

How to Use the Blended Writing Resource Set

As Missouri moves toward assessing the English Language Arts Missouri Learning Standards Grade Level Expectations (MLS) adopted by the State Board of Education in April 2016, much thought has gone into how to best design End-of-Course writing prompts for English I and II.

Assessment writing prompts at all grade levels will now incorporate source-based writing, but English I and II will also incorporate blending of two or more writing genres (narrative, expository, argumentative) within a single piece of writing as presented in the new MLS. With the help of dozens of Missouri educators, Missouri Writing Project leaders and assessment specialists, new scoring guides were developed for English I and II EOCs. In April 2017 a prompt requiring use of blended writing and two sources was informally piloted at a large Missouri high school to gather sample writings to use as models with the new scoring guide.

Educators from across Missouri have been asking excellent questions about what the MLS changes encompass and how to make a smooth transition. The most common question for the English I and II standards and assessment is this: “What does blended writing look like?”

Along with the scoring guide in this resource set are nine student writings from the April 2017 informal prompt pilot demonstrating how blended writing **could be** assessed. (This resource set also includes the sources the students used during the informal pilot.) Each model is color coded to show genres used within the writings along with brief annotations identifying the elements of the genres. A couple of things to keep in mind when using these models:

- *Elements from different writing genres overlap.* For instance, a brief but emotion-charged story used as an example in an essay could be considered narrative (elements of plot and characterization), argumentative (appeal to pathos), or expository (an example to illustrate a point). How does an evaluator determine the genre being used? (See next bulleted item.)
- In a testing situation in which a student has a relatively short amount of time to draft, compose and revise an essay without the benefit of peer or teacher assistance, it is important that evaluators **look for what a student CAN do, not what a student CANNOT do when it comes to blending genres.** As you will see in the models, an effort was made during color coding and annotation to show a student’s use of multiple genres.

During DESE professional development events at ELA quarterly content meetings and district and regional trainings, educators are participating in activities in which they practice coding and annotating student models of blended writing.

Please feel free to share your thoughts and questions with DESE ELA. We love to hear from Missouri educators and value the expertise and passion for teaching and learning you bring to the conversation.