



**MISSISSIPPI ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT
PROGRAM (MAAP)**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING RUBRIC
INTERPRETIVE GUIDE**

Grade 3 Example

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**Mississippi Academic Assessment Program
English Language Arts Writing Rubric Interpretive Guide**

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1.0 Application of the Rubric in the Classroom

1.1 Purpose of the Rubric

The MAAP Rubric is used to score multiple genres of writing across multiple grade levels. The description of each score point under each component is not detailed and grade specific because the rubric itself is generic in its usage. The rubric will be used to score opinion and argumentative writing, informative writing, and narrative writing of students in grades 3-8 and English II.

1.2 Scoring with the Rubric

When using the rubric to score student writing in the classroom, it is imperative to refer back to the requirements of the grade level Writing Standards 1-3 and Language Standards 1-3 as these dictate what is required by students when they write. The rubric is then used to evaluate how well the students meet these requirements. For example, when writing an argumentative essay, Writing Standard 1 requires students to use evidence from the text to support a claim. The rubric is used to determine how well a student uses evidence from the text to determine the claim (Development of Ideas Component).

To use the rubric effectively, understand that each score point under each component has multiple parts. A student may, for example, “demonstrate evidence of planning and a purposeful, logical progression of ideas,” which falls under score point 4 in Writing Organization, but only constructs a “basic introduction and conclusion,” which falls under score point 3 in Writing Organization. The rubric is a holistic rubric; the scorer must determine in which score point the student response best fits overall.

A student response will receive four scores: a score for Development of Ideas, a score for Writing Organization, a score for Language Conventions of Grammar and Usage, and a score for Language Conventions of Mechanics.

1.3 Annotated Scored Writing Samples

The following pages contain an example of a Grade 3 text and a writing prompt. Immediately following the text and prompt are five example student responses. Each response has been scored using the MAAP writing rubric. Following the scores is a description of the rationale for the scores for each component.

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Grade 3 Sample Text and Prompt

Let’s Talk about Mississippi!

(Adapted from information presented on www.ms.gov)

1 Did you know that Mississippi’s name comes from an Indian word meaning “great river of gathering waters”? Or that Mississippi became the 20th state on December 10th, 1817? If you didn’t know that, then you are probably not alone. Many people who live in the state of Mississippi do not know about its rich history and important state symbols. Here are a few facts about Mississippi that can help you tell people about the state.

Mississippi’s State Symbols

2 Symbols are things that stand for something else. When the people in a state choose symbols, they choose them to represent who they are as a community. Mississippi adopted the State Coat-of-Arms in 1894. A coat-of-arms is a shield with symbols. The words on the coat-of-arms, “Virtute et Armis,” mean by valor¹ and arms. Another important symbol in the state is the mockingbird. The Women’s Federated Clubs and the State Legislature² selected the mockingbird as the state bird in 1944. This cheerful bird is found in all sections of Mississippi. In 1900, the school children of Mississippi chose the magnolia as the official state flower, and a group of people who have the power to make and change laws in 1952, the Legislature selected the magnolia as the official state tree. Mississippi even has a state beverage—milk!

Mississippi’s Economy, Inventions, and Manufactured Products

3 Cotton is the most important crop in Mississippi, but there are many other crops that are important to the state’s economy³. The other important crops in

¹ **valor** Courage

² **legislature** A group of people who have the power to make and change laws

³ **economy** The system by which goods and services are produced, sold, and bought in a country or region

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Mississippi are corn, rice, sugar cane, sweet potatoes, soybeans, food grains, poultry and eggs, animals for food, dairy⁴ products, peanuts, and pecans. In fact, the world's largest pecan nursery⁵ is located in Lumberton, Mississippi. Catfish is also important to Mississippi: Belzoni, Mississippi is known as the Catfish Capital of the World.

4 Many things that people all over the world use were invented in Mississippi! Pine Sol, a product that many people use for cleaning, was invented in 1929 by a Jackson, Mississippi chemist. A beverage that many people drink, root beer, was invented in 1898 in Biloxi, Mississippi, and in the 1970s, a man in Columbus, Mississippi invented the soft toilet seat.

5 Mississippi is also famous for the items that it produces. For example, every commercial plane in the world has at least one hydraulic⁶ part that is made by the Vickers Company in Jackson, Mississippi. Peavey Electronics in Meridian, Mississippi is the world's largest producer of musical amplification⁷ equipment, and The Flexible Flyer snow sled, often called the best snow sled in the country, is made in West Point, Mississippi.

6 So, the next time that someone asks you about Mississippi, be sure that you tell them about some of the things that make this state special.

⁴ **dairy** Containing or made from milk

⁵ **nursery** An area where plants are grown

⁶ **hydraulic** Operated by water or fluid

⁷ **amplification** A device that increases the power of a signal

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Writing Prompt

You have read “Let’s Talk about Mississippi.” Write a report in which you explain why Mississippi is an important state in America. Include details from “Let’s Talk about Mississippi” in your report.

Your writing will be scored based on the development of ideas, organization of writing, and language conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

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Grade 3 Example Student Responses

Response 1

Have you ever wondered what makes Mississippi such an important state in the United States? The author of “Let's Talk about Mississippi!” tells about many crops and inventions that make the state so special. Let's take a look at a few.

The author explains in paragraph 3 that Mississippi has many crops that are important to the state. Some of these crops include cotton, corn, rice, sugar cane, and sweet potatoes just to name a few. Mississippi is also home to the largest pecan nursery in the world. You can visit this nursery in Lumberton, Mississippi. People all over America can thank Mississippi for these wonderful crops we all enjoy.

Mississippi is also known for some interesting and useful inventions. The author mentions in paragraph 4 that Pine Sol and the soft toilet seat were invented in Mississippi. People all over America use these inventions in their homes. Also, the Flexible Flyer snow sled is made in West Point. Isn't that a little strange but interesting because it hardly ever snows enough in Mississippi to use a snow sled?

Hopefully people know just how important Mississippi is to our country. Our state has so many great crops and inventions to share with everyone all over America.

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RESPONSE 1 SCORING

Development of Ideas

Score Point 4

The student demonstrates a complete understanding of the task. The student’s response remains consistently focused on the task. Throughout the response, the student provides examples and details from the text that support his or her explanation of the importance of Mississippi in America’s economy. For example, the student uses references from the text as well analysis that are supported by those text references (e.g., “People all over American can thank Mississippi...”). The student also details Mississippi’s inventive side with examples from the text (e.g., “...and the soft toilet seat were invented in Mississippi.”). The student provides well-chosen evidence with relevant and accurate details to demonstrate full understanding (W.3.2b).

Writing Organization

Score Point 4

The student’s response is written with a logical progression of ideas. The student provides a clear introduction that leads into the first paragraph (W.3.2a), which discusses the importance Mississippi plays in America’s economy. The second paragraph analyzes the different contributions that Mississippi makes in its development of certain crops. The third paragraph also analyzes Mississippi’s contribution to America through its useful yet different inventions. There is an effective conclusion that contributes to the cohesiveness of the response (W.3.2d). The transitions throughout the response (especially within and between the paragraphs) are effective in clarifying ideas and detailed examples (e.g., “...Mississippi is also home...”, “...Mississippi is also known...”). (W.3.2c) The response is organized and provides clarity and details in response to the task.

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Language Conventions of Grammar and Usage

Score Point 2

The student's response establishes the appropriate tone for the task. The student also provides effective variance for the audience, which discusses Mississippi's contributions through agriculture and inventions. Additionally, the word choice is purposeful and precise (L.3.3a), and the sentence structure is fluent while also being varied in length (L.3.1i), using coordinating and subordinating conjunctions (L.3.1h).

Language Conventions of Mechanics

Score Point 2

The student's response demonstrates a consistent command of mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, spelling) with no errors that do not interfere with the meaning of the response (L.3.2).

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Response 2

There are many things you need to know about the state of Mississippi. Most people around the country know very little about this southern state. Alabama, Georgia, and the Carolinas are better known for people, symbols, and places to visit.

Mississippi recently celebrated its 200th anniversary of becoming a state. In fact, it was the 20th state to join the United States of America. . The name of Mississippi is an Indian word that means “great river of gathering waters”. If you were to travel around the state, you would notice that there are many cities and places that also have Indian names.

People might be surprised that many things have been invented in Mississippi. Root beer, a great tasting soda, was created in the city of Biloxi. The household cleaner Pine Sol was developed by a chemist in Jackson. How about, a man in Columbus invented the soft toilet seat? I bet there are lots more things that people invented in Mississippi that we use everyday that most people have no idea.

If you want to go fishing for catfish, just head to Belzoni! This city is known for being the Catfish Capital of the World. You could also find lots of catfish in rivers and streams all around the state. If you want to see cotton, sugar cane, and peanuts growing, just take a drive around the state. You can also check out all the other different crops that are grown. Mississippi might not be a well know state, but there is a lot to see and do if you want to learn more.

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RESPONSE 2 SCORING

Development of Ideas

Score Point 3

The student shows a general understanding of the task. The student uses logical reasoning and detail to develop their response (e.g., “Most people around the country know very little...”). The topic is introduced and is developed with details from the passage that respond to the task. The student uses a progression of reasoning to support the development of their ideas in the third and fourth paragraphs (e.g., “The household cleaner Pine Sol was developed by a chemist in Jackson.” “Root beer...was created in the city of Biloxi.”; “...known to be the Catfish Capital of the World.”). The student provides reasonable analysis by explaining different things about Mississippi that make it unique as a state (W.3.2b).

Writing Organization

Score Point 2

The student’s response shows evidence of planning with a progression of ideas that is somewhat easy for the reader to follow. The student includes an introduction with an attempt to provide details about the ease with which Mississippi can be overlooked as a state. However, the introduction does not address the task, and too much space is utilized introducing Mississippi. The student has a clear lead into the first paragraph (W.3.2a) that discusses the age, meaning, and history of the state, but, again, it does not directly address the task. Transitions are clear between the paragraphs but lacks transitions among claims and evidence. The response includes a conclusion, found in the last sentence of the last paragraph (e.g., “Mississippi might not be a well know state..”).

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Language Conventions of Grammar and Usage

Score Point 2

The student's response maintains an effective tone that is consistent throughout the response. Sentences are fluent and varied in length and structure (L.3.1i), using coordinating and subordinating conjunctions (L.3.1h).

Language Conventions of Mechanics

Score Point 2

The student's response demonstrates a consistent command of mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, spelling, etc.) with some errors that do not interfere with the meaning of the student's response (L.3.2).

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Response 3

There are lots of things that make the state of Mississippi special. Many people probably don't even know that they are using or enjoying something that comes from Mississippi. People that even live in Mississippi probably don't know all of the things that make the state so much special. you could be sitting on something drinking something or even playing with something that came from Mississippi!

Mississippi makes lots of dairy products and is known for its root beer so when people drink root beer they are probably drinking something that came from Mississippi. In paragraph 4 the text said that a man from Columbus invented a toilet seat so you people probably sit on something that was invented from Mississippi. If you go sledding you could be riding something that came from Mississippi! it also says that Mississippi has a company name Flexible Flyer that makes slow sleds and you could go sledding with a sled and not even know that it was made in Mississippi.

There are a lot of different things that are made in Mississippi and they are really cool. People probably don't even know they are using something that was invented and created in the state of Mississippi. These are things that help make Mississippi important to America.

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RESPONSE 3 SCORING

Development of Ideas: 2

The student’s response includes some reasoning that develops the topic (W.3.2b) with a limited amount of evidence (references the text/paragraph 4 to cite evidence within the body). While the student responds to the task with evidence, the evidence is more of a list of the things that were invented in Mississippi rather than an analysis of why they make Mississippi an important state. For example, the student discusses sledding in the second paragraph, (e.g., “...Mississippi has a company name Flexible Flyer that makes slow sleds...”), but does not explain how this makes Mississippi important.

Writing Organization: 2

The student’s response contains an introduction (W.3.2a) and conclusion (W.3.2d) that respond to the prompt; however, the conclusion is formulaic and repeats what is stated in the introduction. The student uses transitions (W.3.2c), somewhat effectively in paragraphs 1 and 3 (e.g., “...Many people probably dont even know...People that even live in Mississippi probably don’t know...”), but transitions are limited in paragraph 2 and do not clarify evidence from the text in an effective manner.

Language and Conventions of Grammar: 1

The student’s word choice is limited (L.3.3a) to repetition of phrases. Construction creates some difficulty of understanding.

Language and Conventions of Mechanics: 2

The student’s response to the task contains a limited amount of errors (punctuation, capitalization and spelling) that do not interfere with meaning or understanding.

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Response 4

mississippi is importnt to the United states because crop grow hear. no other crop grew in the us like grow in misissippi. mississippi have other stuff like plan parts and toilet seats. catfish grow in ms two. somebody even make a snow sled in ms where no snow most don't come a lot. i played in the snow last yer one time before. my mom like pine sol to clean. i think that why we live in ms. ms is a good state to live and be free and eat crop and catfish.

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RESPONSE 4 SCORING

Development of Ideas

Score Point 2

Although the student responds to the task (e.g., “mississippi is importnt to the United states...”), the student’s response only shows a partial understanding of the given task. The student begins to develop a response with evidence from the text (W.3.2b); however, the student’s response drifts away from responding to the prompt to a disconnected topic (e.g., “i played in the snow last yer one time before.”). For example, the student creates a response about Mississippi and its crops, plant parts, toilet seats, and snow sleds, but the student provides little reasoning to support the response. Details are merely listed (e.g., “mississippi have other stuff like plan parts and tolet seats...”).

Writing Organization

Score Point 1

The student’s response lacks evidence of logical planning. Even though the student’s response provides an introduction (e.g., “mississippi is importnt to the United states because crop grow hear.”), it is basic (W.3.2d). Linking words or phrases are used sparingly (W.3.2c) (e.g., “somebody even...”) to clarify relationships among reasons and details. A conclusion is attempted (e.g., “i think that why we live in ms. ms is a good state ...to live and be free and eat crop and catfish.”), but it is basic and is disconnected from the task.

Language Conventions of Grammar and Usage

Score Point 1

The student’s response maintains a consistent tone, but it is ineffective for the purpose and audience. The sentences are awkward due to the lack of subject verb agreement (L.3.1f) and lack of sentence variety. Sentences are mostly simple in structure (L.3.1i).

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Language Conventions of Mechanics

Score Point 1

The student demonstrates an inconsistent command of conventions of standard English, with a pattern of errors in capitalization of geographic names (L.2.2a), first words in a sentence (L.K.2a), and the pronoun “I” (L.K.2a). The errors in mechanics make the response difficult to read.

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Response 5

Missisipi means great river of gathering waters and they grow cotton and have Pine Sol and that makes thm important and another symbol in the state is the mocking bird.

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RESPONSE 5 SCORING

Development of Ideas

Score Point 1

The student demonstrates a minimal amount of understanding of the task (e.g., “...and that makes thm imporent...”), which qualifies them for a score point of 1. The student does not attempt to develop a response that further explains Mississippi’s importance to America. The response simply states the meaning of the Mississippi’s name and details a few examples that are specific to the state. There is little to no evidence from the text, and the student does not provide evidence and reasoning in an effort to support his or her claim.

Writing Organization

Score Point 0

The student’s response lacks evidence of planning. There are some transitions between ideas (e.g., “...and have Pine Sol...and another symbol...”), but there is no introduction or conclusion.

Language Conventions of Grammar and Usage

Score Point 0

The student fails to maintain an appropriate tone for the task. There is a single run-on sentence. The sentence contains multiple errors that make it difficult to read and understand.

Language Conventions of Mechanics

Score Point 0

The response contains multiple errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling that impede meaning.

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Appendix A: English Language Arts Writing Rubric

Performance Range	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Minimal	0
	12	11-9	8-5	4-1	0

Standard ID	Standard	Score of				
		4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points
W.1-3	Development of Ideas	The writing is clear, consistently focused, and shows a complete understanding of the given task. Ideas are fully developed by using logical and convincing reasoning, well-chosen evidence from the text, and details that are specific, relevant, and accurate based upon the text.	The writing is generally clear and focused, and shows a general understanding of the given task. Ideas are adequately developed by using logical reasoning, sufficient and appropriate evidence from the text, and descriptions and details that are, for the most part, relevant and accurate based upon the text.	The writing is vague and shows only partial understanding of the given task. Ideas are somewhat developed by using some reasoning and some evidence from the text and descriptions and details that may be irrelevant, may be merely listed, and may or may not be found in the text.	The writing is unclear, and shows a lack of understanding of the given task. Ideas are developed with limited reasoning, little to no evidence from the text, and descriptions and details that are irrelevant and/or inaccurate.	The writing is unclear, shows no understanding of the given task, and uses no reasoning with little to no evidence from the text and descriptions and details that are irrelevant and/or inaccurate.

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Standard ID	Standard	Score of				
		4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points
W.1-3	Writing Organization	The writing demonstrates evidence of planning and a purposeful, logical progression of ideas that allows the reader to easily follow the writer’s ideas. Words, clauses, and transitions are used frequently and effectively to clarify the relationships among claims, reasons, details, and/or evidence. The writing contains an effective introduction and conclusion that contribute to cohesiveness and clarity of the response.	The writing demonstrates evidence of planning and a progression of ideas that allows the reader to follow the writer’s ideas. Words, clauses, and transitions are used effectively to clarify the relationships among claims, reasons, details, and/or evidence. The writing contains an introduction and conclusion that contribute to the cohesiveness of the response.	The writing demonstrates evidence of planning with some logical progression of ideas that allows the reader to follow the writer’s ideas. Words, clauses, and transitions are used somewhat consistently to clarify the relationships among claims, reasons, details, and/or evidence. The writing contains a basic introduction and conclusion that contribute to cohesiveness that may be formulaic in structure.	The writing shows an attempt at planning, but the progression of ideas is not always logical, making it more difficult for the reader to follow the writer’s message or ideas. Words, clauses, and transitions are used sparingly and sometimes ineffectively to clarify the relationships among claims, reasons, details, and/or evidence. The writing contains an introduction and conclusion that are inappropriate and/or disconnected, resulting in a lack of cohesiveness and clarity.	The writing lacks evidence of planning (random order) or a progression of ideas, making it difficult for the reader to follow the writer’s message or ideas. Words, clauses, and transitions are lacking or used ineffectively to clarify the relationships among claims, reasons, details, and/or evidence. There is a lack of an introduction and/or conclusion resulting in a lack of cohesiveness and clarity.

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Standard ID	Standard	Score of				
		4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points
L.1 and .3	Language Conventions of Grammar and Usage			The writing establishes and maintains tone appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. Word choice is precise, effective, and purposeful. Sentences are fluent and varied in length and structure. <i>The writing may contain a few minor errors in grammar and usage, but they do not interfere with meaning.</i>	The writing maintains a tone inappropriate to task, purpose, and/or audience. Word choice is limited, clichéd, and repetitive. Sentences show little or no variety in length and structure, and some may be awkward leading to a monotonous reading. <i>The writing may contain a pattern of errors in grammar and usage that occasionally impedes meaning.</i>	The writing fails to maintain tone appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. Words are functional and simple and/or may be inappropriate to the task. The sentences may contain errors in construction or are simple and lack variety, making the essay difficult to read. <i>The writing may contain egregious errors in grammar and usage that impede meaning.</i>
L.2	Language Conventions of Mechanics			The writing demonstrates a consistent command of the conventions of standard English (punctuation, capitalization, spelling). The writing may contain a few minor errors in <i>mechanics</i> but they do not interfere with meaning.	The writing demonstrates an inconsistent command of the conventions of standard English (punctuation, capitalization, spelling). The writing may contain a pattern of errors in <i>mechanics</i> that occasionally impedes meaning.	The writing demonstrates very limited command of the conventions of standard English (punctuation, capitalization, spelling). The writing may contain egregious errors in <i>mechanics</i> that impede meaning.