



NEW MEXICO MEASURES
OF STUDENT SUCCESS AND
ACHIEVEMENT

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Released Item Booklet 2021

Writing Prompt

Support Materials

Grade 7

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

You are now going to read two brief passages and respond to a writing task. First, read the following passages about the outdoors in New Mexico. Read Passage 1 and then click the Passage 2 tab at the top of the screen to read Passage 2.

Passage 1

A Traveler's Almanac: New Mexico Land of Enchantment

- 1 The fifth largest state in the United States, New Mexico is the ideal destination for people who love the outdoors. There is plenty of space to explore; New Mexico has a population density of 12 people per mile. In fact, it has more cattle and sheep than people and boasts the largest national forest in the nation: the Gila National Forest.

Geography

- 2 New Mexico borders five states (Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Texas, and Oklahoma) as well as one country, Mexico. It consists of deserts, high plains, and mountains, and what may be surprising to would-be travelers is that forests cover a large part of the state. The Rio Grande, the fourth largest river in the United States, flows through the state from north to south. Other major rivers flowing through New Mexico are the Pecos, the Canadian, the San Juan, and the Gila.

Climate and Weather

- 3 New Mexico's climate can be considered mild; some regions in the state are arid, while others are just semi-arid. Just as the climate varies depending on region, so does the state's precipitation. Some areas in the higher elevations can see nearly 30 inches annually, while other, more extreme areas might receive only 3 inches per year.
- 4 Temperatures can vary drastically as well. In the summer, temperatures can reach more than 100°F in the lower-elevation areas, whereas in the winter some mountainous areas can experience temperatures as low as 15°F. These colder temperatures create the optimal skiing conditions in the mountains; northern mountains can see more than 100 inches of snowfall a year.

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Points of Interest

- 5 New Mexico is an outdoor enthusiast's paradise with 5 national forests (comprising millions of acres), 15 national parks and monuments, 34 state parks, and 26 wilderness areas. Two popular destinations are Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument and the Gila Wilderness. Travelers can visit ancient sites such as Petroglyph National Monument or Chaco Canyon Culture National Historical Park.
- 6 These locations offer travelers a wide array of activities: skiing and snowboarding, horseback riding, backpacking, and whitewater rafting. Being outdoors can also offer the opportunity to pause and admire the beautiful scenery, as well as to reflect on the connection of the land to the people of New Mexico.
- 7 A destination that offers both a beautiful outdoor setting and a one-of-a-kind cultural experience is Taos Pueblo, which is one of the 19 pueblos of New Mexico and is located in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in north-central New Mexico. This pueblo originated more than 1,000 years ago and is considered the oldest continuously inhabited community in the United States. Visitors can schedule a guided tour to get closer to the unique adobe structures and learn about the culture and traditions of Taos Pueblo.
- 8 New Mexico offers travelers unique outdoor experiences. It is little wonder it is called The Land of Enchantment.

"A Traveler's Almanac: New Mexico, Land of Enchantment" © 2020 by Cognia, Inc.

Passage 2

The Great Urban Outdoors of New Mexico

- 1 New Mexico is well known for its outdoor adventures. With such places as Carlsbad Caverns, Tent Rock National Monument, and the Sandia Peak ski slopes, New Mexico attracts outdoor enthusiasts from all over the world. Its many outdoor destinations make tourism one of the state’s major industries with approximately 30 million visits each year.
- 2 However, there is a lesser-known outdoor destination that will satisfy anyone’s appetite for the outdoors. Visitors do not have to travel to hard-to-reach locations. Nor do they have to spend a lot of money once they get there, and it can all be done within an urban setting.
- 3 No city its size can rival Albuquerque’s 29,000 acres of urban open space, otherwise known as “green spaces.” In the 1960s, the city of Albuquerque began acquiring land to be designated as open space lands. Its goal was to preserve “the unique natural features of the metropolitan area by achieving a pattern of development and open space respecting the river, land, mesa, mountains, volcanoes, and arroyos.”
- 4 What has resulted in the time since is an extensive network of parks, hiking and biking trails, sports fields, camping spots, and scenic points of interest. In total, there are 14 major open-space areas in Albuquerque. The Open Space Division of Albuquerque also sponsors many activities and events such as guided tours, concerts, art exhibitions, bird-watching, and even gardening classes.
- 5 From viewing the rock art at Petroglyph National Monument to enjoying Maloof Air Park, where enthusiasts gather to safely operate remote control airplanes, helicopters, and cars, there is surely something for everyone to enjoy all year round. Visitors can stroll along the Rio Grande on the Paseo del Bosque Trail or along the Aldo Leopold Forest Interpretive Trail. They might catch sight of native wildlife such as beavers, porcupines, ducks, sandhill cranes, and other exotic species. Along a trail, within earshot of a residential neighborhood, lies a waterfall that pours into the *Piedra Lisa* canyon during summer monsoons. *Piedra Lisa* means smooth rock, a reference to how the waterfall has shaped the canyon.
- 6 Urban green spaces have been around for a long time. There is evidence that open spaces were used in ancient times in Greece, Rome, and Egypt. Today’s cities throughout the world recognize the need that people have for being close to nature and provide residents and visitors with green space to enjoy. But few cities can match the unique natural environment of Albuquerque’s open spaces.

“The Great Urban Outdoors of New Mexico” © 2020 by Cognia, Inc.

Grade 7

Alignment
Standard: W.07.02

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

You have some out-of-town relatives who are planning to visit New Mexico. They told you that they would like to spend some time outdoors during their visit. You have just read two passages about the outdoors in New Mexico and decide to create a detailed plan for how your relatives could spend time outdoors.

Write a letter to your relatives that informs them about what outdoor places, parks, and events they should experience during their visit to New Mexico. Use details from what you have read, along with your own ideas and experiences, to write your letter.

Today you will be writing an informative text. When you write to inform, you

- share what you know about a topic or subject with another person.
- think about what the audience may already know or may want to learn about the topic or subject.
- put your information in a logical order.
- use examples, definitions, and specific details to make the information clear and interesting to your audience.

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

- what you already know about ways to spend time in the outdoors in New Mexico.

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- why some outdoor activities and locations would be enjoyable for your relatives.
- important things you learned by reading the passages.

Now write your response in the space provided.

Production of Writing: NM-MSSA Informative Writing Rubric (Grades 6–8)

	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
	Score Point 4		
	The Writing:		
Development/ Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents ideas that thoroughly address the task. Substantially develops the topic with consistently pertinent facts, definitions, details, examples, and other information from relevant sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents ideas that partially address the task. Partially develops the topic with some pertinent facts, definitions, details, examples, and other information from relevant sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents ideas that minimally address the task. Minimally develops the topic with few pertinent facts, definitions, details, examples, and other information from relevant sources.
Organization/ Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes and consistently maintains an organizational plan focused on a controlling or central idea. Provides a thoroughly clear and engaging introduction and a concluding statement or section that clearly follows from and supports the preceding ideas/information. Consistently demonstrates effective use of transitions to create cohesion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to establish and partially maintains an organizational plan focused on a controlling or central idea. Provides a partially clear introduction and a concluding statement or section that loosely follows from and supports the preceding ideas/information. Sometimes demonstrates effective use of transitions to create cohesion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May attempt to establish but does not maintain an organizational plan focused on a controlling or central idea. May lack an introduction; a concluding statement, if provided, may not follow from or support preceding ideas/information. Rarely demonstrates/does not demonstrate any effective use of transitions to create cohesion.
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently uses precise language to inform or explain the topic. Includes language choices that establish and consistently maintain a style and tone appropriate to the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes uses precise language to inform or explain the topic. Includes language choices that sometimes contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rarely uses/does not use precise language to inform or explain the topic. 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.

Use of Conventions: NM-MSSA Conventions Rubric (Grades 3–8)

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

Score Point 3;3

The Adventures Of New Mexico

The land of enchantment has lots to offer if you know where to go. New Mexico has lots to offer to any type of person. If your an outdoor expert or a city living person, New Mexico is full of activities for anyone to enjoy. You can hike up the mountains, go rafting in the rivers, or ski the slopes. Or, if you dont prefer that, you can experience Albuquerque, an open space city that is full of nature and activities to do. Adventure in New Mexico is there for anyone, no matter where your from there is something for you.

There are some great places for those who love history. Such as the various pueblos located in New Mexico, one of the more popular ones being Taos Pueblo. Taos pueblo originated more than 1,000 years ago and to this day is still inhabited. You can walk through the Pueblo and gaze at the wonderfull adobe housing. Or you can watch one of the various celebrations and shows. Experience the vast culture still alive today, by visiting the Taos Pueblo.

If you are a nature lover than New Mexico is the place for you. New mexico has various different landscapes to explore. Such as Deserts, High Planes, Mountains, and Large Forests. New Mexico has millions of acres worth of forest, 34 state parks, and 15 national monuments and national parks to explore. There are a variety of activities to do in the nature such as, backpacking, rock climbing, biking, rafting, and so much more. New Mexico also hosts a variety of rivers, such as the Rio Grande, the Pecos, and the San Juan, these rivers are perfect for rafting.

However there is more than just nature here. Getting tired after a long day of adventure? Why not visit Albuquerque to have a nice dinner. Albuquerque is an open spaced city that preserves the natural beauty of New Mexico. This city not only has resturants and large hotels, but also a variety of relaxing activities. Such as parks, biking trails, and camping spots. They also have tours for almost anything, such as viewing Petroglyphs, bird watching, and even gardening classes. Albuquerque is a perfect mix of nature and city.

New Mexico has something for everyone to enjoy. With the vast culture of the 19 state wide pueblos. To the great mountains covered in wildlife. New Mexico's landscape is like no other, resulting in there being something for everyone. Or experience the urban city of Albuquerque. Take a tour of the Petroglyphs or go on a bike ride. New Mexico is called the land of enchantment for a reason. That is becasue its beautiful nature and history. New Mexico is a great place to visit for anyone from any place.

ANNOTATIONS

Production of Writing: 3

The response provides a generally developed informational text about places to visit in New Mexico. Pertinent facts and details are provided to explain what makes the suggested destinations attractive places to visit. An organizational plan is established and maintained, with a clear introduction and conclusion, and body paragraphs are organized around different aspects of the central idea (historical sites, natural attractions, and urban destinations). Transitions are generally effective, and language choices generally contribute to the style and tone. Though the response provides an informational text, it does not resemble a letter to a relative as instructed by the task.

Use of Conventions: 3

Relative to length and complexity, the response demonstrates a general command of standard English conventions. Minor issues with capitalization ("New mexico"; "Large Forests") and punctuation ("dont") do not interfere with communication. Issues with misplaced commas ("such as;") and comma splicing ("...these rivers are perfect for rafting") are present but infrequent. Overall, a variety of sentence structures are attempted, with few distracting errors in grammar and mechanics.

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A response with a score of 4 for Production of Writing would more thoroughly address the purpose of the task by presenting the information as a letter to a relative rather than as an essay to a general audience. More adherence to the purpose of the task would also provide more opportunity to assess tone and style. Some of the places and activities suggested by the response are presented in lists; the response would benefit from further development of these lists, expanding on the appeal of some of the locations with additional facts and details. More substantial development of the central idea could also potentially be achieved by extending the support to connect the passage information with the student's own knowledge of the topic.

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Score Point 2;3

Dear Grandma L,

Hi there Grandma, I hope that you are doing good while you are reading this and am glad that you got everything situated with R. How are her and the pups doing? Anyway, like you said in your last letter with your retire ment you would like to spend some time over here in New Mexico. I talked to my parents about it and they all love the idea, however there is one problem. You see is we were planning to spend all summer down at South Padre Island so we won't be able to do it when you want. However, we will have from now until the 1st of June. I am not sure what you want to do so I made this plan for you to tweek when you write back. If ya'll could come down here around the last of the mounth then that will give us plenty of time to explore all over New Mexico. I think that we should meet up at Angle Fire and spend the weekend there. Then on our way to Santa Fe spend the day at Red River and Taos. Just so you know all of these places are extremely pretty and are up in the mountains. Since you live in Kansass I would like to take you here first to show you something new. I say that from there we should go to Ft. Summner to learn about Billy the Kid and the wild west. I think that you would really enjoy it in Alburquerque after being in these small towns for so long. At Alburquerque we can go to a bunch of parks and maybe even watch the hot air baloon show. On our way to Ruidoso we are going to stop by Chaco Canyon Nation Historical Park that way you learn about how much of New Mexico is influinced by Native American culture. Once we are down there I will show you around where every one in my family grew up. Once you see it down ther you will be glad to live in Kansass. Finally we will make the drive all the way up to logan where we will spend howevermuch time is left hanging out and going to Ute Lake. I hope you are paying for this or it won't ever happen!! ;) ;) ;)-

With bunches of love,

T

ANNOTATIONS

Production of Writing: 2

The response provides a partially developed letter informing a relative about several places to visit in New Mexico. Some pertinent details about the locations are included, such as the parks and hot air balloon show that make Albuquerque an enjoyable destination, but overall the response would benefit from further elaboration of these details as well as additional relevant information on the other outdoor attractions suggested throughout the response. The response attempts to establish an organizational plan with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion; however, the introduction digresses slightly from the topic (i.e., informing a relative about what places, parks, and events to visit in New Mexico), and the conclusion is somewhat abrupt. Language choices are appropriate to the task, but more precise language (rather “pretty,” “bunch of parks”) could be utilized to more clearly explain the topic.

Use of Conventions: 3

Relative to length and complexity, the response demonstrates a general command of standard English conventions. Misspellings (“retire ment,” “mounth,” “Kansass,” “influinced”) are infrequent and do not interfere with communication. Throughout a variety of sentence constructions, the response has relatively few errors in punctuation, tense, and subject-verb agreement.

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Score Point 1;2

I heard your family was wanting to come down to New Mexico to spend some quality time outdoors. If you plan on coming during winter and want to go skiing, I suggest you stay in the north-central part of New Mexico such as the Sande De Christo Mountains or somewhere in the Lincoln National Forest. On the other hand, if you want to come during summer time, you can visit many of our state parks. You may want go to Southeastern New Mexico and visit Carlsbad Caverns. A couple more destination that I think you would absolutley love is Chaco Canyon Culture National Historical Park, the Myan Ruins, and the Taos Pueblo. New Mexico is a beautiful place filled with many outstanding landmarks and monuments, we will enjoy having you here and I hope you enjoy your time here!

Sincerely,
J

ANNOTATIONS

Production of Writing: 1

The response provides a minimally developed letter informing a relative about places to visit in New Mexico. New Mexico attractions are listed, but few facts and details are provided to elaborate on why these particular destinations have been suggested. Given the relative lack of length and complexity, the response would benefit from additional development; this would provide further opportunity to demonstrate whether the student could have maintained organizational focus and continued to employ effective transitions. Language is appropriate to the task but occasionally vague (“New Mexico is a beautiful place”), and more precise word choice would benefit overall tone and style.

Use of Conventions: 2

The response demonstrates partial command of standard English conventions. Spelling errors are minor and infrequent (“destination”). Errors with subject-verb agreement and comma splicing are present, but do not interfere with meaning. Given the relative lack of length and complexity, the response would benefit from additional development; this would provide further opportunity to demonstrate a sustained command of conventions through a variety of sentence constructions.

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Score Point

i lwrned that nm has a natinal forest which i did not know nm had one..

ANNOTATIONS

This response does not receive a score in Production of Writing or Use of Conventions. It is an insufficient amount of writing to determine its connection to the task; there is no information provided on places a relative could visit. While the writing shows some evidence the student has read the passage, the response is too minimal to show awareness of letter/informational writing as required by the task.