Recognize the signs of a successful writer.

Teachers look at six areas of a student’s writing to identify success, as reflected in the Provincial Achievement Standards for the end of Grade 8. The description of the game of hockey on this page is an example of acceptable writing by a student at the end of Grade 8.

Content is the overall topic, degree of focus and related details. In the hockey game example, the writer has included thoughtful ideas relevant to the topic (“...good hand-eye coordination”) and included relevant details that enhance the ideas (“...there are nine players on the ice for each team, the goalie, ...”), and finishes with an adequate conclusion (“Hockey is a very exciting game and...”).

Organization means the writing has a clearly established purpose in the introduction, transitions to show sequencing and connections (“...there are nine players...”), and finishes with an adequate conclusion (“Hockey is a very exciting game and...”).

Word Choice means that interesting words and/or technical or subject-specific language (“watch deflections, ‘deeks’ and ‘passes’”) and figurative language (“thrown out of”) enhance meaning.

Voice means the student has skillfully connected the audience to the topic (“...watch a game on TV and you will fall in love with the game”) and has generated strong feeling, energy and individuality.

Sentence structure means different kinds of sentences with a variety of lengths and beginnings are used (“...and there are nine players...” and “...Hockey is a very exciting game and...”). The sentence “Even if you don’t like to play hockey, watch a game on TV and you will fall in love with the game” is easy to read.

Conventions include spelling, punctuation and grammar. In the hockey game example, the student uses internal punctuation (e.g., apostrophe, hyphen, comma) that creates fluency in the writing; almost all words are used and spelled correctly.

You can support your teen’s development of writing strategies and behaviours.

- Provide your teen many opportunities to read different genres of interest (e.g., science fiction, realistic/historical fiction, biographies) written by different authors.
- Suggest a variety of sources in which ideas and information can be gathered.
- Provide appropriate tools (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus).
- Encourage your teen to review the Writing Revision Checklist on the attached bookmark.
- If a part of your teen’s writing is confusing, point out the specific part and explain why it confused you.
- Read the writing aloud while your teen listens for fluency.
- Encourage the use of a variety of publishing formats (e.g., online blogging, pamphlets, letters to the editor).

Writing Revision Checklist

**Content**
- I selected a specific topic with a main idea.
- I included relevant ideas/events.

**Organization**
- I used my introduction to let my readers know what I would be writing about.
- I put my ideas into a logical order and organized them into paragraphs.
- I used transitions between and within paragraphs to connect my ideas.
- I provided an appropriate conclusion.

**Word Choice**
- I included interesting words and specific language.
- I used figurative language (e.g., metaphor, analogy, symbolism).

**Voice**
- I made my reader interested in my topic.
- I showed that I cared about my topic.
- I created strong feeling, energy and individuality.

**Sentence Structure**
- I included a variety of sentence structures.
- I included a variety of sentence lengths and beginnings to make my writing flow.

**Conventions**
- I included common, semi-colons, colors, dashes, hyphens, parentheses, and apostrophes and correctly paragraphed any dialogue.
- I used correct spelling.
- I used correct grammar (subject/verb agreement, verb tense, all parts of speech, numbers, contractions, plurals).
Recognize the signs of a successful reader.

In Grade 8, your teen will read a variety of texts written by many different authors. You, your teen, and his or her teacher can tell whether your teen is reading successfully by watching for growth in the following reading behaviours, drawn from the Provincial Achievement Standards for the end of Grade 8.

Checking closely for understanding, and adjusting and using a wide range of strategies

Encourage your teen to generate questions, make connections and organize significant information in notes or with graphic organizers.

Quickly solving unfamiliar words using a variety of clues

Encourage your teen to use root words, or origins, and references to find the meanings of unknown or technical words.

Automatically reading and understanding more words in a range of contexts

Encourage your teen to read and remember important words in subjects such as science (e.g., ecosystem, heterogeneous solutions, igneous rock).

Reading familiar texts with expression and confidence, and adjusting rates to match form and purpose

Encourage your teen to use appropriate phrasing, pauses and tone.

Using context clues, prior knowledge or experience, and knowledge of text forms and features

Encourage your teen to verify and adjust predictions while reading, and to seek information from other sources when necessary.

Using text features (e.g., glossary, captions, charts and diagrams) to interpret and locate information

Encourage your teen to use all of the information in a text—not just the words in the paragraphs—to preview, interpret and locate information.

Reflecting on reading processes and strategies to ensure deeper understanding of content

Encourage your teen to use the reading and fix-up strategies checklists on the attached bookmark.

Fix-Up Strategies Checklist

I can use the following strategies to help me when the text becomes confusing:

Connecting – This reminds me of the character __________ in ________.

Questioning – I am confused because the chart (or another text feature) seems to say something different from the text.

Inferring – I think ________ because it says ________.

Visualizing – The author describes ________ in a way that I can clearly see.

Determining Importance: Although I find this information interesting, it is not part of the main idea.

Analyzing – I think the author’s purpose in writing this was ________.

Synthesizing – “This information has made me reconsider how I ________.”

In Grade 9, your teen will read more text with many lines of print on a page that contains challenging illustrations, photographs and complex graphics that add meaning; they may also contain reader’s tools, such as glossaries and pronunciation guides. The music industry text example contains a pie chart, which shows how the money is divided when a CD is purchased.

You can support your teen’s development of reading skills.

Trends demonstrating appropriate achievement respond to three levels of understanding. Interpreting and evaluating what is read are necessary elements of reading at this level. You can ask the following sample questions to help support his or her comprehension:

Comprehension Task

Reading “the lines”

Reading “between the lines”

Reading “beyond the lines”

Questions you can ask:

What were the key ideas in the information you read?

Why is the ________ event or action important in the story?

In what ways did the weaknesses or strengths of the character affect the chain of events in the story?

What is the theme or message of the selection?

How would you have solved the problem?

Whose viewpoint is presented or missing?

Whose interests are served?

In Grade 9, your teen will complete the English Language Proficiency Assessment (E.L.P.A.), which measures both reading comprehension and writing skills. The standards described in this brochure reflect the expectations for success on the E.L.P.A. Successful completion of the E.L.P.A. is a graduation requirement for a New Brunswick high school diploma.

Studies show that students who read longer each day perform higher on reading tests. Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1998) report on this strong correlation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minutes of Reading per Day</th>
<th>Percentile Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.7</td>
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</tr>
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<td>12.9</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your teen is now reading texts that are mature and contain challenging themes and ideas. Topics may include human problems, such as abuse, war, hardship, poverty and racism. These texts encourage social awareness and provide your teen insights into the struggles of humanity. Your teen will often need to interpret and connect information and ideas to other texts and subject areas. 10 Myths and Realities of the Music Industry is an example of text that a student at the end of Grade 9 should be able to read and understand.

The language in reading material for your teen is challenging, including:

- many long multi-syllable words (e.g., popularize, sophisticated, merchandise)
- complex plural and spelling patterns (e.g., realities, continuous, techniques)
- many hard-to-decode nouns and technical words (e.g., slovenly, plethora, discipline)

Increasingly, your teen reads text with many lines of print on a page that contains few or no illustrations. Texts may contain challenging illustrations, photographs and complex graphics that add meaning; they may also contain reader’s tools, such as glossaries and pronunciation guides. The music industry text example contains a pie chart, which shows how the money is divided when a CD is purchased.

In what ways did the character ________ in ________.

Connecting – This reminds me of ________ in ________.

Inferring – I think ________ because it says ________.

Visualizing – The author describes ________ in a way that I can clearly see.

Determining Importance: Although I find this information interesting, it is not part of the main idea.

Analyzing – I think the author’s purpose in writing this was ________.

Synthesizing – “This information has made me reconsider how I ________.”

In what ways did the weaknesses or strengths of the character affect the chain of events in the story?

What is the theme or message of the selection?

How would you have solved the problem?

Whose viewpoint is presented or missing?

Whose interests are served?