

# Washington Comprehensive Assessment Program

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## Performance Level Descriptors

Performance Level Descriptors give teachers, parents/guardians and students more information about a student's strengths and areas for improvement after taking our state assessments. Performance Level Descriptors are broken down by grade and by the score levels students can earn: Basic (Level 2), Proficient (Level 3) and Advanced (Level 4). There are no descriptors for Below Basic (Level 1).



# Writing Working Descriptions of Performance

## Grade 10

### March 2004

#### Basic Writing Descriptors

##### Basic 10<sup>th</sup> grade writing exhibits:

- Concrete thinking, limited ability to distinguish between an idea and supportive detail as well as relevant and irrelevant details; black-and-white thinkers; some synthesis and analysis
- Blurred understanding of the difference between writing to explain and writing to persuade; tends to write “persuasive” papers to persuade
- Little expansion of ideas and elaboration of details (often only listed or general support); a skeleton but no flesh
- Some evidence of a plan
- Circular logic; repetition of ideas
- “Miss” organization; basic formulaic organization
- Little thinking about, or consideration of, style or audience
- Listed introductions and/or conclusions
- Basic, often ordinal, transitions between paragraphs; either lack of internal transitions or use of basic transitions such as “and” or “also”
- Presence of voice, but lacks authentic or intentional voice; often writes in passive voice
- “Kidspeak” (unable to—or doesn’t think to—adjust language for audience and purpose)
- Limited, predictable, non-specific vocabulary
- Limited sentence variety which affects the development of ideas
- Limited revision; haphazard editing—if at all
- A distracting misuse of conventions (errors in usage, capitalization, spelling, punctuation, paragraphing)
- Fragments and run-on sentences

#### Proficient Writing Descriptors

##### Proficient 10<sup>th</sup> grade writing exhibits:

- Connection to topic; communication of basic ideas although demonstrates some original thinking; an occasional “Ah-ha”
- Adequate control of topic; some courage or risk taking
- Understanding of the difference between writing to explain and writing to persuade
- Understanding of the difference between main idea and supporting details (examples, anecdotes, statistics, etc.)
- Adequate elaboration—often layered although may be uneven, inconsistent, or general
- Adequate sentence-to-sentence progression within paragraphs
- A logical organizational pattern (a thesis/topic/position statement, development, and conclusion)—although some lapses may occur
- Introductions sometimes pull the reader into the main idea or position; writes conclusions that leave the reader with something to think about
- Correct paragraphing (chunking material using transitions) for the most part
- Adequate—sometimes some sophisticated—transitions which serve to connect ideas between paragraphs; some internal transitions.

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- A sense of the person behind the words (voice); evidence of the writer’s own life in the communication (emotional connection)
- Adequate word choice; not fully in control; occasional use of “high power” word choice
- Some clichés
- An understanding of the difference between written and spoken language and what is appropriate (audience awareness)
- Adequate sentence variety but without the control demonstrated by advanced writers
- When writing persuasively, adequately uses words, phrases, and/or persuasive techniques that urge or compel the reader to support position; considers opposing argument(s)
- Deeper revision: evidence of strategies to revise (e.g., additions, deletions of words, phrases, chunks of writing)
- An ability to express complete thoughts in complete sentence structures
- Consistent use of a dictionary and/or spell check, and appropriate use of thesaurus
- Attention to editing; consistent application of the rules for capitalization, usage, punctuation, spelling; non-distracting use of conventions