



Writing Testlet FAQ

Spring Summative Assessment 2015

Which DLM students are assessed in writing? When are DLM Students assessed in writing?

All Missouri students who are eligible for the alternate assessment will receive a writing testlet during the Spring Summative Assessment 2015. Every student in every grade will be assessed in writing as a part of the English language arts Blueprint 2014-2015. Writing is integral to English language arts. It is not a separate subject.

How is writing assessed?

Each student will be assessed in **emergent writing** or **conventional writing**. Emergent writing testlets and conventional writing testlets require the Test Examiner to engage the student in writing about information using the tools the student normally writes with as a part of instruction and then observing the student's writing processes and products. Most items focus on teacher observation of the student's writing process. One or more items require the teacher to evaluate the student's written product. Writing testlets are expected to take 10-20 minutes to administer.

Are there linkage levels for the writing EEs?

Yes. The linkage levels are grouped together in DLM writing testlets. The initial and distal precursor levels are combined in an "Emergent Writing" testlet. The proximal precursor, target, and successor levels are combined in a "Conventional Writing" testlet. Emergent and Conventional Writing testlets will be available for every grade. Since EEs are combined into a single writing testlet at every grade level, the codes used in the KITE system will look different than the EEs that appear on the Blueprint 2014-2015. Emergent Writing testlets will be labeled with an "EW" in the EE code. Conventional writing testlets will be labeled with a "CW" in the EE code.

For example, Grade 4 Writing EE codes will appear in KITE as:

ELA.EE.EW.4.IP	This is an ELA Essential Element for Emergent Writing, Grade 4, Initial Precursor (IP)
ELA.EE.EW.4.DP	This is an ELA Essential Element for Emergent Writing, Grade 4, Distal Precursor (DP)
ELA.EE.CW.4.PP	This is an ELA Essential Element for Conventional Writing, Grade 4, Proximal Precursor (PP)
ELA.EE.CW.4.T	This is an ELA Essential Element for Conventional Writing, Grade 4, Target (T)
ELA.EE.CW.4.S	This is an ELA Essential Element for Conventional Writing, Grade 4, Successor (S)

What is emergent writing?

Emergent writing describes the marks, scribbles, and random selection of letters seen in beginning writers. The EEs focus on having students work toward an understanding of writing as a form of communication and the ability to write about information. Emergent writing testlets focus on nodes in the learning map that are identified as being important precursor skills on the way toward conventional writing. [DLM Professional Development Module 29: Emergent Writing](#)¹, includes examples of strategies teachers can use to start writing with students as a part of instruction.

What is conventional writing?

Conventional writing includes methods of writing that use orthography (letters, words) assembled in ways that are meaningful to others. Key conceptual components of conventional writing include an understanding that words are comprised of letters, that words have meanings, and that written words can be put together in order to communicate to others. Key behaviors associated with conventional writing include writing letters and words through the use of a traditional writing tool or alternate pencil. Examples of conventional writing by students with significant cognitive disabilities can be seen in [DLM Professional Development Module 13: Writing Production and Distribution](#)¹.

What are the general principles of assessing writing in the DLM system?

- Maximize student independence while he or she writes.
- Assess writing in a way that is appropriate for all DLM students. DLM accomplishes this principle through a set of structured tasks within a testlet. Tasks assess the student's writing process and product, for both emergent and conventional writers.

What will students write about?

DLM testlets that assess writing allow students to select their own topic, or to select a topic with assistance from Test Examiners. The writing-related EEs in the ELA Blueprint 2014-2015 focus on writing about information. Since writing is a complex process, students should be allowed to write about familiar informational topics. A student highly motivated to write about types of cars should be allowed to write about cars as part of the DLM writing testlets. The tasks on which the Test Examiner will guide the student will focus on whether the student can write about information related to the selected topic. More information about instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities in writing can be found in [DLM Professional Development Module 26: Writing Information and Explanation Texts](#)¹.

¹ <http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/content/professional-development>

How are students assessed who do not physically write using paper and pencil or a traditional keyboard?

Many DLM students will need the support of Test Examiners to assist them in accessing a tool for writing. Some examples of partner-assisted alternate pencils that can be used by students who cannot physically access a traditional pencil include: eye-gaze systems, alphabet flip-charts used with partner-assisted scanning, adapted keyboards and onscreen switch-enabled keyboards. All students are required to have access to a tool used for writing. Tools that require dictation of letters or words to the Test Examiner are acceptable. Specific information about allowable tools is included in the updated *Test Administration Manual* that was updated on 2/25/2015. More information about alternate pencils and emergent writers can be found in these DLM professional development modules:

- [Module 16: Writing with Alternate Pencils](#)
- [Module 29: Emergent Writing](#)

How can Test Examiners prepare to give a student a writing testlet?

- Use DLM professional development resources. The following modules are recommended for Test Examiners who will deliver DLM writing testlets.
 - [Module 12: Writing: Text Types and Purposes](#)
 - [Module 13: Writing: Production and Distribution](#)
 - [Module 26: Writing Information and Explanation Texts](#)
 - [Module 29: Emergent Writing](#)
- Before administering a writing testlet, access the Testlet Information Page (TIP) to learn more about what is needed for the specific testlet.

What else do Test Examiners need to know about writing assessment during the Spring Summative Assessment?

- The KITE system will choose the linkage level for the writing testlet.
- The linkage level will be based on the student's First Contact Survey and any testlets delivered to the student during the Spring Summative Assessment prior to receiving the writing testlet.
- The testlets will be similar to the writing testlets administered during Phase C.