

Glossary of Writing Terms

Allowable Interpretations – a scoring tool that assists scorers in distinguishing scorable from unscorable responses

Census Writing Assessment – testing of all students in a particular grade level to measure the writing proficiency of students and schools

Conventions – commonly accepted rules of edited American English (e.g., spelling, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure)

Draft – preliminary version of a piece of writing that may need revision of details, organization, and conventions

Expository Writing – writing that gives information, explains why or how, clarifies a process, or defines a concept

Field Test – testing a representative sample of the state’s student population to determine the effectiveness of an assessment instrument

Focus – relationship of supporting details to the main idea, theme, or unifying point

Loosely Related – only slightly related

Extraneous – not related

Holistic Scoring – method by which trained readers evaluate the overall quality of a piece of writing according to predefined criteria

Narrative Writing – writing that recounts a personal or fictional experience or tells a story based on a real or imagined event

Organization – structure or plan of development (beginning, middle, and end) and the transitional devices used to arrange ideas

Transitional Devices – words, terms, phrases, and sentence variations used to arrange and signal the movement of ideas. For example, “next, and then, in the end, another reason, after that we went, another way to look at” are transitional devices.

Performance Task – test item (prompt) that requires a student to write a response instead of choosing one from several choices

Persuasive Writing – writing that attempts to convince the reader that a point of view is valid or that the reader should take a specific action

Prompt – writing assignment that states the writer’s task, including the topic and purpose of the writing

Range finders – student responses used to illustrate score points on the rubric

Response – writing that is stimulated by a prompt

Rubric – scoring description for each score point of the scale

Scorer – person trained to score student responses

Support – quality of details illustrating or explaining the central theme **Bare** – use of a detail or a simple list that focuses on events or reasons. For example, “I like to go to school because it is fun.”

Extended – use of information that begins to clarify meaning. For example, “I like to go to school because it is fun when the teacher allows us to do

experiments with frogs.” **Layered** – use of a series of informational statements that collectively help to clarify meaning. For example, “I like to go to school because it is fun

when the teacher allows us to do experiments with frogs. We learned what kinds of foods frogs like to eat by offering them flies, worms, and seeds. We observed the frogs during the

morning and afternoon to determine when they were more active. We also compared frogs to other amphibians to see what characteristics they share.”

Elaborated – use of additional details, anecdotes, illustrations, and examples that further clarify meaning. Information that answers the question, “What do you mean?” For example, “I like to go to school because it

is fun when the teacher allows us to do experiments with frogs instead of just reading about frogs in books. Experiments allow us to have the fun of discovering for ourselves how far

and how fast frogs can jump and what kinds of foods frogs like to eat.” The elaboration could also provide a detailed description of the experiments.

Writing Process – recursive steps of prewriting, draft