

Description of DWA Writing Achievement Levels

Utah Direct Writing Assessment (DWA)

May 2005

GRADE 6

The following descriptions of student writing skills are based on responses to the Utah Direct Writing Assessment.

Level 1: *Minimal Achievement*

Students performing at the *Minimal* level should be able to:

- provide some details and support for ideas;
- show a limited sense of organization;
- communicate on a basic level;
- use simple vocabulary to convey ideas;
- demonstrate minimal awareness of sentence structure; and
- demonstrate very limited skill in applying writing conventions.

Level 2: *Partial Achievement*

Students performing at the *Partial* level should be able to:

- create an appropriate response to a writing task;
- convey a main idea or purpose;
- provide moderate detail and support for ideas;
- show a basic level of organization;
- communicate in formulaic writing patterns;
- use limited vocabulary to convey ideas;
- use simple sentence structure consistently; and
- demonstrate limited skill in applying writing conventions.

Level 3: *Sufficient Achievement*

Students performing at the *Sufficient* level should be able to:

- create an effective response to a writing prompt;
- convey a clearly expressed and focused main idea;
- provide sufficient elaboration and support for ideas;
- use effective organization to structure text;
- demonstrate an awareness of an audience;
- indirectly acknowledge other opinions on the subject
- use appropriate vocabulary to for topic and audience;
- demonstrate purposeful use of varied sentence structure; and
- show adequate skill in applying writing conventions.

Description of DWA Writing Achievement Levels (grade 6)

Level 4: *Substantial Achievement*

Students performing at the *Substantial* level should be able to:

- create an effective and elaborated response to a writing prompt;
- convey a clear, focused, and persuasive main idea;
- provide substantial elaboration and support for ideas;
- demonstrate effective organization that enhances the text;
- demonstrate an awareness of the intended audience;
- clearly acknowledge other opinions on the subject and may refute them;
- write with an expressive and engaging personal style;
- apply a rich and appropriate vocabulary to create vivid imagery;
- demonstrate sentence fluency with a natural flow and rhythm; and
- show enhanced expression through control of writing conventions.

Note: The description of writing achievement levels was developed by the DWA standard setting participants and USOE assessment specialists. Phrasing of the descriptions was primarily based upon the DWA scoring rubric. In addition, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) standards for achievement were used to inform the process and draft the definitions.