

Grade 8 Writing: Grade Level Expectations

Essential Academic Learning Requirements [EALR] for Writing K-10

EALR 1: The student understands and uses a writing process

Component 1.1 Prewrites to generate ideas and plan writing.

Component 1.2 Produces Drafts.

Component 1.3 Revises to improve text.

Component 1.4 Edits Text.

Component 1.5 Publishes text to share with audience.

Component 1.6 Adjusts writing processes as necessary.

EALR 2: The student writes in a variety of forms for different audiences and purposes

Component 2.1 Adapts writing for a variety of audiences.

Component 2.2 Writes for different purposes.

Component 2.3 Writes in a variety of forms/genres.

Component 2.4 Writes for career applications.

EALR 3: The student writes clearly and effectively

Component 3.1 Develops ideas and organizes writing.

Component 3.2 Uses appropriate style.

Component 3.3 Knows and applies writing conventions appropriate for the grade level.

EALR 4: The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of written work.

Component 4.1 Analyzes and evaluates others' and own writing.

Component 4.2 Sets goals for improvement.

Cited from Washington State's Essential Academic Learning Requirements:

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GRADE 8:

In eighth grade, students competently write reports and explanations on a range of complex topics, maintaining focus on the theme or issue. The well-researched information is structured effectively in appropriate forms and style for a range of audiences and purposes. Students produce pieces that go beyond formulaic writing. They retrieve, select, organize, synthesize, and evaluate material from a variety of print and electronic resources. They craft a variety of literary texts with confidence. Students are able to manage time to complete a writing task on demand or over several weeks. Students reflect on their own writing and identify strategies to improve the quality of their written work.

EALR 1: The student understands and uses a writing process.

Component 1.1: Prewrites to generate ideas and plan writing.

- 1.1.1 Analyzes and selects effective strategies for generating ideas and planning writing.
- Generates ideas prior to organizing them and adjusts prewriting strategies accordingly (e.g., free write, outline, list, T-chart for comparing).
 - Maintains a log or journal (electronic or handwritten) to collect and explore ideas; records observations, dialogues, and/or descriptions for later use as a basis for informational, persuasive, or literary writing.
 - Gathers information (e.g., takes notes) from a variety of sources (e.g., Internet, interviews, multimedia, books, periodicals) and chooses an organizer to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information to plan writing.
 - Uses prewriting stage to determine purpose, analyze audience, select form, research background information, formulate theme (for narrative writing) or a thesis, and/or organize text

Component 1.2: Produces draft(s).

- 1.2.1 Analyzes task and composes multiple drafts when appropriate.
- Refers to prewriting plan.
 - Drafts according to audience, purpose, and time.
 - Drafts by hand and/or electronically.
 - Assesses draft and/or feedback, decides if multiple drafts are necessary, and explains decision.

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Component 1.3: Revises to improve text.

1.3.1 Revises text, including changing words, sentences, paragraphs, and ideas.

Selects and uses effective revision tools or strategies based on project (e.g., referring to prewriting, checking sentence beginnings, combining sentences, using “cut and paste” word processing functions).

- Rereads work several times and has a different focus for each reading (e.g., first reading — looking for variety of sentence structure and length; second reading — checking for clarity and specific word choice; third reading — checking for layers of elaboration and persuasive language).
- Decides if revision is warranted.
- Seeks and considers feedback from a variety of sources (e.g., adults, peers, community members, response groups).
- Records feedback using writing group procedure (e.g., partner reads writer’s work aloud, and writer notes possible revision).
- Evaluates and justifies the choice to use feedback in revisions (e.g., “I don’t want to change this because ...”).
- Revises typographic devices (e.g., bullets, numbered lists) to clarify text and to meet requirements of technical writing forms (e.g., lab reports, graphs).
- Uses multiple resources to improve text (e.g., writing guide, assignment criteria, peer, adult, electronic or other thesaurus).

Component 1.4: Edits text.

1.4.1 Edits for conventions (see 3.3).

- Identifies and corrects errors in conventions.
- Uses appropriate references and resources (e.g., dictionary, writing/style guide, electronic spelling and grammar check, adult, peer).
- Edits with a critical eye, often using a self-initiated checklist or editing guide (e.g., conventions or format guidelines).
- Proofreads final draft for errors.

Component 1.5: Publishes text to share with audience.

1.5.1 Publishes in formats that are appropriate for specific audiences and purposes.

- Selects from a variety of publishing options keeping in mind audience and purpose (e.g., e-portfolio, newsletter, contest, school announcement, yearbook).
- Publishes using a range of graphics and illustrative material (e.g., photos, charts, graphs, tables, time lines, diagrams, cartoons).
- Publishes material in appropriate form (e.g., multimedia presentation) and format (e.g., photos, graphs, text features).
- Publishes using visual and dramatic presentations (e.g., skits, interviews).

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- Uses available technological resources to produce, design, and publish a professional-looking final product (e.g., charts, overheads, word processor, photo software, presentation software, publishing software).

Component 1.6: Adjusts writing process as necessary.

1.6.1 Applies understanding of the recursive nature of writing process.

- Revises at any stage of process.
- Edits as needed at any stage.

1.6.2 Uses collaborative skills to adapt writing process.

- Delegates parts of process to team members (e.g., one team member publishes, one edits, and another presents).
- Collaborates on drafting, revising, and editing.
- Collaborates on final layout and publishing/presenting (e.g., presentation with slideshow).

1.6.3 Uses knowledge of time constraints to adjust writing process.

- Adapts time allotted for data gathering and number of drafts for shorter projects.
- Writes to meet a deadline.
- Creates a management timeline/flow chart for multi-week written projects (e.g., portfolios, research papers, I-Search papers).
- Decreases time for prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing when writing on demand, in-class pieces.
- Increases time for prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing when working on longer written projects (e.g., research papers, I-Search papers)

EALR 2: The student writes in a variety of forms for different audiences and purposes

Component 2.1: Adapts writing for a variety of audiences.

2.1.1 Applies understanding of multiple and varied audiences to write effectively.

- Identifies an intended audience.
- Analyzes the audience to meet its needs (e.g., uses tone appropriate to culture, age, and gender of audience).
- Respects the cultural backgrounds of potential audiences (e.g., through word choice, topics).
- Describes how a particular audience may interpret a text (e.g., by defining terms, using formal language).
- Anticipates readers' questions and writes accordingly.

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Component 2.2: Writes for different purposes.

2.2.1 Demonstrates understanding of different purposes for writing.

- Writes to pursue a personal interest, to explain, to persuade, to inform, and to entertain a specified audience (e.g., writes to persuade community to build a skate park, includes narratives/poetry in portfolio).
- Writes for self-expression.
- Writes to analyze informational and literary texts.
- Writes to learn (e.g., KWL Plus; summary; double-entry journal in math, science, social studies).
- Writes for more than one purpose using the same form (e.g., a newspaper article used to persuade, to entertain, or to inform).
- Includes more than one mode within a piece to address purpose (e.g., narrative anecdote to support a position in expository research paper).
- Writes to examine opposing perspectives (e.g., an argumentative paper examining how white settlement in the Pacific Northwest has had both positive and negative effects).

Component 2.3: Writes in a variety of forms/genres.

2.3.1 Uses a variety of forms/genres.

- Integrates more than one form/genre in a single piece (e.g., a narrative told using an explanation, a character sketch, a free verse poem, a dialogue, a newspaper article, a document, and a diary entry).
- Maintains a log or portfolio to track variety of forms/genres used.
- Produces a variety of new forms/ genres. Examples:
 - reflective journals
 - fictional stories (e.g., science fiction)
 - scripts (e.g., television, movie, radio) ~ essays/speeches (e.g., cause/effect, problem/solution)
 - application forms
 - minutes
 - debates
 - scientific reports
 - magazines
 - narrative poems

Component 2.4: The student writes in a variety of forms for different audiences and purposes.

2.4.1 Produces documents used in a career setting.

- Collaborates with peers on long-term team writing projects (e.g., scientific investigation).

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- Produces technical and nontechnical documents for career audiences (e.g., letters, applications, lab reports), taking into consideration technical formats (e.g., fonts, layout, style guides). N
- Selects and synthesizes information from technical and career documents for inclusion in writing (e.g., lab report that includes data recorded on graphs).

EALR 3: The student writes clearly and effectively.

Component 3.1: Develops ideas and organizes writing.

3.1.1 Analyzes ideas, selects a manageable topic, and elaborates using specific, relevant details and/or examples.

- Presents a central idea, theme, and manageable thesis while maintaining a consistent focus (e.g., “Commercials influence the spending habits of teenagers.”).
- Selects specific details relevant to the topic to extend ideas or develop elaboration (e.g., quotations, data, reasons, multiple examples that build on each other).
- Uses personal experiences, observations, and/or research to support opinions and ideas (e.g., relevant data to support conclusions in math, science, social studies; appropriate anecdotes to explain or persuade; information synthesized from a variety of sources to support an argument).
- Develops convincing characters (e.g., using details of thoughts, actions, appearance, and speech) and convincing settings (e.g., through the character’s point of view or described during action) within a range of plots (e.g., suspense, flashback) in narratives.

3.1.2 Analyzes and selects effective organizational structures.

- Writes unified, cohesive paragraphs (e.g., inverted pyramid: broad topic, narrowing focus, specific details).
- Develops a compelling introduction (e.g., startling statement, setting/ description, quotation).
- Composes an effective ending/ conclusion that is more than a repetition of the introduction (e.g., response to a “so what” question, connection to bigger picture).
- Uses transitional words and phrases between paragraphs to show logical relationships among ideas (e.g., moreover ... , because of this issue ... , equally important ... , as opposed to ...).
- Selects and uses effective organizational patterns as determined by purpose: ~ explanations (e.g., process description) ~ comparison (e.g., all similarities grouped together and all differences grouped together) ~ persuasion (e.g., vary sequence of arguments) ~ narrative (e.g., problem-solution-outcome) n Emphasizes key ideas through appropriate use of text features (e.g., headings, charts, diagrams, graphs, bullets).

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Component 3.2: Uses appropriate style.

3.2.1 Applies understanding that different audiences and purposes affect writer's voice.

- Writes with a clearly defined voice appropriate to audience.
- Writes in an individual, informed voice in expository, technical, and persuasive writing.
- Writes from more than one point of view or perspective (e.g., cultural perspective for a character's viewpoint in history or literature, first person for ISearch papers, third person for mathematical communication, first or third person for persuasive writing).

Note: Read-alouds should include a multicultural perspective and be continued throughout all grade levels.

3.2.2 Analyzes and selects language appropriate for specific audiences and purposes.

- Selects and uses precise language to persuade or inform.
- Selects and uses precise language in poetic and narrative writing.
- Uses the vernacular appropriately.
- Selects and uses specialized vocabulary relevant to a specific content area (e.g., meteorologist, climatology).
- Selects and uses persuasive techniques (e.g., powerful and emotional imagery).
- Selects and uses literary devices (e.g., metaphor, symbols, analogies).
- Selects and uses sound devices in prose and poetry (e.g., two-syllable rhyme, repetition, rhythm, rhyme schemes).
- Considers connotation and denotation when selecting words (plump vs. fat, shack vs. house).

3.2.3 Uses a variety of sentences consistent with audience, purpose, and form.

- Writes a variety of sentence structures and lengths to create a cadence appropriate for audience, purpose, and form.
- Writes a variety of sentence structures (e.g., inverts sentence to draw attention to the point being made in an essay: "Down the stream swam the salmon fingerlings.").
- Uses a variety of line lengths and rhythms for effect in narrative poems.

Component 3.3: Knows and applies appropriate grade level writing conventions.

3.3.1 Uses legible handwriting.

- Produces readable printing or cursive handwriting (e.g., size, spacing, formation, uppercase and lowercase).

Note: In the Grade Level Expectations 3.3.1 through 3.3.8, skills generally are not repeated and build each year on preceding years' skills. Because these skills are learned and practiced as writing becomes more sophisticated, attention should be paid to skills in more than one year.

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3.3.2 Spells accurately in final draft.

- Uses spelling rules and patterns from previous grades.
- Uses multiple strategies to spell.

Examples:

- homophones (e.g., capital and capitol)
- affixes (e.g., dis-, ir-, -ist -ism)
- Greek and Latin roots (e.g., circus, spiral, vision)
- words from other languages (e.g., arena, buffet, soufflé, lariat)
- frequently misspelled words (e.g., accommodation, cemetery, receive)
- Uses resources to correct own spelling

3.3.3 Applies capitalization rules.

- Uses capitalization rules from previous grades.
- Capitalizes the title of a specific course (e.g., History 9A as opposed to history).
- Uses resources to check capitalization.

3.3.4 Applies punctuation rules.

- Uses punctuation rules from previous grades.
- Uses commas to enclose titles (e.g., Mohammed Abdul, M.D., is a pediatrician.).
- Uses commas for emphasis or clarity (e.g., What the cook does, does affect the meal.).
- Places commas and periods inside quotation marks.
- Uses apostrophes to form plurals of letters or numbers (e.g., Know your ABC's.).
- Uses apostrophes in possessive compound nouns (e.g., the mother-in-law's birthday).
- Uses a colon between title and subtitle (e.g., Write Source 2000: A Guide to Thinking, Writing and Learning).
- Uses diagonal slash (/) correctly:
 - in a fraction
 - to show choice
- Uses resources to check punctuation

3.3.5 Applies usage rules.

- Applies usage rules from previous grades.
- Identifies and corrects past grammar and usage issues.
- Uses fewer vs. less correctly.
- Uses parallel construction when listing infinitive phrases.
 - parallel: Jamillah likes to hike, swim, and ride a bicycle.
 - not parallel: Jamillah likes to hike, to swim, and rides a bicycle.
- Uses resources to check usage.

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3.3.6 Uses complete sentences in writing.

- May use fragments in dialogue as appropriate.

3.3.7 Applies paragraph conventions.

- Uses paragraph conventions (e.g., designated by indentation or block format, skipping lines between paragraphs).
- Uses textual markers (e.g., rows, columns, tables).

3.3.8 Applies conventional forms for citations.

- Cites sources according to prescribed format (e.g., MLA, APA).

EALR 4: The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of written work.

Component 4.1: Analyzes and evaluates others' and own writing.

4.1.1 Analyzes and evaluates writing using established criteria.

- Critiques work, independently and in groups, according to detailed scoring guide, sometimes developed collaboratively (e.g., checklist, rubric, continuum).
- Identifies persuasive elements in a peers' writing and critiques the effectiveness (e.g., preponderance of evidence, rhetorical questions).
- Explains accuracy of content and vocabulary for specific curricular areas (e.g., math-specific words when justifying a strategy used during estimation involving integers).

4.1.2 Analyzes and evaluates own writing using established criteria.

- Explains strengths and weaknesses of own writing using criteria (e.g., rubrics specific to purpose or form of assignment, WASL or 6-trait rubrics).
- Rereads own work for the craft of writing (e.g., logic, transitional phrases) as well as the content (e.g., selected, relevant supporting detail).
- Uses criteria to choose and defend choices for a writing portfolio.
- Provides evidence that goals have been met (e.g., selects piece that shows complex organizational structure).

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Component 4.2: Sets goals for improvement.

4.2.1 Evaluates and adjusts writing goals using criteria.

- Monitors progress toward goals over time (e.g., “After every piece of writing, I need to check to make sure I am supporting my claims with evidence.”).
- Analyzes progress (e.g., “I have been supporting my claims with evidence.”).
- Evaluates goals (e.g., “I should find more relevant evidence to support my claim.”).
- Adjusts goals (e.g., “I will change my goal from supporting claims with more evidence to supporting claims with better evidence.”).
- Maintains a written log of long-term goals (e.g., “I will write to multiple audiences, improve and vary my introductions and conclusions, and try a new persuasive technique.”) and a portfolio of work.