

Wisconsin Forward Exam New English Language Arts Test Design and Short Writing Tasks

Beginning with the 2024 administration, the English Language Arts Forward Exam will consist of three test sessions:

- **Session 1** - Reading Comprehension
- **Session 2** - Language Arts/Writing, including one short-write task
- **Session 3** - Language Arts/Writing, including one short-write task

The Listening Session and the Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) Session have been removed. The TDA is replaced by two new short write tasks.

The purpose of these new short write tasks is to collect a short writing sample from students to see how well they are able to communicate in writing in relation to the grade-level expectations of the Wisconsin Academic Standards.

A description of the new writing prompts are as follows:

Writing prompt with short passage (Session 2)

Students will be asked to read a short passage and write a one-paragraph response to a writing prompt that is related to the text, in a specific mode/style (e.g., narrative, opinion/argumentative, informative) based on grade-level standards. The passage should be used by the student to support their writing or as mentor text, depending on the prompt.

The writing sample with the short passage should take students approximately 10-20 minutes to complete.

Stand-alone writing prompt (Session 3)

Students will be asked to write a one-paragraph response to a writing prompt in a specific mode/style (e.g., narrative, opinion/argumentative, informative) based on grade-level standards.

The stand-alone writing sample should take students approximately 10-20 minutes to complete.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Will instructions be included in the writing prompt so that a student understands what is expected of them?

A. Yes, expectations are clearly defined in the writing prompt (e.g., introduce your topic, use descriptive words and details, state your opinion/claim, write a one-paragraph story, explain your reasoning, include a summary/concluding statement).

Q. How long should the student response be, and will students be penalized if they write more?

A. The writing prompt will include a statement instructing students to write a one-paragraph response. Students will not be penalized for going over one paragraph (e.g., more than one paragraph to accommodate for dialog for narrative style/mode) or for including dialog in the single paragraph.

Q. Does spelling count towards the student's score?

A. The writing samples should be clear and organized, however spelling errors will not affect the score as long as it is decipherable by the scorers.

Q. Do students need to provide supporting evidence from the passage in their response?

A. No, students do not need to provide evidence from the passage. The passage should be used by the student to support their writing or as mentor text, depending on the prompt.

Q. Will students be provided with a Writer's Checklist?

A. No. Students will not be provided with a Writer's Checklist. Expectations are clearly defined in the writing prompt (e.g., introduce your topic, use descriptive words and details, state your opinion/claim, write a one-paragraph story, explain your reasoning, include a summary/concluding statement).

Q. Does the short write need to be completed in one sitting?

A. Yes, unless there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., fire drill, illness, need for extra time due to differing abilities). At the end of any test sitting (the time allotted by the school for students to test), students who have not completed and submitted their test session are instructed (via the test administration script) to go back and make any changes or complete flagged questions at that time as they will not be permitted to do so when they log back in to complete the test session. While the test functionally will let students go back to test questions, it will open to the last unfinished question when the student logs in. The Test Administrator is to monitor

students to ensure they only work forward from the last question completed during their previous sitting.

Q. How long will it take students to respond to each short write?

A. Wisconsin educators were brought together during the 2023 Forward Exam New Item Review and discussed, reviewed, and edited each of the short write task for their grade-level. During this time, educators were asked to respond to each task from as the students in their classrooms would and how long they believed students would take to respond. Educators agreed that students may take 10-20 minutes to respond per short write task. Younger students may take closer to 15-20 minutes due to processing and keyboarding skills, while older students may finish in closer to 10 minutes.

Q. Even though students are not required to provide evidence during the short write task with the passage, can they do so if the writing mode (e.g., informational/explanatory) allows for it?

A. Providing evidence from the passage is not required but students will not be penalized for doing so.

Q. Are the 10-12 questions in Session 2 and 3 related to the short write tasks and or passage?

A. No. The 10-12 questions in Session 2 and 3 are in no way related to the short write tasks in those sessions. These questions are stand-alone multiple choice and technology enhanced questions that measure the other ELA writing and language arts standards.

Q. Will Text-to-Speech (TTS) read the passage associated with the short write task with passage?

A. Yes. The passage associated with the short write task with passage, will be read by TTS if the student chooses to make use of the TTS.

Q. Will DPI share which mode of writing students will be expected to write to each year?

A. No. Each short write task will instruct the student to write a response in a specific mode (e.g., narrative, opinion/argumentative, informative). There will be different short write tasks/prompts within each grade-level. The prompt in Session 2 may ask for a different mode than the prompt in Session 3. Students are expected to be able to write to the grade-level expectations of ELA writing standards W3.2 and W3.3 in the Wisconsin Academic Standards.

Q. What Wisconsin Academic Standards do the new short write tasks align to?

A. The new short write tasks align to the ELA writing standards W3.2 and W3.3 in the Wisconsin Academic Standards for English Language Arts.