

RIVERSIDE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Elementary Education Department

**California Writing Standards Test for Fourth Grade:
Released Tasks (Prompts) for 2002 through 2008**

The English language arts writing applications standards for fourth grade require students to produce four types of writing: narratives, summaries, responses to literature, and information reports. The CSTs in writing do not assess information reports because they take considerable time to write and require the use multiple sources of information. Each year, one of the three remaining types of writing is assessed on the California Writing Standards Test.

A reader scores each student's writing using a holistic, four-point rubric. Readers take into account the fact that the papers are edited first drafts. Ten percent of papers are scored by a second reader to ensure that the scoring is accurate and reliable. The second score is not used. Each student's score (1 – 4) is doubled and added to his or her multiple-choice CST score. In 2008, the writing test score was also reported separately.

Below you will find the writing tasks (prompts) released by the California Department of Education from 2002 through 2008. The CST Writing Guides for 2002 – 2008 are available on the California Department of Education website <http://www2.cde.ca.gov>. Your site ELA and/or EL coach has copies of three of the guides, which cover summary, narrative, and response to literature.

Narrative Writing Tasks from 2003, 2005, and 2007

On the California Writing Standards Test, students will be instructed to complete a “writing task.” Be sure they know this is the same as a “writing prompt.” Samples of actual tasks with the directions are included in the guides mentioned above. The test guides state that personal or autobiographical narrative will not be tested as personal disclosure is not desired.

Narratives must include a beginning, middle, and end; vivid descriptive detail; and correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. To date, all released tasks for narratives have called for a response to be written in first person, although it is possible a task could call for a response using third person. The released narrative writing tasks are listed below.

Imagine you are walking down the hall at your school, and you hear a strange noise coming from your classroom. When you go inside, you discover that the strange noise is coming from a funny-looking animal sitting at your desk. Write a story about what happens next. (2003)

If you could be the teacher for your class for one day, what would you do and why? Write a story about what would happen in your class the day you are the teacher. (2003)

Imagine you are able to spend a day with anyone you want. Write a story about that day. (2005)

Imagine waking up one morning to find that you live in a world where machines do everything. Write a story about what happens next. (2005)

One day while you are out on a walk with a dog, the dog suddenly starts talking about where he used to live and how he would like to visit that place again. Write about what happens that day. (2007)

Think about your favorite animal. For one day, you are going to be that animal. Write about your day as this animal. (2007)

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Response to Literature Tasks from 2006 and 2008

Students are directed to read a piece of text and respond based on the task. Students are allowed to make notes or otherwise mark the text they read. Their response must show their understanding of the story or article. They must use evidence (examples, details) from the text to support their ideas.

What is the lesson the author feels her readers should learn? Use details from the story to support your answer. (2006)

Based on the story “Jack and Billy,” how can the reader tell that the narrator is a caring person? Use details from the story to support your answer. (2006)

Why do you think “First Choice” is a good title for this story? Use details from the story to support your answer. (2008)

In this story, two friends are annoyed with each other’s bad habit. What would be a good title for this story, and why? Use examples from the story to support your answer. (2008)

Summary Tasks from 2002 and 2004

To date, all text summarized for the state test has been expository. However, during Theme 1 students also learned to summarize narrative text. Students should include the main ideas (or events) and most significant details that support the main ideas. They must write using their own words—paraphrase! They should not include opinions.

After reading the article, write a summary of what you have read. (2002, 2004)

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Grade 4, Theme 4 Writing Conventions Instruction

During Theme 4, students will be honing their skills in three writing applications: summary, narrative, and response to literature. In addition, it is important that they learn the writing and language skills listed in the Theme at a Glance (TE pages 384E and 384f). The table below provides an overview of the standards, skills, assessment questions, and instructional materials pertinent to Theme 4. Additional Houghton Mifflin instructional materials from the *Writing Resources Center* are also listed.

Note: Sentence combination to eliminate fragments (485N) is assessed on the CST. Also assessed is sentence combination using introductory phrases (411N) and coordinating conjunctions.

Writing Conventions Standards:

WC1.1 use simple and compound sentences in speaking and writing.

WC1.2 combine short, related sentences with appositives, participial phrases, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases.

WC1.3 identify and use regular and irregular verbs, adverbs, prepositions, and coordinating conjunctions in writing and speaking

WC1.7 spell correctly roots, inflections, suffixes and prefixes, and syllable constructions

	Stand.	CST Rel. Quest	Read. Lions Quest	Skill	Houghton Mifflin Lessons	Houghton Mifflin Writing Resources Center Materials
Selection 1	WC1.3	69, 81, 84, 93	1-3	Choose the correct form of the verb <i>be</i>	The Irregular Verb Be TE 411K-L Transparencies 4-4, 4-5, 4-6 Practice Book: 223, 224, 225 Reteach 26	<u>Reteach Workbook:</u> The Special Verb, <i>be</i> , 32* <u>Workbook Plus:</u> Special Verb, <i>be</i> , 54
	WC1.2	64, 76, 79		Combine sentences using introductory phrases	Using Commas for Introductory Phrases, 411N.	
	WC1.7	54, 72, 86, 88		Add and correctly spell inflected endings to base words (relates to past tense verbs and suffixes)	Dictionary: Base Words and Inflected Forms (-s, -es, -ed, -ing, -er, -est) TE 411 I Transparency : 4-3 Practice Book: 222	<u>Reteach Workbook:</u> Spelling the Present Tense, 28 Spelling the Past Tense, 29
Selection 2	WC1.3	69, 81, 84, 93	4 - 7	Use correct form of irregular verb	Other Irregular Verbs TE 449 K-L Transparencies: 4-12, 4-13, 4-14 Practice Book: 243-245 Reteach: 27	<u>Reteach Workbook:</u> Past with Helping Verbs, 30* Irregular Verbs, 31* <u>Workbook Plus:</u> Irregular Verbs, 52
Selection 3	WC1.2	64, 76, 79	8-10	Identify and use adjectives (including articles) and the nouns they modify	Adjectives TE 485K-L Transparencies: 4-20, 4-21, 4-22 R28 PB: 258 – 260	<u>Reteach Workbook:</u> What is an Adjective? 35 Writing with Adjectives, 36, 37 Using <i>a, an, and the</i> , 39 <u>Workbook Plus:</u> What is an Adjective? 59 Writing with Adjectives, 61, 62 Using <i>a, an, and the</i> , 64
	WC1.1	73, 85, 87		Eliminate sentence fragments	Writing Skills: Compare/Contrast, TE 485M	
	WC1.2	64, 76, 79			Correcting Sentence Fragments, TE 485N	
Selection 4				Comparing with adjectives	Comparing with Adjectives TE 511K-L Transparencies 4-28, 4-29, 4-30 Reteach 29 Practice Book 273-275	<u>Reteach Workbook:</u> Making Comparisons, 40 - 42 <u>Workbook Plus:</u> Making Comparisons, 65, 67, 69

*Content and format similar to Reading Lions.

Pages include sentence combination and/or revision and editing using skills taught during the theme. Good practice for CST.

Note to teachers: Below are the directions from previous narrative writing tasks. This template is provided to you as a resource. Be sure that your students are at least familiar with this format prior to the March 3 and 4 California Writing Standards Test.

Narrative Writing Task

Directions:

- In this writing test, you will respond to the writing task below.
- You will have time to plan your response and write a first draft with edits.

Scoring:

Your writing will be scored on how well you:

- include a beginning, a middle, and an end;
- use details to describe the experience; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Read the following writing task. You must write a narrative about this topic.

Insert your writing task (prompt) here

When you write about this experience, remember:

- to include a beginning, a middle, and an end;
- to use details to describe the experience; and
- to use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

GRADE 4 Summary

California Writing Standards Test Practice

Note to teachers: Below are the directions from previous summary tasks. This template is provided to you as a resource. Be sure that students are at least familiar with this format prior to the March 3 and 4 CST Writing Standards Test.

In Theme 4, the Health Link on pages 446 – 449 and the Social Studies Link on pages 482-483 provide expository text you may want to use for summary practice. Other ideas include selected pages from the social studies or science textbooks.

Summary of an Article Writing Task

Directions:

- Read the informational article.
- As you read, you may mark the article or make notes. Marks and notes will not be scored. You will have time to read, plan, write, and proofread.
- After reading the article, write a summary of what you have read.
- You may reread or go back to the article at any time during the test.

Scoring:

You will be scored on how well you:

- state the main ideas of the article;
- identify the most important details that support the main ideas;
- use our own words in writing the summary; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Students read the article.

Writing the Summary:

Write a summary of the article.

Remember that your writing will be score on how well you:

- state the main ideas of the article;
- identify the most important details that support the main ideas;
- use our own words in writing the summary; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

GRADE 4 Response to Literature

California Writing Standards Test Practice

Note to teachers: Below are the directions from previous response to literature tasks. This template is provided to you as a resource. Be sure that your students are at least familiar with this format prior to the March 3 and 4 California Writing Standards Test.

Response to Literature Writing Task

Directions:

- Read the story.
- As you read, you may mark the story or make notes. Marks and notes will not be scored. You will have time to read, plan your essay, and write a first draft with edits.
- You may reread or go back to the article at any time during the test.

Scoring:

You will be scored on how well you:

- show your understanding of the story;
- give examples from the story; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Students read the article.

Response to Literature Writing the Essay

Insert your task (prompt) here. Use specific examples from the story to support your answer.

Remember that your writing will be score on how well you:

- state the main ideas of the article;
- identify the most important details that support the main ideas;
- use our own words in writing the summary; and
- use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Grade Four Scoring Rubric in Rearranged Format

In the following charts, the grade four scoring rubric is presented in a rearranged format to indicate how all the scoring criteria in the rubric—those derived from the state content standards for Writing Strategies and Written Conventions as well as those derived from the state content standards for Writing Applications—are applied to student responses in each genre tested.

The column under “Genre” contains the scoring criteria derived from the grade four content standards for Writing Applications. The column under “Organization and Focus” contains scoring criteria derived from the subset of Organization and Focus standards within the grade four content standards for Writing Strategies. The column under “Sentence Structure” contains the scoring criterion derived from the subset of Sentence Structure standards within the grade four content standards for Written and Oral English Language Conventions. The column under “Conventions” contains the scoring criteria derived from the subsets of Grammar, Punctuation, Capitalization, and Spelling standards within the grade four content standards for Written and Oral English Language Conventions. Although some columns contain more bullets than others, this is not meant to imply that columns with more bullets are more important in the scoring than the other columns. References to the writing content standards from which each scoring criterion is derived are presented in coded form following each criterion for score point four.

2008 Grade Four Scoring Rubric: Narrative Writing

Genre (Narrative Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
<p>4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides a <i>thoroughly developed</i> sequence of significant events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories. (Gr. 4 WA 2.1 a, d) ■ Includes <i>vivid</i> descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to imagine the events or experiences. (Gr. 4 WA 2.1 b, c) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Clearly</i> addresses the writing task.* ■ Demonstrates a <i>clear</i> understanding of purpose. (Gr. 4 WS 1.1) ■ Maintains a <i>consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. (Gr. 4 WS 1.1; 1.2 a, c, e; 1.3) ■ Includes a <i>clearly presented</i> central idea with <i>relevant</i> facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 4 WS 1.2 b, c) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes sentence <i>variety</i>. (Gr. 4 WC 1.1; 1.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contains <i>some errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing. (Gr. 4 WC 1.3–1.7)
<p>3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides an <i>adequately developed</i> sequence of significant events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories. ■ Includes <i>some</i> descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to imagine the events or experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Addresses most of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates a <i>general</i> understanding of purpose. ■ Maintains a <i>mostly consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. ■ Presents a central idea with <i>mostly</i> relevant facts, details, and/or explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes some sentence <i>variety</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contains <i>errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not interfere with the reader’s understanding of the writing.

* Because this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.

Genre (Narrative Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
<p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides a <i>minimally developed</i> sequence of events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories. ■ Includes <i>limited</i> descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to imagine the events or experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Addresses <i>some</i> of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates <i>little</i> understanding of purpose. ■ Maintains an <i>inconsistent</i> point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure; may lack appropriate paragraphing. ■ <i>Suggests</i> a central idea with <i>limited</i> facts, details, and/or explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes <i>little</i> sentence variety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contains <i>many errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.
<p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Lacks</i> a sequence of events to relate ideas, observations, and/or memories. ■ <i>Lacks</i> descriptive language and sensory details that enable the reader to imagine the events or experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Addresses <i>only one part, if any</i>, of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates <i>no</i> understanding of purpose. ■ <i>Lacks</i> a clear point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure; may contain inappropriate paragraphing. ■ <i>Lacks</i> a central idea but may contain <i>marginally related</i> facts, details, and/or explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes <i>no</i> sentence variety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contains <i>serious errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

2008 Grade Four Scoring Rubric: Summary Writing

Genre (Summary Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
<p>4 ■ Summarizes text with clear identification of the main idea(s) and the most <i>significant</i> details in the student's own words. (Gr. 4 WA 2.4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Clearly</i> addresses the writing task.* ■ Demonstrates a <i>clear</i> understanding of purpose. (Gr. 4 WS 1.1) ■ Maintains a <i>consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. (Gr. 4 WS 1.1, 1.2 a, c, e; 1.3) ■ Includes a <i>clearly presented</i> central idea with <i>relevant</i> facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 4 WS 1.2 b, c) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes sentence <i>variety</i>. (Gr. 4 WC 1.1; 1.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contains <i>some errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing. (Gr. 4 WC 1.3–1.7)
<p>3 ■ Summarizes text with the main idea(s) and <i>important</i> details, generally in the student's own words.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Addresses most of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates a <i>general</i> understanding of purpose. ■ Maintains a <i>mostly consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. ■ Presents a central idea with <i>mostly</i> relevant facts, details, and/or explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes some sentence <i>variety</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contains <i>errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.
<p>2 ■ Summarizes text with some of the main idea(s) and details, minimal use of the student's own words.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Addresses <i>some</i> of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates <i>little</i> understanding of purpose. ■ Maintains an <i>inconsistent</i> point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure; may lack appropriate paragraphing. ■ <i>Suggests</i> a central idea with <i>limited</i> facts, details, and/or explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes <i>little</i> sentence variety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contains <i>many errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

* Because this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.

Genre (Summary Writing)

Organization and Focus

Sentence Structure

Conventions

1

- Summarizes text with few, if any, main idea(s) and/or details, little or no use of the student's own words.

- Addresses *only one part, if any*, of the writing task.
- Demonstrates *no* understanding of purpose.
- *Lacks* a clear point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure; may contain inappropriate paragraphing.
- *Lacks* a central idea but may contain *marginally related* facts, details, and/or explanations.

- Includes *no* sentence variety.

- Contains *serious errors* in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

2008 Grade Four Scoring Rubric: Response to Literature Writing

Genre (Response to Literature Writing)	Organization and Focus	Sentence Structure	Conventions
<p>4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrates a <i>clear</i> understanding of the literary work. (Gr. 4 WA 2.2 a) ■ Provides <i>effective</i> support for judgments through <i>specific</i> references to text and/or prior knowledge. (Gr. 4 WA 2.2 b) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Clearly</i> addresses the writing task.* ■ Demonstrates a <i>clear</i> understanding of purpose. (Gr. 4 WS 1.1) ■ Maintains a <i>consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. (Gr. 4 WS 1.1; 1.2 a, c, e; 1.3) ■ Includes a <i>clearly presented</i> central idea with <i>relevant</i> facts, details, and/or explanations. (Gr. 4 WS 1.2 b, c) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes sentence <i>variety</i>. (Gr. 4 WC 1.1; 1.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contains <i>some errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing. (Gr. 4 WC 1.3–1.7)
<p>3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrates an understanding of the literary work. ■ Provides <i>some</i> support for judgments through references to text and/or prior knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Addresses <i>most</i> of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates a <i>general</i> understanding of purpose. ■ Maintains a <i>mostly consistent</i> point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including paragraphing when appropriate. ■ Presents a central idea with <i>mostly relevant</i> facts, details, and/or explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes <i>some</i> sentence <i>variety</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contains <i>errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.
<p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrates a <i>limited</i> understanding of the literary work. ■ Provides <i>weak</i> support for judgments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Addresses <i>some</i> of the writing task. ■ Demonstrates <i>little</i> understanding of purpose. ■ Maintains an <i>inconsistent</i> point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure; may lack appropriate paragraphing. ■ <i>Suggests</i> a central idea with <i>limited</i> facts, details, and/or explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes <i>little</i> sentence <i>variety</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contains <i>many errors</i> in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors may interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.

* Because this criterion addresses requirements of the writing test rather than a content standard, it does not include a standards reference.

Genre (Response to Literature Writing)

Organization and Focus

Sentence Structure

Conventions

1

- Demonstrates little or no understanding of the literary work.
- *Fails* to provide support for judgments.

- Addresses *only one part, if any*, of the writing task.
- Demonstrates *no* understanding of purpose.
- *Lacks* a clear point of view, focus, and/or organizational structure; may contain inappropriate paragraphing.
- *Lacks* a central idea but may contain *marginally related* facts, details, and/or explanations.

- Includes *no* sentence variety.

- Contains *serious errors* in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the writing.