

Description of DWA Writing Achievement Levels

Utah Direct Writing Assessment (DWA)

May 2005

GRADE 9

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

Level 1: *Minimal Achievement*

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

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

Level 2: Partial Achievement

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

- create an appropriate response to a writing prompt;
- convey a main idea or purpose;
- provide minimal support for ideas;
- show a basic sense of organization of thoughts;
- communicate in writing on a functional level;
- use limited vocabulary to convey ideas;
- demonstrate use of simple sentence structure; and
- demonstrate limited skill in applying writing conventions.

Level 3: Sufficient Achievement

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

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

Description of DWA Writing Achievement Levels (grade 9)

Level 4: *Substantial Achievement*

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

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

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