” Grade 7 Writing Priority Standards

- 1.0** Writing Strategies: Students WRITE clear, coherent, and focused essays. Writing DEMONSTRATES awareness of audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, bodies of supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students successfully USE the stages of the writing process, as needed.
- 1.1** Organization and Focus: CREATE an organizing structure to balance all aspects of the composition and USE effective transitions between sentences and ideas to UNIFY key ideas.
- 1.2** Organization and Focus: SUPPORT all statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and/or specific examples.
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“Unwrapped” Grade 7 Writing Graphic Organizer

Priority Standards (listed by number): 1.0, 1.1, 1.2

Concepts: Need to Know about Writing Strategies

Essays

- Audience awareness and purpose
- Formal introductions
- Supporting evidence
- Conclusions
- Stages of writing process

Organization and Focus

- Structure
- Composition
- Transitions
- Key ideas

• Support for statements/claims

- Anecdotes
- Descriptions
- Facts
- Statistics
- Specific examples

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Skills: Be *Able* to Do

(Note: Number in parentheses indicates approximate level of Bloom’s Taxonomy of thinking skills.)

- (2) DEMONSTRATE (audience awareness/purpose)
- (3) USE (writing process, transitions)
- (5) CREATE (organizing structure)
- (5) UNIFY (key ideas)
- (5) STRUCTURE (compositions)
- (5) SUPPORT (statements, claims)
- (6) WRITE (essays)

Big Ideas from “Unwrapped” Priority Standards

1. All essays need an organized beginning, middle, and end to accomplish the writer’s purpose.
2. Knowing who one is writing for is essential to engaging the readers.
3. Transitions are “word bridges” that tie one section of the essay to the next.
4. Key ideas need support for statements and claims.

Essential Questions Matched to Big Ideas

1. *Why is the structure of an essay important?*
(All essays should have a clearly organized beginning, middle, and end to accomplish the writer’s purpose.)
2. *How can an author “capture” an audience?*
(Knowing who one is writing for is essential to engaging the readers.)
3. *What are transitions? Why are they important?*
(Transitions are “word bridges” that tie one section of the essay to the next.)
4. *Why do writers need to justify their ideas?*
(Key ideas need support for statements and claims.)

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Common Formative Assessment, Section 1 Sample *Selected-Response* Items (Design Team Would Add Others)

Note: The following multiple-choice item—*written for educators, not students*—is included here to model several of the criteria for a well-written selected-response item to assess **proper use of transitions**. Teachers, of course, will select a passage or *article appropriate for their students* and then create the corresponding selected-response items using this format model.

The following assessment item has been designed to assess student understanding of all of these “unwrapped” concepts and skills:

- Level 3—USE (writing process, transitions)
- Level 5—UNIFY (key ideas)

Multiple Choice: Best Answer (correctly written)

Directions: Read the following paragraph from p. 68 of the book, *Common Formative Assessments* (2006), and then answer the related question.

“It is appropriate here to remember that several—perhaps as many as one per month—common formative pre- and post-assessments will be designed, administered, scored, and analyzed by each grade-level or department team during the course of each academic school year. _____, we recommend following the sequence of 10 steps for improving the use of common formative assessments that teacher teams design, administer, score, and analyze.”

Read this sentence.

_____, we recommend following the sequence of 10 steps for improving the use of common formative assessments that teacher teams design, administer, score, and analyze.

*Which word or phrase could **best** provide a transition that would unify its ideas with the previous sentence?* (Levels 3 and 5)

- A. After that
- B. For example
- C. In addition
- D. To accomplish this

Best Answer: “D”

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Meets Following Specific Guidelines: (see Correlation of Guidelines for others. p. 173)

- Self-contained question stem.
- Uses “best” answer instead of “correct” answer.
- Only one choice is *best* answer.
- Answer choices are reasonably equal in length.
- All distracters are plausible within the given context.
- Items address “unwrapped” concepts (transition, key ideas) and match rigor of “unwrapped” skill (unify) listed on graphic organizer.
- Question requires students to use higher-level thinking skill.

Common Formative Assessment, Section 2 Sample *Extended* Constructed-Response Items

Note: The following assignment—*written for educators, not students*—is included here to model several of the criteria for a well-written constructed-response item used to evaluate the reader’s ability to produce a **written summary of an article**. Teachers, of course, will select an article *appropriate for their students* and then create the corresponding assignment using this format model.

Assessment has been designed to assess student understanding of all of the following “unwrapped” concepts and skills. Note level of thinking skill in parentheses.

- (2) DEMONSTRATE (audience awareness/purpose)
- (3) USE (writing process, transitions, draft strategies)
- (5) CREATE (organizing structure)
- (5) UNIFY (key ideas)
- (5) STRUCTURE (compositions)
- (5) SUPPORT (statements, claims)
- (6) WRITE (essays)

Assignment: Read a nonfiction article and then write a summary (essay) of the article demonstrating effective writing strategies.

Directions, Part I: Read the following article summary on the topic of common formative assessments. (*Note:* Article not included here, but appears on pp. 154–155.) As you read, mark or highlight any key points. You will then write a summary (essay) of what you have read. You have _____ minutes to read, plan, write, and proofread your essay. You may reread or go back to the article at any time during the assessment.

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Directions, Part II: Now write a *summary of the article* in the form of a properly structured essay to share with another colleague. State the main ideas of the article and include the most important details that support the main ideas. Include any conclusions you have drawn regarding the value of using common formative assessments in the classroom, school, and district. Follow the established guidelines for proper essay writing. Use correct language conventions.

Your writing will be evaluated according to the criteria listed on the Constructed-Response Scoring Guide. Refer to the Scoring Guide for the specific requirements of the task. (*Note:* Relative point values for criteria on scoring guide will be decided by teacher and students *prior* to assignment.)

Constructed-Response Scoring Guide:

Exemplary

- All “Proficient” criteria *plus*:
- Includes real-life connection to, or experience with, topic
- Includes plan for follow-up discussions with colleague

Proficient

- Correctly identifies main ideas of article that must include:
 - Definitions
 - Guidelines for usage
 - Benefits
- Supports main ideas with important details from article
- Includes conclusions regarding value of topic to professional practice
- Follows established guidelines for proper essay writing
- Uses correct language conventions

Progressing

- Meets 5–7 of the 8 “Proficient” criteria

Beginning

- Meets fewer than 5 of the 8 “Proficient” criteria
- Task to be repeated after re-teaching

Teacher’s evaluation _____

Comments regarding student’s performance:

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Common Formative Assessment, Section 3 *Essential Questions with Big Ideas*

This portion of the common formative assessment requires students to demonstrate their *integrated* understanding of all the “unwrapped” concepts and skills in the targeted Priority Standards by expressing their understanding of the Big Ideas in their own words. Write your planned Essential Questions (and corresponding Big Idea responses for your own reference) in the space provided.

1. *Why is the structure of an essay important?* (All essays should have a clearly organized beginning, middle, and end to accomplish the writer’s purpose.)
2. *How can an author “capture” an audience?*
(Knowing who one is writing for is essential to engaging the readers.)
3. *What are transitions? Why are they important?*
(Transitions are “word bridges” that tie one section of the essay to the next.)
4. *Why do writers need to justify their ideas?*
(Key ideas need support for statements and claims.)

Teachers: Ask students to respond in writing to the four Essential Questions with their own Big Ideas. They should be able to explain their thinking using any of the “unwrapped” concept vocabulary (audience, organizing structure, transitions, support for evidence and claims, etc.) that they can. Provide students with the accompanying Generic Scoring Guide to reference as they complete the assignment.

Generic Scoring Guide:

Exemplary

- All “Proficient” criteria *plus*:
- Makes connections to other areas of school or life
- Provides example(s) as part of explanation

Proficient

- States Big Ideas correctly in own words
- Provides supporting details for each one
- Includes vocabulary of “unwrapped” concepts in explanation

Progressing

- Meets 2 of the “Proficient” criteria

Beginning

- Meets fewer than 2 of the “Proficient” criteria
- Task to be repeated after re-teaching

Teacher’s evaluation _____

Comments regarding student’s performance:

