

Tennessee Writing Assessment Scoring Process

The writing essays from each grade level are scored holistically. Holistic scoring goes beyond mechanical correctness to focus on the overall effect of the writing. It measures the effectiveness of the communication. Seventy-five Tennessee teachers are nominated to serve on the TCAP Writing Assessment Scoring Committee each year. This committee sets the standards for the current year's scoring by selecting anchor papers that typify the six score points of the scoring rubric. Professional readers use the anchor papers as guides to score the essays. A reader must qualify to score by showing that he/she has shown consistent scoring on six qualification sets. Two qualified readers score each paper independently. If the scores do not agree, but have adjacent scores, the paper receives the higher score. If the two scores are split a third team leader determines the score.

Scoring Rubric

Scores from 6 to 1 reflect the range of excellence in the papers written in response to the assignment. Anchor and sample papers illustrate both the limits and the diversity within each score level. The following broad categories define the score ranges for the writing assignment and for the range of skills among students responding.

SCORE OF 6

A 6 paper is **OUTSTANDING**. It demonstrates a high degree of proficiency in response to the assignment but may have a few minor errors.

An essay in this category:

- is well organized and coherently developed
- clearly explains or illustrates key ideas
- demonstrates syntactic variety
- clearly displays facility in the use of language
- is generally free from errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure

SCORE OF 5

A 5 paper is **STRONG**. It demonstrates clear proficiency in response to the assignment and may have minor errors.

An essay in this category:

- is generally well organized and coherently developed
- explains or illustrates key ideas
- demonstrates some syntactic variety
- displays facility in the use of language
- is generally free from errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure

SCORE OF 4

A 4 paper is **COMPETENT**. It demonstrates proficiency in response to the assignment.

An essay in this category:

- is adequately organized and developed
- explains or illustrates some of the key ideas
- demonstrates adequate facility in the use of language
- may display some errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure

SCORE OF 3

A 3 paper is LIMITED. It demonstrates some degree of proficiency in response to the assignment, but it is clearly flawed.

An essay in this category reveals one or more of the following weaknesses:

- inadequate organization or development
- inadequate explanation or illustration of key ideas
- limited or inappropriate word choice
- a pattern or accumulation of errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure

SCORE OF 2

A 2 paper is FLAWED. It demonstrates limited proficiency in response to the assignment.

An essay in this category reveals one or more of the following weaknesses:

- weak organization or very little development
- little or no relevant detail
- serious errors in mechanics, usage, sentence structure, or word choice

SCORE OF 1

A 1 paper is DEFICIENT. It demonstrates fundamental deficiencies in writing skills.

An essay in this category contains serious and persistent writing errors or is incoherent or is undeveloped.

SCORE OF 0

A 0 paper is reported accompanied by one of the following codes to indicate a paper could not be scored for one of the following reasons:

- 0-A - Blank or Refusal
- 0-B - Insufficient to score or Illegible
- 0-C - Off Topic
- 0-D - Written predominantly in another language

Special Report Notations

SCORE followed by "E" indicates the student is excluded from summaries.

SCORE followed by asterisk (*) indicates the student's test score is nullified due to a Report of Irregularity.