

WRITING GUIDELINES

**MIDDLE GRADES
(6-8)**

June 6, 2006

**Compiled by: English Department Chairs,
Selected Sixth-Grade Teachers, &
Dr. Mae Sheftall**

Writing Guidelines - Middle Grades (6-8) Bibb County Public Schools - 2006-2007

The following guidelines were approved by a committee of teachers at the end of the 1999-2000 school year. Subsequently, the guidelines have been revised yearly, with the latest revisions being made by the English Department Chairs in May, 2006. The guidelines will be implemented in 2006-2007.

1. The pre-assessment will be administered systemwide on **August 10**; make-up is on August 11 (Grades 5-8). A writing prompt has been provided. There will be a mid-year writing assessment on **January 11**. The writing prompts will be provided; however, they will vary. *Each student (grades 5-8) should receive either a persuasive or an expository topic. The topics are passed out randomly to the students.* The post-assessment in writing will be administered on **May 3**, make-up is on **May 4**. This post-assessment in writing prompt will be the same as the pre-assessment writing prompt. (If events prevent our administering these writing assessments on the proposed dates, we will make the necessary adjustments.) Schools should administer these assessments on the specified days from 9:20-11:00. Please do not deviate from this schedule unless the change is made systemwide. Students should not receive assistance on these assessments.
2. The committee recommends that all the required writing pieces be placed in each student's writing folder. (This includes the pre-, mid-, and post-assessment pieces.) Other kinds of writing can be placed in the student's regular work folder. Please see the writing checklist for the required genres and the due dates.
3. The genres and the page numbers from the literature text are listed on the checklist. In addition, suggested lessons from Nancie Atwell's Guide are indicated on the checklists. While it is not necessary to complete the specific activities from the text, it is necessary to complete the required genres (e.g., you might have a more appropriate activity that addresses the genre).
4. As you are completing the required genres, use Nancie's Atwell's guide and other sources to teach the craft of writing (leads, show, don't tell, conclusions, etc.) and conventions.

5. All samples should be labeled appropriately: student's name, date, genre, etc. The writing process stage (**prewriting, draft, self- and peer-revising, self- and peer-editing and final copy**) should be evident for each sample. The sample should be stapled in the following order: final copy (top), draft (including revision and editing), and prewriting.
6. The textbook has a variety of quickwrite opportunities, which are related to the literature. Please take advantage of these writing activities. These activities will facilitate your students' daily writing. **The students really do need to write daily.**
7. Editing/Proofreading symbols should be taught and utilized.
8. If a grade is given for the writing pieces, a writing rubric **MUST** be used. There are several writing rubrics in your literature resources. If you have a rubric that you have developed, please feel free to use that one. In addition, the state has provided rubrics for our use.
9. The students should be taught to use the writing rubrics when revising and editing their pieces and those of their peers. The student's use of rubrics will increase the students' writing proficiency.
10. The language arts teacher within each cluster should house and maintain the students' writing folders.
11. Content-area teachers should support and reinforce what is being taught in the language arts classrooms (i.e., use of Standard English grammar, usage, mechanics, etc.), give students opportunities to write, and give the students feedback.
12. Content-area teachers should assign and evaluate writing assignments germane to their particular subjects. These writing pieces will become a part of the students' regular work file in that content area.

13. The **initial school-level review** of the students' writing progress should be done by each English department chair in **September** (or as soon as possible after the pre-assessment in August).
14. The English department chairs and sixth-grade writing teachers (if sixth grade is housed in elementary schools) should meet periodically to assess the students' progress in writing. The **initial district-wide review** should be held in **December** (before the holiday break) to review the pre-assessment in writing (administered in August).
15. The **second district-level review** should be held during the **last week** in **January** after the mid-year assessment. At this review the department chairs and selected sixth-grade teachers will discuss the students' progress and strategies for improvement. They will discuss the state's writing assessment scheduled for March.
16. The final review of students' progress will be scheduled for the **second week of May** after the post-assessment.
17. After the final review, teachers should staple the writing checklists to the writing samples and send the students' formal writing folders to the next grade level. Pre- and post- writing pieces, as well as each student's favorite selection (under the teacher's guidance) are kept in the writing folder. The other samples can be returned to the students. The sixth-grade and seventh-grade folders are given to each English department chair at the end of the year. The **eighth-grade students' expository and persuasive pieces** (one sample of each genre) and the checklists should be placed in the students' **cumulative folders**.

NOTE: The initial and mid-year reviews will be held after school. The final review (second week of May) will be an all-day workshop. At this workshop the department chairs and selected sixth-grade teachers will learn additional strategies for teaching writing. They will discuss and demonstrate at least one successful writing strategy. In addition, they will discuss challenges of teaching writing. Finally, they will make plans for the upcoming school year.

WRITING CHECKLIST: GRADE 6

School: _____ Date Student Entered: _____

Student: _____ Teacher: _____

Completion Dates/ Teacher's Initials	Time Period	Genre/Mode Students must complete the given genres.	Suggested Activities from Textbook and/or Nancie Atwell's Guide (Choose appropriate lessons.)	Teacher's Comments
	August 10 th	Pre-Assessment	Prompt Provided (persuasive)	
	August	Introduce the Writer's Notebook and the Writer's Workshop	Atwell's Guide	
	Sept./ Oct.	Narrative and/or Memoir	- Atwell: Lessons 27 - 33 - Textbook: Collection One - "Autobiographical Incident" - page 86	
	Oct./ Nov.	Expository	- Atwell: Lessons 49 - 54 - Textbook: Collection Four: "Informative Report" - page 302	
	Nov./ Dec.	Persuasive	- Textbook: Collection Five - "Supporting a Position" - page 396	
	January 11 th	Mid-year Assessment	Prompts Provided (persuasive and expository)	
	Jan. / Feb.	Descriptive	- Atwell: Lessons 17 and 18 - Textbook: Collection Seven: "Observational Writing" - page 562	
	Mar./ Apr.	Persuasive	<i>Teacher's Choice</i>	
	May	Response to Literature and/or Poetry	- <i>Teacher's Choice and/or</i> - Atwell: Lessons 34-46	
	May 11 th	Post-Assessment	Prompt (same as the pre-assessment prompt)	

Use codes* for missing pieces

Codes*

G. Absent/Non-attendance

H. Assigned, but not completed

I. Not attempted/Indifference

G. Other: _____

D. Entered After Assignment

E. Withdrew

F. ISS/Alternative School

WRITING CHECKLIST: GRADE 7

School: _____ Date Student Entered: _____

Student: _____ Teacher: _____

Completion Dates/ Teacher's Initials	Time Period	Genre/Mode Students must complete the given genres.	Suggested Activities from Textbook and/or Nancie Atwell's Guide (Choose appropriate lessons.)	Teacher's Comments
	August 10 th	Pre-Assessment	Prompt Provided (persuasive)	
	August	Introduce the Writer's Notebook and the Writer's Workshop	Atwell's Guide	
	Sept./ Oct.	Personal and/or Fictional Narrative	- Atwell: Lessons 27 - 33 - Textbook: Collection One- "Story" - p. 94; Collection Two - "Autobiographical Incident" - page 182	
	Sept./ Oct.	Expository	- Atwell: Lessons 49 - 54 - Collection Eight: "Informative Report" - page 672	
	Nov./ Dec.	Persuasive	- Textbook: Collection Three - Supporting a Position - page 260	
	January 11 th	Mid-year Assessment	Prompts Provided (persuasive and expository)	
	Jan. / Feb.	Expository	- Atwell: Lessons 49 - 54 - Collection Eight: "Informative Report" - page 672	
	Mar./ Apr.	Persuasive	- Textbook: Collection Seven: Evaluation - page 582	
	May	Response to Literature	<i>Teacher's Choice</i>	
	May 11 th	Post-Assessment	Prompt (same as the pre-assessment prompt)	

Use codes* for missing pieces

Codes*

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|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Absent/Non-attendance | D. Entered After Assignment |
| B. Assigned, but not completed | E. Withdrew |
| C. Not attempted/Indifference | F. ISS/Alternative School |
| G. Other: _____ | |

WRITING CHECKLIST: GRADE 8

School: _____ Date Student Entered: _____

Student: _____ Teacher: _____

Completion Dates/ Teacher's Initials	Time Period	Genre/Mode Students must complete the given genres.	Suggested Activities from Textbook and/or Nancie Atwell's Guide (Choose appropriate lessons.)	Teacher's Comments
	August 10 th	Pre-Assessment	Prompt Provided (persuasive)	
	August	Introduce the Writer's Notebook and the Writer's Workshop	Atwell's Guide	
	Sept./ Oct.	Personal and/or Fictional Narrative	- Atwell: Lessons 27 - 33 - Textbook: Collection One- "Autobiographical Incident" - page 82	
	Sept./ Oct.	Expository	- Atwell: Lessons 49 - 54 - Collection Three: "Analyzing a Character" - page 254	
	Nov./ Dec.	Persuasive	- Textbook: Collection Two: "Supporting a Position" - page 160	
	January 11 th	Mid-year Assessment	Prompts Provided (persuasive and expository)	
	Jan. / Feb.	Expository	- Atwell: Lessons 49 - 54 - Collection Five: "Comparison / Contrast" - p. 442 - Collection Seven: "Informative Report" - page 612	
	Mar./ Apr.	Persuasive	<i>Teacher's Choice</i>	
	May	Response to Literature	<i>Teacher's Choice</i>	
	May 11 th	Post-Assessment	Prompt (same as the pre-assessment prompt)	

Use codes* for missing pieces

Codes*

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| D. Absent/Non-attendance | D. Entered After Assignment |
| E. Assigned, but not completed | E. Withdrew |
| F. Not attempted/Indifference | F. ISS/Alternative School |
| G. Other: _____ | |