



High School Anchor Set Annotations

**from the Spring 2008
Washington Assessment of
Student Learning in Writing**



August 2008

High School Anchor Set Annotations

from the Spring 2008 Washington Assessment of
Student Learning in Writing

Prepared by
Pearson Educational Measurement Scoring Directors
Nikki Elliott-Schuman, Writing Assessment Specialist, OSPI
Nancy Spane, Writing Assessment Specialist, OSPI
Linda Rebitzer, Administrative Assistant, OSPI

Assessment and Student Information
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dr. Terry Bergeson
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dr. Cathy Davidson
Chief of Staff

Dr. Joseph Willhoft
Assistant Superintendent, Assessment and Student Information

August 2008

Copyright © 2008 by Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. All rights reserved. Educational institutions within the State of Washington have permission to reproduce this document. All other individuals wishing to reproduce this document must contact OSPI.

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Old Capitol Building
P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200

For more information about the contents
of this document, please contact:

Nikki Elliott-Schuman, Writing Assessment Specialist
Email: Nikki.ElliottSchuman@k12.wa.us
Phone: 360.725.6341

or

Nancy Spane, Writing Assessment Specialist
Email: Nancy.Spane@k12.wa.us
Phone: 360-725-4979

To order more copies of this document,
please call 1-888-59-LEARN (1-888-595-3276)
or visit our Web site at <http://www.k12.wa.us/publications>

Please refer to the document number below for quicker service:
08-0023

This document is available online at:
<http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/WASL/WritingAssessment.aspx>

This material is available in alternative format upon request.
Contact the Resource Center at (888) 595-3276, TTY (360) 664-3631.

High School Anchor Set Annotations from the 2008 Washington Assessment of Student Learning

Table of Contents

I. Introduction:

- About the WASL in Writing i
- How to Use this Book iii
- Writing Prompts iv
- Writing Scoring Guides
 - Content, Organization, and Style Scoring Guide..... v
 - Conventions Scoring Guide vi

II. Expository Anchor Set and Annotations

- Student Papers Receiving a COS Score of 1 1
- Student Papers Receiving a COS Score of 2 9
- Student Papers Receiving a COS Score of 3 27
- Student Papers Receiving a COS Score of 4 48

III. Persuasive Anchor Set and Annotations

- Student Papers Receiving a COS Score of 1 64
- Student Papers Receiving a COS Score of 2 71
- Student Papers Receiving a COS Score of 3 90
- Student Papers Receiving a COS Score of 4 115

IV. Conventions Anchor Set and Annotations

- Student Papers Receiving a CONV Score of 0 131
- Student Papers Receiving a CONV Score of 1 140
- Student Papers Receiving a CONV Score of 2 151

About the Washington Assessment of Student Learning in Writing High School

Why test writing?

Learning to write is vital to a good education. It is an essential skill for succeeding in higher education, the workplace, and lifelong learning. Writing requires students to express their knowledge with purpose and coherence. As students learn to write, they sharpen their ability to clarify thoughts and organize ideas. Writing teaches mental discipline and precision by promoting careful, analytical thinking and demanding that students follow the rigors of correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, and usage/format.

Purpose and Content of the WASL

The writing section of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) is designed to measure student achievement of the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in writing.

The test includes two writing tasks or "prompts," one designed to elicit an extended **expository** response (e.g., the writer may explain, compare/contrast, analyze, and/or evaluate), and the other, a **persuasive** response. Although the second Essential Academic Learning Requirement states that students be able to write for "different...purposes" (or "modes"), holding the purposes/modes constant will ensure that the difficulty of the test is consistent from year to year.

The decision to limit the number of modes/purposes assessed is in no way meant to limit classroom instruction or district and classroom-based assessments. Expository and persuasive modes were chosen because learning to write for these purposes is essential if students are to perform well on the tasks expected of them in high school—on the reading and mathematics WASL, for example—as well as in the years to come.

Each writing prompt will clearly state a designated topic, audience, purpose (mode), and form. Research has shown that in order to be effective, a writer must understand the role and interaction of topic, audience, purpose, and form. Each prompt will contain an underlined verb—explain or inform for the expository prompt, persuade or convince for the persuasive prompt—which will serve to cue writing for the intended mode/purpose. In addition, each writing prompt will also specify a form, for example, letter, editorial, or essay. Therefore, a prompt might be written as follows: Decide on how much TV you think students should watch and then write an essay (form) to convince (persuasive mode) parents (audience) to follow your advice (topic).

Expository Writing:

For the purposes of the state assessment, an expository response is one that **explains or informs**. The writer should present information in a way that enhances the reader's understanding of the topic. Effective expository writing is usually, **but not always**, characterized by the following:

- narrowed topic and focus on main idea;
- well-chosen supporting details, which may include description, examples, anecdotes, reasons, and/or facts;
- logical, understandable organizational pattern;
- use of transitions to connect ideas;
- commitment to the topic (voice);
- an introduction and conclusion.

Sample expository prompts: (1) What object is most important to you? In an essay, explain to your teacher why it is your most important object, or (2) What is your favorite place? In an essay, explain to your teacher why it is your favorite place.

Persuasive Writing:

For the purposes of the state assessment, a persuasive response is one that is primarily written to persuade or convince the designated audience to support a point of view, make a decision, or take an action. Effective persuasive writing is usually, **but not always**, characterized by the following:

- topic or issue clearly stated in the introduction;
- a clear position and stays focused on that position;
- more than one argument to support position;
- detailed reasons, examples, and evidence to support arguments;
- anticipation and refuting of opposing arguments;
- a clear, logical organizational strategy which makes the best case for position;
- transitions to connect position, arguments, and evidence;
- an awareness of the audience demonstrated in the choice of words, details, and voice;
- persuasive language and techniques;
- an ending/conclusion which includes a call for action.

Sample persuasive prompts: (1) Think about something you would like changed at your school. In a letter to your principal persuade him or her to make that change, or (2) The school board is considering extending the school day. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper in which you persuade the readers to extend or not extend the school day.

A final note: Effective writing instruction includes teaching the traits of quality writing; a variety of modes/purposes and audiences; various forms of writing such as letters, newspaper articles, editorials, and memos; the writing process; and self reflection/goal setting. The overall goal of a comprehensive writing program is to support students in becoming clear, competent, and reflective writers who have the ability to adjust their writing for topic, audience, and purpose.

How to Use This Book

This booklet contains the anchor papers used to score the 2008 Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) in writing, high school. Anchor papers are concrete examples that illustrate the intent of the scoring guides. They serve as a reference point or "anchor" to ensure that scorers interpret and apply the scoring guides consistently.

The papers shown exemplify the full range of score points possible. For each of the two writing prompts students can earn up to:

- four points for content, organization, and style; and
- two points for conventions (grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, and spelling).

This booklet is divided into several sections:

- Student work on an **expository** prompt earning 4, 3, 2, and 1 point(s) in the area of content, organization, and style;
- Student work on a **persuasive** prompt earning 4, 3, 2, and 1 point(s) in the area of content, organization, and style; and
- Student work earning 2, 1, and 0 point(s) in the area of **conventions** (grammar/usage, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, and spelling).

At the beginning of each section you will see a list of typed annotations and scores for each paper within the section. The annotations and papers are numbered such as 10EA8a. This should be read as:

- 10= Grade Level (this is the same on every example)
- E= Expository ("P" for persuasive or "C" for conventions)
- A8= The number of the anchor paper (in this case #8)
- a= The first page of the students response; "b" would indicate the second page, "c" the third, and so on.

This is the numbering system used by the state's testing contractor. We have used this same numbering system to ensure accurate identification of papers should any questions arise. Make sure the number of the annotation you are reading matches the student sample. The score is shown at the end of each anchor paper: "COS" for content, organization, and style or "CONV" for conventions.

Review of these examples should help you better understand the level of work expected of students who meet the standard in writing. For additional assistance, please contact Nikki Elliott-Schuman at 360.725.6341 (nikki.elliottschuman@k12.wa.us) or Nancy Spane at 360.725.4979 (nancy.spane@k12.wa.us).

2008 Washington Assessment of Student Learning in Writing

High School Prompts

Expository Prompt

Think of someone—a classmate, friend, relative, teacher, or someone else—you would like to see again. Write a multiple-paragraph essay for your teacher in which you identify whom you would like to see again and explain why you would like to see him or her again.

Persuasive Prompt

To ensure that students have more time to focus on their schoolwork, the school board is considering a proposal that students be allowed to have a job only on weekends. Take a position on this proposal. In a multiple-paragraph letter, persuade the school board to support your position.

High School Content, Organization, & Style Scoring Guide

Points	Description
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains consistent focus on topic and has selected and relevant details • Has a logical organizational pattern and conveys a sense of completeness and wholeness • Provides transitions which clearly serve to connect ideas • Uses language effectively by exhibiting word choices that are engaging and appropriate for intended audience and purpose • Includes sentences, or phrases where appropriate, of varied length and structure • Allows the reader to sense the person behind the words
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains adequate focus on the topic and has adequate supporting details • Has a logical organizational pattern and conveys a sense of wholeness and completeness, although some lapses occur • Provides adequate transitions in an attempt to connect ideas • Uses adequate language and appropriate word choices for intended audience and purpose • Includes sentences, or phrases where appropriate, that are somewhat varied in length and structure • Provides the reader with some sense of the person behind the words
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an inconsistent focus and includes some supporting details, but may include extraneous or loosely related material • Shows an attempt at an organizational pattern, but exhibits little sense of wholeness and completeness • Provides transitions which are weak or inconsistent • Has a limited and predictable vocabulary which may not be appropriate for the intended audience and purpose • Shows limited variety in sentence length and structure • Attempts somewhat to give the reader a sense of the person behind the words
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates little or no focus and few supporting details which may be inconsistent or interfere with the meaning of the text • Has little evidence of an organizational pattern or any sense of wholeness and completeness • Provides transitions which are poorly utilized, or fails to provide transitions • Has a limited or inappropriate vocabulary for the intended audience and purpose • Has little or no variety in sentence length and structure • Provides the reader with little sense of the person behind the words
Z	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response is “I don’t know”; response is a question mark (?); response is one word; response is only the title of the prompt; or the prompt is simply recopied

High School Conventions Scoring Guide

Points	Description
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently follows the rules of Standard English for grammar and usage • Consistently follows the rules of Standard English for spelling of commonly used words • Consistently follows the rules of Standard English for capitalization • Consistently follows the rules of Standard English for punctuation • Exhibits the use of complete sentences except where purposeful fragments are used for effect • Indicates paragraphs consistently
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally follows the rules of Standard English for grammar and usage • Generally follows the rules of Standard English for spelling of commonly used words • Generally follows the rules of Standard English for capitalization • Generally follows the rules of Standard English for punctuation • Generally exhibits the use of complete sentences except where purposeful fragments are used for effect • Indicates paragraphs for the most part
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly does not follow the rules of Standard English for grammar and usage • Mostly does not follow the rules of Standard English for spelling of commonly used words • Mostly does not follow the rules of Standard English for capitalization • Mostly does not follow the rules of Standard English for punctuation • Exhibits errors in sentence structure that impede communication • Mostly does not indicate paragraphs
Z	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response is “I don’t know”; response is a question mark (?); response is one word; response is only the title of the prompt; or the prompt is simply recopied

Principles of Holistic Scoring:

- **Density:** We weigh the proportion of errors to the amount of writing done well. This includes the ratio of errors to length.
- **Variety:** We consider the range of errors across the categories included in the rubric (usage, grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, sentence formation, and paragraphing).
- **Severity:** We weigh basic errors more heavily than higher level errors. We also weigh basic spelling and sentence formation errors more heavily.