

Text Forms

The following describe the specific elements of common text forms explored in grade six, seven, and eight. Refer to the Organization Trait to distinguish between appropriate and strong achievement.

Form: Persuasive

Purpose: to discuss and/or debate ideas developing an argument to convince the reader to agree with the writer's premise

Opening Statement: provides an overview of the topic and states the writer's position (*Racial slurs are damaging and should not be permitted.*)

Arguments and Reasons: provides three or more arguments or assertions that have supporting statements (*I believe...because...*) drawn from facts or personal experience; begins to identify other points of view and counter-arguments

Conclusion: includes a statement to reinforce or summarize position

Special Features

- persuasive devices (quotes from experts, examples, anecdotes, flattery, authorial intrusion, irony, wit, humour)
- linking words/phrases (because, however, also)
- present tense
- first person singular or plural (I, we)
- persuasive adjectives/adverbs (most, must, strongly)
- technical terms which are often verbs changed into nouns (new-comers become immigrants)

Form: Explanatory Report

Purpose: to tell how/why something came to be or to explain how something works

Statement or definition: identifies topic with a statement, question or definition

Explanation of how or why: to analyze a process (movements in the earth's crust) showing the relationship among the parts including cause and effect connections

Summary: can state unusual features of the phenomenon and/or reiterate the main points

Special Features

- may include a title, illustrations or diagrams
- connecting words to signal cause-effect (if, because, then) and/or sequence (next, then, when)
- present tense with some passive verbs (are folding/faulting)
- technical, subject-specific vocabulary

Form: Memoir

Purpose: to capture a defining personal memory

Orientation: begins with a purposeful lead, identifies the personal event and may give the reason for selecting the topic

Key Events: has key events in logical order (single day, flashback) with sufficient relevant details including the subject's feelings revealed through describing actions or using quotes

Conclusion: communicates the larger meaning or reason for the writing

Special Features

- literary language (powerful nouns and verbs, figurative language)
- linking words and phrases (later that afternoon, as I walked out)
- past tense

Form: Biography and Autobiography

Purpose: to give a true or fictionalized account of a person's life

Orientation: identifies the subject, the important events in the subject's life, and the reason for the selections

Events: important events are described in a logical order (e.g., chronological, categories); provides reasons for omitting significant parts of the subject's life (e.g., only focusing on the childhood or adult years)

Conclusion: includes a personal response, evaluative statement, or a comment on the significance of the subject

Special Features

- subjects feelings may be revealed in quotes
- supplemental texts (interviews, awards, newspaper clippings, foreword, afterword)
- dialogue

Form: Hybrid Texts (multigenre texts)

As writers become familiar with certain writing forms and as they read mentor texts that mix two or more genres, they begin to produce hybrid texts to communicate information in different ways (procedures and explanation, narrative and letters). The different forms to be combined are chosen with a clear purpose and integrated into one harmonious text that communicates a message.

Form: Descriptive Report

Purpose: to describe a topic

Introduction: introduces a manageable topic with a definition or a classification (*Three types of soil are*)

Description of Topic: includes factual details, from a variety of sources (books, photographs, websites), to support sub-topics (attributes, weather systems) sequenced in a specific way

Conclusion: summarizes, or restates, key ideas; may include an impersonal evaluative comment

Special Features

- includes a title, headings, illustrations, maps, or photographs with labels or captions
- connecting words and phrases (also, many other, has a variety of)
- present tense
- language to show comparisons/contrasts (as hard as), definitions (are called), classification (belong to)

Form: Instructions/Procedures

Purpose: to tell how to do something

Goal or aim: identifies topic by title or opening statement(s)

Materials/ingredients: lists materials

Method/process: includes key steps in correct order with adequate details focusing on how/when

Conclusion or Evaluation: includes a closing statement or an evaluation which may be a photograph or drawing of the completed item

Special Features

- may include headings, illustrations, diagrams or labels
- numbered-steps or words showing sequence (first, next, then)
- point form or full sentences starting with sequence words or verbs
- present tense often written as commands
- technical language - verbs, adverbs and adjectives (*whip the cooled cream vigorously*)

Form: Narrative (short story)

Purpose: to entertain with an imaginative experience

Orientation (time, place and characters): attempts to establish an emotional response through the development of character, setting, and plot and sets the mood or tone (humour, personalization, sarcasm)

Events: develop the main character, including insights into actions and feelings, and build tension that leads to the climax

Resolution: the complication is generally resolved and the loose ends are tied up

Special Features

- use of literary devices to create imagery (metaphor, personification, idiom, hyperbole)
- connecting words related to time (later on, after that,)
- action verbs and verbs related to character's thoughts and feelings
- include dialogue (with change in tense from past to present)
- pronouns refer to specific characters

Form: Poetry

Purpose: to entertain, communicate deep meaning or create a new perspective on a subject

Organization: a variety of forms with specific structures (ballad, Haiku, Cinquain, sonnet, diamantes) as well as free verse which has no set structure or conventions

Special Features

- title communicates the meaning of the poem
- lines of text usually short and concise
- words evoke strong images, moods, and/or emotions
- poetic devices (repetition, refrain, rhyme, rhythm, sensory images)
- literary devices are used (alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, symbolism, personification, rhetorical question)
- the line breaks and white space on the page may have meaning

Important Note: In all forms of writing, where appropriate, all research references are cited.

Writing Achievement Standards End of Grade 8



Writing Strategies and Behaviours *Appropriate Achievement*

Students:

- select and develop a topic; demonstrate awareness of audience and competence crafting a variety of text forms (including hybrids)
- write with purpose and understand the influence of the writer
- gather ideas from a variety of sources and use a framework (e.g., web, graphic organizer) to sort and classify the information/ideas, recognize different perspectives, and make new connections; apply knowledge of copyright/plagiarism
- draft a piece of writing making critical choices about ideas/content based on the purpose and intended audience
- independently reread to add to, delete from, or reorganize the text to clarify and strengthen content
- request, obtain, and make decisions about, constructive criticism
- refine writing to enhance impact
- select linguistic (e.g., analogy, colloquialism, figurative language, flattery) and print devices (e.g., print size, font, page design) designed to influence audience
- reread writing aloud for fluency; make changes to sentence structures and word choices to provide variety
- use appropriate tools (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, grammar checker, and text models) to edit conventions, and strengthen word choice
- use a variety of publishing formats (e.g., books, pamphlets, posters, web sites) with appropriate text and text features
- use specific devices to achieve purpose (instruct, persuade, entertain)
- explain form choice as it pertains to purpose and intended audience

Writing Strategies and Behaviours *Strong Achievement*

Students demonstrating strong achievement consistently apply the strategies and behaviours listed to the left. They take more risks and attempt techniques observed during independent reading.

Writing Achievement Standards

Appropriate Achievement Students

Content

overall topic, degree of focus, and related details

- select a specific topic with a main idea that supports the purpose and audience
- include thoughtful ideas/events relevant to the topic
- include relevant/well-researched details to enhance the ideas

Organization

structure and form, dependent on purpose and audience

- select an appropriate form and clearly establish the purpose in the introduction
- use an underlying structure to present information (e.g., temporal sequence, cause and effect, compare and contrast)
- use transitions between and within paragraphs to show sequencing and connections
- provide an adequate conclusion

See Text Forms for elements of narrative and information texts.

Word Choice

vocabulary, language, and phrasing

- include interesting words and/or technical/subject-specific language to enhance meaning (strong nouns and verbs, colourful adjectives and adverbs)
- use figurative language (e.g., metaphor, analogy, symbolism)

Voice

evidence of author's style, personality, and experience

- skillfully connect the audience to the topic
- show care and commitment to the topic
- generate strong feeling, energy, and individuality

Sentence Structure

variety and complexity of sentences

- include different kinds of sentences, with a variety of complex structures
- include a variety of sentence lengths and beginnings to create fluidity

Conventions

spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage (grammar)

- include internal punctuation (e.g., commas, semi-colons, colons, dash, hyphen, parentheses, apostrophes) and paragraphing of dialogue
- correctly spell almost all words; use spelling support (e.g., dictionary, spell checker); correctly use homophones
- use standard grammatical structures (subject/verb agreement, verb tense, all parts of speech, numbers, contractions, plurals)
- use a range of print characteristics and layout to enhance the meaning (e.g., headings, visuals, white space, italics, bold, font size, and style)

Writing Achievement Standards

Conference Prompts

Strong Achievement Students

- introduce a specific topic with a main idea that clearly defines the purpose and engages the audience
- include original and thoughtful ideas
- support the strong main idea with relevant details and examples

- begin with an engaging lead that establishes the purpose and form
- vary the organizational structures to enhance interest (e.g., hybrids, flashback, story within a story)
- use a variety of ways to focus the topic (e.g., time structures, theme)
- provide an effective/creative conclusion

See Text Forms for elements of narrative and information texts.

- effectively include vivid descriptive vocabulary/ precise technical words (strong nouns and verbs, colourful modifiers)
- use figurative language effectively

- skillfully connect with the audience by sharing thoughts, feelings, inner conflict, and convictions
- demonstrate a strong commitment to the topic
- develop ideas in a unique or unusual way, revealing the writer's perspective

- use a striking variety of complex sentence structures and types
- connect ideas with smooth transitions to add flair

- Use conventions skillfully to enhance meaning and voice
- make informed decisions about text layout and print characteristics to enhance meaning (e.g. headings, visuals, white space, italics, bold, font size, and style)

*What specific details do you think would enhance this part for your audience?
Do you need to do more research/further explore?
What can be accomplished through this piece of writing?*

*What did you do to help you organize your writing before you began?
How did you get your reader's attention?
Does your ending pull your ideas together?
Here's where I got confused _____.
How can you show that this part connects to the part you wrote here?
What text features or illustrations could be used to make this part clearer to the reader?*

*Find a place in your writing where you wrote so the reader could visualize.
What did you do to make that part work so well?
Show me the thesaurus words that you used to replace some of your ordinary words.
What are some words we've been learning in (subject area) that would help you tell about this topic?*

*Where did you really try to make the reader agree with you? What devices did you use?
Will your reader be able to tell that you know a lot about _____?
This part made me feel _____.*

*What is the strongest sentence in your piece and what makes it strong?
How can we make this sentence _____ (longer, shorter, etc.)?
Reread this part and see if it is easy to read aloud.*

*Let's look at the spell and grammar checker suggestions.
Did you use a mentor text to help you with text layout?*

General Conference Prompts

*What did you decide to revise after you shared your draft with a peer?
On what would you like to work to improve in your next piece?
What is the best way to publish this writing?
What form of writing would you like to work on next? What are you reading right now that could be a mentor text for your writing?*