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ABSTRACT

Intended to familiarize persons with the scoring standards and criteria used for the Georgia Basic Skills Writing Test, this scoring manual is in eight sections: (1) an introduction to the scoring dimensions and scale points; (2) definitions of the four scale points; (3) definitions of scoring dimensions and components (content and organization, style, sentence formation, usage, and mechanics); (4) guidelines for scoring; (5) suggestions for keeping the dimensions separate; (6) model papers; (7) nonscorable paper codes; and (8) a glossary. (SR)

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ED300817

Scoring  
Manual

# Georgia Basic Skills Writing Test

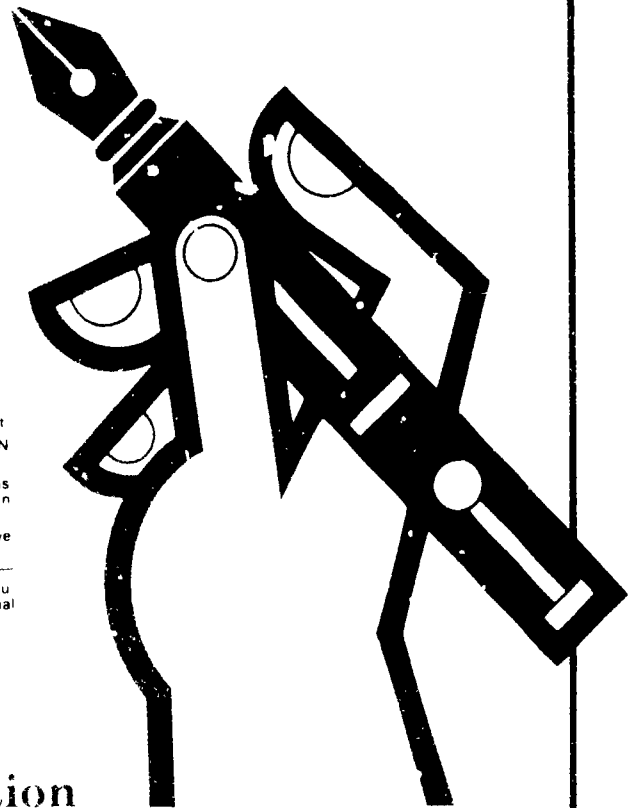
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# GEORGIA BASIC SKILLS WRITING TEST

## Scoring Manual

[ Version of 2/1/87 ]

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## Introduction

The information contained in this manual is intended to familiarize interested persons with the scoring standards and criteria used for the *Georgia Basic Skills Writing Test*. The material included was taken from the actual training manual used to train raters to understand and apply the scoring system. In the actual training process, the training manual is used in conjunction with a computer workstation. The training manual provides definitions and descriptions of the scoring dimensions and the score scale and specific directions about the rating of real papers. The computer workstation directs the rater-trainee in practice exercises and provides feedback regarding practice.

## Introduction to the Scoring Dimensions and Scale Points

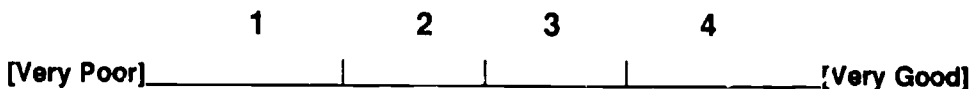
A list of the five Scoring Dimensions, their definitions, and the components that apply to each dimension are provided on Page 4. You should read this page carefully and thoroughly and refer to it often--throughout training and also throughout scoring. You may want to remove this page from your manual so that you can refer to it easily, if a separate copy of the page is not provided you for this purpose.

A score of "1" to "4" is to be assigned for each one of the five dimensions of writing. Appearing beneath the name of each dimension is a list of the components which "define" that dimension. Different aspects of writing competence are to be evaluated in the different dimensions. While the dimensions are interrelated during the writing process, writing strengths and weaknesses are rated only once during the scoring process. In other words, a particular strength or weakness is not rated in two or more dimensions.

Refer to the page listing the five Scoring Dimensions to be sure in which dimension a particular aspect of writing is to be rated. A detailed discussion of the dimension follows the definitions of the scale points.

## Definitions of the Four Scale Points

Try to visualize each dimension represented on a line that goes from "Very Poor" to "Very Good." Along the way, four regions are defined and labeled 1, 2, 3, and 4. Such a representation is shown below:



This figure shows that each score point represents a range on the dimension. There can be low 2's, high 2's, and typical 2's. The same is true for the other points. A particular paper that you are reading and scoring will rarely seem exactly like the definitions of the four points, but it will be more like one than the other. In other words, a paper that is more like a 3 than a 4, and more like a 3 than a 2, would be rated 3 on that dimension.

**Score Point 1:** The writing is **Inadequate**. Very few if any of the components for the dimension are demonstrated.

**Score Point 2:** The writing is **Minimal**. Some of the components for the dimension are demonstrated.

**Score Point 3:** The writing is **Good**, yet, not exceptional. Many of the components are demonstrated, and these are demonstrated successfully.

**Score Point 4:** The writing is **Very Good**. Most of the components of the dimension are demonstrated, and these are demonstrated consistently.

**NOTE:** A paper might *not* demonstrate competence in *each* component listed under a particular dimension, yet still be scored a "4" on that dimension. Another paper may demonstrate competence in one component but be so weak in other components that those weaknesses overpower the single strength. Thus, this second paper may thus receive a score of "1" on that dimension because of overpowering weaknesses. In other words, strengths may compensate for weaknesses, and weaknesses may overpower strengths.

### Definitions of Scoring Dimensions and Components

In the next section each one of the five dimensions is presented separately. Terms are defined, followed by writing samples selected to illustrate the meaning of some key terms. Definitions of *dimension* and *component* are given below.

**Dimension:** The Georgia Department of Education has identified several basic qualities in any piece of effective writing, regardless of the topic or type (narrative, expository). The qualities are: **Content and Organization; Style; Sentence Formation; Usage; and Mechanics**. Each of these is referred to as a *dimension* or *domain* of writing.

**Component:** A component is one of the list of aspects to be considered within a particular dimension. A complete listing of all the scoring dimensions and the components for each dimension appears on Page 4. For example, *clear pronoun reference* is a component of the dimension **Usage**. When you are deciding on your rating for **Usage** on a student paper, you would look for demonstrated competence in pronoun reference, along with competence in the other components of that dimension.

## Georgia Basic Skills Writing Test Scoring Dimensions, Definitions and Components

**CONTENT/ORGANIZATION:** The writer establishes the controlling idea through examples, illustrations and facts or details. There is evidence of a sense of order which is clear and relevant.

- Clearly established controlling idea
- Clearly developed supporting ideas
- Sufficiently relevant supporting ideas
- Clearly discernible order of presentation
- Logical transitions and flow of ideas
- Sense of completeness

**STYLE:** The writer controls language to establish his/her individuality.

- Concrete images and descriptive language
- Easily readable
- Varied sentence patterns
- Appropriate tone for topic, audience and purpose

**SENTENCE FORMATION:** The writer forms effective sentences.

- Appropriate end punctuation
- Complete sentences or functional fragments
- Appropriate coordination and/or subordination

**USAGE:** The writer uses standard American English.

- Clear pronoun references
- Correct subject-verb agreement
- Standard form of verbs and nouns
- Correct word choice

**MECHANICS:** The writer employs devices necessary in standard written American English.

- Appropriate capitalization
- Appropriate internal punctuation
- Appropriate formatting
- Correct spelling

**Score Point 1:** The writing is **Inadequate**. Very few if any of the components for the dimension are demonstrated.

**Score Point 2:** The writing is **Minimal**. Some of the components for the dimension are demonstrated.

**Score Point 3:** The writing is **Good**, yet, not exceptional. Many of the components are demonstrated, and these are demonstrated successfully.

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- Sufficiently relevant supporting ideas
- Clearly discernible order of presentation
- Logical transitions and flow of ideas
- Sense of completeness

**Controlling idea:** The controlling idea of a piece of writing is not the same as the written "thesis statement," although the controlling idea may be expressed in the form of such a statement. The controlling idea may be either stated or implied; if stated, it may appear toward the beginning or toward the end of the piece of writing, or even inserted in the middle of the text. It may be stated in several sentences. The controlling idea may be apparent to the reader even though there is no direct "thesis statement." The writer may present a written thesis statement, but the actual controlling idea may differ somewhat from the statement. To determine the controlling idea of a piece, ask yourself, "If I had to sum up this piece of writing in one brief sentence, what would that sentence be?"

**Order of presentation:** A piece of writing may be ordered or organized in many different ways: chronological; a listing of ideas related to the topic; a series of examples illustrating the controlling idea; a comparison or contrast; identification of a problem followed by a proposed solution; a generalization followed by a narrative illustration of the generalization. These are but a few of the possible orders. In an effective piece of writing, the order of presentation is appropriate to the controlling idea.



**CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION:**  
Controlling Idea and Order of Presentation

Statements suggesting the writer's *controlling idea* are underlined. Note the repetition and slight variation of the thesis in the last paragraph. The actual controlling idea and thesis statement are not identical in this piece. The controlling idea is limited to what the two girls "share"; it does not include "why" they are friends.

*Order of presentation* is established in the third paragraph (look a'ike, same taste in boys, same taste in clothes, do everything together). Each one of these points illustrating what the two girls share in common is addressed in the established order.

"Are yall twins", he asked me and my best friend Paige.

"No, just best friends", I replied to his question.

Paige and I share alot in common. I guess that's why we're best friends. We look alot alike. We have the same ~~same~~<sup>taste</sup> in boyz and girls clothes, plus we do everything together.

Everywhere we go people think we're sisters. We both have dark brown hair and green eyes. We are both 5 foot 1 and built the same. I think its a complement when people say I look like Paige. She is really pretty.

Paige and I go shopping together and talk to each other about boyz. We both like the same kind of clothes, so we wear each others clothes and try new ideas. Paige and I always have boyfriends that look sortof alike because we have the same taste in boyz. We can relate to each others picklers about boyz because we always have the same problems.

We do everything together. shopping, dates, vacation, you name it. We do it! sometimes we

~~we~~ have to spend time away from each other on every row and then we call one of our other friends and do something with them. That way we don't get tired of each other and end up hating one another.

We share a lot of things in common.

It's a very special feeling to have someone that you can share things in common with.

**CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION:**  
Controlling Idea and Order of Presentation

Although a thesis is attempted in the first sentence (underlined), the piece has no clear controlling idea. The piece, a random listing of details, also lacks a clearly discernible order of presentation.

My favorite hobby is music. I have enjoyed playing and listening to music all my life. I play percussion, drums, mallets, piano, and xylophone for 6 years. My favorite music is classic, jazz, rock, country, and love songs. I started playing music in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade at E.W. Oliver. I also want to learn how to play oboe, clarinet, trombone, and trumpet. One day I would like to major in music at Georgia State University, and become a director. I also like music, because I can relax while I am playing or listening to it.

**CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION:**  
Controlling Idea and Order of Presentation

The writer's *controlling idea* ("I live by the Golden Rule because it helps me get along with people") is established by the opening paragraph and clearly implied throughout the piece. Note that there is no single thesis statement.

The *order of presentation*, an opening generalization followed by a specific illustrative example, is clearly discernible. The example itself is ordered chronologically.

The motto that I live by is the saying "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." I believe you should treat people in the best way you know how, even if they do treat you badly. This motto helps me get along with people better than I would if I treated them like dirt.

I have used this motto many times in my life. Just a few weeks ago, I used this rule when I was playing football with my cousins. I had just thrown an interception. My oldest cousin ran me down for it. He said if I had thrown to him, we would have scored a touchdown. Later on in the ball game, my oldest cousin decided he would be quarterback. I was wide open on a certain play. Instead, he threw to another receiver and the ball was intercepted. I did not fuss him out like he did me. I just told him, "Good try, maybe next time we will get them." I think he became ashamed of what he had said just ten minutes ago. Everyone was waiting on me to jump back at him but I never

did. This gained me more of my cousin's respect. It also made me play better the rest of the ball game. After this interception, I led my team to victory.

By making this decision, I came out a whole lot better than if I had smacked off to him. I believe this type of conclusion is why everyone should use the motto, no matter what the circumstances.

**STYLE:** The writer controls language to establish his/her individuality.

- Concrete images and descriptive language
- Easily readable
- Varied sentence patterns
- Appropriate tone for topic, audience and purpose

**Images, or concrete images:** A writer uses imagery when he or she uses descriptive language that appeals to the senses of the reader. This type of language enables the reader to "experience" the piece of writing more or less directly.

**Readable:** "Readable" does not refer to the legibility of the handwriting. Rather, it addresses the ease with which the piece of writing could be read aloud without false starts or backing up and re-reading to "make sense."

**Sentence patterns:** The pattern of a sentence refers to the grammatical structure, the order of the words, and the length. Some of the possible sentence patterns are: simple, compound, complex, subject-first, beginning with a phrase or clause, or beginning with a sentence connective.

**Tone:** Tone indicates the writer's sensitivity to the purpose of the piece of writing and to the effect the piece of writing should have on the audience. Simply, tone refers to the general mood or emotion brought forth by the piece of writing. Tone may be formal or informal, witty, ironic, sarcastic, humorous, informative, sorrowful, ecstatic...and so on.

STYLE:  
Sentence Patterns

The sentences are *not varied*: almost all of the sentences follow a "We-plus-verb" pattern. Only three of the sentences begin differently. The repetitions are circled. There is only minimal variety in terms of length.

my best friend and I are alike in many ways. (We go) everywhere together. (We go) to the movies all the time. We like to ride our bikes for miles. (We also go) to each other's family get-togethers. (We like) the same stuff. (We both like) to watch television and listen to the radio. She and I both like spaghetti and meatballs. (We both like) talking on the phone. (We also like) the same thing in a guy. We (both) want him to be nice and kind. (We would both like) him to respect us and like us for what we are. (We would also like) him to be fairly cute. These are just a few of the things that tell you how my best friend and I are alike in our way.

**STYLE:**  
Sentence Patterns and Concrete Images

The *sentence patterns* in this piece are varied. Sentence beginnings include subject-first, opening phrases and clauses, and sentence connectives. The grammatical structure and length are also varied.

Some of the images (underlined) are concrete, appealing to the reader's sense of sight (the appearance of the two bikes, where they looked for the lost bike), and sense of touch (temperature outside on Christmas day).

The first thing I remember doing was learning to ride my bike. Every day, my mother would go out on our subdivision streets with me and attempt to teach me how to ride the bicycle. I wanted to learn so that I could ride up and down the street with my friends. So, my mom would hold onto the back of the bicycle seat to balance me and, as I would pedal, she would then run along behind. I was scared that she would lose her grip and let me fall, so she bought me a set of training wheels. It seemed much easier to ride with them and I progressed my learning quickly. After a few weeks, I began to practice riding without the training wheels. Gradually, the riding became easier, and I rode without the training wheels more and more. Now, I can ride my bicycle with ease. Sometimes, I ride with just one hand!

During the time I was learning to ride my bicycle, the bike was stolen. It was an old, white, rusty bicycle that belonged to my aunt when she was young. I was very upset because I really wanted to learn how to ride and I couldn't very well do that if I didn't have a bicycle to learn on. So, for the next few days, my parents and I walked around our neighborhood, looking for the bike. We looked in the



woods and creeks behind some houses. We walked  
all around the streets in the area. No one we asked  
had seen the bicycle. After about four days of  
searching, we gave up hope on ever seeing it again.  
But, the next day, the bike appeared on our front porch  
from where it was stolen. It was a very strange  
situation. We never found out who stole my bike.

A few years ago, I was using my mom's 10-speed  
bike to ride on. The bike was always available because  
she never rode it, but I wanted one of my own. So, one  
Christmas morning, I woke up to open my presents,  
hoping to find a bicycle under the tree. After all  
the presents were opened, there was still no bike. I  
was extremely disappointed, but I figured I'd live  
through it. Mom asked me to go turn off the oven in  
the kitchen, and I did as she asked. When I walked  
into the kitchen, the first thing I noticed was a brand-  
new, shiny, blue bicycle! I was so excited! I got dressed  
and went outside. Even though it was very cold, I  
still rode around for about thirty minutes. It was a  
great Christmas!

I'm really glad I went through the process of  
learning how to ride on that rusty, old bicycle even  
though it was difficult. If I hadn't, I wouldn't have  
gotten my brand-new, shiny, blue one.

**SENTENCE FORMATION:** The writer forms effective sentences.

- Appropriate end punctuation
- Complete sentences or functional fragments
- Appropriate coordination and/or subordination

**End punctuation:** End punctuation refers to the use of the period, question mark, or exclamation point to mark the end of a sentence. The absence of appropriate end punctuation creates sentence formation errors known as a comma splice or a fused sentence. A comma splice error occurs when two sentences are linked with a comma ("The weather was cold, I wore my dad's jacket"). A fused sentence or run-on error occurs when two sentences are run together without any punctuation.

**Fragment, or sentence fragment:** As the term suggests, a fragment refers to an incomplete sentence which is lacking one or more of its parts but is written as if it were a complete sentence. A fragment may be caused by improper punctuation, as when a writer places a period between a main clause and the subordinate clause ("The happiest time of my life was when we went to Walt Disney World. Because that was our first vacation as a family.") Such a punctuation-based fragment is considered an error in sentence formation. A "functional fragment" is one over which the writer seems to have control, one which is used to create a particular effect ("And when were we leaving? In the morning! Bright and early!")

**Coordination:** Coordination refers to the connecting of equal grammatical structures to provide equal emphasis. Coordinating elements include (but are not limited to) connectors such as "and," "but," and "or." The semi-colon, used to connect two independent clauses, serves as a signal of coordination.

**Subordination:** Subordination refers to a method of connecting structures so as to give some structures lesser emphasis than others. Examples of subordinating connectors are "because," "when," "if," "after," "while," "although," "so that," "who," "which" and "that."

**SENTENCE FORMATION:**  
Sentence Fragments and End Punctuation

Non-functional sentence fragments are underlined. Missing end punctuation noted is with  $\Delta$ . The absence of appropriate end punctuation creates fused sentences.

Using drugs can kill you or any other people riding with them or without them. Some people get drunk or high go out get in your car drive down the road someone pulls out in front of you and because you drunk  $\Delta$  or whatever the case may be your to slow to react and you hit them. lets say you killed the one in the car. Your going to have a bunch of charges. Some of them could be DUI and Attempted murder. And your going to be there in the jail for a long time. So don't drink and drive  $\Delta$  its just murder on our souls.

I think suicide is crazy but people do it  $\Delta$  mostly people on drugs or alcohol do it and never know it until its too late. People on drugs and alcohol have jumped off buildings out of trees anything you can think of them thought they was some kind of super hero.

This is what makes life hard people do this all the time and when you get old your affraid for your kids  $\Delta$  they might try the drugs or alcohol or whatever and they just might get killed. So watch out and please don't drink or get high and drive. Because its hard to get somethings out of life if your not here to get it.

## SENTENCE FORMATION:

## Coordination

The coordinating connector is enclosed in a box , and the elements which are connected (clauses, verbs) are circled.

Note: not all instances are marked.

I had been assigned the job to straighten the house.  My mother was planning a shower, and  wanted everything in perfect order she had to leave the house, so go pick up supplies, and left me in charge of the cleaning duties.

I was tired of working.  I had cheered my heart out the night before, and  I wanted to rest.  I thought I could just lie down a few moments and then I'd be ready to go again. That was my biggest mistake. I ended up falling into a deep sleep, and I didn't hear her. As my mother returned an hour later needless to say she wasn't very happy.  I endured the yelling and screaming  and tried to make up for my mistake.

We finally came to a stopping point later on that night.  I went on to bed,  but  my mother was upset that she was behind and stayed up she completed the jobs I had been assigned.

The next morning as we were getting ready for church, I noticed all my jobs I had been told to do, were done. My mother had not gotten the sleep in which she needed, but I didn't complain as I had the day before.

I learned my lesson from all this. I had complained about not being treated equal, when they did treat me as an equal, I acted like a child. In the future I will handle my responsibility as I should.

SENTENCE FORMATION:  
Subordination

Subordinate clauses are enclosed in brackets. Subordinating connectors are underlined.

My favourite holiday

My favourite holiday is Christmas. I choose Christmas as my favourite holiday because it's the time of year when a person can give and receive lots of love. During Christmas many people go to visit their relatives, others stay home. Most people like Christmas for many different reasons. I like Christmas because one can celebrate the birth of Christ. I feel that that's the best season a person could have for being Christmas. Children like Christmas because they know that on Christmas Eve, Santa's coming to bring them in lots of toys and presents and in return they leave him milk and cookies. Yet, still there are other reasons for being ~~the~~ Christmas such as no school. That's another good reason. Christmas is probably everyone's favourite holiday.

**USAGE:** The writer uses standard American English.

- Clear pronoun references
- Correct subject-verb agreement
- Standard form of verbs and nouns
- Correct word choice

**Standard American English, standard form:** "Standard" refers to careful word choice and to the use of those grammatical conventions agreed upon as the "language of the marketplace." Standard American English avoids the use of slang, jargon, regionalisms, and illiterate forms except when appropriate to the topic and the audience. Also, standard American English uses the agreed-upon forms for plurals, possessives, subject-and-verb agreement and the formation of verb tenses. Competence and errors in usage can be "heard."

**Pronoun reference:** Pronoun reference involves the relationship between a single word or group of words (the antecedent) and the pronoun replacement. The meaning of the pronoun should be immediately obvious to avoid confusion. Clarity is achieved through consistency of person and number ("My favorite *sport* is *volley ball*, but I like swimming too. *They* have to be played with teammates..." "They" refers to both sports, while the writer intends a singular reference to volleyball, or "It"). Broad references ("it," "this") can create confusion, particularly when overused.

**Word choice:** Word choice refers to the writer's use of words which *express his or her ideas clearly* and which demonstrate appropriate usage. For example, word choice includes an awareness of the differences between "a" and "an," "accept" and "except" and "lie" and "lay." Word choice also includes the appropriate forms of adjectives and adverbs, ("the *worst* time in my life," "*really* hard") and correct pronoun case ("My parents gave *my* brother and *me*").

## USAGE:

## Pronoun Reference, Standard Form of Verbs, and Word Choice.

Errors in usage are marked. Corrections are provided. Correct usage is also identified.

Note: not all instances are marked

My special gift was a ring. It was given to me by my boyfriend, as a Christmas gift. The day after Christmas he came over my house. I asked him to come in, my cousin was with him. We sat on the sofa talked awhile, then he told me he had to go. My aunt had to take him home. He gave me a small box, wrapped very pretty. Then I went in the living room, and got his gift from under the Christmas tree. I gave him his gift. He left after we exchanged gifts.

Pronoun reference clear

Correct form of verb

Pronoun reference clear

Pronoun reference not clear.  
Is "we" the writer and the boyfriend or does it also include the cousin?

Incorrect form of verb.  
Should appear: "had given."

incorrect form of verb.  
Should appear: "had received."

Incorrect word choice and verb form. Should appear: "if I liked it."

After he had left my sisters wanted to see what he had gave me. I didn't want anyone to see, so I went in the bathroom and opened it. When I saw the ring, I was so happy I cried. Then I showed my sisters what I had got. About 20 minutes later he called and asked me did I like it. He said yes. I had to go because I was going bowling. All night I thought about how much he really cared about me.



**USAGE:**  
Standard Form, Word Choice, Subject-Verb Agreement

Errors in usage are marked. Corrections are provided. Correct usage is also identified.

Note: not all instances are marked.

Correct verb formation  
and tense.

Subject-verb agreement error  
Should appear: "it affects"

Incorrect word choice.  
Should appear as "The  
reason...is that" or "I  
would like to ...because."

Correct word choice -  
pronoun case.

Incorrect word choice.  
"Surrounding" cannot be  
used to refer to people.

Subject-verb agreement error  
Should appear: "appearance  
is."

Incorrect word choice.  
"Well" is not an appro-  
priate adjective for  
"appearance."

Incorrect word choice:  
"Won't" for "want." This  
is an error that can be  
heard.

Would you like to make a change in yourself.

I would like to make a big change in my self, because I feel that I do not have the attitude that a young lady my age should have the right appearance, and the way I act towards my peers. ~~the~~ To make a change in your- self you really have to believe in it so you can make that change. I plan to change ~~my~~ attitude, and I hope it affect me in the way my peers can understand. Why I would I like to make the change is because my family, peers, and other surrounding do not under- stand my appearance, attitude, and the way I act. I am not a bad person but some- times I have a nasty attitude. ~~my appearance are~~ not so well. sometime I don't know how to act toward my peers. I want to make this change because I will be a better off person. I will get a good ~~stay~~, stay in school, and have ~~(more friend)~~ and succeed in life. If you make a change in your-self you will come out bet- ter than ever in life, your environment, attitude appearance, and the way you act will change.

Nonstandard form of noun  
plural. Should appear  
"friends."

Incorrect word choice.  
Should appear "a better  
person."

**MECHANICS:** The writer employs devices necessary in standard written American English.

- Appropriate capitalization
- Appropriate internal punctuation
- Appropriate formatting
- Correct spelling

**Internal punctuation:** As opposed to "end punctuation," internal punctuation appears within a sentence: for example, quotation marks and commas in dialogue; commas between words in a series; commas after introductory clauses and phrases; commas setting off non-restrictive elements; commas after transition words. Such errors have to be "seen" to be noted.

**Formatting:** Formatting refers to the layout of the piece of writing on the page--margins, paragraph indentation, spacing between words and spacing between sentences. Writers and readers have agreed on certain spatial conventions for clarity and ease of reading, and words are placed on the page in accordance with these conventions. Formatting also refers to the appropriate grouping of related information into paragraphs.

**MECHANICS:**  
Internal Punctuation

Instances of correct and incorrect internal punctuation are noted.

I believe that to be a good neighbor or family member one must be friendly, caring, and patient. My definition of a good neighbor and family member is someone who takes time to do for others. ~~When~~ ~~everything~~ ~~is~~ ~~alright~~ ~~and~~ ~~see~~ ~~others~~ ~~through~~ ~~hand~~ ~~tried~~. Most importantly, a good family member or neighbor will always be thinking of others instead of himself. Of course you cannot spend all of your time doing for others but at least try to be considerate. Being considerate to a neighbor might mean just picking up a piece of trash from her yard or maybe going to help rake her yard during the fall. ~~It~~ ~~is~~ ~~for~~ ~~your~~ ~~family~~ ~~just~~ ~~because~~ ~~it~~ ~~may~~ ~~suit~~ ~~you~~ ~~to~~ ~~turn~~ ~~your~~ ~~radio~~ ~~on~~ ~~at~~ ~~a~~ ~~high~~ ~~volume~~. ~~I~~ ~~may~~ ~~not~~ ~~see~~ ~~them~~ ~~so~~ ~~try~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~considerate~~ and keep the sound down. Not only are the visual aids or help, such as raking, appreciated but also the mental encouragement. Many times after your neighbor has lost a family member to death or a family member had a friend move away, a simple consolation hug or talk is greatly appreciated. So as you can see being a good neighbor or family member is quite easy as long as you always think of others.

comma following introductory clause

comma separating words in a series

comma after introductory transition

commas to set off a parenthetical element

comma missing before coordinating conjunction

comma missing after introductory clause

MECHANICS:  
Formatting

Like Summer Sands

~~Remembering back to~~  
when I was about three years of age,  
I can see my self and my parents  
on the way to the Beaches of Jekyll  
Island for a vacation.

Paragraph indentation of three inches exceeds the general rule of one inch.

~~I remember being stoned~~  
on the beach, joyful in the  
park, and sleepy as my father  
held me in his arms as  
we walked around and looked at the  
many quaint shops.

The first two single sentence paragraphs should be formatted as a single paragraph. Each paragraph is too short and the ideas are related.

The beach was quite  
an experience the water could have  
been the whole world in my small  
eyes. ~~I was very afraid of the~~  
~~sand because the wind~~  
blowing ~~wisp~~ of it onto my eyes.  
This was the first time I had seen  
so much water and so many crowds of  
people.

The amount of space separating words and sentences interferes with ease of reading.

The park was the  
most fun of all. ~~of~~ the children, ice  
cream, and rides. I had not a

Call in the world as I jumped from  
 the merry-go-round to the swing and  
 the slide. There was Chubby-faced  
 red-hearted man selling ice cream he  
 picked me up and let me climb into  
 his cart and chase what ever I  
 wanted. This was tops to me!

I can remember being  
 so sleepy my that father carried me  
 in his arms as we walked  
 around at the shops and the people.

This is a special  
 moment in my life because it is  
 the first thing that I can remember  
 doing there were alot of <sup>small</sup> memories  
 compiled into this one memory.

## Guidelines for Scoring

1. Leave your personal grading standards at home. Put away any preconceived ideas you might have as to what ought to be expected of a student at this age or grade level. Rate each paper only for the five dimensions defined in this Manual, only for the components outlined for each dimension and only on the four-point scale given you.
2. Remember throughout training and scoring that you are to operate from a *competence perspective* -- not an *error perspective*. This means that in order to rate a paper accurately, you must read it looking for a *demonstration of competence* in each dimension based on the components listed. To "count errors" as you read will often cause you to make mistakes in judgment. Rather, you should be continually asking yourself as you read, "Has this writer demonstrated his or her competence in this dimension, and if so, how well?" The model papers will serve as your guide for defining this competence.
3. Don't confuse the appearance of the paper with competence. Assign a score based on each dimension-- *not* on the length, neatness or legibility of the paper.
4. Keep in mind that you are scoring the writing sample, not the writer. Your subjective response ("I like this kid," "I find this topic boring," "I agree with what the writer is saying," "I wish the writer had not shared this information with me") is to be kept separate from the scores you assign.
5. Remember that the scale contains four points and four points only. A paper can't receive a score of "0" or "5." Review the model papers and their annotations periodically to avoid redefining the scale because of the papers you have read.
6. If the writer provided a title at the beginning of the essay, you should *not* consider that a part of the text you are scoring.
7. Papers that cannot be assigned a rating of "1" to "4" are discussed in the scoring portion of this manual under "Non Scorable Paper Codes."

## Suggestions for Keeping the Dimensions Separate

**Content/Organization:** Read the paper looking for evidence of a stated or implied controlling idea (not necessarily a thesis statement or statement of purpose); for development through the use of explanation, detail, and/or example; and for an organizational plan that is easy to follow.

**Style:** Read for evidence of individuality. Does there seem to be a definite *personality* behind the words? Does the writer appeal to any of your five senses? Can you see any *pictures* or *scenes* as you read?

**Sentence Formation:** Read for competence at the sentence level.

**Usage:** Read for demonstration of competence and/or the presence of errors you would *hear* if the paper were read aloud to you.

**Mechanics:** Read for demonstration of competence and/or the presence of errors you would notice only if you *saw* the paper.

## **Model Papers**

On the following pages you will find the first six training papers, which are referred to as *Model Papers*. Following each Model Paper is a set of scores and rationale statements for each of the scoring dimensions, for that Model Paper. The rationale statements or annotations explain why the scores assigned to that paper are correct. These six Model Papers illustrate and define the precise meaning of each score point on each dimension. Studying these papers with their accompanying annotations, will give the reader valuable insights into the meaning of the scoring scale.

Following these Model Papers is a section that includes Non Scorable Paper (NSP) codes and examples of papers that have been given these codes. An NSP is a paper that cannot be scored using the scoring criteria because of some anomaly (e.g. an off-topic paper, an illegible paper, etc.). The final section in this manual contains a Glossary of terms used throughout the manual.

The most frightening experience in my life occurred while I was deep-sea fishing with my father in the middle of winter. I was only 13 yrs old and it was my first ocean voyage. We were about 30 miles out, well out of sight of land. During the course of the day, news came over the radio about increased seas due to severe thunderstorms. We were fishing in a small, 24 foot boat and decided to head in. We were running wide open when ~~we~~ we hit huge waves and punishing rains. We slowed down and tried to keep on course. ~~The~~ One minute we seemed to be making progress but the next I was thrown into icy-cold water. I don't even remember how it happened it was so quick. I tried to keep calm but every few seconds I was dunked by a large wave. My toes and fingers started to numb from the water temperature so I tried to keep moving for warmth. I remembered what my father had said about staying with the boat. I looked around for the over-turned craft but my vision was cut to 5 feet because of the heavy rain. I swam around helplessly for what seems like hours trying to find the boat and screaming for my father. It was no use, thoughts of drowning were going through my head. It was impossible to try and swim anywhere, besides I didn't know which way to go. My muscles were aching terribly.



and my body was slowing getting numb. I removed my shoes and some articles of clothing to make it easier to swim or to simply keep myself afloat. I floated for hours praying to stay alive. Soon the storm started to break and the rain slowed. In a matter of minutes the sun was shining and there were almost no waves. I quickly glanced around and saw the boat with my father hanging on. I screamed for joy or for fear, I didn't know and swam over to the boat. He was so glad to see me that he started crying. We sat on the over turned boat for hours. Finally we saw the coast-guard heading our direction and we knew we were saved. I've never been so frightened in my life.

**Model Paper - 1 Annotation****CONTENT/ORGANIZATION Score = 4**

Clear order of presentation of ideas. Ideas flow. Controlling idea supported and clear even without direct statement in last sentence of paper.

**STYLE Score = 4**

Language highly descriptive and images concrete. Reader shares writer's experience. Appropriate tone.

**SENTENCE FORMATION Score = 4**

Lengthy piece with majority of sentences correctly and effectively formed. Occasional loss of control with ideas run together (near end of first page and end of paper).

**USAGE Score = 4**

Almost error free. Numerous instances of competence in all usage concepts.

**MECHANICS Score = 3**

Absence of formatting. Some spelling errors, but most words spelled correctly. Most internal punctuation correct with commas used inappropriately for semi-colon and dashes.

### Dad's Jacket

If someone ask me to pick out my favourite item of clothing, I would have no problem deciding. I would immediately go for my blue jean jacket. The jacket is much to big for me to wear to a important social gathering. But I know one day it will fit me just perfect, and until then I will keep it safe and take real good care of it.

The jacket is very easy to describe. It is blue like most blue-jean jackets and is made of denim. It is held together by light gold yellowish thread. It has fourpockets two at the lower side left + right, and two at the top on each side.

The jacket is perfect for wearing on cold windy days. It is thick and will keep your body heat sealed in. Even though it is still to big I'm gonna wear it this winter. I go hunting often and early in the mornings when its about twenty degrees I'm sure the jacket will come in handy.

As far as memories go they are the whole reason for me being so fond of the jacket. The jacket became mine when my dad left. I have not seen him in several years so ofcourse things that belonged to him are special to me. Every time I put the jacket on I notice the jacket begins to fit better. This for some reason makes me feel as though I'm just as big as my dad is. I hope that in a couple of more years I will be able to put the jacket on and be the

man my dad is.

The jacket is very special to me for different reasons of course one is because it belonged to my dad. Other is because it is my style of clothes, and all my friends think highly of blue-jean jackets.

I'm sure I'll always love and cherish the jacket. I know I'll never part with it because I feel as though giving it away would be giving a part of my dad away.

**Model Paper - 2 Annotation****Content/Organization 3**

Controlling idea clearly established and developed with relevant support and details. Organization tends to be "listy" and is flawed by contradiction of "whole reason" -- "different reasons." Paper has a sense of completeness.

**Style 4**

Choice of subject (denim jacket) limits description possible. Given limitations, the description is successful. Sentences are varied. Paper is easily readable. Tone is appropriate: writer and reader are close to subject.

**Sentence Formation 3**

Majority of paragraphs contain completely formed sentences. One paragraph contains run-on sentences. Coordination weak -- "and" overused.

**Usage 2**

Some grasp of usage concepts, but errors in all areas. Incorrect verbs ("if someone ask me," "gonna wear"). Missing "-s" on plural nouns. Agreement error ("others is"). Word choice errors: ("fit... perfect" and "me being" for "my being").

**Mechanics 3**

Formatting of paper is effective. Several words are misspelled, but most words are spelled correctly. Necessary commas missing. Capitalization is correct.

The happiest time in my life was vacation. We could almost do every thing we wanted to do. The happiest time was ~~the time~~ when we were at Big Coult.

We went swimming and rode the Flato boats, went down the water slide. We could not do it all in one day.

But what was so bad was we only had 3 days to do it all in.

We also went to Rock City. It looked almost like a zoo. But not as many animals. But we all enjoyed it. It was fun.

We went through Look Out Mountain. It was the funniest time. Because we went under ground. Walk 2 or 3 miles before coming up.

It was fun and we all enjoyed every bit of it.

### Model Paper - 3 Annotation

#### Content/Organization 1

Controlling idea established. Supporting ideas limited in number and development. Paper reads like a bare skeleton. Sense of completeness lacking.

#### Style 1

Nothing concrete, descriptive. No images. No sentence variety. Sentences are short, choppy, and monotonous subject-verb-complement pattern.

#### Sentence Formation 2

The paper is a mixture of effective and ineffective sentences. Some are completely formed and correctly punctuated. Many, however, are fragments.

#### Usage 1

Instances of correct usage do not offset the frequency and variety of errors in this short text. Pronoun reference is vague. "It" used too often. Needed pronouns omitted. Tense is incorrectly formed ("walk" for "walked"). Error in word choice ("the funniest time").

#### Mechanics 1

Very few components are consistently present. Formatting is weak, with several one sentence paragraphs. Given the few words, competence in spelling and capitalization is not demonstrated.

"Wanted: T.V. Thief!"

It was a dreary evening and getting rather cool outside. My mother and family were coming home from an evening out. Everyone was coming in the house from the car. I, being the only one in at the time, stumbled over to the television to see what was playing. As an impulse my hand just reached out to turn the switch but my hand didn't feel anything but vacant air. With a weird feeling in my stomach I looked up and to my surprise our T.V. was gone! I ran outside to tell mom and she said, "Young lady you better not be telling a fib!" She stroled into the house and while unloading she looked up for the television, which was no longer there, and let out this screeching noise. I could see the fright, disgust, anger and pain in her eyes. Her tears rolled slowly as my sisters sat in one spot observing the whole time. Of course they were frightened like anyone in their right mind would be. We finally drew the conclusion that we had not been but in one room and no other lights were on. The robber could



be watching us. While being very alert  
me all stumbled to the car. Still  
shaking we went to the nearest phone  
and called the police. Within no time  
they arrived. We sat very stiff, un-  
like like and our faces were filled  
with fright. They saw where the rob-  
ber had made his entrance and his  
exit. He had left a few clues he  
thought would throw them off. The  
police couldn't find him. "It's just a  
matter of time," they told us for  
days we waited for our T.V. to be back  
but of course it was never returned.  
That was a big loss but also a very  
frightening experience!

**Model Paper - 4 Annotation****Content/Organization 4**

Controlling idea clearly implied throughout the paper. Support is relevant and clearly developed. Order of presentation clear. Transitions used effectively. Ideas flow. Paper has a sense of completeness.

**Style 4**

Language descriptive, with real-sounding dialogue. Images (especially description of eyes) effective. Good sentence variety. Tone (suspense) appropriate. Easily readable.

**Sentence Formation 3**

End punctuation generally correct. Coordination ineffective in places. One or two sentences contain ideas run together.

**Usage 4**

Almost error free. One instance of shift ("they were frightened...anyone...their mind"). Verb formation error in the quotation is likely to be an exact quote of the mother's words, not the writer's error.

**Mechanics 4**

Formatting is a problem, while other errors in mechanics are minor. Dialogue is correctly punctuated. Capitalization is appropriate.

If I became principal today, I would change the rule of having to keep your shirt-tail packed in. The three reasons why I believe it should be changed are that it only pertains to boys, it usually carries a harsh punishment, and it is not a very good rule. For these three reasons the rule of having to keep your shirt-tail packed in should be changed.

~~The~~ The rule of having to keep your shirt-tail packed in only pertains to boys. Yes, only boys have to pack their shirt-tails in and then some are practically ignored by the faculty. Girls don't have to pack their shirt-tails in. They get to wear them out, some down past their knees. The faculty says there is a difference if you can't recognize it. If so, what is the difference?

In many ways harsh punishment is given in the rule of having to keep your shirt-tails packed in. Usually if you're caught with your shirt-tail out, you receive three licks. If it happens again, you may receive more licks, and possibly face suspension.

In two ways it is not a good rule of having

to keep your shirt-tail packed in. The first reason is that the rule is not common among other schools. This is probably the only school in our district which has this rule. The other reason is that of which the school has no acceptable explanation for having this rule. The students have done nothing for this.

If I were principal, I would change the rule of having to keep your shirt-tail ~~to~~ packed in because of the three reasons that it only pertains to boys, it may result in harsh punishment, and it is not a very good rule.

## Model Paper - 5 Annotation

### Content/Organization 2

Controlling idea is clearly established even if it is trivial. Two supporting ideas are developed, the third remains vague. Formula organization results in repetition, not development. Order (thesis, 3 reasons, summary) clear but ineffective.

### Style 1

No description. Language monotonous and vague. Some sentence variety. Not easy to read: repetition of phrases overwhelming

### Sentence Formation 3

Sentences are complete and effectively formed. While sentence formation is correct, competence in coordination and subordination is only partially demonstrated.

### Usage 3

Vague pronoun "it" used too often. One instance of shift in person ("boys" to "you"). Subject-verb agreement correct. Some word choice is inappropriate ("packed in" and "exceptional explanation"). General command of usage concepts.

### Mechanics 4

"Their" inappropriately used for "there." Formatting, capitalization, and internal punctuation are appropriate.

The big day has come I've finally become principal, I finally have the power to change things, and get things done right. The first thing I'll do is change the time schedule of the day so that the day won't be shorter but school will be out earlier. School would start at 8:30 and end at 2:45 or 3:00 there will be a 15 minute difference in time but I'm sure the students and teachers will not mind, but just to make sure I'll have a conference with the student council, the teachers and the bus drivers.

My like at this school has been good  
so far, there's no fighting the students  
are maintaining there high average and  
frankly I think everything and  
everyone is going to get along just fine.

**Model Paper - 6 Annotation****Content/Organization 1**

Controlling idea not clear. Single supporting idea not developed. Order of presentation confusing due to "gap" in information. Final paragraph an unsuccessful attempt at closing.

**Style 2**

Language mechanical, with very little description. Easily readable. Some sentence variety. Tone of final paragraph almost succeeds in getting reader into the fantasy. Contains some of the components.

**Sentence Formation 1**

Numerous errors with end punctuation and sentence formation. Many run-on sentences. Ideas are strung together. Subordination ineffective.

**Usage 3**

Demonstrates overall control of many usage concepts. No judgment can be made concerning pronoun reference. Incorrect shift in verb from conditional ("would start") to future ("will be").

**Mechanics 2**

Formatting is weak. Several simple words misspelled, including "there" for "their" and "average." Several internal punctuation errors, including the lack of commas.



## Non Scorable Paper Codes: Definitions and Examples

The following codes are to be assigned to papers which cannot be assigned a rating of 1 through 4. Illustrations of several codes are provided.

Code and Description	Definition
<b>A Blank</b>	Assign to any paper which is completely blank. Be sure to check the front and back page.
<b>B Too Short</b>	Read the paper to determine if there is enough information to score the dimensions. Don't assign this code just on the basis of the number of lines filled. The key word here is too short. (Short, scorable papers are contained in the "Training" portion of the manual.)
<b>C Non English</b>	Assign to any paper written in a foreign language.
<b>D White-out Used</b>	Assign to any paper on which white-out has been used, no matter how much or how little white-out has been used. Students are told that they are not permitted to use white-out.
<b>E Illegible</b>	Before assigning the code make a reasonable attempt to recognize enough words to use them as a basis for figuring out what the other words are.
<b>F Incomprehensible</b>	Read the paper in its entirety before assigning this code. Do Not confuse spelling errors with incomprehensibility. An incomprehensible paper may contain few recognizable English words or, it may contain recognizable English words arranged in such a way that no meaning is conveyed.
<b>G Off Topic</b>	Familiarize yourself with the assigned topic. Consider that the paper may be a variation on the topic. [Example of a scorable variation of the topic "your favorite holiday": "I don't have a favorite holiday and here's why." Examples of scorable variations on the topic "the biggest problem you had with someone": "My problem is with the people who made up this test." or, "My best friend has this really bad problem with his mother." Addressing some aspect of the topic is acceptable. For example, it is possible to write about "what you think your future will be like", as if the future has already arrived: "I am a successful lawyer..."]
<b>H Off Task</b>	This code applies to responses that are not on the task of writing a BSWT response. Off Task responses include: copying from the test directions or test booklet or from some material in the testing area; writing a response consisting solely of a message to the rater ("I won't complete this stupid test," or "I have passed this thing already but Mr. Jones won't believe me.")

Non Scorable Response Code B:  
Too Short

The 4th of July I like to go to see  
The fire crackers and it is fun  
and you can see things and you  
can see fireworks

Non Scorable Response Code F:  
Incomprehensible

I got out my bed and went in the bathroom and put on  
 my colts and call my friend house and work to the  
 bus stop and we were on the bus and come to school  
 and I see to the store and buy some gum  
 and walk around the school for a few minutes and  
 The bell had ring for Hammerman and I went to  
 class and went the moment bell, well I went to the  
 game Georgia Basic skills test and we took a Georgia  
 Basic skills writing test and I had to write about  
 the first thing I remember doing it was so hard  
 to remember and I had ate one or two cookies and  
 a paper went my friend game and that for a  
 while outside and we thing about colts and cars  
 and the taking will like to have one day and car  
 I have thing went the come in the color paper the  
 house will help in line like from the way you can  
 go by help in your line well I know how some you  
 have least more least you come least least in the  
 time they you sleep go and went you like to help  
 constant the please you please house way some love

Non Scorable Response Code G:  
Off Topic

1. "The funniest thing ever happened to me"

Like I fell off of a ladder. Because we were painting the house and I was trying to get up higher so I can paint the top of the house.

It was really funny because I could have killing myself.

It was funny because I landed on a soft surface on the ground.

and every one began to laugh at a me and talking about how stupid I was for falling off of the ladder.

2. "The Longest day of my life"

Like when the C.P.T. Test was here last year. I thinking this test will over and. And the time was going by like a little turtle was going by on the swim-way.

And I was looking at the clock every second. And the people whom I was testing with was looking at me like I'd have did something wrong. And

the teacher had come over to me and said "What are you looking at that for. And I think that was the longest day of my life.

3. "My Plans for the future"

Is to Graduate from high school and get a diploma and to be member of Army. And try very hard to be come a sergeant in the Army. And be in the Army for about five or six year. And come out of the Army and get married to the lady of my life. And to have children and to be very, very, very rich and to have a huge house with a big swimming in my back yard.

And I want my house to be design by the designer in the whole world.

"On how schools can become better"

You can get all the non-works out of the school and build a <sup>mind</sup> for the bad children and let the good in the schools. Everyone school in the world need to do that. Because it's not doing nothing but putting the focus on the good of learning bad. And let the bad stay in these school into things had improving on their behavior problems.

All the bad children is pick on you and call you names. But I try to sig them but it never work for me. They hunt people telling and talk about your parents and they don't be knowing what be talking about they just be talking just hunting you telling that's all they be doing to you.

Non Scorable Response Code G:  
Off Topic

### The people of Ethiopia

The people of Ethiopia don't have a chance, they  
 like they are living now. I think the people of  
 America should them but they care for them, they  
 people of America should send money, food, and clothes  
 things. I also think that if people start loving  
 each other. Instead of fighting one another way  
 thing would be alright, but now they go to show  
 their blackness off. When the man up stairs get  
 through his foot down their throat, I bet if one  
 thing they will be crying alright. The man up stairs  
 is just waiting for them to do something wrong,  
 he's going to show who the boss around here. Back in  
 Ethiopia it just ain't right for them to suffer the  
 way they do. Look America they are killing in their  
 own house trying to keep warm. If I had all  
 the money in the world half would go to them  
 why because they need it more than we do, I don't  
 mind giving them my shirt off my back, I'd be happy  
 to give them anything they want, I wish that I was  
 crying because the first I would go to is Ethiopia  
 show them that someone really care about them  
 please help them out, they need money and  
 food and clothes to them I think when someone

need your help, you should come and cheer them  
 up. It just ain't right for them to live in  
 a low life, while we living in a high society, I  
 know if some person could do something about them  
 I can't. But what one person could do very little,  
 I know. Some ~~days~~ <sup>days</sup>, and dinner, could do I know  
 we can. Because I can ~~help~~ <sup>help</sup> in my heart. The little  
 kid need help bad, you ~~should~~ <sup>should</sup> have watch that picture  
 about the ethiopia circus and how the little kid  
 were suffering, they were do little you could cheer them  
 about how little they were. Next to no bad they  
 were dying at the age of 2 years old it would make  
 your heart break, it would make <sup>us</sup> think, what if  
 that was my child something like that I'd be  
 a <sup>to</sup> them.

What about their eating habit they don't get  
 enough vitamins, they get enough vitamin  
 in their little body I saw this little boy that  
 he could hardly stand up, that how bad they  
 is please help them out

Non Scorable Response Code H:  
Off Task

I have took the Georgia Basic Skill  
once in my young life, and I have pass it.  
My teacher Mrs. Cooper tried to make  
me take it over, I told her I have took it  
before, but she keep on with it. As I  
read and heard, about it, you just have to  
pass the test. As I tried to explain to her  
that I shouldn't have to go through all of  
this again. "Of course", I wouldn't mind strengthen  
my skills but not in the ways I really don't  
want to argue, but I just want take the test  
again, I'm sorry.



## GLOSSARY

**Component** - A component is one of the list of aspects to be considered within a particular dimension. A complete listing of all the scoring dimensions and the components for each dimension appears on the sheet titled "Georgia Basic Skills Writing Test: Scoring Dimensions, Definitions, and Components." For example, "clear pronoun reference" is a component of the dimension "Usage". When you are deciding on your rating for "Usage" on a student paper, you would look for demonstrated competence in pronoun reference, along with competence in the other components of that dimension.

**Controlling idea** - The controlling idea of a piece of writing is not the same as the written "thesis statement," although the controlling idea may be expressed in the form of such a statement. The controlling idea may be either stated or implied; if stated, it may appear toward the beginning or toward the end of the piece of writing, or even inserted in the middle of the text. It may be stated in several sentences. The controlling idea may be apparent to the reader even though there is no direct "thesis statement." The writer may present a written thesis statement, but the actual controlling idea may differ somewhat from the statement. To determine the controlling idea of a piece, ask yourself, "If I had to sum up this piece of writing in one brief sentence, what would that sentence be?"

**Coordination** - Refers to the connecting of equal grammatical structures to provide equal emphasis. Coordinating elements include (but are not limited to) connectors such as "and," "but," and "or." The semi-colon, used to connect two independent clauses, serves as a signal of coordination.

**Dimension** - The Georgia Department of Education has identified several basic qualities in any piece of effective writing, regardless of the topic or type (narrative, expository). The qualities are: **Content and Organization; Style; Sentence Formation; Usage; and Mechanics.** Each of these is referred to as a *dimension* or *domain* of writing.

**End punctuation** - Refers to the use of the period, question mark, or exclamation point to mark the end of a sentence. The absence of appropriate end punctuation creates sentence formation errors known as a comma splice error or a fused sentence. A comma splice error occurs when two sentences are linked with a comma ("The weather was cold, I wore my dad's jacket"). A fused sentence or run-on error occurs when two sentences are run together without any punctuation.

**Formatting** - Refers to the layout of the piece of writing on the page--margins, paragraph indentation, spacing between words, and spacing between sentences. Writers and readers have agreed on certain spatial conventions for clarity and ease of reading, and words are placed on the page in accordance with these conventions. Formatting also refers to the appropriate grouping of related information into paragraphs.

**Fragment, or Sentence fragment** - As the term suggests, a fragment refers to an incomplete sentence which is lacking one or more of its parts but is written as if it were a complete sentence. A fragment may be caused by improper punctuation, as when a writer places a period between a main clause and the subordinate clause ("The happiest time of my life was when we went to Walt Disney World. Because that was our first vacation as a family.") Such a punctuation-based fragment is considered an error in sentence formation. A "functional fragment" is one over which the writer seems to have control, one which is used to create a particular effect ("And when we were leaving? In the morning! Bright and early!")

**Images, or Concrete images** - A writer uses imagery when he or she uses descriptive language that appeals to the senses of the reader. This type of language enables the reader to "experience" the piece of writing more or less directly.

**Internal punctuation** - As opposed to "end punctuation," internal punctuation appears within a sentence: for example, quotation marks and commas in dialogue; commas between words in a series; commas after introductory clauses and phrases; commas setting off non-restrictive elements; commas after transition words. Such errors have to be "seen" to be noted.

**Order of presentation** - A piece of writing may be ordered or organized in many different ways: chronological; a listing of ideas related to the topic; a series of examples illustrating the controlling idea; a comparison or contrast; identification of a problem followed by a proposed solution; a generalization followed by a narrative illustration of the generalization. These are but a few of the possible orders. In an effective piece of writing, the order of presentation is appropriate to the controlling idea.

**Pronoun reference** - Pronoun reference involves the relationship between a single word or group of words (the antecedent) and the pronoun replacement. The meaning of the pronoun should be immediately obvious to avoid confusion. Clarity is achieved through consistency of person and number ("My favorite sport is volleyball, but I like swimming too. They have to be played with teammates..." "They" refers to both sports, while the writer intends a singular reference to volleyball, or "It." Broad references ("it," "this") can create confusion, particularly when overused.

**Readable** - "Readable" does not refer to the legibility of the handwriting. Rather, it addresses the ease with which the piece of writing could be read aloud without false starts or backing up and re-reading to "make sense."

**Sentence patterns** - The pattern of a sentence refers to the grammatical structure, the order of the words, and the length. Some of the possible sentence patterns are: simple, compound, complex, subject-first, beginning with a phrase or clause, or beginning with a sentence connective.

**Standard American English, standard form** - "Standard" refers to careful word choice and to the use of those grammatical conventions agreed upon as the "language of the marketplace." Standard American English avoids the use of slang, jargon, regionalisms, and illiterate forms except when appropriate to the topic and the audience. Also, standard American English uses the agreed-upon forms for plurals, possessives, subject-and-verb agreement and the formation of verb tenses. Competence and errors in usage can be "heard."

**Subordination** - Refers to a method of connecting structures so as to give some structures lesser emphasis than others. Examples of subordinating connectors are "because," "when," "if," "after," "while," "although," "so that," "who," "which" and "that."

**Tone** - Indicates the writer's sensitivity to the purpose of the piece of writing and to the effect the piece of writing should have on the audience. Simply, tone refers to the general mood or emotion brought forth by the piece of writing. Tone may be formal or informal, witty, ironic, sarcastic, humorous, informative, sorrowful, ecstatic...and so on.

**Word choice** - Word choice refers to the writer's use of words which *express* his or her ideas clearly and which demonstrate appropriate usage. For example, word choice includes an awareness of the differences between "a" and "an," "accept" and "except" and "lie" and "lay." Word choice also includes the appropriate forms of adjectives and adverbs, ("the *worst* time of my life," "*really* hard") and correct pronoun case ("My parents gave *my* brother and *me*").

***Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Title II of the Carl F. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984); or handicap (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.***

***Employees, students and the general public are hereby notified that the Georgia Department of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or in employment policies.***

***The following individuals have been designated as the employees responsible for coordinating the department's effort to implement this nondiscriminatory policy.***

***Title II—Ann Lary, Vocational Equity Coordinator***

***Title VI—Peyton Williams Jr., Associate Superintendent of State Schools and Public Libraries***

***Title IX—Myra Tolbert, Coordinator***

***Section 504—Jim Whitworth, Coordinator***

***Inquiries concerning the application of Title II, Title VI, Title IX or Section 504 to the policies and practices of the department may be addressed to the persons listed above at the Georgia Department of Education, Twin Towers East, Atlanta 30334; to the Regional Office for Civil Rights, Atlanta 30323; or to the Director, Office for Civil Rights, Education Department, Washington, D.C. 20201.***

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