



NEW MEXICO MEASURES  
OF STUDENT SUCCESS AND  
ACHIEVEMENT

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**Released Item Booklet 2021**

**Writing Prompt**

**Support Materials**

**Grade 6**

**cognia™**

# In This Released Item Booklet

## Writing Prompts

On the New Mexico Measures of Student Success and Achievement (NM-MSSA) assessment, students in grades 3–8 receive one writing prompt (comprising a passage or passage set, a writing task, and other supporting information and instructions), either narrative, informative/explanatory, or opinion/argument. All three of these purposes for writing will be assessed at every grade level each year. The Common Core State Standard alignment assigned to each released writing prompt is displayed in the booklet.

There are a total of six released writing prompts, one for each of grades 3–8. There is one released item booklet per grade level, each containing one writing prompt. The writing prompts that appear in the released item booklets were among those piloted with a small sample of students in the spring of 2021. Similar writing prompts will appear in future administrations of the assessment. The writing prompts that will appear on future writing assessments may be subject to additional revision (for example, repositioning components of the prompt frame) before they appear in an operational administration and count toward a student’s score.

## Stimuli

All NM-MSSA writing prompts are partnered with one to three brief text stimuli. The purpose of these passages is to “set the stage” by introducing a general topic and providing some ideas and information about it that students will draw upon when they write. The text stimuli associated with each of the released writing prompts has been included in the booklet for reference.

## Student Responses and Annotations

One sample student response is provided for each possible Production of Writing score point with annotations that explain the reasoning behind the assigned score. It is important to note that the scores in each booklet are likely to have been assigned the designated score that is shown; however, a definitive identification cannot be made at this point because range-finding—the process by which New Mexico stakeholders, in conjunction with Cognia content and scoring specialists, will identify writing samples that establish the lines between score points—has not yet occurred.

If a sample response was not available for one of the score points, an annotation is included to indicate some ways in which a student response could be further developed to exhibit the characteristics of a specified score point in accordance with the scoring rubric. Reviewing the student responses and annotations within a grade band or across all grade levels will provide additional examples and insight into the expectations for student writing on the assessment.

## Rubrics

There are six scoring rubrics associated with the writing prompts on the NM-MSSA writing assessment. These are distinct for each grade band (3–5 and 6–8) and purpose for writing (Narrative, Informative/Explanatory, and Opinion or Argument). The released writing prompt in each booklet is shown with its associated rubric.

Similar to the writing prompts, the scoring rubrics that are shown are currently considered provisional and may undergo further refinement prior to use with a later administration.

**For questions about the New Mexico writing assessment, additional information is available at [https://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/11/NM-MSSA\\_Writing-Assessment-Resources-for-Teachers.pdf](https://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/11/NM-MSSA_Writing-Assessment-Resources-for-Teachers.pdf)**

*You are now going to read two brief passages and respond to a writing task. First, read the following passages about text messaging.*

## **Passage 1**

### **Texting to Help the World**

- 1** Did you know that there was a contest to see how text messaging could help people around the world? Usually people think of texting as something teenagers do. It is true that teens do text a lot. However, other people see texting as a way to help people who need it.
- 2** Non-Governmental Organizations, or NGOs, are groups that help people around the world, especially in poor countries. A group decided to see if texting could help NGOs help people. They started a contest and asked groups to send in ideas of ways texting could help the people they work with. Here are some of the groups that won the contest:
- 3** The Centre for Training and Integrated Research in Kenya decided to use texting to protect their environment. People who are working in the field will text on their cell phones if they see anyone harming or stealing animals.
- 4** In Uganda, a group will encourage rural communities to text questions about their water quality and how to keep their villages clean.
- 5** In Mexico, a group will send reminders to farmers to let them know the best times to plant, water, and harvest their crops. The group hopes this will help the farmers grow more food.
- 6** There is also a group in Azerbaijan that is using texting to encourage people to vote. Each person is encouraged to text five friends to remind them to vote.
- 7** Finally, in the United States, there is a nonprofit group that is concerned about people's negativity. This group has created a different program. With this program you can write a short, kind, positive message to a person you have never met. A random person somewhere in the world will get your cheerful message. And maybe best of all, you will get many cheerful, positive messages back!

"Texting to Help the World" © 2020 by Cognia, Inc.

## Passage 2

### Smart Glove Learns How Muscles Write

- 1 Scientists have developed a fingerless glove that automatically translates hand motions into text. Six people were asked to use a digital pen and write the number 0 to 9 fifty times while wearing the fingerless glove. The glove recorded the electrical activity of each person's hand and arm muscles. These are the muscles used for writing. A computer connected the electrical data from the glove to the information from the digital pen. This information taught the computer to make written symbols from the burst of electrical activity that was coming from the glove.
- 2 The scientists who have developed this glove have done this for a variety of reasons. The glove might help people with Parkinson's or Alzheimer's disease. The hands of these people shake. The glove might help people notice this shaking earlier than it is now noticed. The glove can also help people with writing and drawing on computers and phones. The scientists say that technology is changing the way people write. They think that the way people write should also change technology.

"Smart Glove Learns How Muscles Write" © by Cogna, Inc.

# Grade 6

Alignment  
Standard: W.06.01

1. Now read the writing task and draft a response. As you write, think about what makes writing successful.

## Features of Successful Writing

Clearly addresses the topic and purpose identified in the prompt
Includes relevant and specific details and examples in support of ideas
Has a clear focus and an organizational plan
Uses language that is engaging and contributes to a style and tone appropriate to the task
Shows attention to sentence structure, sentence variety, and conventions (grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation)

## Writing Task

Suppose that your class is creating a school literary magazine.

You have read two passages about how texting technology is being used to help people in different ways. One passage describes ways texting is helping people in different situations around the world. The other passage describes a glove that helps people text or write.

Write a story to be published in the literary magazine in which a character uses texting technology to help others. Use ideas from what you have read, along with your own thoughts and imagination, to write your story.

Today you will be writing a narrative text. When you write a narrative, you

- recount a real or imaginary series of events in an engaging way.
- think about how your story can affect your audience through humor, sympathy, or other emotions.
- put events in an order that makes sense.
- use specific details to make the events and characters interesting.

After you have read the passages, and before you begin writing, think about

- who your narrative will be about.

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- what events you want your narrative to include.
- when and where the events in your narrative happen.
- why the person or people in your narrative think and act as they do.

Now write your response in the space provided.

Production of Writing: NM-MSSA Narrative Writing Rubric (Grades 6–8)				
	Score Point 4	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
Development/Content	<p>The Writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presents a narrative that develops real or imagined experiences or events that consistently address the task.</li> <li>Uses consistently effective and varied narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, and description to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</li> <li>Substantially develops the narrative using consistently relevant descriptive details.</li> <li>Engages and effectively orients the reader by clearly establishing a context and point of view*and clearly introducing a narrator and/or character(s).</li> <li>Establishes and consistently maintains an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</li> <li>Provides a conclusion that clearly follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.</li> <li>Consistently demonstrates effective use of a wide variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts in time frame or setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presents a narrative that develops real or imagined experiences or events that generally address the task.</li> <li>Uses generally effective and somewhat varied narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, and description to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</li> <li>Generally develops the narrative using mostly relevant descriptive details.</li> <li>Adequately engages and orients the reader by generally establishing a context and point of view* and adequately introducing a narrator and/or character(s).</li> <li>Establishes and generally maintains an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</li> <li>Provides a conclusion that generally follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.</li> <li>Generally demonstrates effective use of a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts in time frame or setting.</li> <li>Often uses precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</li> <li>Includes language choices that generally contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presents a narrative that develops real or imagined experiences or events that partially address the task.</li> <li>Uses partially effective and/or varied narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, and description to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</li> <li>Partially develops the narrative using some relevant descriptive details.</li> <li>Attempts to engage and orient the reader but does not clearly establish a context and point of view* and/or clearly introduce a narrator and/or character(s).</li> <li>Attempts to establish and partially maintains an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</li> <li>Provides a conclusion that partially follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences of events.</li> <li>Sometimes demonstrates varied and effective use of transition words, phrases, and/or clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts in time frame or setting.</li> <li>Sometimes uses precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and/or sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</li> <li>Includes language choices that sometimes contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presents a narrative that develops real or imagined experiences or events that minimally address the task.</li> <li>Rarely uses/does not use effective and/or varied narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, or description to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</li> <li>Minimally develops the narrative using few, if any, relevant descriptive details.</li> <li>May attempt to engage and/or orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view* and/or introduce a narrator and/or character(s).</li> <li>May attempt to establish but does not maintain an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</li> <li>Provides a conclusion that minimally follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events or does not follow from them.</li> <li>Rarely demonstrates/does not demonstrate varied or effective use of transition words, phrases, and/or clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts in time frame or setting.</li> <li>Rarely uses/does not use precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and/or sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</li> <li>Rarely includes/does not include language choices that contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task and/or includes language that is inappropriate to the task.</li> </ul>
Organization/Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes and consistently maintains an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</li> <li>Provides a conclusion that clearly follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.</li> <li>Consistently demonstrates effective use of a wide variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts in time frame or setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes and generally maintains an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</li> <li>Provides a conclusion that generally follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.</li> <li>Generally demonstrates effective use of a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts in time frame or setting.</li> <li>Often uses precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</li> <li>Includes language choices that generally contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attempts to establish and partially maintains an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</li> <li>Provides a conclusion that partially follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences of events.</li> <li>Sometimes demonstrates varied and effective use of transition words, phrases, and/or clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts in time frame or setting.</li> <li>Sometimes uses precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and/or sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</li> <li>Includes language choices that sometimes contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May attempt to establish but does not maintain an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</li> <li>Provides a conclusion that minimally follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events or does not follow from them.</li> <li>Rarely demonstrates/does not demonstrate varied or effective use of transition words, phrases, and/or clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts in time frame or setting.</li> <li>Rarely uses/does not use precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and/or sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</li> <li>Rarely includes/does not include language choices that contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task and/or includes language that is inappropriate to the task.</li> </ul>
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently uses precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</li> <li>Includes language choices that establish and consistently maintain a style and tone appropriate to the task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often uses precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</li> <li>Includes language choices that generally contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes uses precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and/or sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</li> <li>Includes language choices that sometimes contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rarely uses/does not use precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and/or sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</li> <li>Rarely includes/does not include language choices that contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task and/or includes language that is inappropriate to the task.</li> </ul>

Use of Conventions: NM-MSSA Conventions Rubric (Grades 3–8)			
	Score Point 2	Score Point 1	
Grammar/Usage	<p>The Writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates general command of standard English grammar and usage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates partial command of standard English grammar and usage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates little command of standard English grammar and usage.</li> </ul>
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates general command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text.</li> <li>May have minor or infrequent errors that do not interfere with meaning or confuse the reader.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates partial command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text.</li> <li>May have errors or patterns of errors that somewhat interfere with meaning or confuse the reader.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates little command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text.</li> <li>May have errors that interfere with meaning or confuse the reader.</li> </ul>

\*Only assessed at grades 7 & 8

# Grade 6

## Score Point 3–;3

Ella was so excited, she was finally going to get to go to her friend Allie's house! She had never been there before and her house was in the forest surrounded by lots of trees, animals, and other plants.

It was Friday and they had just gotten out of school. Ella ran as fast as she could to her house. Her mom was shocked when she ran in the door and ran right past her. Ella grabbed the bag that she had packed the night before. She saw a few magazines and grabbed them, just in case they got bored. She ran downstairs threw her bags in the car and then remembered that she had left her phone upstairs. After she found her phone, she went back downstairs and asked her mom if she was ready to go. Her mom said yes and they both got in the car.

When they arrived at Allie's house her mom greeted them. As soon as Ella's mom left, Allie and her ran up to Allie's room. Ella said excitedly, "Let's go outside in the woods!"

Allie replied, "That would be so much fun but we need to pack a few things because we will probably be there for a while."

Ella agreed and they both started packing a little backpack. They packed a few things. Ella saw the magazines that she had packed and grabbed them. They both grabbed their cell phones and ran outside. Ella loved the smell of the fresh air.

They had been walking on the trail and talking for a long time now. They both were having so much fun. They were talking but then they both stopped in their tracks, they had heard a sudden cry, like somebody needed help. They followed the voice until they reached a bush. They found a girl that looked a little bit younger than them. Allie didn't know what to do and was panicked. The little girl was hurt badly. Then, Ella remembered that in the magazines that she had brought she had read something about texting a number and they could track your location and send help right away. She frantically looked through the pages until she found the page. She grabbed her cell phone texted the number and got a text back saying they knew their location and would be there shortly. Ella realised that if it wasn't for that texting program we would have no way of getting help.

### ANNOTATIONS

#### Production of Writing: 3 (low)

The response generally develops a narrative through clear description and a logical and generally well-paced series of events. The introductory paragraphs orient the reader by establishing characters, context, and setting, and the events follow naturally from that set-up. However, there are missed opportunities for further development; the events of the concluding paragraph, in particular, would benefit from further elaboration, perhaps in the form of dialogue between Ella and Allie. Overall, the response demonstrates a still-developing sense of how to effectively use dialogue in order to, for example, advance a plot, reveal character, or slow pacing and create suspense. Descriptive details and sensory language are adequately used to convey the characters' experiences ("excitedly," "frantically," "Ella loved the smell of the fresh air"), though the response would benefit from more varied vocabulary, as the verb choice becomes somewhat repetitive (especially "grabbed" and "packed").

#### Use of Conventions: 3

Relative to length and complexity, the response demonstrates a general command of conventions. Though some issues with missing commas ("She ran downstairs threw her bags in the car...") and comma splicing are present, given that the response attempts a variety of complex sentence structures over the course of a sustained narrative, no significant patterns of grammatical errors emerge overall. The writing is relatively free of issues with verb tense and agreement. Misspellings are infrequent and do not interfere with communication.



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A response with a score of 4 for Production of Writing would achieve a more substantial level of development. This could be accomplished with further elaboration of events, especially in the final paragraph. Additional sensory details and description to help convey the experience could benefit the response. Techniques such as dialogue and description (of both the characters and the setting) could be used to further develop the personalities of the characters and to help differentiate between incidental and key events in the narrative. More vivid language choices would also help establish an appropriate tone to capture the action and urgency of the experience.

## Score Point 2;2+

Amber was texting her friend about something that happened in class. She was typing really fast, so she was spelling some words wrong but she didn't care because she had auto-correct. It corrected her words automatically for her which really helped. She wasn't the best speller so she was really grateful for auto-correct. As she was texting her friend she walked pass a store that really caught her eye. There was a glove that was on display. But it wasn't just any regular glove, it was a glove that helped you text. Theglove turns hand motion into words. Amber has been wanting one ever since it came out to the public. But Amber didn't have enough money for it. So she has been working extra hours at work so she can get it. Her friend Saiki had one and her let her see it but she had to work so she didn't get to try it. She walked away sad that she didn't get the glove. But she she will soon when she has enough money. Amber was looking through her phone the next day until she got a phone call from Saiki. He said "Amber get here quick they just dropped the price of the glove by 40%!" Amber got off her bed got dressed grabbed her wallet and ran out the door as fast as she could. She ran to the store and walked inside and asked the employee who worked at the counter if they had anymore gloves left. The store clark said " No ma'am we just sold our last one to a nice young man. But everything else is still on sale." Amber walked out of the store feeling ashamed. She met Saiki who was waiting by the door she told him what the employee told her. Saiki reached for something in his back pocket and pulled out the glove and gave it to Amber. Amber was filled with shock and joy, she hugged Saiki and thanked him for the glove. Amber was so happy.

### ANNOTATIONS

#### Production of Writing: 2

The response presents a narrative that partially addresses the task, as a character gives a piece of texting technology to a friend. The characters Amber and Saiki are introduced but are not fully developed with further description. Although the narrative does establish a situation, the events unfold quickly, and their sequence is somewhat unclear, especially in the first paragraph. The response includes some descriptive language, such as "filled with shock and joy," but the word choice is occasionally imprecise ("ashamed"). Dialogue is sparse, but used effectively to advance the plot. Overall, the response would benefit from more vivid language to convey the characters' experiences (rather than "She walked away sad...," "Amber was so happy.") and from a more effective conclusion (e.g., one that helped the reader better understand Amber's strong feelings about the glove).

#### Use of Conventions: 2 (High)

The response demonstrates partial command of conventions. While spelling errors are minor overall, punctuation is misplaced in contractions ("was'nt," "did'nt"). Sentence construction is sometimes correct but has occasional errors with comma usage ("got dressed grabbed her wallet") and run-on sentences ("She met Saiki who was waiting by the door she told him..."). Sentence fragments are present throughout the response, in particular for clauses beginning with a coordinating conjunction. The response occasionally switches from past to present tense, but such errors are minor, considering the relative complexity of attempting past perfect continuous tense ("She had been wanting one...").

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## Score Point 1;1

Once there were a set of twins named Alexa and Connroy. Alexa and her brother were walking home and Connroy was texting on his phone, this made Alexa irritated.

Why are you texting on phone Connroy, she asked, we are walking home from school we should be talking about are day and enjoying each others precence. Not be atached to are cell phones, she stated.

Alexa calm down, he said, I am actually helping a kid some where in the world feel better about themselves by texting positive messages and somtimes I get possitive messages back.

Alxa was amazed by what her brother was telling her. He told about different texting programs to halp people in the world. He also told her about a new type of glove to help docters determen a certain type of deises and help people wirtne in technology. *THE END*

### **ANNOTATIONS**

#### **Production of Writing: 1**

The response presents a narrative in which a character uses texting technology to help others. Characters are introduced but only minimally developed. A narrative sequence is clear, but the events would benefit from further elaboration and more effective pacing to help capture the action of the narrative (e.g., use pacing to build on a sense of excitement or suspense). While some dialogue is used, the response would benefit from varied and effective use of other narrative techniques as well, such as using more descriptive details to convey the characters' experiences. Given the relative lack of length and complexity, there are few opportunities to demonstrate clear and sustained organizational focus. While a conclusion is provided, it is somewhat abrupt and does not effectively follow from the narrated events to provide a satisfactory end to the story.

#### **Use of Conventions: 1**

The response shows little command of standard English conventions. Although the meaning is usually immediately clear, run-on sentences recur and quotation marks are missing from the dialogue. Patterns of errors in usage (are vs. our) and spelling ("halp", "docter", "determen") are demonstrated throughout the writing.

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## Score Point

The naritive is about a texter

I wnt to knw where he was texting from.

It happend at brazill

They think and act the way they do by the way they think.

### **ANNOTATIONS**

This response does not receive a score in Production of Writing or Use of Conventions. In addition to being unclear, it is an off-mode informational response about what the student would include in a narrative.