



A Parent/Guardian's Guide to Understanding the 2009-2010 North Carolina *Writing Instruction System* Grades 4 and 7

What is the *Writing Instruction System*?

The new *Writing Instruction System* encourages instruction to focus on the writing process, not just the preparation for a traditional single-day assessment. It is based on writing across the curriculum in each content area and involves all educators, not just English/language arts educators.

What is the purpose of the *Writing Instruction System*?

The vision of the new *Writing Instruction System* is for students to develop and enhance the writing skills necessary to communicate effectively in the 21st century. These skills will also strengthen students' abilities to apply higher level thinking skills, such as analysis and evaluation, to new and challenging situations.

Which students must participate in the *Writing Instruction System*?

The 2009-2010 *Writing Instruction System* will involve all General and *NCEXTEND2* students statewide in grades 4 and 7. Students participating in the *NCEXTEND1* alternate assessment of writing are the **only** students in grades 4 and 7 who will **not** participate in the *Writing Instruction System*.

What does the *Writing Instruction System* consist of?

All students statewide in grades 4 and 7 will complete two content-specific writing assignments and two on-demand writing tasks during the 2009-2010 school year. Students in grade 4 will complete their work using paper/pencil (using word processing tools is optional) and the writing assignments and tasks will be stored locally in portfolios. Students in grade 7 will complete their work using word processing tools (using paper/pencil is optional) and the writing assignments and tasks will be stored locally in portfolios. *Grades 4 and 7 students in LEAs/schools who choose to participate in the centrally hosted online system will complete their work using word processing tools and upload the writing assignments in the online electronic portfolio. On-demand writing tasks will be delivered and responded to by students through the centrally hosted online system.*

How are the content-specific assignments and on-demand tasks scored?

The NCDPI suggests that content area teachers score student work within their content area applying the *NC Content Rubric* - specifically designed for evaluating the accuracy of the subject matter included in the student writing. The NCDPI also suggests that ELA teachers score the student work applying the *NC Writing Features and Conventions Rubrics*.

How will the scores be used?

The information that students, teachers, and schools receive from the *Writing Instructional System* in 2009-2010 is intended exclusively to support the instructional process. This information will not be included in the formalized statewide accountability model. Currently, the 10th grade writing assessment is the only measure of writing included in the statewide accountability model. NCDPI may, in the future, conduct a standardized audit of student achievement in writing using a sampling model similar to that used by the *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Writing Assessment*.

How can I help my child with writing?

- The basis of good writing is speaking well. Share experiences with your child and encourage him/her to speak about them.
- Be a model for your child. Share everyday writing, such as business writing, notes, agendas, etc. with your child.
- Explain to your child the importance of writing in the adult world.
- Read aloud something you have written and ask your child's opinion.
- Discuss current events and encourage your child to form opinions and reasoning for those opinions.
- Routinely edit your child's writing and explain the reasons for your edits.
- Encourage your child to write letters or emails to friends or relatives.
- Good grammar when speaking translates into good grammar when writing. Correct incorrect grammar in private conversations.
- Be sure to praise your child's efforts in writing.

Additional Information

For additional information on the *North Carolina Writing Instruction System*, please visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/writing/>

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*Dr. Rebecca Garland, Chief Academic Officer
Academic Services and Instructional Support
6368 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6368
Telephone (919) 807-3200; Fax (919) 807-4065*