

Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing Rubric FAQs

The TCRWP has fielded several questions about the assessment system aligned to the *Units of Study for Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing, Grades K-8*. Please refer to the frequently asked questions and answers listed below. For a more in-depth understanding of the learning progressions and assessment system, please refer to *Writing Pathways, Grades K-5; Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions* by Lucy Calkins.

What is the difference between a learning progression and a scoring rubric?

The learning progressions describe development in three aspects of writing: structure, development, and language conventions. These progressions are meant to show the path writers take moving step by step along a continuum of development.

The rubrics stem from the learning progressions and are, of course, closely aligned to the student checklists. These rubrics allow teachers to score a piece of writing, based on the corresponding grade level expectations. Rubric scoring is done by adding up scores from components of a student's writing to find a raw score, then converting that raw score into a scaled score.

How should I score parts of a student's work on the rubric if it is below a 1?

For certain student samples, components of their writing will not be reflected on the scoring rubric. Since 1 is the lowest score on the rubric, if a component of a child's writing falls below a 1 you should score it a 0. For scoring purposes that component will be scored as a zero, but for instructional purposes teachers should look back to the learning progression to see where on the progression the child is, and what future instruction will help the student develop her writing skills.

For kindergarten, if a child's work is consistently scoring zeros across components they might end up with a raw score that is below 2, which is not indicated on the raw-to-scale score table. In this instance the child's scaled score is a 1. Therefore, a kindergarten student cannot score below 1 as a scaled score.

This means that a piece of student writing cannot be graded a 0 as the scaled score, but within components of the rubric a student might score zero points. If a student does not attempt a response, we recommend returning to the student to request a response and possibly reconsidering the assessment situation to better meet the needs of the student.

How should I transfer scaled scores to letter grade scores?

We feel strongly that grades given for writing should include many factors related to student performance. In addition to the use of on-demand and published writing, teachers should consider students' volume of writing, their growth over time, their willingness and ability to attempt strategies taught in class, and their understanding and use of writing process. For school sites that give out letter grades in writing, each school will have to agree on letter grade scores based on either scaled scores or raw scores. This way scoring will be consistent through a grade level and across grade levels so that data can be compared. Many schools have held workshops for families so that they can understand these rubrics, but more importantly expectations across the year. It is significant to note that the expectations in any given grade level are end of the year expectations and are Common Core aligned, which means they are particularly ambitious.

How do I use the rubrics when there is not an exact match between the unit that was taught and the rubric?

The rubrics were designed for on-demand use so that teachers across grades could use the same tool to collect and assess student work and track student growth. Again, consistency in administration of the on-demand writing and scoring of student performance across years is the goal. However, it is also true that many teachers use the rubrics to score students' published pieces according to text type. We invite you to make these changes. This means that teachers have made decisions about slight adjustments to the rubrics when the type of text the students have written does not match the unit of study. For example, some teachers who taught the fourth grade unit on realistic fiction made some revisions in the language of the rubric and checklist in the overall structure category to reflect the ways writers develop characters and plots in realistic fiction. Of course, we always recommend collaboration within schools among teachers and across grades so that students receive consistent messages and are supported in their growth.

How should writing samples collected from students who use adaptive technology or have a scribe for writing be scored in the conventions section of the rubric?

In these cases, schools usually decide to revise the total points and corresponding scale scores to remove the conventions category of the rubric.

How should I account for a student's writing process when using the rubrics?

The on-demand writing samples collected and scored using the rubrics offer one piece of assessment data. Please refer to pages 220-225 in *Writing Pathways* for another learning progression related to writing process. Please also consider that student on-demand writing is only one piece of assessment data and should be considered in conjunction with many other sources of information such as students' volume of writing, their growth over time, and their willingness and ability to attempt strategies taught in class.