

Amherst County Public Schools



Literacy Program

*An articulation of expectations
for literacy instruction*

Preface

Our children deserve the best possible instruction based on what current research tells us is most effective. This document describes Amherst County Public Schools' literacy principles and outlines a plan for instruction in ACPS K-5 classrooms.

The plan was developed in the 2009-10 school year by a committee of ACPS teachers and administrators during a series of sessions that included study and discussion of reading research as it applies to our work in our community. The result is a document that will serve as the basis for instructional decision-making throughout the school division, ensuring that the language used to talk about instruction and the expectations for instruction are consistent from school to school.

Every K-5 teacher is expected to understand and follow the core principles and framework outlined in this plan and to consider the expectations for literacy education beyond the K-5 level. Secondary literacy teachers will understand and follow the principles and be familiar with the expectations for literacy instruction at the elementary level. The goal is for teachers to use their knowledge about effective practices to make *intentional* decisions about what happens in their classrooms.

The demands of a 21st century world are expected to change rapidly, requiring that teachers and students develop new skills. The plan will be reviewed and revised as such information becomes available.

Our task, the grounding vision for our work as educators, is to guide our students in becoming literate individuals able to learn and thrive in a global society.

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Amherst County Public Schools Literacy Program

"Literacy is the foundation for all other learning, the means by which youngsters develop critical thinking skills. It is the vehicle through which humans can make sense of our world and ourselves." (Raphael, 2000)

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Goal

Amherst County Public Schools shall motivate, inspire, and educate every child, every day by providing appropriate comprehensive literacy instruction.

Honoring Children's Rights to Excellent Literacy Instruction*: 6 Principles

Amherst County Public Schools is convinced that efforts to improve children's literacy achievement must begin by recognizing the right of every child to receive the best possible literacy instruction. We have six basic principles to serve as a guide for our professional practice.

1. Children have a right to literacy instruction based on their individual needs as determined by assessment that identifies their strengths as well as their needs and involves them in making decisions about their own learning.
2. Children have a right to classrooms that build both the skill and the desire to read and write increasingly complex materials.
3. Children who are struggling with reading have a right to receive intervention from teachers who are knowledgeable about the teaching of reading.
4. Children have a right to access a wide variety of books, other print materials, and available technology for both independent and instructional reading in classrooms and school libraries.
5. Children have a right to teachers who purposefully involve parents and communities in their academic lives.
6. Children have a right to well-prepared teachers who continue to learn and reflect on their practices, keeping up-to-date through professional development.

** Based on a position statement of the International Reading Association, "Making a Difference Means Making it Different: Honoring Children's Rights to Excellent Reading Instruction"*

Framework for K-5 Reading Instruction

Introduction

The principles outlining children’s right to the best possible reading instruction that are introduced in the preceding section are expanded in this section. The essential components are curriculum, assessment, and instruction. Teacher knowledge and parent involvement, which impact literacy development at all levels, are discussed following the Framework section. The final section is an appendix of required documents and useful resources.

Curriculum

Virginia’s Standards of Learning as outlined in the [English Curriculum Framework](#) (found on the Virginia Department of Education website) is the basis for the literacy curriculum. The Curriculum Framework details what students are to learn at each grade level. The [ACPS pacing guide](#) assigns the curriculum components to nine weeks sections, thus facilitating sequencing of instruction in the classroom. The expectations for reading achievement for each grade are found in the [Grade Level Benchmarks](#) in the appendix.

The core of the ACPS literacy program is a set of instructional practices and materials informed by research. The practices that teachers employ to teach the essential knowledge and skills outlined in the Curriculum Framework and ACPS pacing guide are described in this document.

Assessment

Assessments provide feedback to inform instruction, monitor progress, or form the basis for evaluation. Some assessments (see below) are required for all students and others will be determined by teachers. For example, in addition to the required assessments, teacher-designed assessments evaluate progress in the curriculum on a daily and weekly basis. This document focuses on division-wide assessments; however, effective classroom teachers and specialists will monitor student progress in a variety of other ways, including authentic and differentiated assessments. [Grade Level Benchmarks](#), found in this document’s appendix, outline the expectations for grade-level work.

Types of Assessments

An effective reading program uses four types of assessments:

- **Screening instruments**, administered at the beginning of the school year to all students, indicate which students may have difficulties in reading and may need additional support or intervention or extension.
- **Progress monitoring assessments**, administered to individuals or groups, measure student progress at intervals throughout the school year to determine effectiveness of literacy instruction. Progress monitoring helps ensure that students falling behind receive immediate support.
- **Diagnostic assessments**, administered individually, provide specific information concerning skills, knowledge, and application.
- **Outcome assessments**, usually administered at the end of the school year, provide information about the numbers and percentages of students making gains in reading and reaching grade level benchmarks.

Division-Wide Assessments

Listed below are the state and Amherst County Public Schools literacy assessments administered during the school year. Teachers are encouraged to use additional assessments as needed to inform their instruction.

- **PALS – Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening** is a state reading assessment for grades PK-3 to identify strengths, weaknesses, and progress. PALS will be administered three times during the school year, and scores are to be entered online. Beginning with the fall administration in grade 2, students who have met high benchmark may be exempted from PALS testing. (Screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic)

Timeline: Must be completed in a two-week window identified by school or division within PALS parameters.

August-October	PK-1
	2-3 who have not met high benchmark. (NOTE: "High benchmark" students are reading well-above grade level and are flagged with this designation in the PALS database. This is different from "meeting benchmark.")
January	K (and/or running record, depending on what is needed to plan appropriate instruction)
	1-3 (or running record)
May	PK-1
	2-3 who have not met high benchmark

- **Informal Reading Inventory** is a county reading assessment to determine the instructional reading level of students and to identify strengths and weaknesses. It will be

administered by classroom teachers in grades 4 and 5 in the fall and spring. (Screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic)

Timeline:

August-September	4-5
March	5 (NOTE: Earlier than grade 4 to facilitate timely information to middle schools.)
April-May	4

- **Developmental Spelling Assessments** are used by the county schools to determine students' word knowledge and to plan word study instruction that scaffolds students' understanding about the way words work. Kathy Ganske's Developmental Spelling Assessment (copies available in schools) will be administered three times during the school year. (Screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic)

Timeline:

August-September	1-5
December-January	K-5
April-May	K-5

- **Running records** are coded notations of text reading on leveled text, administered individually. Although ACPS uses the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System for the *required* assessments, other running records may be taken on any text. When running records are used as a diagnostic tool, errors are analyzed to determine the reader's use of meaning, sentence structure, and visual cues. Comprehension questions or a retelling may be a part of the process; however, the error analysis is most useful for diagnostic purposes. A mix of fiction and nonfiction is helpful. For required assessments, teachers should use the percentages used by PALS in calculating accuracy (found in the [appendix](#)). (Progress monitoring, diagnostic)

Timeline:

Nine Weeks 1	1-3
Nine Weeks 2	K (for students reading guided reading level A or higher)
	1
	2-3 (optional for students who met PALS high benchmark)
	4 (optional for students reading independently at grade 5 or higher)
	5
Nine Weeks 3	K (for students reading guided reading level A or higher)
	1-3 (unless PALS is administered)
Nine Weeks 4	K
	2-3 (except for students who are required to take PALS)
	5 (optional for students reading independently at grade 6 or higher)

- **Nine Weeks Benchmark Assessments** are administered at the end of each nine weeks based on the skills and content that are delineated in the curriculum and pacing guides for Amherst County Public Schools in English. The assessment results are used as diagnostic tools in designing remediation, intervention, enrichment, and instructional planning. (Progress monitoring)

Timeline:

Nine Weeks 1	2 (optional) (NOTE: Teachers read assessments aloud first semester; students read independently thereafter.)
	3-5
Nine Weeks 2	2-5
Nine Weeks 3	2-5
Nine Weeks 4	2

- **Standards of Learning (SOL)** state assessment will be given according to the state testing guidelines in grades 3-5. (Outcome assessment)

Timeline:

May	3-5 (Dates established and disseminated prior to school opening each year.)
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Reading Assessment Schedule

	First 9 Weeks	Second 9 Weeks	Third 9 Weeks	Fourth 9 Weeks
Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letter names, letter sounds, letter production, concept of word assessment ▪ PALS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running record and/or assessment of letter names, letter sounds, letter production, concept of word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ PALS and/or running record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running record ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ PALS
First grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running record ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ PALS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PALS or running record ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PALS ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske)
Second grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running record ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ PALS (exempt students who have achieved high benchmark) ▪ 9-wks benchmark (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running record (optional for high benchmark) ▪ 9-wks benchmark assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PALS or running record ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ 9-wks benchmark assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PALS (Substitute running record for high benchmark students) ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ 9-wks benchmark assessment
Third grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running record ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ PALS (exempt students who have achieved high benchmark) ▪ 9-wks benchmark assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running record (optional for high benchmark) ▪ 9-wks benchmark assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PALS or running record ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ 9-wks benchmark assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PALS (Substitute running record for high benchmark students) ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ SOL test
Fourth grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informal Reading Inventory ¹ ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ 9-wks benchmark assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running record (optional for students independent at gr. 5 or higher) ▪ 9-wks benchmark assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running record ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ 9-wks benchmark assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informal Reading Inventory ¹ ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ SOL test
Fifth grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informal Reading Inventory ¹ ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ 9-wks benchmark assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running record ▪ 9-wks benchmark assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informal Reading Inventory ¹ ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ 9-wks benchmark assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running record (optional for students independent at gr. 6 or higher) ▪ Developmental Spelling Analysis (Ganske) ▪ SOL test

NOTES:

- This chart outlines the minimum assessments required; schools and teachers may opt to assess more frequently as needed.
- Recommend alternating fiction and nonfiction passages for running records.
- "High benchmark" refers to students who have achieved high benchmark in PALS. High benchmark is denoted on PALS website and means that the child is reading independently at the next grade level or higher. This is NOT the same as meeting PALS benchmark.

¹ Students who are on or above grade level may read informal reading inventory silently at grades 4 and 5 if teacher prefers.

Instruction

What We Teach:

The [Virginia Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework](#) (found on the Virginia Department of Education website) and the [ACPS pacing guide](#) detail the essential knowledge and skills students learn at each grade level. [Grade Level Benchmarks](#), found in this document's appendix, outline the expectations for grade-level work. The following sections address the key **components** of reading instruction and the **process** that students use as they construct meaning from text.

▪ Components

The National Reading Panel report (2000) summarized several decades of research that shows effective reading instruction addresses five critical areas identified below. Further, the report also found that systematic and explicit instruction is most effective. Systematic instruction teaches skills in a planned, logical progression. With explicit instruction the teacher clearly states what the student is to learn and models how the skill is used.

Phonemic Awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (pre-K-2). Before children learn to read print, they need to become aware of how sounds in words work. Children demonstrate phonemic awareness by recognizing which words in a set begin with the same sound, by saying the first or last sound in a word, by blending sounds to say a word, and by breaking a word into its separate sounds. In addition, children need a broader phonological awareness of larger parts of spoken language and must be able to identify and manipulate words, syllables, onsets, and rhymes.

Phonics is the ability to recognize the relationship between letters of written language and the individual sounds of spoken language. ACPS teachers use the **word study** approach to help children learn the relationship between letters and sounds and to apply their knowledge of sounds and letters to their own writing.

Fluency is the ability to read with speed and accuracy. Fluent readers read aloud with expression, and reading sounds effortless.

Vocabulary is the ability to use words orally and in written communication by applying word meaning. (Types of vocabulary- Listening, speaking, reading, and writing.)

Comprehension is the ability to understand the meaning of what is read.

■ Reading Process

The reading process includes all the strategies, conscious and unconscious, that readers use before, during, and after reading a text to construct meaning. Effective readers focus on understanding what they are reading by using these strategies in order to monitor their understanding:

- monitoring comprehension
- activating background knowledge
- questioning
- visualizing
- evaluating to determine importance
- summarizing and synthesizing
- inferring

Below are activities that can be used to teach the above strategies at each part of the reading process (before, during, and after).

BEFORE Reading

Comprehension strategies taught:

- Previewing/activating background knowledge
- Predicting
- Questioning
- Determining importance (looking at text features)

Activities to help teach:

- Prediction statements
- KWL (know, want to know, learned)
- Think, Pair, Share (predictions, "noticings" that helped with predictions)
- Picture walks
- Anticipation guides (the before reading section)
- Think-alouds
- Skimming (text features to focus on)
- Preview-Predict-Confirm organizer
- Making connections
- Concept sorts
- Content vocabulary list to set purpose or make predictions
- Text feature instruction (headers, bold type, maps, illustrations, etc.)
- Text preview (teacher-written passage to build background knowledge before reading)
- List-group-label

DURING Reading

Comprehension strategies taught:

- Questioning
- Self-monitoring
- Visualizing/mental images
- Inferring
- Making connections (text-to-text, text-to-world, text-to-self)

Activities to help teach:

- KWL (know, what I want to know, learned)
- Sticky notes (mark confusing, interesting parts)
- QAR (question-answer relationships)
- Two-column notes
- DR-TA (directed reading thinking activity)
- Think-alouds to monitor strategies
- Rereading
- Literature circles (required roles—examples: discussion director, literary luminary, connector)
- Wordless picture books (visualizing)
- Inferencing (what I read + what's in my head)
- Three-column notes (background knowledge/text clues/inference made)
- Word analysis (context clues)
- Questioning the author
- Word mapping
- Journaling (specific purpose to address a strategy)

AFTER Reading

Comprehension strategies taught:

- Summarizing
- Evaluating to determine importance
- Self-monitoring

Activities to help teach:

- KWL (know, want to know, what I learned)
- Graphic organizers:
 - Web
 - Venn diagram
 - Time line
 - Story map
 - Character map
 - Main idea and details chart
 - Beginning, middle, end
 - Word map (Frayer model)
- QAR (question-answer relationships)
- Two-column notes
- Think-pair-share
- Summary writing ("who, wanted, but, so" for fiction; topic, two facts, personal response for nonfiction)

- Reread to confirm
- Literature circles (required roles—examples: discussion director, literary luminary, connector)
- Concept sort
- Making connections to draw conclusions
- Inferencing (what I read + what's in my head)
- Three-column notes (background knowledge/text clues/inference made)
- Identify themes
- Retelling
- Anticipation guides (the after-reading section)
- Determining topic from details
- List-group-label
- Journaling (specific purpose to address a strategy)
- Discussion
- Jigsaw

How We Organize:

Teachers organize the instructional day for multiple purposes according to student needs. The following sections describe how to group students and how much time to allocate to the components of the reading block.

▪ **Grouping Practices**

According to the National Reading Panel, a combination of small group and whole class instruction produces the best results. Student grouping for reading instruction is generally determined by academic need and is based on literacy assessments such as running records and word study assessments. Student interests may also be considered when forming groups. While the teacher is working with small groups, other students may be working independently or with partners on work at their independent level. One-to-one instruction, that is, a teacher working with one child, is valuable and is most often seen in intervention or tutorial settings.

Listed below are examples of the types of instructional work that may be seen in each group.

Whole Group- Heterogeneous

- Phonemic awareness (most appropriate K-2)
- Read aloud
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Questioning based on Bloom's Taxonomy
- Writing

Small Group- Homogeneous Flexible Groupings

- Fluency
- Phonics
- Dictation (writing for sounds)
- Guided reading
- Comprehension
- Questioning
- Word recognition
- Phonemic awareness (most appropriate K-2)
- Literature circles (most appropriate in upper elementary)

Managing Small Group Instruction Time

(What the others are doing while I teach small group)

- Writing
- Independent reading
- Centers/work stations
- Computer activities
- Word study activities
- Collaborative group work

▪ *Allocation of Time*

Amherst County Schools will allocate a minimum of 120 minutes daily for language arts. This will include 90 minutes of reading instruction and 30 minutes of process writing. The reading “diets” on the following pages will be used in lesson planning. Using reading and spelling assessments, the teacher will determine the diet to be used for instruction for each child.

The 90 minutes will occur in various settings such as whole group, small group, and independent work or literacy work stations. For example, a beginning reader might experience five of the recommended 18 minutes of writing for sounds in a whole group setting through a group-generated message, another five minutes writing a dictated sentence in small group instruction, and eight minutes in a literacy work station activity.

Writing referenced in the diets on the following pages is linked to writing as it relates to learning how to read and to improve comprehension skills. Refer to the [ACPS Writing Recommendations](#) and the [SOL Curriculum Framework](#) for more details on expectations related to the *process* of writing.

EMERGENT (PREREADER) DIET

Instructional Goal	Activity	Percent of Time Spent
CONCEPT OF WORD Goal: speech to print match	finger-point reading to memorized rhymes, jingles, songs, and dictations repeated reading of little books (natural language text and controlled vocabulary)	20% of instructional time (Approximately 18 minutes)
CONCEPT OF PRINT Goal: how written language works; concepts about print	listening to stories, retelling stories, story illustrations, drama/flannel boards, and concept sorts	20% of instructional time (Approximately 18 minutes)
ALPHABET Goal: phonemic awareness; phonics	oral language play, alphabet games and activities, recognition/matching games, picture sorts by letters and sounds (beginning letter alliteration for alphabet)	20% of instructional time (Approximately 18 minutes)
Language Play/ PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS	listening to rhyme, rhyme activities, words/sentences, syllables, initial/final consonants	20% of instructional time (Approximately 18 minutes)
WRITING Goal: letter-formation and letter-sound associations	drawing and labeling, picture captions, pretend writing, writing letters	20% of instructional time (Approximately 18 minutes) <i>Process writing—additional 30 minutes</i>

** Chart taken from McGuffey Reading Center, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia **

Characteristics of an emergent reader: scribbles letters and numbers, lacks concept of word, lacks letter-sound correspondence, represents most salient sounds with single letters, and pretends to read and write

BEGINNING READER DIET

Instructional Goal	Activity	Percent of Time Spent
<p style="text-align: center;">FLUENCY</p> <p>Goal: success in reading (making reading happen) automatic word recognition</p>	<p>repeated reading of familiar text (books that have been read before), choral and echo reading of controlled vocabulary text, taped reading</p>	<p>40% of instructional time (Approximately 36 minutes)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">WORD STUDY</p> <p>Goal: sort known words by alliteration (beginning sounds), rhyme (short vowel families), and short vowels outside of rhyme</p>	<p>word bank sight words, sorting by beginning sounds, sorting by rhyming families, short vowel spellings outside of rime</p>	<p>20% of instructional time (Approximately 18 minutes)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">COMPREHENSION</p> <p>Goal: predicting using multiple cueing systems, cross checking, vocabulary, concepts</p>	<p>concept sorts with word bank words, predicting in text being read, retelling, listening to stories</p>	<p>20% of instructional time (Approximately 18 minutes)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">WRITING</p> <p>Goal: writing to use sounds</p>	<p>dictated sentences (from familiar text), writing for sounds, picture captions</p>	<p>20% of instructional time (Approximately 18 minutes) <i>Process writing—additional 30 minutes</i></p>

** Chart taken from McGuffey Reading Center, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia **

Characteristics of a beginning reader: spells initial and final consonants and some blends and digraphs, uses letter names to spell vowel sounds, spells phonetically representing all salient sounds in a one-to-one linear fashion, omits most silent letters, omits preconsonantal nasals in spelling (BOP or BUP for bump), finger points and reads aloud, and reads slowly in a word-by-word manner

TRANSITIONAL/INSTRUCTIONAL READER DIET

Instructional Goal	Activity	Percent of Time Spent
FLUENCY Goal: fluency (speed and accuracy)	timed repeated readings of independent level text, paired readings, readers' theatre, expert reading, poetry reading	20% of instructional time (Approximately 18 minutes)
WORD STUDY Goal: sort words by vowel sound and pattern	sorting known words by long and short vowel spelling patterns, continued word study as stages advance (based on assessment)	20% of instructional time (Approximately 18 minutes)
COMPREHENSION Goal: strategies for reading comprehension	silent reading in instructional level text, directed reading-thinking activities (DRTA) for fiction, graphic organizers (KWL, etc.) for content text	40% of instructional time (Approximately 36 minutes)
WRITING Goal: express ideas in writing	journal writing, summaries of stories, character studies, inquiry charts (content), free writing	20% of instructional time (Approximately 18 minutes) <i>Process writing—additional 30 minutes</i>

** Chart taken from McGuffey Reading Center, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia **

Characteristics of a transitional reader: spells most single-syllable short-vowel words correctly, spells most beginning consonant digraphs and two-letter consonant blends, attempts to use silent long-vowel markers (NALE for nail), reads silently and with more fluency and expression, writes more fluently and in extended fashion, and can revise and edit

Characteristics of an instructional reader: has mastered high frequency words and most single-syllable words correctly, makes errors on low frequency multisyllabic words derived from Latin and Greek combining forms and syllable juncture and in accented syllables, reads with good fluency and expression, reads faster silently than orally, and writes responses that are sophisticated and critical

How We Provide More Support:

- ***Intervention/Remediation (aligned with Response to Intervention Model)***

For students who are not achieving according to average grade level expectations, schools need to provide something more. The usual names for this "something more" are *remediation* or *intervention*. Since the recent reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), the term *Response to Intervention* (RtI) is being used to describe a systematic approach to intervene with struggling learners. RtI is a way to ensure that academic or behavioral difficulties are not the result of a lack of appropriate instruction. If students fail to respond with adequate progress to appropriate evidence-based classroom and supplemental instruction (and a disability is suspected to be the cause of the lack of progress), a child may be referred for a comprehensive evaluation.

Amherst County Public Schools does not currently institute a formal system of Response to Intervention. The process for providing intervention is, however, in line with a Response to Intervention framework. A student with academic delays is given research-validated interventions and the student's progress is monitored frequently and systematically to see if interventions are sufficient. It is an ongoing process of using student performance and other data to guide instructional and intervention decisions.

Amherst's Structure/Process for Remediation/Intervention

1. All students receive evidence-based, differentiated whole-classroom instruction. (Effective for approximately 80-90% of students.)
2. For students not succeeding, reteach or adjust instruction with evidenced-based interventions in small group settings. (Approximately 10-15% of students require supplemental support.)
3. For students still not successful, adjust instruction with additional evidence-based intervention(s) in even smaller groups. Instruction may involve additional time and/or more intensive targeted instruction. (Less than 5% of students require this level of intervention.)

Refer to the Multi-tier Intervention Chart (used with permission from the PALS office) at the end of this section for additional details.

Progress Monitoring

A progress monitoring system provides an **ongoing** systematic method of collecting data to determine the literacy performance of a student. Progress monitoring provides information to help teachers adjust instruction to a student's needs. Progress monitoring tools include

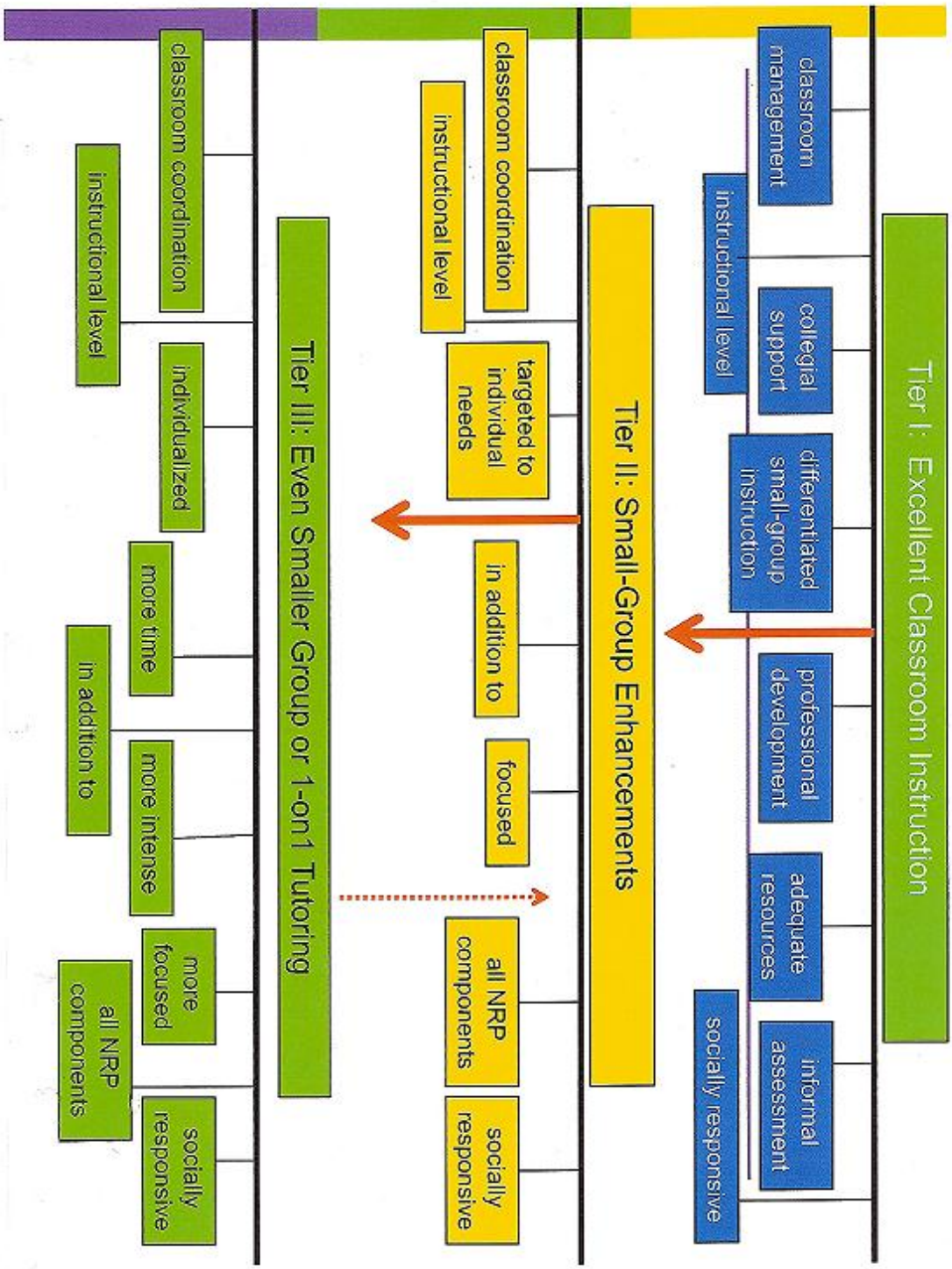
- Running records
- PALS Quick Checks
- Analysis of student work
- Spelling assessments (feature mastery)
- Nine-weeks benchmark tests

Where Do We Find Support Resources?

Refer to strategies, intervention and remediation ideas located in the PALS website, appendix, and ACPS web portal.

See reading instruction and intervention strategies in the *Learning Intervention Manual* available in each school by the Child Study chairperson. Reading and writing are specifically addressed on pages 177-286.

House, S. *Learning Intervention Manual: Goals, Objectives, and Intervention Strategies*. Hawthorne Educational Services, Inc. 2004.



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Writing Instruction

The information in this document focuses on reading instruction, yet teachers know that writing and reading are reciprocal processes. Most of the references to writing in these pages refer to writing as it relates to *learning to read*. Examples of this type of writing are writing for sounds as beginning readers, spelling instruction, and writing involved in comprehension development. The teaching of writing as a *process* is outlined in Amherst County's writing curriculum, and the expectations are defined in the [ACPS Writing Recommendations](#) which appear in the appendix of this document. Additionally, the [ACPS pacing guides](#) and the [Virginia Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework and the Enhanced Scope and Sequence](#) provide information to guide effective instruction.

To effectively teach students to become good writers, teachers provide many opportunities for their students to write in various modes, guiding them through the nuances of composing and crafting prose that fit different kinds of writings. Writing instruction in Amherst County encompasses all of the writing process, from planning and pre-writing through drafting, revising, editing, and sharing. Amherst County students are taught strategies for planning, organizing, revising, and editing so that they will become competent in the three domains of writing that comprise good writing and that are assessed on the Virginia Standards of Learning writing test: composing, written expression, and usage and mechanics.

Teacher Knowledge

As high expectations for achievement for all students have become the norm in our schools, teachers understand that professional development is an essential, ongoing part of their work. Educators must continue to learn to make use of the best available educational research to be able to deliver appropriate, targeted instruction for each child.

Please refer to the ACPS Calendar of Staff Development for details for information on staff development offered within the school division.

Parents as Partners

When a child comes to school able to take full advantage of the school's instruction, the child's school success is enhanced. It is the school's task to reach out to parents to build a partnership between the two major influences in a child's life.

The school division, as well as each elementary school, has a parent involvement plan that outlines how schools and parents might work together. To effectively serve families, we need to guard against limiting our efforts to activities that occur at school. Remembering James Comer's quote, "No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship," we must be open to forging relationships *in* the home or in other places where parents and families gather. Overcoming barriers such as transportation, trust, and child care issues may be part of the equation in educating the whole child.

Literacy Instruction in Grades 6-12

Reading Next and *Writing Next*, two documents from Alliance for Excellent Education, outline action plans for vision and research in secondary level literacy. These documents make the case that the profession must go beyond the goal of expecting that children are on grade level by third grade to ensuring that students have comprehension abilities that allow them to successfully comprehend increasingly complex material. Students' literacy skills must transfer across the curriculum so that students are able to communicate orally and in writing and to interpret and integrate diverse information.

On the next pages are the action steps from *Reading Next* and *Writing Next*, reports from Alliance for Excellent Education, presented to the Carnegie Corporation (*used with permission*).

Reading Next Recommendations

- 1. Direct, explicit comprehension instruction**, which is instruction in the strategies and processes that proficient readers use to understand what they read
- 2. Effective instructional principles embedded in content**, including language arts teachers using content-area texts and content-area teachers providing instruction and practice in reading and writing skills specific to their subject area
- 3. Motivation and self-directed learning**, which includes building motivation to read and learn and providing students with the instruction and supports needed for independent learning
- 4. Text-based collaborative learning**, which involves students interacting with one another around a variety of texts
- 5. Strategic tutoring**, which provides students with intense individualized reading, writing, and content instruction as needed
- 6. Diverse texts**, which are texts at a variety of difficulty levels and on a variety of topics
- 7. Intensive writing**, including instruction connected to the kinds of writing tasks students will have to perform well in high school and beyond
- 8. A technology component**, which includes technology as a tool for and a topic of instruction
- 9. Ongoing formative assessment of students**, which is informal, often daily assessment of how students are progressing under current instructional practices
- 10. Extended time for literacy**, which includes approximately two to four hours of literacy instruction and practice that takes place in language arts and content-area classes
- 11. Professional development** that is both long term and ongoing
- 12. Ongoing summative assessment of students and programs**, which is more formal and provides data that are reported for accountability and research purposes
- 13. Teacher teams**, which are interdisciplinary teams that meet to discuss students and align instruction
- 14. Leadership**, which can come from principals and teachers who have a solid understanding of how to teach reading and writing to the full array of students present in schools
- 15. A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program**, which is interdisciplinary and interdepartmental and may coordinate with out-of-school organizations and the local community

Writing Next Recommendations

- 1. Writing Strategies**, which involves teaching students strategies for planning, revising, and editing their compositions
- 2. Summarization**, which involves explicitly and systematically teaching students how to summarize texts
- 3. Collaborative Writing**, which uses instructional arrangements in which adolescents work together to plan, draft, revise, and edit their compositions
- 4. Specific Product Goals**, which assigns students specific, reachable goals for the writing they are to complete
- 5. Word Processing**, which uses computers and word processors as instructional supports for writing assignments
- 6. Sentence Combining**, which involves teaching students to construct more complex, sophisticated sentences
- 7. Prewriting**, which engages students in activities designed to help them generate or organize ideas for their composition
- 8. Inquiry Activities**, which engages students in analyzing immediate, concrete data to help them develop ideas and content for a particular writing task
- 9. Process Writing Approach**, which interweaves a number of writing instructional activities in a workshop environment that stresses extended writing opportunities, writing for authentic audiences, personalized instruction, and cycles of writing
- 10. Study of Models**, which provides students with opportunities to read, analyze, and emulate models of good writing
- 11. Writing for Content Learning**, which uses writing as a tool for learning content material

Appendix

Virginia Department of Education resources (web links):

[Virginia Department of Education Elementary English and Reading](#)

[Virginia Department of Education Middle School English](#)

[Virginia Department of Education High School English](#)

[English Standards of Learning, Curriculum Framework, Enhanced Scope and Sequence, Blueprints, Most Recent Released SOL Tests](#)

[All Released Tests](#)

Video Vignettes of Comprehension/Vocabulary Strategies:

- [Read-Aloud](#)
- [Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review](#)
- [Know, Want, Learn](#)
- [Think-Pair-Share](#)
- [Sticky Notes](#)
- [Think-Alouds](#)
- [Question-Answer Relationships](#)
- [Reciprocal Teaching](#)
- [Anticipation Guides](#)
- [Story Face](#)
- [Two-Column Notes](#)
- [Selective Underlining](#)
- [Concept Sorts](#)

Assessment:

- *Web links*

[PALS \(Phonological Awareness Screening\)](#)

- *Documents in appendix*

[ACPS Reading Benchmarks](#)

[ACPS Reading Correlation Chart](#)

[Dolch Lists](#)

[Running records tools](#)

Instruction:

▪ Web links

General

[ACPS Pacing Guide](#)

[PALS \(Phonological Awareness Screening\)](#) *(includes grouping and lesson planning tools)*

[Book level equivalencies](#)

[Virginia Reading First](#) *(includes articles and slide shows of instruction)*

[Reading Rockets](#)

[Florida Center for Reading Research](#)

[ReadWriteThink \(International Reading Association\)](#)

<http://www.readinglady.com/mosaic/tools/tools.htm#2>

<http://pals.virginia.edu/tools-activities.html>

<http://carlscorner.us.com/>

<http://www.readinga-z.com/>

<http://www.lrobb.com/web/guest/home>

<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/reading/products/essential.pdf>

Phonological Awareness

<http://www.kizclub.com/>

<http://www.ldonline.org/article/6254>

<http://phonologicalawareness.org/>

<http://www.songsforteaching.com/phonemicawareness.htm>

<http://teams.lacoe.edu/DOCUMENTATION/classrooms/patti/k-1/activities/phonemic.html>

<http://www.aability.com/pagames.htm#pagames>

<http://www.literatureforliterature.ecsd.net/strategies.htm>

<http://classroom.jc-schools.net/read/Phonemic.htm>

<http://www.readinga-z.com/phonics/index.html>

<http://westside.polk.schooldesk.net/Portals/47/docs/findings.pdf>

<http://www.k-3learningpages.net/web%20phonemic%20awareness.htm>

[http://www.freereading.net/index.php?title=Phonological Awareness Activities](http://www.freereading.net/index.php?title=Phonological_Awareness_Activities)

http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/ela/e_literacy/awareness.html

<http://www.lkwdpl.org/schools/elempath/reading/index.html>

[http://www.freereading.net/index.php?title=Find Activities](http://www.freereading.net/index.php?title=Find_Activities)

Phonics

<http://www.kizclub.com/>

<http://www.sadlier-oxford.com/phonics/student.cfm>

<http://db.dadecountyschools.org/~davis/wordstudy/>

<http://www.starfall.com/>

<http://www.spellingcity.com/>

[http://www.freereading.net/index.php?title=Find Activities](http://www.freereading.net/index.php?title=Find_Activities)

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/c51/>

<http://www.readingrockets.org/target/phonics>

Fluency

<http://www.timrasinski.com/?page=presentations>

<http://www.kizclub.com/>
http://www.freereading.net/index.php?title=Find_Activities
http://www.busyteacherscafe.com/teacher_resources/literacy_pages/fluency.htm
<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=4469>
<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/3416>
<http://www.literacyleader.com/?q=fluency>
<https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/brokaw/590fluency/activities.htm>

Sight Words

<http://www.learningbooks.net/xLPDolch.html>
<http://www.netrover.com/~kingskid/sightword/dolchgames.htm>
<http://www.readingresource.net/sightwords.html>
<http://www.sabine.k12.la.us/ZES/sightwords/default1.htm>
<http://www.adrianbruce.com/reading/games.htm>
<http://www.gamequarium.com/readquarium/sightwords.html>
http://www.readinga-z.com/more/highfreq_strat.html
http://classroom-activities.suite101.com/article.cfm/teaching_sight_words_in_preschool_and_esl
<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/reading/products/essential.pdf>

Comprehension and Vocabulary

[Comprehension caveat](#)

<http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/tools/index.htm>
<http://www.readingquest.org/>
http://www.freereading.net/index.php?title=Comprehension_Activities
<http://specialed.about.com/od/balancedliteracy/a/comp.htm>
<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/guided-comprehension-making-connections-228.html>
<http://www.emints.org/ethemes/resources/S00000737.shtml>
<http://reading.ecb.org/>
http://www.mce.k12tn.net/units/units_with_books.htm
<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=4464>
<http://www.targetedreadingintervention.org/links-kids-list>
http://www.freereading.net/index.php?title=Find_Activities
<http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/Reading/resources/IScomprehension.htm>

Graphic organizers

<http://int.cysd.k12.pa.us/Formspage/index.htm>
<http://my.hrw.com/nsmedia/intgos/html/igo.htm>
<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=2983>

Genre

<http://hill.troy.k12.mi.us/staff/bnewingham/myweb3/Genres.htm>

Vocabulary

<http://www.vocabulary.com/>
<http://www.resourceroom.net/Comprehension/vocabactivities.asp>
<http://www.cobbk12.org/Cheathamhill/LFS%20Update/Vocabulary%20and%20Word%20Walls.htm>
<http://forpd.ucf.edu/strategies/stratWordB.html>

Differentiation

<http://www.faculty.sbc.edu/brimijoin/>

http://www.internet4classrooms.com/links_grades_kindergarten_12/sample_units_lessons_differentiated_instruction.htm

<http://www.teach-nology.com/tutorials/teaching/differentiate/planning/>

Intervention/Remediation:

Note: Resources for intervention are throughout the appendix; for example, teachers may find resources for meeting struggling students' needs in the Instruction section.

- *Web links*

[RtI Action Network](#)

[Using PALS Data to Plan Multi-Tiered Interventions](#)

[RtI: Who is the First Responder?](#) (*Includes assistance with using PALS Quick Checks*)

<http://www.readingresource.net/>

Writing Instruction:

- *Web links*

[Virginia Department of Education Middle School Writing Modules](#)

[Perspective: Understand Scoring](#) (Tutorial for scoring SOL direct writing prompts; includes explanations of writing domains and detailed scoring rubrics)

- *Documents in appendix*

[ACPS Writing Recommendations](#)

ACPS Writing Rubrics

[PK/Smart Start](#)

[Kindergarten](#)

[Grade 1](#)

[Grade 2](#)

[Grade 3](#)

[Grade 4](#)

[Grade 5](#)

[Grades 6-8](#)

[Grades 9-12](#)

SOL Writing Test Rubrics

[Grade 5](#)

[Grade 8](#)

[High School](#)

Kindergarten Reading Benchmarks

Grading Period	Alphabet Knowledge		Early Literacy Concepts				
	Letter Names (Uppercase)	Letter Names (Lowercase)	Rhyming	Letter Sounds	Concept of Word*	Instructional Reading Level	Sight Words
1st August - October	12	12	No	12	No	Pre-readiness	10
2nd October - December	20	20	Yes	20	Yes	Readiness	20
3rd January – March	26	26	Yes	26	Yes	Pre-primer 1	30
4th March - June	26	26	Yes	30 (sh, th, ch, wh)	Yes	Pre-primer 2	40

* Concept of Word: While reading, match one spoken to one written word in a left to right progression with a return sweep from top to bottom.

Benchmarks

	Letter Names	Letter Sounds	Sight Words			
1st	O- above benchmark S- meets benchmark P- knows 6-11 NI- knows 0-5	O- above benchmark S- meets benchmark P- knows 6-11 NI- knows 0-5	O- above benchmark S- meets benchmark P- knows 5-9 NI- knows 0-4	a we am it	the my go	like I can
2nd	O- above benchmark S- meets benchmark P- knows 10-19 NI- knows 0-9	O- above benchmark S- meets benchmark P- knows 10-19 NI- knows 0-9	O- above benchmark S- meets benchmark P- knows 10-19 NI- knows 0-9	on have and yellow	to do red	you what blue
3rd	O- above benchmark S- meets benchmark P- knows 13-25 NI- knows 0-12	O- above benchmark S- meets benchmark P- knows 13-25 NI- knows 0-12	O- above benchmark S- meets benchmark P- knows 15-29 NI- knows 0-14	no come one is	see for little	look me said
4th	O- above benchmark S- meets benchmark P- knows 13-25 NI- knows 0-12	O- above benchmark S- meets benchmark P- knows 15-29 NI- knows 0-14	O- above benchmark S- meets benchmark P- knows 20-39 NI- knows 0-19	are down find jump	here two make	away three play

First Grade Reading Benchmarks

Grading Period	Instructional Reading Level Benchmark	Sight Word Knowledge Benchmark	Suggested Fluency Levels (words per minute)
1st August-October	Pre-primer 2	40 words (Pre-primer Word List)	15-30
2nd October-December	Primer	92 words (Pre-primer & Primer Dolch Word List)	25-35
3rd January-March	1	133 words (Pre-primer, Primer & First Grade Dolch Word List)	35-50
4th March-June	2.0	179 words (Pre-primer, Primer, First & Second Grade Dolch Word List)	50-60

Second Grade Reading Benchmarks

Grading Period	Instructional Reading Level Benchmark	Fluency Benchmarks (words per minute)
1st August-October	2.0	50-60
2nd October-December	2.5	60-70
3rd January-March	2.5	70-80
4th March-June	3.0	80-90

Third Grade Reading Benchmarks

Grading Period	Instructional Reading Level Benchmark	Fluency Benchmarks (words per minute)
1st August-October	3.0	80-90
2nd October-December	3.5	90-100
3rd January-March	3.5	100-110
4th March-June	4.0	110-120

Fourth Grade Reading Benchmarks

Grading Period	Instructional Reading Level Benchmark	Fluency Benchmarks (words per minute)
1st August-October	4.0	90-100
2nd October-December	4.5	100-105
3rd January-March	4.5	105-115
4th March-June	5.0	115-130

Fifth Grade Reading Benchmarks

Grading Period	Instructional Reading Level Benchmark	Fluency Benchmarks (words per minute)
1st August-October	5.0	100-110
2nd October-December	5.5	110-115
3rd January-March	5.5	115-125
4th March-June	6.0	125-140

Amherst County Public Schools Elementary Reading Level Benchmarks/Correlation Chart

Grade Level	Interim 1 (Sept.)	End of 1st 9 weeks (Oct.)	Interim 2 (Nov.)	End of 2nd 9 weeks (Dec.)	Interim 3 (Feb.)	End of 3rd 9 weeks (March)	Interim 4 (April)	End of 4th 9 weeks (May)
K	Pre-reader	Pre-reader	Readiness (A, B)	Readiness (A, B)	Readiness (A, B)	PP1 (C)	PP1 (C)	PP2 (D)
1	PP2 (D)	PP2 (D)	PP3 (E)	Primer (F, G)	Primer (F, G)	1 st (H, I, J)	1 st (H, I, J)	2.0 (K)
2	2.0 (K)	2.0 (K)	2.0 (K)	2.5 (L, M)	2.5 (L, M)	2.5 (L, M)	2.5 (L, M)	3.0 (N)
3	3.0 (N)	3.0 (N)	3.0 (N)	3.5 (O, P)	3.5 (O, P)	3.5 (O, P)	3.5 (O, P)	4.0 (Q)
4	4.0 (Q)	4.0 (Q)	4.0 (Q)	4.5 (R, S)	4.5 (R, S)	4.5 (R, S)	4.5 (R, S)	5.0 (T)
5	5.0 (T)	5.0 (T)	5.0 (T)	5.5 (U, V)	5.5 (U, V)	5.5 (U, V)	5.5 (U, V)	6.0 (W)

() Guided Reading Levels (Fountas & Pinnell)

Dolch Pre-Primer Sight Vocabulary

a	I	run
and	in	said
away	is	see
big	it	the
blue	jump	three
can	little	to
come	look	two
down	make	up
find	me	we
for	my	where
funny	not	yellow
go	one	you
help	play	
here	red	

Dolch Primer Sight Vocabulary

all	into	that
am	like	there
are	must	they
at	new	this
ate	no	too
be	now	under
black	on	want
brown	our	was
but	out	well
came	please	went
did	pretty	what
do	ran	white
eat	ride	who
four	saw	will
get	say	with
good	she	yes
have	so	he
soon		

Dolch First Grade Sight Vocabulary

after	has	over
again	her	put
an	him	round
any	his	some
ask	how	stop
as	just	take
by	know	thank
could	let	them
every	live	then
fly	may	think
from	of	walk
give	old	were
going	once	when
had	open	

Dolch Second Grade Sight Vocabulary

always	gave	these
around	goes	those
because	green	upon
been	its	us
before	made	use
best	many	very
both	off	wash
buy	or	which
call	pull	why
cold	read	wish
does	right	work
don't	sing	would
fast	sit	write
first	sleep	your
five	tell	found
their		

Running Records

Use the following ranges to determine reading levels following running records:

Independent level: 98-100 %

Instructional level: 90-97 % (85-97% for readiness and pre-primer levels)

Frustration level: Below 90% (Below 85% for readiness and pre-primer levels)

Sample form for running records is on next page.

Independent 98-100% *Instructional* 90- 97% (*85%PP) *Frustration* <90% (<85%PP) Date _____ Student Name _____

Title _____ Level _____

No. of Times Read _____ WRC% _____

Type of text (circle one)				
Pat/Pred	Decod	Cnt Voc	N-Fic	Chptr. Bk

WPM: _____ Fluency: W x W WxW/Phrases Choppy phrases Fluent rdg.

- Using expression Pays attention to punctuation

Notes:

										<p>Notes:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Finger-pointing <input type="checkbox"/> Uses initial sounds <input type="checkbox"/> Self-correcting most errors <input type="checkbox"/> Relies on picture cues <input type="checkbox"/> Missing function/high frequency words. Examples: <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent appeals to adult <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Amherst County Public Schools
Writing Recommendations
Revised 1/09

All Schools:

1. Provide staff development on the use of [Understanding Scoring](#) as needed/requested.
2. Provide staff development on the writing process as needed/requested.
3. Ensure that all four kinds of writing in curriculum/pacing guides are taught
 - Narrative
 - Descriptive
 - Expository
 - Persuasive
4. Create a writing portfolio for each student which includes the kinds of writing that are required/accomplished.
5. ACPS teachers will use the Enhanced Scope & Sequence to aid in defining the writing process and writing assignments appropriate for each grade level. The writing process will be taught prior to and independent of the writing prompts administered during the year.
6. A standardized writing prompt will be assigned to grade levels 2-8 each nine weeks. Grade 2 will not receive a writing prompt for the first nine weeks. Secondary schools will develop their own writing prompts as appropriate.
7. At the end of the school year, students' writing portfolios will contain a minimum of one sample from each writing category. These four samples will remain in the students' writing portfolios until the portfolio transfers to the next grade level. After teachers have reviewed the writing samples for instructional planning purposes, the portfolio will be purged and the process will begin again for that year. Once the portfolio is sent to the high school, additional samples including a variety of student work (ie: prompts, essays, creative works, etc.) may be collected as determined by the English department.
8. Student cumulative record folders will be revised to include writing SOL data, spelling data with appropriate keys, and language arts assessment information.
9. To encourage students to write in all content areas, content area teachers will implement writing strategies including, but not limited to:
 - Require complete sentences as appropriate in written assignments, homework, quizzes, etc.
 - RAFTS
 - Summaries of reading material
 - Essay question answers

- Content area writing assignments from the writing category designated for that grading period.
 - Journaling to explain process
 - Using and emphasizing content vocabulary, as well as vocabulary associated with the writing process steps
 - Making books
 - Response stories about field trips, speakers, news items, current events, etc.
 - Promote participation in writing competitions (ie: DAR essay) and/or other competitions (ie: Science Fair) that might include written work
 - Collaboration between content area and Language Arts teachers on written assignments used for class credit that make logical connections across curricula.
10. **Elementary school students** will complete a minimum of two pieces of writing in their language arts classes from one of the four categories (narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive) each nine weeks. The kind of writing to be emphasized each grading period will be designated in the curriculum guide.
11. At the end of the school year, students' writing portfolios will contain the students' writing samples that correspond to the four types of writing required in the curriculum guide. (The exception to this will be second grade which is not assigned a writing prompt for the first nine weeks.) Three of the writing samples will be the first three nine weeks' writing prompts, and the writing sample from the fourth nine weeks will be completed in class during the final nine weeks at a time to be determined by the principal.
- At the high school level, the writing portfolios will contain a variety of student work including writing prompts, essays, creative works, etc.
12. The nine weeks writing prompts will be scored according to the ACPS writing rubric in grades K-2. Teachers will use the state writing rubric to score the nine weeks writing prompts in grades 3-11. (See attached rubrics) Writing rubrics for other writing assignments may be developed as needed according to the instructional focus.
13. **In middle and high school English classes**, students will complete a minimum of two multi-paragraph writing assignments (no less than three paragraphs) each grading period of the school year. Teachers will select the order of these writing assignments as appropriate based on the pacing and curriculum guides.

ACPS Writing Rubric

PK End of Year Expectations

	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1
Composing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conveys messages, tells stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands that spoken language can be written 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses inventive spellings to help understand that writing communicates ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to write through scribbling forms
Written Expression		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies or writes letters using various materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguishes print from numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguishes print from pictures
Mechanics/ Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses inventive spellings to convey messages or tell stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies 3-5 letter words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prints 5-8 letters with a writing tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prints his or her own name

Revised 3/9/07

ACPS Writing Rubric

Kindergarten End of Year Expectations

	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1
Composing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generates content and topics for writing • Writes a story correctly • Uses sight words and phonetically spelled words to write about experiences, people, objects, and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs adult suggestions to decide on a writing topic • Writes two or more sentences on topic • Spells with beginning sounds and some ending sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writes when an adult gives the topic • Draws pictures and writes one sentence to match • Spells with letter-like representations, random letters, and may include some letters that represent beginning sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws pictures but cannot write or tell about the picture
Written Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writes without resistance when given time, place, and materials • Uses syntax of oral language, approximating phrasing and rhythm of literary language • Attempts to reread own text with appropriate word match-written and spoken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writes when asked • Writes somewhat like a story (may have some literary language) • Points to the text when rereading with some control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writes with teacher's redirection • Write events in random order • Does not reread his/her story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not write on his/her own • Confused telling leaves the adult unsure of "the story"
Usage and Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prints complete name correctly • Consistently uses capitalization and punctuation • Controls direction (up, down, top, bottom) • Uses spaces between words correctly • Spells at late letter name stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prints complete name correctly most of the time • Uses spaces between words at times • Begins to control direction (up, down, top, bottom) • Spells at early letter name stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prints complete name correctly some of the time • Omits space between words • Writes anywhere on the page • Spells at emergent stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prints part of his/her name • Scribbles OR spells at early emergent stage

Revised 3/12/07

ACPS Writing Rubric

First Grade End of Year Expectations

	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1
Composing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses the writing process (plans,drafts, revises, and edits) • Progressing toward purposeful writing • Clear beginning, middle and ending • Descriptive details included 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readily uses temporary spellings • Spaces between words • Some evidence of use of the writing process (plan, draft, revise, and edit) • Some evidence of a beginning, middle, and end • Stays on task • Reads back what was written 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs encouragement and support • May imitate classmates' ideas • Need suggestions to stay on task • Focuses on several topics with little or no elaboration • Little evidence of a beginning, middle and end • May begin to use own ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates through drawing • Dictates labels, descriptions or events about own drawing • May write random letters and memorized words • May attempt to string several several words together • No evidence of a beginning, middle, and end
Written Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive words appear frequently • Sentences are complete with a variety of sentence structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student uses some descriptive vocabulary when writing about people, places, things, and events • Some complete sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary is repetitive • Few complete sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete sentences • No elaboration
Usage and Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies most sentences correctly with beginning capitals and ending periods • Corrects most errors (edits) without teacher guidance • Edits for spelling of frequently used words and phonetically regular words • Forms letters and properly uses spaces so that writing is readable for the teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning to identify some sentences with beginning capitals and ending punctuation • Corrects some errors (edits) with teacher guidance • Most letters are formed properly and proper spacing between words is used most of the time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some complete sentences • Random use of capital letters and periods • Little evidence of spacing between words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling may have one letter(beginning sound) or random letters • Punctuation is not used • Words often run together with little or no spacing

Revised 3/12/07

ACPS Writing Rubric

Second Grade End of Year Expectations

	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1
Composing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposeful writing that has been revised for clarity • Uses the writing process (plans, drafts revises and edits) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of descriptive language is evident • Begins to group related ideas • Beginning to use the writing process (planning, drafting, revising and editing) • Clear beginning, middle, end • Stays on task • Uses declarative, interrogative and exclamatory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writes longer stories • Selects one topic and elaborates on it using some descriptive words • Readily uses temporary spellings to communicate ideas • Stays on task during writing • Reads back what was written 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize ideas with direct adult supervision • Conveys ideas with pattern sentences. <i>I like... I have...</i> • Writes simple stories, sometimes containing a beginning, middle, and ending
Written Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students use extensive vocabulary • Sentences are complete and sentence structure enhances meaning • Student uses own personal writing style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing shows some evidence of personal style • Sentences are complete with a variety of sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is beginning to utilize some elements of style including word choice, tone, and voice • Writing contains an appropriate sequence of ideas • Sentence structure is repetitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student uses basic, functional vocabulary • Student writes in complete sentences
Usage and Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses subject/verb agreement • Corrects spelling of high frequency words • Spells in the within word pattern stage • Correct use of <i>I, a/an, them/those, good/well</i> • Uses paragraphing formatting • Omits double negatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses subject/verb agreement most of the time • Corrects spelling of high frequency words most of the time • Spells in the letter name stage • Capitalizes proper nouns • Correct use of pronouns most of the time • Uses end punctuation and commas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses subject/verb agreement sometimes • Capitals at the beginning of sentences sometimes • Spells at early letter name stage • Uses inventive spelling (is readable) • Uses some end punctuation • Uses some correct sentences, some run-on sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omits subject/verb agreement • Omits capital letters at the beginning of sentences • Spells at emergent stage • Uses inventive spelling but is difficult to read • Uses run-on sentences

Revised 3/12/07

ACPS Writing Rubric

Third Grade End of Year Expectations

	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1
Composing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main idea is clear with details and elaboration including adjectives and adverbs • Writing is organized with a clear introduction, body and conclusion • Writing process is used as evidenced by a writing plan, more than one draft, student initiates revision of ideas • Revisions clarify the message • Changes/adds nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main idea is understandable with some related details • Writing has a recognizable beginning, middle, and ending • Student initiates some basic revision of ideas • Student changes/adds nouns, verbs, and adjectives with support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main idea is emerging but there maybe unrelated sentences • Writing may be a general listing without a clear beginning, middle, and/or end • Student revises only with support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main idea is unclear • Writing lacks a beginning, middle, and/or end • Student needs a lot of teacher support to revise
Written Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students use a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary that is strong and vivid • Writing shows evidence of style and voice • Student writes for a specific audience and various purposes • Student does not use run-on sentences • Writing has a consistent tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student uses complete sentences with some interesting words, but little variety • Student sometimes writes for a specific audience and for various purposes • Student recognizes run-on sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some sentences are incomplete, short, choppy, or repetitive ("I like...I have...") • Student needs support to write for a specific audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of sentences are incomplete • Sentence meaning is unclear • Student is unable to write for a specific audience
Usage and Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses subject/verb agreement with consistent control • Uses capitalization when writing days, months, places, and titles • Spells most words correctly, up to the level of the early- to mid-syllable juncture stage • Forms cursive letters correctly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses subject/verb agreement with some control • Uses capitals for I and names with few errors • Uses end punctuation correctly most of the time • Spells high frequency words correctly, invented spellings are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrects subject/verb agreement with support • Use capitals for I and names sometimes with many errors • Begins to use end punctuation • Uses invented spelling is readable • Edits with support (little 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omits subject/verb agreement • Omits capitals and punctuation • Spells in the early letter name stage • Omits editing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses paragraph formatting • Uses irregular verbs correctly • Uses apostrophes correctly in contractions and singular possessives • Uses commas in a series and an offset • Uses pronouns and conjunctions correctly <i>Examples: My sister and I</i> 	<p>understandable and correct up to the level of within word patterns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edits with support • Forms legible cursive handwriting • Uses commas in a series • Uses subject pronouns 	<p>evidence of self-initiation of editing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses correct manuscript letter formation • Spells at the late letter name stage 	
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Revised 3/12/07

ACPS Writing Rubric

Fourth Grade End of Year Expectations

	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1
Composing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main idea is distinct and supported by elaborations with related details throughout including adjectives and adverbs • Ideas are grouped into unified paragraphs • Writing process is evident • Revises for clarity, changes/adds nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizes pieces less than one page using introduction, body and conclusion • Establishes understandable main idea and relate details • Groups ideas into paragraph form • Initiates revision for clarity of message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes a recognizable main idea with some organization • Conveys ideas with basic, unelaborated lists • Groups ideas into a paragraph with support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize ideas with adult supervision • Conveys ideas with basic listing and limited details • Writes simple stories, sometimes containing a beginning, middle, and ending
Written Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposefully crafted message that the reader remembers • Precise information and vocabulary resonates an image in the reader’s mind • Voice is enhanced by specific word choice and specific information • Rhythmic flow created by sentence • Uses correct punctuation • Uses paragraph formatting • Uses complete sentences variety, length and beginning • Uses humor, dialogue, and figurative language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May control some features better than others • Some specific word choice and information make the message clear, although there may be some inclusion of unnecessary but related information • Some general statements or vague words which somewhat flatten the tone and voice • Sentences are varied in length and structure most of the time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some specificity of word choice may exist, but consists of general information, which is written in imprecise, bland language • Voice emerges only on occasion • Lack of sentence variety may make the reading monotonous • Awkward sentence variety may be distracting enough to make the writer’s meaning unclear on occasion • While a few brief rhythmic clusters of sentences may occur, an overall sense of rhythmic flow is not present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word choice and information are general, vague, and/or repetitive • Lack of sentence variety makes the presentation monotonous • May have several awkward sentence constructions • Lack of control of vocabulary and information control prevents tone and voice from emerging
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses subject/verb agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses subject/verb agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses subject/verb agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses basic subject/verb

<p>Usage and Mechanics</p>	<p>consistently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses inflected endings correctly (verb tense) • Uses homophones correctly • Initiates editing and revising • Uses punctuation correctly • Spells at syllable juncture stage • Uses complete sentences without word omissions • Uses paragraph format • Uses a/an, them/those, good/well correctly 	<p>with some control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses inflected endings with some control • Uses homophones with some control • Uses possessives with some control • Edits and revises when prompted • Uses capitalization • Spells at within word or early syllable juncture stage • Uses correct punctuation • Uses paragraph formatting • Uses complete sentences 	<p>sometimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses some inflected endings • Editing with support • Spells mid to late within word stage • Uses correct punctuation sometimes • Uses paragraph formatting sometimes • Uses complete sentences sometimes 	<p>agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses few inflected endings • Edits with much support • Uses some end punctuation • Uses some basic capitalization • Spells at letter name or within word stage
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Revised 3/12/07

ACPS Writing Rubric

Fifth Grade End of Year Expectations

	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1
Composing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear main idea supported by elaboration with details • Ideas are organized into paragraphs • Has self revisions for clarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has understandable main idea • Writing is sequenced with a clear beginning, middle, and ending • Has a conclusion • Has attempts of revision • Uses modifiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main idea unclear • Unclear beginning, middle, and ending • No elaboration • Groups of ideas are present within a paragraph • Use of revision with support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main idea is not present • No beginning, middle, and ending • No brainstorming is evident • Lack of organization • No revisions are present, only with support
Written Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong voice and tone • Uses a variety of sentences • Effective use of descriptive language • Strong use of details • Specific use of vocabulary to help with meaning • Uses dialogue and figurative language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat tone and voice • Uses some specific word choice or vocabulary • Some sentence variety with length and structure • Use of some descriptive words (adjectives and adverbs) • Uses some details to elaborate thoughts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice emerges on occasion • Awkward sentence variety • Dull word choice, bland language • Lack of rhythm and flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of voice and tone • Incomplete sentences • Boring language • Lack of sentence variety • Short and choppy sentences • Poor word choice • Overuse of words (really, so, then, I, and, because)
Usage and Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses correct subject-verb agreement • Run-on sentences and fragments are absent • Uses correct capitalization and punctuation • Has paragraphs with strong supporting details • Edits spelling errors • Uses homophones correctly • Spells at the derivational constancy stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has subject-verb agreement and inflected endings • Very little use of run-ons and fragments • Correct capitalization and punctuation most of the time • Has paragraphs with supporting details • Most words are spelled correctly • Spells at syllable juncture stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little subject-verb agreement • Some use of run-on sentences and fragments • Incorrect use of capitalization and punctuation • Evidence of paragraphs • Spells at with-in word stage or early syllable juncture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of subject-verb agreement • Overuse of run-on sentences and fragments • Lack of basic capitalization and punctuation • Lack of paragraphs • Few words are spelled correctly • Spells at letter name or early within word stage

Revised 3/9/07

ACPS Writing Rubrics

Middle School 6-8 COMPOSING

	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1
Prewriting Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses planning strategies effectively to compose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses planning strategies to compose paper, but not effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses planning strategies, but unrelated to story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses no planning strategies
Central Idea and Unity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stays on a single topic with one clear point of view • Follows sequential and logical order • Includes effective transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stays on a single topic with consistent point of view • Includes some information that is unnecessary • Includes transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes competing ideas with more than one story • Changes point of view • Digresses • Leaves out or adds too much information • Confuses time order • Includes ineffective transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks a central idea (reader cannot determine the focus of the piece) • Switches between points of view • Lacks organization, sequence, and transition
Elaboration: Details Examples/ Illustrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes details that show, not tell, throughout the piece • Includes three or more examples. • Appeals to several senses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses details that show, not tell, in some parts of the piece • Includes at least two examples • Appeals to a couple of senses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has few details that show, not tell • Includes one example • Appeals mostly to one sense (usually sight) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tells, does <i>not</i> show • Uses general statements • Includes no examples or sensory material
Lead/ Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins with a strong, interesting lead • Closes with a statement that is "tight" and more than a repetition of previous statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins with a lead that is evident, but not strong • Closes with a statement that is present but not "tight" and does not wrap up the piece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins with an uninteresting, weak lead • Concludes with a weak closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes no lead and/or closing or includes a lead and/or closing that do(does) not match the piece
Revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the piece • Reflects understanding of mini-lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the piece, but additional revisions are needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes a few revisions, but major revisions are needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits little or no revision

Revised 3/9/07

Middle School 6-8 WRITTEN EXPRESSION

	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precise words Specific nouns Strong active verbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific vocabulary, with a few vague or bland words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bland or anemic words that do not focus or paint a picture in the reader's mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General nouns and verbs (nice, pretty) or repetitive words
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precise information that creates a picture in the reader's mind Sensory images and figurative language are present and purposeful throughout the piece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific word choice Some examples of purposeful figurative language and sensory images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vague or repetitive information (saying the same thing over and over in different ways)
Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong—it is you (It shows your personality) Purposeful dialogue (not in all types of writing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present, but not throughout the entire piece Some dialogue (not in all types of writing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak (Emerges only on occasion, if at all) No dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No voice (Anyone could have written the story)
Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purposeful throughout the piece "Funny," "entertaining," "frightening," "exciting," etc. can be used to describe the piece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purposeful in most of the piece, but flattens out when vocabulary and information are general 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General throughout No overall "feel" to the piece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not present
Sentence Variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple, complex, and compound sentences are included Embedded ideas in the sentences Various beginnings throughout the piece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some sentence variety, but there is a large percentage of simple or compound sentences Few complex sentences Sentence beginnings vary somewhat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most sentences start the same way The word "and" or "then" is overused No complex sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short, choppy, monotonous (boring) sentence No variety Awkward sounding when piece is read

Middle School 6-8 USAGE AND MECHANICS

Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands thoroughly the K-8 usage and mechanics SOLs (consistently applies rules for capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation) • Applies principles of spelling • Exhibits no more than 2-3 minor errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits basic understanding of K-8 usage and mechanics SOLs (usually applies rules of capitalization, punctuation, sentence formation) • Applies spelling principles most of the time • Exhibits no more than 4-6 errors • (Errors do not detract from the quality of the writing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits frequent errors (Inconsistently applies rules of capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation) • Applies principles of spelling inconsistently • Exhibits 7-9 errors (density of errors outweighs control and detracts from meaning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits frequent and severe errors which distract the reader and make writing hard to understand • Exhibits 10+ errors (Density and variety of errors keep piece from meeting minimum standards)

ACPS Writing Rubrics

High School 9-12 COMPOSING

	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1
Main Idea/Thesis/ Problem Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharply focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most ideas are focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somewhat focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas often stray from the main idea Lacks focus
Details/Examples/ Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific and well- chosen details/examples that adequately support the main idea Vivid and purposeful writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear writing at times More details needed Uneven details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks elaboration (too few details) OR repetitive details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very few details OR many details that do not fit together
Organization Intro/Body/ Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent lead, opening, and closing Logical order and flow Easy to read and understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective lead, opening, and closing Minimal errors in sequencing of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate lead, opening, OR closing Unrelated OR rambling ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate OR absent, lead, opening, AND closing Disconnected ideas

Revised 3/12/07

High School 9-12 WRITTEN EXPRESSION

	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1
Sentence Variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied sentence types • Ideas flow smoothly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some sentence variety • Some awkward sentences, but ideas still flow smoothly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little sentence variety • Awkward phrases are present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sentence variety • Many awkward phrases
Word Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precise information • Lively, colorful words create a picture in the reader's mind • Varied choice of words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective use of descriptive adjectives, adverbs and verbs • Some overused words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General information • Dull and overused word choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vague and repetitive information
Voice/Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer's personality is evident throughout the writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer's personality comes through sometimes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer's personality rarely comes through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer's personality is not evident
Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer's purpose is clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer's purpose is usually clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer's purpose is seldom clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer's purpose is unclear
Specificity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-chosen words which describe topic * • Words are used correctly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some well-chosen words which show student's understanding of topical vocabulary • Uses words properly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to use words which are specific to topic, but uses them incorrectly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorrect use of correct language for the topic/subject • Lacks attempt to use proper vocabulary which designated specificity of topic

Revised 3/12/07

High School 9-12 USAGE/MECHANICS

	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1
Spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains no more than 2-3 errors High quality writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 4-6 errors that do not detract from the quality of writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 7-9 errors that do not detract its meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 10 or more errors that prevent the reader from following meaning
Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains no more than 2-3 errors High quality writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 4-6 errors that do not detract from the quality of writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 7-9 errors that do not detract its meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 10 or more errors that prevent the reader from following meaning
Punctuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains no more than 2-3 errors High quality writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 4-6 errors that do not detract from the quality of writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 7-9 errors that do not detract its meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 10 or more errors that prevent the reader from following meaning
Capitalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains no more than 2-3 errors High quality writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 4-6 errors that do not detract from the quality of writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 7-9 errors that do not detract its meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 10 or more errors that prevent the reader from following meaning
Formatting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains no more than 2-3 errors High quality writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 4-6 errors that do not detract from the quality of writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 7-9 errors that do not detract its meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains 10 or more errors that prevent the reader from following meaning

Revised 3/12/07

- If a student writes a paper about a specific time period, he must understand key words and phrases which mark the period.
- If a student writes a paper about becoming a mechanic, he or she understands the correct steps, words, terms, and schooling that this type of person needs to get a degree or to be successful.
- If a student writes a paper about world resources, he or she understands and uses terms to show their mastery of the topic. For instance, he or she might use words such as capital resources, natural resources, and human resources, can distinguish between each, and provide specific examples. If a student writes a paper about an author, he or she includes information which describes author's style, time period, genre of writing, etc.

Grade 5 SOL Writing Test Composing Rubric

Score Point 4

The writer demonstrates consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of the composing domain's features. Full elaboration focuses the central idea both at the sentence level and throughout the entire piece by providing purposeful examples, anecdotes, illustrations, or details. Narrative organization is intact; in other modes, minor organizational lapses may occur. However, any organizational lapses that occur do not significantly detract from the presentation. Several elements in the writing provide evidence of unity: a consistent point of view (e.g., not switching from "I" to "you"), a lack of digressions, and the presence of a lead and closure.

Score Point 3

The writer demonstrates reasonable, but not consistent, control of the composing domain's features; the writer may control some features more than others. Purposeful elaboration focuses the central idea both at the sentence level and throughout the entire piece of writing. However, some thinness or unevenness in elaboration may occur. Narrative organization is generally intact; in other modes, organizational lapses may occur, but an overall plan is apparent. Unity is evidenced by the fact that few, if any, minor digressions or shifts in point of view occur; further, an opening and closing, though not sophisticated, are present.

Score Point 2

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control of several features, indicating significant weakness in the composing domain. At this score point, major digressions may be present, or ideas compete and no one idea emerges as central. Even if a single idea dominates, the writing may be a list of general, underdeveloped statements or a skeletal plot. Often, little elaboration or organization is apparent, although some attempt at a lead or closure may be present. The lack of a logically elaborated central idea prevents unity from emerging.

Score Point 1

The writer demonstrates little or no control of most of the composing domain's features. Typically, the writing jumps from point to point without a unifying central idea. No organizational plan is apparent. No purposeful elaboration of any kind is present.

Grade 5 SOL Test Written Expression Rubric

Score Point 4

The writer demonstrates consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of the written expression domain's features. The result is a purposefully crafted message that the reader remembers, primarily because its precise information and vocabulary resonate as images in the reader's mind. Specific word choice and information also create tone in the writing and enhance the writer's voice. Sentences are often varied in length and beginnings, resulting in a rhythmic flow throughout the piece.

Score Point 3

The writer demonstrates reasonable, but not consistent, control of the written expression domain's features; the writer may control some features more than others. On the whole, some specific word choice and information cause the message to be clear, although there may be some inclusion of unnecessary but related information. Along with instances of successful control, general statements or vague words might be present; when they are, the tone and voice of the piece will flatten somewhat. Typically, sentences are varied in length and structure. However, at times the rhythm of the paper may be diminished by a lack of sentence variety or by awkward constructions.

Score Point 2

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control of several features, indicating significant weakness in the written expression domain. While some specificity of word choice might exist, mostly the message consists of general information written in imprecise, bland language. As a result, the writer's voice emerges only on occasion, if at all. A relative lack of sentence variety may make the reading monotonous, and awkward constructions may be distracting enough to make the writer's meaning unclear on occasion. While a few brief rhythmic clusters of sentences may occur, an overall sense of rhythmic flow is not present.

Score Point 1

The writer demonstrates little or no control of most of the written expression domain's features. Both word choice and information are general, vague, and/or repetitive. A lack of sentence variety makes the presentation monotonous. The existence of several extremely awkward constructions may further reduce the paper's stylistic effect. The writer's lack of control of vocabulary and information prevents both tone and voice from emerging.

Grade 5 SOL Test Usage/Mechanics Rubric

Score Point 4

The writer demonstrates consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of the domain's features of usage/mechanics. The writing demonstrates a thorough understanding of usage and mechanics as specified in the Virginia K-5 SOL. The author uses capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation and applies the structural principles of spelling. A few errors in usage and mechanics may be present. However, the writer's control of the domain's many features is too strong for these mistakes to detract from the performance.

Score Point 3

The writer demonstrates reasonable, but not consistent, control of most of the domain's features of usage/mechanics. The writing demonstrates a basic understanding of usage and mechanics as specified in the Virginia K-5 SOL. For the most part, the author appropriately applies both the rules of capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation and the structural principles of spelling expected of 5th graders.

Score Point 2

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control of several features, indicating significant weakness in the domain of usage/mechanics. Evidence of the author's knowledge of features of this domain appears alongside frequent errors. In terms of both usage and mechanics, the writer inconsistently applies the rules of capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, and sentence formation as specified in the Virginia K-5 SOL. The density of errors across features outweighs the feature control present in the paper.

Score Point 1

The writer demonstrates little or no control of most of the domain's features of usage/mechanics. Frequent and severe errors distract the reader and make the writing very hard to understand. Even when meaning is not significantly affected, the density and variety of errors overwhelm the performance and keep it from meeting minimum standards of competence.

Grade 8 SOL Writing Test Composing Rubric

Score Point 4

The writer demonstrates consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of the composing domain's features. Full elaboration focuses the central idea both at the sentence level and throughout the entire piece by providing purposeful examples, anecdotes, illustrations, or details. Narrative organization is intact; in other modes, minor organizational lapses may occur. In all types of writing, a strong organizational plan is apparent. Any organizational lapses that occur do not significantly detract from the presentation. Several elements in the writing provide evidence of unity: appropriate transitions, a consistent point of view (e.g., not switching from "I" to "you"), a lack of digressions, and the presence of a lead and closure that is more than mere repetition of statements.

Score Point 3

The writer demonstrates reasonable, but not consistent, control of the composing domain's features; the writer may control some features more than others. Purposeful elaboration focuses the central idea both at the sentence level and throughout the entire piece of writing. However, occasional thinness or unevenness in elaboration may occur. Narrative organization is intact. Organizational lapses may occur (in modes other than narration), but an overall plan is apparent. Unity is evidenced by the fact that few, if any, minor digressions or shifts in point of view occur. Transitions are, on the whole, purposefully used. An opening and closing, though not sophisticated, are present.

Score Point 2

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control of several features, indicating significant weakness in the composing domain. At this score point, major digressions may be present, or ideas compete and no one idea emerges as central. Even if a single idea dominates, the writing may be a list of general, underdeveloped statements or a skeletal plot. Often, little elaboration or organization is apparent. Although a contrived closure may be present, inconsistent control of transitions or the lack of a logically elaborated central idea prevent unity from emerging.

Score Point 1

The writer demonstrates little or no control of most of the composing domain's features. The focus on a central idea is lacking, or the piece is so sparse that the presence of a clear focus is insufficient for it to earn a higher score. Typically, the writing jumps from point to point, without a unifying central idea. No overall organizational strategy is apparent. The writing seems haphazard, and sentences can be rearranged without substantially changing the meaning. Bare statement is the norm, but even in responses that are several pages long, no purposeful elaboration is present.

Grade 8 SOL Test Written Expression Rubric

Score Point 4

The writer demonstrates consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of the written expression domain's features. The result is a purposefully crafted message that the reader remembers, primarily because its precise information and vocabulary resonate as images in the reader's mind. Highly specific word choice and information also create tone in the writing and enhance the writer's voice. Metaphors, similes, and other figurative language, if present, are purposeful. The writer repeats or varies sentence construction for effect and appropriately subordinates ideas and embeds modifiers on a regular basis, resulting in a rhythmic flow throughout the piece.

Score Point 3

The writer demonstrates reasonable, but not consistent, control of the written expression domain's features; the writer may control some features more than others. On the whole, specific word choice and information cause the message to be clear; occasionally, a few examples of vivid or purposeful figurative language may be present. Along with instances of successful control, a few general statements or vague words might be presented; when they are, the tone and voice of the piece will flatten somewhat. Overall, subordination and sentence variety are present, but occasional awkward constructions or the lack of structural complexity may diminish the rhythm of the paper.

Score Point 2

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control of several features, indicating significant weakness in the written expression domain. Some specificity of word choice might exist, but mostly the message will be crafted with imprecise, bland language. As a result, the writer's voice emerges only on occasion, if at all. The selection of information may be uneven and/or consist of an attempt to tell everything that the writer knows about a topic. A relative lack of sentence variety may make the reading monotonous, and awkward constructions may be distracting enough to make the writer's meaning unclear on occasion. While a few brief rhythmic clusters of sentences may occur, an overall sense of rhythmic flow is not present.

Score Point 1

The writer demonstrates little or no control of most of the written expression domain's features. Both word choice and information are general, vague, and/or repetitive. A lack of sentence variety makes the presentation monotonous. The existence of several extremely awkward constructions may further reduce the paper's stylistic effect. The writer's lack of control of vocabulary and information prevents both tone and voice from emerging.

Grade 8 SOL Test Usage/Mechanics Rubric

Score Point 4

The writer demonstrates consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of the domain's features of usage/mechanics. The writing demonstrates a thorough understanding of usage and mechanics as specified in the Virginia K-8 SOL. The author uses capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation and applies the structural principles of spelling. A few careless errors in usage and mechanics may be present. However, the writer's control of the domain's many features is too strong for these mistakes to detract from the performance.

Score Point 3

The writer demonstrates reasonable, but not consistent, control of most of the domain's features of usage/mechanics. The writing demonstrates a basic understanding of usage and mechanics as specified in the Virginia K-8 SOL. For the most part, the author appropriately applies both the rules of capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation and the structural principles of spelling expected of 8th graders.

Score Point 2

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control of several features, indicating significant weakness in the domain of usage/mechanics. Evidence of the author's knowledge of features of this domain appears alongside frequent errors. In terms of both usage and mechanics, the writer inconsistently applies the rules of capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, and sentence formation as specified in the Virginia K-8 SOL. The density of errors across features outweighs the feature control present in the paper.

Score Point 1

The writer demonstrates little or no control of most of the domain's features of usage/mechanics. Frequent and severe errors distract the reader and make the writing very hard to understand. Even when meaning is not significantly affected, the density and variety of errors overwhelm the performance and keep it from meeting minimum standards of competence.

WRITING Standards of Learning Rubric for Grade 8

Name: _____

		4 Consistent control (but not perfect)	3 Reasonable control (some features better controlled than others)	2 Inconsistent control (control of several features but not of others — “losing it”)	1 Little or no control
Composing	Central idea	Central idea is sharply focused, narrowed by elaboration.	Central idea is present and focused by purposeful elaboration	Central idea may be present, or several ideas may compete.	Central idea is lacking, usually.
	Elaboration	Full: details in sentences; illustrations, examples, reasons, and/or anecdotes within paragraphs	Purposeful and found at both sentence and paragraph levels (occasional thinness of elaboration)	Little or no elaboration; or a few brief details, underdeveloped statements	Sparse or not purposeful elaboration; bare statement the norm
	Organization	Strong: minor lapses don't detract; narrative organization has no lapses, but other modes may.	Reasonable: minor lapses don't detract significantly; narrative organization is generally intact; other modes may lapse somewhat, although overall plan is apparent.	Very little apparent organization; there may be a list of general statements, or an underdeveloped explanation, or skeleton of a narrative.	Often not present; writing jumps from point to point; sentences can be rearranged without changing meaning.
	Unity	Opening and closing present (more than mere repetition); consistent point of view; appropriate transitions; no digressions	Few, if any, digressions; few if any, point of view shifts; introduction and closing present but not sophisticated; transitions purposefully used	Opening and closing may be present; closing may be contrived, fake, or trite; significant digressions; unity not fully created because of lack of logically elaborated central idea	There may be some functional transitions or no digressions, but unity is never created.
Written Expression	Vocabulary	Precise words create images in reader's mind due to careful choice of words and avoiding anemic, vague words.	Specific, but a few vague or anemic words may be present.	Imprecise, bland vocabulary	Imprecise, bland, vague, general, or repetitive vocabulary
	Information	Precise and even information presentation creates images in the reader's mind; figurative language is purposeful.	Specific information present, making the message clear, but there may be a few general statements; some figurative language may be present.	General information presentation is uneven or tells everything that the writer knows.	Imprecise, bland, vague, or repetitive information
	Voice	Strong: enhanced by word choice and information given	Easily discernible, except when general information or vague, functional vocabulary is used	Emerges seldom or only when specific vocabulary and specific information amplify it.	Does not emerge because specific vocabulary and information are not present.

	Tone	Purposeful	Flattens when information and vocabulary are not specific	Rarely emerges due to lack of specific vocabulary and information	Rarely emerges
	Rhythm	Effective, purposefully varied sentence structure; modifiers and subordination are effectively embedded.	Smooth rhythm due to sentence variety and structure, but an occasional awkward construction may diminish it in places.	Sentence beginnings or types not very varied, although an occasional rhythmic cluster of sentences may be present.	Sentence variety lacking; several extremely awkward sentence constructions may be present.

High School SOL Test Composing Rubric

Score Point 4

The writer demonstrates consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of the composing domain's features. The piece is generally unified in that all of the parts contribute to the creation of a dominant impression or idea. The sharply focused central idea is fully, but not exhaustively, elaborated with key examples, illustrations, reasons, events, or details. In all successful responses, layers of elaboration are present. Surface signals, like transitions, logically connect their respective statements into the whole of the paper. In all types of writing, a strong organizational plan is apparent. Any minor organizational lapses that occur do not significantly detract from the presentation. The writing provides evidence of unity by exhibiting a consistent point of view (e.g., not switching from "I" to "you"), a lack of digressions, appropriate transitions both within paragraphs and across the entire piece, the presence of careful logic, and a strong lead and closure.

Score Point 3

The writer demonstrates reasonable, but not consistent, control of the composing domain's features; the writer may control some features more than others. The clearly focused central idea is purposefully elaborated with key examples, illustrations, reasons, events, or details. Occasionally, some thinness or unevenness in elaboration may occur. In all types of writing, an organizational plan is apparent. Any minor organizational lapses that occur do not significantly detract from the piece. Although there may be occasional lapses in coherence or cohesiveness, unity is evidenced by the fact that few, if any, digressions or shifts in point of view occur. Transitions are, on the whole, appropriate. The opening and closing show some skill, but not the sophistication of a 4 performance.

Score Point 2

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control of several features, indicating significant weakness in the composing domain. At this score point, ideas often compete, or no one idea emerges as central. Even if a single idea dominates, the paper may lack focus because of little or no elaboration. The paper may be a list of general, underdeveloped statements or the skeleton of a narrative. In the case of persuasive writing, it may consist of a few unelaborated reasons accompanied by inappropriate attempts (begging, pleading, negotiating) to persuade. Typically, the writer extends ideas with a few brief details and moves on, though chunks of irrelevant material may appear as well. Often, no more than a hint of organization is apparent. Even though an opening and closing may be present, the lack of a logically elaborated central idea prevents unity from emerging.

Score Point 1

The writer demonstrates little or no control of most of the composing domain's features. The focus on a central idea is lacking, or the piece is so sparse that the presence of a clear focus is insufficient for it to earn a higher score. Typically, the writing jumps from point to point, without a unifying central idea. No overall organizational strategy is apparent. The writing seems haphazard, and sentences can be rearranged without substantially changing the meaning. Bare statement is the norm, but even in responses that are several pages long, no purposeful elaboration is present.

High School SOL Written Expression Rubric

Score Point 4

The writer demonstrates consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of the written expression domain's features. The result is a purposefully crafted message that the reader remembers, primarily because its precise information and vocabulary resonate as images in the reader's mind. Highly specific word choice and information also create a purposeful tone in the writing and enhance the writer's voice. If metaphors, similes, personification, or other examples of figurative language are present, they are appropriate to the purpose of the piece. The writer repeats or varies sentence construction for effect and appropriately subordinates ideas and embeds modifiers on a regular basis, resulting in a rhythmic flow throughout the piece.

Score Point 3

The writer demonstrates reasonable, but not consistent, control of the written expression domain's features. On the whole, specific word choice and information cause the message to be clear; occasionally, a few examples of vivid or purposeful figurative language may be present. Along with instances of successful control, some general statements or vague words may be present, flattening the tone and voice of the piece somewhat. Overall, the writing is characterized by a smooth rhythm created by the effective use of normal word order and competent variation in sentence length and complexity. An occasional awkward construction or the lack of structural complexity is not distracting.

Score Point 2

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control of several features, indicating significant weakness in the written expression domain. Some specificity of word choice might exist, but generally the piece is written in imprecise, bland language. As a result, the writer's voice rarely emerges. The selection of information may be uneven and/or consist of an attempt to tell everything that the writer knows about a topic. A relative lack of sentence variety may make reading monotonous, and occasional awkward constructions may be distracting enough to make the writer's meaning unclear. While a few brief rhythmic clusters of sentences may occur, an overall sense of rhythmic flow is not present.

Score Point 1

The writer demonstrates little or no control of most of the written expression domain's features. Both word choice and information are general, vague, and/or repetitive. A lack of sentence variety makes the presentation monotonous. The existence of several extremely awkward constructions reduces the paper's stylistic effect. The writer's lack of control of vocabulary and information prevents both tone and voice from emerging.

High School SOL Test Usage/Mechanics Rubric

Score Point 4

The writer demonstrates consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control of the domain's features of usage/mechanics. The writing demonstrates a thorough understanding of usage and mechanics as specified in the Virginia K-11 SOL. The author uses capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation and applies the structural principles of spelling. A few errors in usage and mechanics may be present. However, the writer's control of the domain's many features is too strong for these mistakes to detract from the performance.

Score Point 3

The writer demonstrates reasonable, but not consistent, control of most of the domain's features of usage/mechanics. The writing demonstrates a basic understanding of usage and mechanics as specified in the Virginia K-11 SOL. For the most part, the author appropriately applies both the rules of capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation and the structural principles of spelling expected of high school students. Most of the errors contained in the piece are not elementary ones.

Score Point 2

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control of several features, indicating significant weakness in the domain of usage/mechanics. Evidence of the author's knowledge of features of this domain appears alongside frequent errors. In terms of both usage and mechanics, the writer inconsistently applies the rules of capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, and sentence formation as specified in the Virginia K-11 SOL. Often, these papers exhibit a lack of control of tense consistency, meaningful punctuation, and the principles of spelling, thus making it difficult for the reader to follow the writer's thought. The density of errors that emerges across features outweighs the feature control present in the paper.

Score Point 1

The writer demonstrates little or no control of most of the domain's features of usage/mechanics. Frequent and severe errors distract the reader and make the writing very hard to understand. Even when meaning is not significantly affected, the density and variety of errors overwhelm the performance and keep it from meeting minimum standards of competence.