

Louisiana Believes

Guide to Using the *ELPT Sample Writing Items*
(Grades 6-12)
Webinar September 18, 2019

Today's Goals

At the end of this presentation, participants will understand:

- Overview of ELs and Writing
- How to use the *ELPT Sample Writing Items*
- What the writing items look like
- How to use these collaboratively
- How to use the annotations
- How to provide more practice

Purpose of the *ELPT Sample Writing Items*

The *ELPT sample writing items* were created to provide students and test administrators with:

- an opportunity to practice the type of constructed-response items on ELPT
- an opportunity to assess students' writing abilities and create more individualized instructional strategies
- a medium to foster more collaboration between EL and ELA teachers

These items can be used multiple times. While they are paper based, we encourage you to have students respond on the computer to better familiarize themselves with this process.

LA Connectors for ELs and Writing

There are four LA Connectors for ELs that address writing:

Connector	Descriptor
4	Construct grade-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence
7	Adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing.
9	Create clear and coherent grade-appropriate speech and text
10	Make accurate use of standard-English to communicate in grade-appropriate speech and writing

ELPT writing items measure the skills listed here.

Writing as an EL

It is important for our ELs to write.

- Written responses will give us some of the most valuable information about their language development.

Is it language? or Is it writing?

If ELs are not able to write at this level in their own language, they will struggle more with both parts.

- Writing on ELPT measures fluency, accuracy, complexity and conventions.
- Writing on ELA assessments measures reading comprehension, development, organization, use of text-based evidence and conventions (grade-level).

ELPT Versus ELA

For ELA content assessments, there is always a **research task** and either a **literary analysis task** or a **narrative writing task**.

All of these come paired with passages and the expectation that the student will use the text in their response. Example (Grade 4 Practice Test):

Think about how the structural elements in the passage from “Emergency on the Mountain” differ from the structural elements in the poem “Mountains.”

Write an essay that explains the differences in the structural elements between the passage and the poem. Be sure to include specific examples from **both** texts to support your response.

The ELPT does not do this. There are no texts and students are expected to develop their own ideas from the prompt.

ELPT Writing Tasks

ELPT Writing tasks include:

Storyboard-a student is shown a set of images and asked to create a story.

Construct a claim-a student is asked to write an opinion about a topic and support it with personal experiences

Respond to a Peer Email-a student writes a response to a friend's email

Writing Questions-a student is asked to write 3 questions related to a specific topic

Storyboard

The Storyboard item from the Sample set is just one image.

The skill of writing a story is being assessed here along with narrative organization, idea development and English conventions.

Item 1: Look at the picture and write a paragraph about what is happening. Be sure to include details that happened before and after the events in the picture.



Storyboard Rubric

The Storyboard item is worth 5 points. Here's a snapshot of the rubric.

Score	Descriptors
5	<p>Responses at the 5 level are typically characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The response contains a variety of syntactic structures, such as simple, compound, and complex sentences, and vocabulary that are appropriate and relevant. Word choice and grammar are effective and accurate, though the response may contain a few minor and isolated errors that do not interfere with meaning.<li>● The student addresses the topic and task very well by composing a narrative that is coherent and well developed, using relevant information and specific details. The response is well organized, using a variety of transitional words and phrases to connect events and ideas in a logical sequence.<li>● The student's message is easily understood on a first reading.

The entire rubric can be found in the ELPT Sample Writing Annotated Responses Document.

Respond to a Peer Email

Item 2: Read the email that follows. How should Maya respond to her friend Luna?

Gifts from Puerto Rico
Maya@studentemail.com
Gifts from Puerto Rico
Hey! I'm leaving for Puerto Rico tomorrow and need to know what you want me to bring you back. Remember, we are a small island, but I know I can find you whatever you want. Just let me know!
Friends,
Luna
Answer:
Re: Gifts from Puerto Rico
To: Luna
Re: Gifts from Puerto Rico

Be sure to check your work. Make sure you:

- ✓ Give a suggestion
- ✓ Organize ideas in a logical way
- ✓ Use the right style for the task and audience

These kinds of activities give a student the opportunity to demonstrate a certain comfort level with English.

The main focus here is using the appropriate tone and language for the audience while also addressing the topic.

Peer Email Rubric

The “Respond to a Peer Email” item is worth 3 points.

Score	Descriptors
3	<p>Responses at the 3 level are typically characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The response contains vocabulary and simple, compound, and complex sentence structures that are appropriate. Word choice and grammar are accurate, though the response may contain a few noticeable errors that do not obscure the student’s meaning.<li>● The student successfully addresses the topic and task by giving at least one suggestion. Organizational logic is clear throughout the response, and transitional words and phrases are used appropriately.

Since this item is very informal, the focus is more on appropriateness and providing an accurate response.

Construct a Claim

Item 3: In the past, civilizations built new settlements close to water. What are the advantages and disadvantages of living near water?

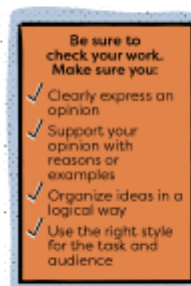
Write at least one advantage, one disadvantage, and one reason that shows both in a paragraph form.



These writing items are similar to ones students might see on an ELA assessment. However there is no text from which to pull evidence.

Here, it is purely about logical organization, addressing the topic, and providing personal evidence.

Item 4: Some math tests allow students to use calculators, others do not. Write a paragraph to explain to your math teacher your opinion about using calculators on math tests. Support your opinion with your own experiences.



Constructing a Claim Rubric

The “Construct a Claim” items are worth 5 points.

Score	Descriptors
5	<p>Responses at the 5 level are typically characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The response contains a variety of syntactic structures, such as simple, compound, and complex sentences, and vocabulary that are appropriate or higher. Word choice and grammar are effective and accurate, though the response may contain a few minor and isolated errors that do not interfere with meaning.<li>● The student addresses the topic and task very well, developing an opinion and supporting it effectively with compelling reasons and examples. The response is coherent, demonstrating organizational logic and an effective use of a variety of transitional words and phrases to connect ideas.<li>● The student’s message is easily understood on a first reading.

Writing Questions

The way questions are written in English is very challenging to language learners.

Simply the way we writing questions (flipping verb order, using question words, etc,.) is very English specific.

If an EL struggles with this activity, it is a good indicator that they still need specialized language instruction.

Item 5: Robert is buying a plant to grow at home. This will be his first time taking care of a plant. What questions should Robert ask the person at the plant store before he buys his plant? Write at least 3 questions.



Writing Questions Rubric

The “Writing Questions” item is worth 3 points.

Score	Descriptors
3	<p>Responses at the 3 level are typically characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The grammar and word choice are largely accurate. The response may contain isolated errors and typos that do not interfere with meaning.<li>● The response successfully addresses the prompt and is consistent with the stimulus.

How to Use

The *ELPT Sample Writing items* include suggestions on how to use them.

EL teachers are also encouraged to use these in collaboration with ELA teachers to gain more insight into what is an EL-specific error and what is common for any struggling writer.

General Use	Specific Guidance	How to Use
	Think about how to prepare students for the sample writing items by examining content instructional materials and strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice how the sample items are presented and what language skills are being taught. Make sure you are building the skills and knowledge necessary for students to demonstrate strong writing skills across several genres.
Examine ELPT Sample Writing Items to evaluate Instruction	Use as a basis of comparison for other supplemental writing materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine classroom assessments and materials and ask questions such as, "Do these support a language based approach to writing?" "How can I create additional opportunities for my students to practice these types of writing items?"
	Examine the ELPT writing rubrics and use the Scoring Activity to better understand expectations for written responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Scoring Activity with fellow teachers and with students to practice using ELPT Rubrics and to identify qualities of writing that meets the LA Connectors for ELs.
Examine ELPT Sample Writing Items to design classroom/ supplemental items with similar features.	Integrate writing items into instruction and assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create similar items that integrate reading, writing and language skills.

Scoring Activity

SCORING ACTIVITY: SCORING STUDENT WRITING USING RUBRICS

PURPOSE:

- To establish common expectations for student writing

OUTCOMES:

- Learn to use an ELPT writing rubric and identify qualities of writing that meet LA Connectors for ELs
- Reveal grade-specific expectations in a school
- Learn about and discuss different approaches that can improve the student's writing.

PROCESS:

1. Have students respond in writing to a common prompt. Suggested prompts:
 - a. Items from the ELPT Sample Writing Items
 - b. Items created at the school/district level for ELA
2. Collect students' written responses to the common prompt.
3. Work collaboratively to understand the rubric.
 - a. Review the scoring criteria on the chosen rubric. Read through each row. Highlight the key words on the rubric that shows the differences between each score.
 - b. Annotate the papers to identify which qualities match the rubric. They will serve as models of each score point on the rubric.

This scoring activity is at the back of the *ELPT Sample Writing Items*.

These activities encourage teachers to create additional writing activities and to score them collaboratively while also establishing expectations for ELs and writing.

Annotations

To help teachers and specialists use the *ELPT Sample Writing Items*, we collected student responses and included them in the *ELPT Sample Writing Items Annotated Responses*.

The responses are scored using the modified ELPT Rubrics. Scores are shown as well as explanations.

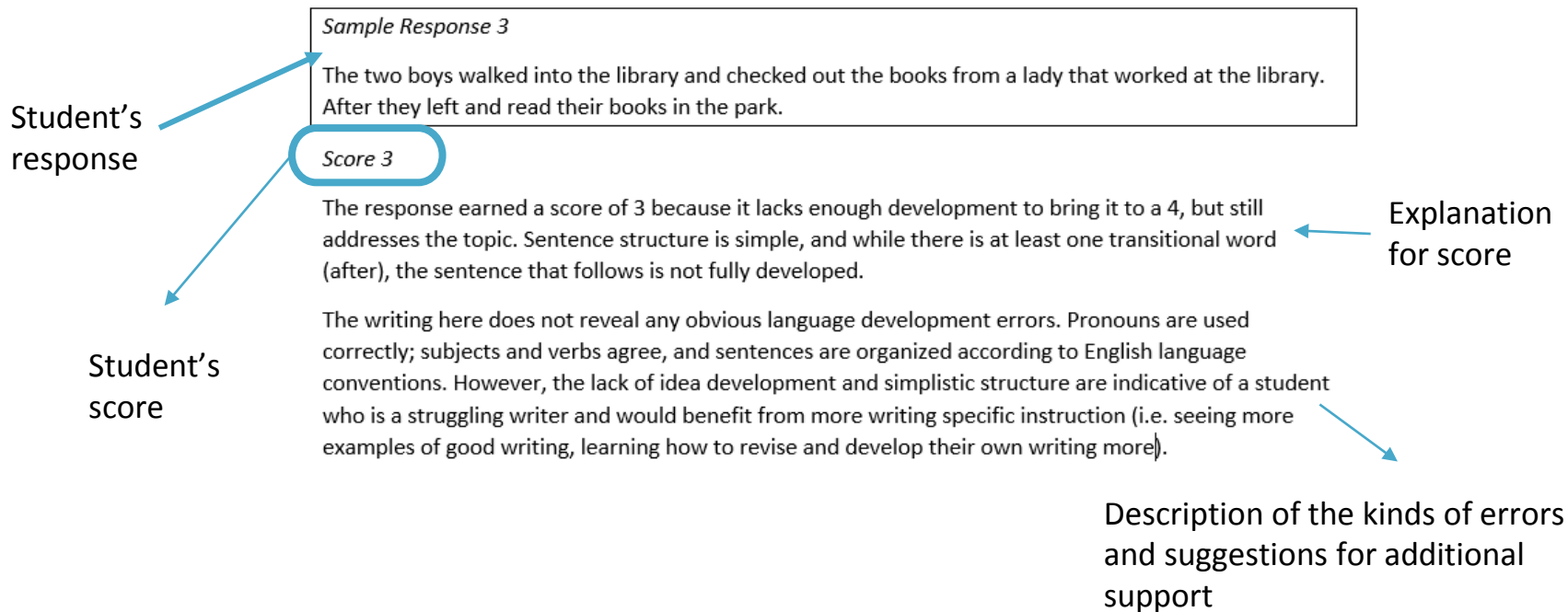
Suggestions of how to best support the student based on their responses are also included.



ELPT Sample Writing Items
Annotated Responses

Understanding the Annotations

This is a sample response for Item 1.



Common EL Writing Issues

To see these, we must first get ELs to write. Once we do, it is not unusual to see the following:

- Misusing/omitting articles
- Reversing adjective-noun order
- Incorrect or lack of pronoun usage
- Subject-verb agreement (tense and singular versus plural)
- Lack of prepositions
- More complicated verb tenses not used
- Lack of contractions, possessives, idioms

More Practice

Now that you are familiar with the items, use the same format to create your own items or have students create them.

- Use related images (3-5) for students to write a story
- Present other topics for which they can construct a claim (school uniforms, cell phones, speaking more than one language, later start for school--all popular topics)
- Write an email about the same topic to your teacher then to a friend
- Write questions to a character from a movie, a story, a song, or a long-dead celebrity

These are just some ideas, but do not let them limit you or your students.

Think about letting your students grade themselves or other students as well!

ELA Guidebooks

Item	Grade	Unit: Lesson
1	6	Out of the Dust: Lesson 23--Writing in response to an image Lesson 7--Create a timeline (sequence)
		If Stones Could Speak: Lesson 1--Observing images and taking notes on them Lesson 20--Comparing and contrasting images Extension Task
2	6	Steve Jobs: Lesson 18--Read and summarize a letter

Item	Grade	Unit: Lesson
3	6	Out of the Dust: Lesson 28--Making predictions based on historical facts
	7	Written in Bone: Lesson 14 (writing about how setting and characters interact)
4	6	Out of the Dust: Lesson 19--writing an argumentative essay
	9	Fahrenheit 451: Extension Task (argumentative debate)
	10	Rhetoric: Extension Task (argumentative presentation)
5	All	Many activities throughout the Guidebooks could be converted into a question writing activity.

Speaking and Listening

These items could also be converted into Speaking and Listening activities.

- Have students tell you the responses to these items.
- Have students listen to responses from other students and then ask questions.

Rubrics for Speaking items can be found the [ELPT Assessment Guide](#).

Next Steps

Key Dates	Action
Now-February 2020	Practice writing with your ELs using these sample items and ones you create.
February 3-March 13, 2020	Administer ELPT to all identified ELs

Thank you for your time!

Send all questions to assessment@la.gov.