

# Balanced Early Literacy: Assessment: Writing: The Writing Continuum Protocol

*Based on work by Richard Gentry, Blackburn/Cramp Writing Scale,  
Kindergarten-Grade 2 Task Force Developmental Writing Scale*

**Grade Levels:** Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2

**Writing Standard #1:** Plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish writing using correct grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, and effective vocabulary appropriate to the purpose, context, and audience.

## **Purposes:**

- To improve instruction by giving teachers a clear sense of what students need to know and be able to do to improve their writing.
- To evaluate/demonstrate growth in use of the conventions of writing over time to the student, teacher, and parent. The Writing Developmental Continuum *does not* address focus/ideas, organization, word choice/style, etc.
- To compare students writing with the writing of other students – within the same grade level and across grade levels.
- To assess students' writing in a way that is embedded in the ongoing instructional program and that can be used in conjunction with portfolio assessment and Title I assessment.

*A developmental continuum is most useful for looking at and honoring children's writing behaviors until children attain most of the conventions of writing. Once these have been attained, it may be useful for teachers to use an analytic trait writing rubric that addresses specific components of writing such as ideas/focus, organization, and conventions.*

## **Kindergarten**

**Materials for Kindergarten:** Crayons, markers, pencils, unlined paper

**Procedure for Kindergarten** (one session):

1. *Getting ready:* Students choose their own topic ("Think about something you could write about. It could be something you have done or something you might want to do. It could be about something you know about. It could be a true story or a make-believe story.").
2. *Solicit examples:* Teacher asks several students to tell the whole class what they plan to write/draw about.
3. *Get everyone actively involved:* Teacher asks every student to tell a partner what she or he plans to write/draw.

4. Each student draws his or her picture on one page and then writes a story or information about the picture on another page. Teacher asks students to use letters and words to tell about their drawings. Students may "read the room" (consult word walls, posters, and environmental print).
5. Children should independently write their first drafts. (This procedure may be different from the usual procedure in which teachers help children "sound out the words" and encourage children to help each other). Today's writing is for assessment purposes, so it is important to see what the child knows and is able to do on his/her own.
6. Students may choose to edit in response to your question as follows:
  - a. Do you want to add anything to your writing? (What happened next? Do you want to add more information?)
  - b. Have you put in all the sounds/letters/words you need?
  - c. Do you want to change any of your words?
7. Student "reads" or tells adult what he/she wrote. Adult writes the message/story at the bottom of the page in conventional writing. Teacher scores writing responses. When scoring for Title I purposes, it is recommended that each response be scored by two teachers. After scoring the writing samples using the Developmental Writing Continuum, you may add these to students' portfolio.

**Management for Kindergarten:**

The teacher may choose to follow the above procedures with the full group or may choose to focus on groups of 5-6 over the course of a week. For teachers to work with small groups of children, especially during the Fall assessment period, it is important that the principal provide teachers with support personnel to help supervise the class.

**Scoring for Kindergarten:**

Teachers may use the Writing Developmental Continuum to assess representative samples of each student's writing corresponding to report card periods.

# Balanced Early Literacy: Assessment: Writing: The Writing Continuum

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Level \_\_\_\_\_

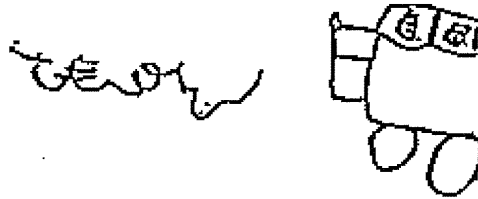
## Level I / EMERGING

- 1.1 Uncontrolled or unidentifiable scribbling  
\_\_\_



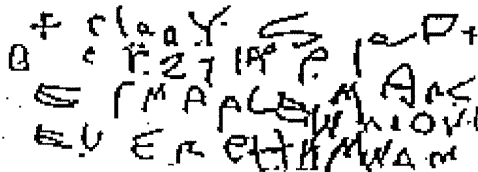
## Level II / PICTORIAL (All descriptors must be evident)

- 2.1 \_\_\_ Imitates writing  
2.2 \_\_\_ Draws a somewhat recognizable picture  
2.3 \_\_\_ Tells about drawing



## Level III / PRECOMMUNICATIVE (All descriptors must be evident.)

- 3.1 \_\_\_ Writes letter-like forms, letters, and/or random letter strings to convey a message; may be randomly placed on page  
3.2 \_\_\_ Attempts to read message  
3.3 \_\_\_ Writes own name or occasional known word



**Level IV / SEMI-PHONETIC (All descriptors must be evident)**

- 4.1 \_\_\_ Writes one or more letters to represent every word
- 4.2 \_\_\_ Writes from left to right and top to bottom (May reverse some letters)
- 4.3 \_\_\_ Correctly uses some letters to match sounds
- 4.4 \_\_\_ Spells some high frequency words correctly
- 4.5 \_\_\_ Writes at least one sentence

I N M Y M O M F M Y F  
N I K W + M Y F H  
(I asked my mom if my friend  
and I could walk to my friend's  
house.)

**Level V / PHONETIC (5 descriptors must be evident)**

- 5.1 \_\_\_ Uses both upper and lower case letters
- 5.2 \_\_\_ Writes from left to right and top to bottom (May reverse some letters)
- 5.3 \_\_\_ Uses logical phonetic spelling; most sounds in words represented
- 5.4 \_\_\_ Includes some vowels (often not correct ones)
- 5.5 \_\_\_ Spells some high frequency words correctly
- 5.6 \_\_\_ Separates words with dots, dashes, or spaces
- 5.7 \_\_\_ Writes two or more sentences on a related topic or theme

This is an A o l p  
The A o l p Red  
I Like A o l p  
(This is an apple. The apple  
is red. I like apples.)

**Level VI / TRANSITIONAL (5 descriptors must be evident)**

- 6.1 \_\_\_ Correctly spells many high frequency words used in sentences
- 6.2 \_\_\_ Uses logical phonetic spelling including vowels in most syllables (may not be correct ones)
- 6.3 \_\_\_ Capitalizes beginning word in sentence, names, and the pronoun I; lower case used appropriately
- 6.4 \_\_\_ Correctly uses periods and question marks
- 6.5 \_\_\_ Uses appropriate subject/verb agreement
- 6.6 \_\_\_ Uses regular verb endings
- 6.7 \_\_\_ Writes three or more sentences on a related topic or theme

I Was going to my  
Aunt's house because my  
cousin was there.  
We Played with her boss.  
We Went to her stair  
because we were  
hog rief. We ate a tie  
and meat balls. We were  
bored. We were in a stair.

**Level VII / CONVENTIONAL (5 descriptors must be evident)**

- 7.1 \_\_\_ Correctly spells most high frequency words used in sentences
- 7.2 \_\_\_ Uses logical phonetic spelling (including logical choices of vowels) in most syllables
- 7.3 \_\_\_ Accurately capitalizes first word in sentence, pronoun I, proper nouns
- 7.4 \_\_\_ Accurately uses periods, question marks, exclamation marks, and commas in a series
- 7.5 \_\_\_ Accurately uses plurals
- 7.6 \_\_\_ Writes a paragraph on a related topic or theme
- 7.7 \_\_\_ Uses varied sentence structure

My Perfect Allow  
I remember my first three  
little pigs. I had a pig  
named Popsin. I got it  
at Christmas. I was  
my favorite. I was  
going to get a dog  
if Popsin got it.  
I had a pig named  
Doe. I had it for  
months every night.  
I lost it when I was  
five years old. Then  
I found it and he  
and I was very glad  
the end.

**Level VIII / CONVENTIONAL II (5 descriptors must be evident)**

- 8.1  
— Uses conventional spelling for words taught (May use phonetic spelling for advanced words)
  
- 8.2  
— Accurately uses periods, question marks, exclamation marks, quotation marks, and apostrophes in contractions and possessives
  
- 8.3  
— Accurately uses commas in a series, in dates, between city and state, and in the salutation and close of a letter
  
- 8.4  
— Uses appropriate past, present, and future verb tenses
  
- 8.5  
— Uses correct syntax
  
- 8.6  
— Writes at least two indented paragraphs on a related topic or theme
  
- 8.7  
— Uses varied and complex sentence structure