Grades 6–8

Step Up to Writing®

4th Edition

Maureen Auman

Assessment and Implementation Guide

VOYAGER SOPRIS LEARNING

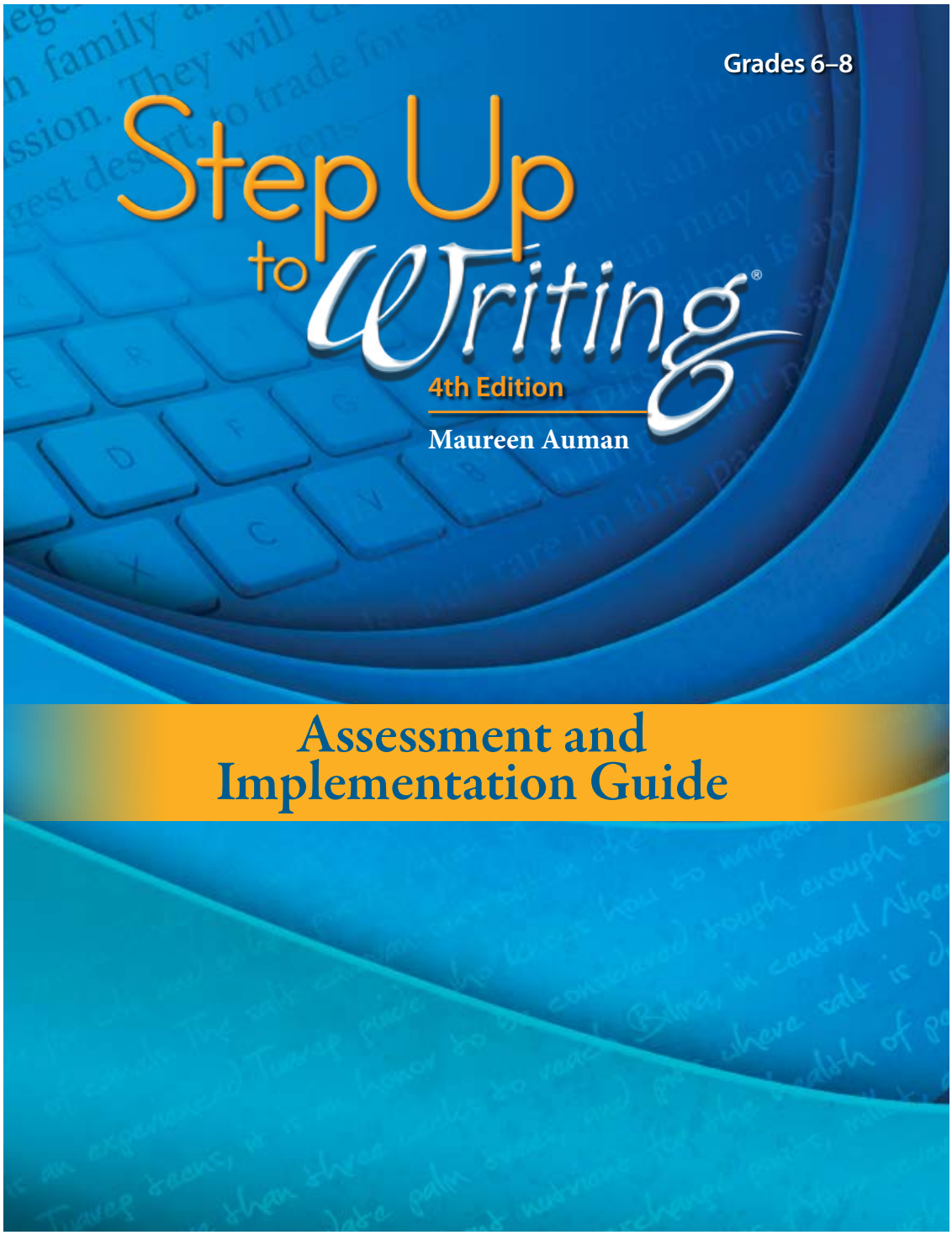

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Table of Contents

Overview of *Step Up to Writing*

Proven Instruction in Writing 3
Focused on the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts 3
Who Is *Step Up to Writing* For? 4

Choosing an Assessment and Implementation Plan

Flexible Implementation 5
Compatible with Other Programs 7
Training and Professional Development for *Step Up to Writing* 8

Assessment

Step Up to Writing Assessment Materials 10
Cycle of Assessment 15
Preparing Students for the Formal Assessments 16
Administering the Formal Assessments 17
Scoring the Formal Assessments 19
Using Assessment Data to Guide Instruction 22

Implementation Plan

Pacing of the Implementation Plan 26
Year At-a-Glance 27

Unit Maps

Meeting the CCSS ELA with the Unit Maps 28
How the Unit Maps Are Organized 28
Unit 1 29
Unit 2 32
Unit 3 38
Unit 4 39
Unit 5 44
Unit 6 45
Unit 7 48

Table of Contents *(continued)*

Scoring Guides

Scoring Guides for Longer Compositions

- Informative/Explanatory Essay and Report Scoring Guide 50
- Argument Essay and Report Scoring Guide 51
- Narrative Writing Scoring Guide 52
- Personal Narrative Writing Scoring Guide 53
- Research Report Scoring Guide 54

Scoring Guides for Shorter Compositions

- Informative/Explanatory Paragraph Scoring Guide 55
- Argument Paragraph Scoring Guide 56

Class Record Sheets

Class Record Sheet for Writing Data 57

Class Record Sheet for Reading Data 58

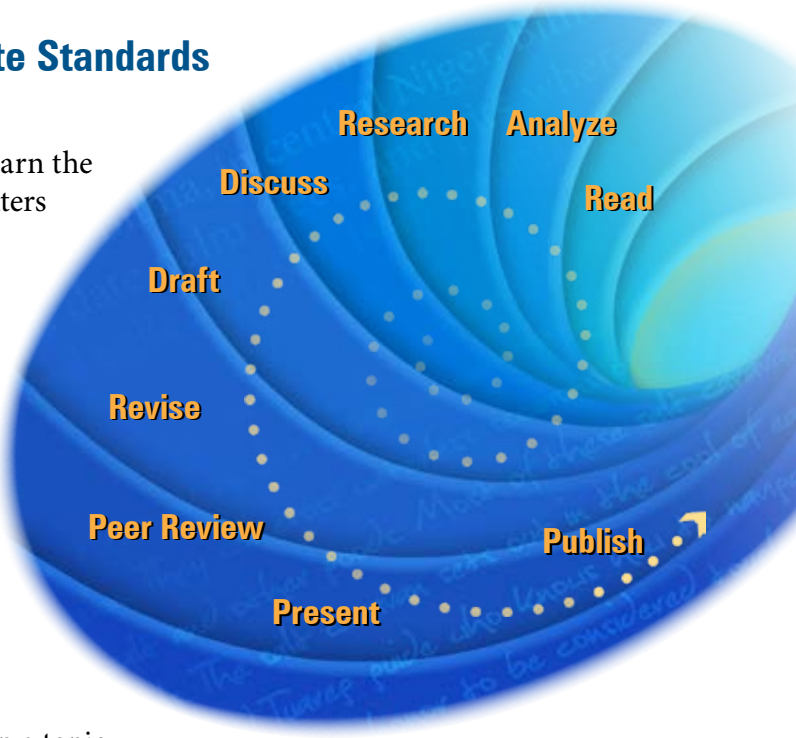
Welcome to *Step Up to Writing*! Here is an overview of just a few of the program's benefits.

Proven Instruction in Writing

- Explicit, systematic instruction in all aspects of writing
- Strategies to address all levels of student writing ability from basic skills in sentence and paragraph writing to developing research reports
- Emphasis on the use of standard English and formal style along with incorporating academic vocabulary in writing
- Development of deep reading for analysis and reflection to support writing
- Rigorous formal assessments that focus on writing in response to authentic texts similar to the new performance task standardized assessments

Focused on the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

In the *Step Up to Writing* program, students learn the essential skills to be proficient readers and writers in the 21st century. This includes:



- In-depth practice producing the three major text types—informative/explanatory, argument, and narrative
- Evaluating the accuracy and credibility of sources of information, online and in print
- Using technology strategically for research, collaboration, and publishing
- Writing in response to a wide range of domain-specific texts
- Following the writing process to develop a topic
- Forming logical, well-reasoned arguments
- Writing with a focus on task, purpose, and audience
- Participating in collaborative writing tasks, such as peer editing

Step Up to Writing Assessment Materials

The *Step Up to Writing* program includes the following assessment materials to help teachers collect data and make informed instructional decisions to meet the needs of their students. These *Step Up to Writing* materials can be used to differing degrees depending on the assessment requirements of states, districts, and schools. Teachers can use their own mandated assessments and grading criteria wherever appropriate. However, in the Implementation Plan included in this guide, suggested units have been mapped out using the following *Step Up to Writing* Assessment materials:

- **Formal Assessments** to collect data on students' reading and writing skills
- **Scoring Guides** to provide students with clear criteria for proficient writing and help teachers fairly evaluate students' compositions
- **Progress Monitoring** materials to help assess students' mastery of skills throughout the unit
- **Digital Data Tracker** to help easily track and analyze the data from all assessments
- **Class Record Sheets** to track and analyze assessment data (for tracking data by hand if not using the Digital Data Tracker)
- **Prompts** for creating rigorous writing assignments

All assessment materials are available as part of the *Step Up to Writing* Classroom Set, at **www.stepuptowriting.com**. The following sections describe each component in detail.

Formal Assessments

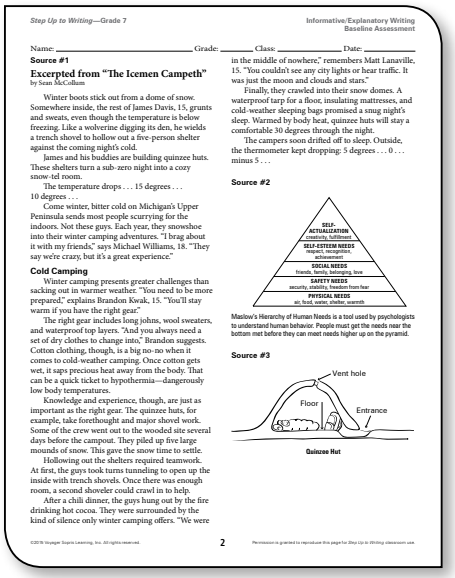
Formal Assessments are provided for each of the three major types of writing taught in the program (informative/explanatory, argument, and narrative). Each grade level (6th, 7th, and 8th) has its own assessments. There are two types of formal assessments:

- **Baseline Assessments** that are given to students at the beginning of each unit to assess their starting skill levels for a certain type of writing
- **Summative Assessments** that are given at the end of the unit to determine whether students have made progress in the skills taught for that type of writing

These Formal Assessments are performance tasks that are structured to emphasize the reading-writing connection by asking students to read excerpts from authentic texts, answer comprehension questions, and then write a composition that synthesizes or responds to the ideas in the texts. This structure gives students experience with the type of performance task now encountered in new standardized test formats. (To find the details and references for any of the authentic texts that appear in the Formal Assessments, see the Bibliography in the back of the Teacher Edition.)

The *Step Up to Writing* Formal Assessments are structured as follows:

PART 1: Authentic texts and other sources that students read, analyze, and mark (the complexity and number of texts will vary by grade level)



Step Up to Writing—Grade 7 — Informative/Explanatory Writing Baseline Assessment

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Source #1

Excerpted from "The Icemen Campeth"
by Sean McCollum

Winter boots stick out from a dome of snow. Somewhere inside, the rest of James Davis, 15, grunts and sweats, even though the temperature is below freezing. Like a wolverine digging its den, he wields a trench shovel to hollow out a five-person shelter against the coming night's cold.

James and his buddies are building quinzee huts. These shelters turn a sub-zero night into a cozy snow-tel room.

The temperature drops . . . 15 degrees . . . 10 degrees . . .

Come winter, bitter cold on Michigan's Upper Peninsula sends most people scurrying for the indoors. Not these guys. Each year, they snowshoe into their winter camping adventures. "I brag about it with my friends," says Michael Williams, 18. "They say we're crazy, but it's a great experience."

Cold Camping

Winter camping presents greater challenges than sacking out in warmer weather. "You need to be more prepared," explains Brandon Kwak, 15. "You'll stay warm if you have the right gear."

The right gear includes long johns, wool sweaters, and waterproof top layers. "And you always need a set of dry clothes to change into," Brandon suggests. Cotton clothing, though, is a big no-no when it comes to cold-weather camping. Once cotton gets wet, it saps precious heat away from the body. That can be a quick ticket to hypothermia—dangerously low body temperatures.

Knowledge and experience, though, are just as important as the right gear. The quinzee huts, for example, take forethought and major shovel work. Some of the crew went out to the wooded site several days before the campout. They piled up five large mounds of snow. This gave the snow time to settle.

Hollowing out the shelters required teamwork. At first, the guys took turns tunneling to open up the inside with trench shovels. Once there was enough room, a second shoveler could crawl in to help.

After a chili dinner, the guys hung out by the fire drinking hot cocoa. They were surrounded by the kind of silence only winter camping offers. "We were in the middle of nowhere," remembers Matt Lanaville, 15. "You couldn't see any city lights or hear traffic. It was just the moon and clouds and stars."

Finally, they crawled into their snow domes. A waterproof tarp for a floor, insulating mattresses, and cold-weather sleeping bags promised a snug night's sleep. Warmed by body heat, quinzee huts will stay a comfortable 30 degrees through the night.

The campers soon drifted off to sleep. Outside, the thermometer kept dropping: 5 degrees . . . 0 . . . minus 5 . . .

Source #2

Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs is a tool used by psychologists to understand human behavior. People must get the needs near the bottom met before they can meet needs higher up on the pyramid.

Source #3

Quinzee Hut

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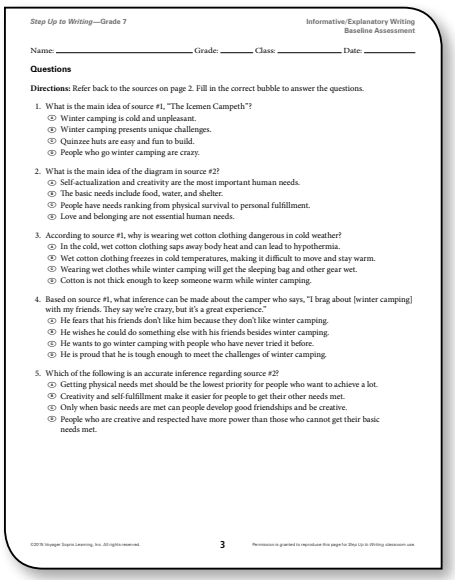
PART 2: Reading comprehension questions that gauge students' understanding of the sources (the complexity of the questions will vary by grade level)



Step Up to Writing—Grade 7 — Informative/Explanatory Writing Baseline Assessment

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Questions

Directions: Refer back to the sources on page 2. Fill in the correct bubble to answer the questions.

1. What is the main idea of source #1, "The Icemen Campeth"?
   - Winter camping is cold and unpleasant.
   - Winter camping presents unique challenges.
   - Quinzee huts are easy and fun to build.
   - People who go winter camping are crazy.

2. What is the main idea of the diagram in source #2?
   - Self-actualization and creativity are the most important human needs.
   - The basic needs include food, water, and shelter.
   - People have needs ranking from physical survival to personal fulfillment.
   - Love and belonging are not essential human needs.

3. According to source #1, why is wearing wet cotton clothing dangerous in cold weather?
   - In the cold, wet cotton clothing saps away body heat and can lead to hypothermia.
   - Wet cotton clothing freezes in cold temperatures, making it difficult to move and stay warm.
   - Wearing wet clothes while winter camping will get the sleeping bag and other gear wet.
   - Cotton is not thick enough to keep someone warm while winter camping.

4. Based on source #1, what inference can be made about the camper who says, "I brag about [winter camping] with my friends. They say we're crazy, but it's a great experience."
   - He fears that his friends don't like him because they don't like winter camping.
   - He wishes he could do something else with his friends besides winter camping.
   - He wants to go winter camping with people who have never tried it before.
   - He is proud that he is tough enough to meet the challenges of winter camping.

5. Which of the following is an accurate inference regarding source #2?
   - Getting physical needs met should be the lowest priority for people who want to achieve a lot.
   - Creativity and self-fulfillment make it easier for people to get their other needs met.
   - Only when basic needs are met can people develop good friendships and be creative.
   - People who are creative and respected have more power than those who cannot get their basic needs met.

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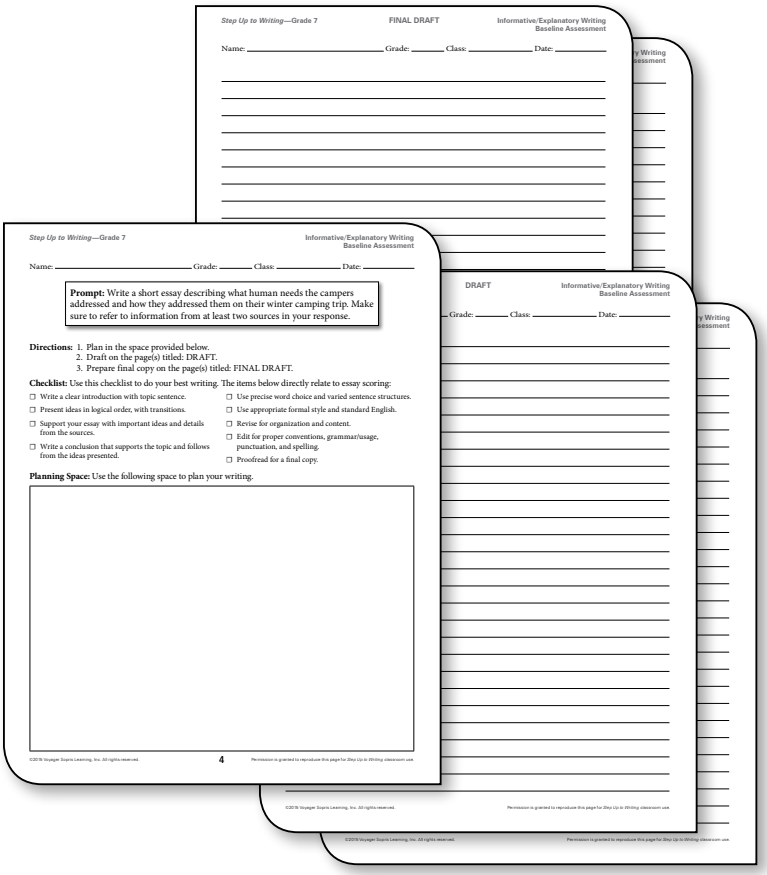
PART 3: A writing prompt that asks students to synthesize the information in the sources or respond to the ideas in them, then use information from the sources in their response. Students are given spaces for planning, drafting, and producing a final draft.



Step Up to Writing—Grade 7 — FINAL DRAFT — Informative/Explanatory Writing Baseline Assessment

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Step Up to Writing—Grade 7 — Informative/Explanatory Writing Baseline Assessment

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Prompt: Write a short essay describing what human needs the campers addressed and how they addressed them on their winter camping trip. Make sure to refer to information from at least two sources in your response.

Directions:
1. Plan in the space provided below.
2. Draft on the page(s) titled: DRAFT.
3. Prepare final copy on the page(s) titled: FINAL DRAFT.

Checklist: Use this checklist to do your best writing. The items below directly relate to essay scoring:

- ☐ Write a clear introduction with topic sentence.
- ☐ Present ideas in logical order, with transitions.
- ☐ Support your essay with important ideas and details from the sources.
- ☐ Write a conclusion that supports the topic and follows from the ideas presented.
- ☐ Use precise word choice and varied sentence structures.
- ☐ Use appropriate formal style and standard English.
- ☐ Revise for organization and content.
- ☐ Edit for proper conventions, grammar/usage, punctuation, and spelling.
- ☐ Proofread for a final copy.

Planning Space: Use the following space to plan your writing.

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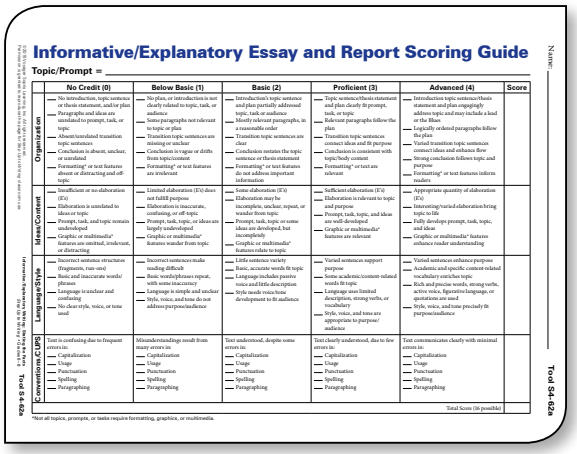
DRAFT — Informative/Explanatory Writing Baseline Assessment

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Scoring Guides

Scoring Guides are formal writing rubrics that can be used to assess the quality of students' written work across a number of categories (e.g., organization, ideas, language, conventions). Scoring Guides have been developed for each of the three major types of writing (informative/explanatory, argument, and narrative). There are also Scoring Guides for one-paragraph compositions, Research Reports, and Personal Narratives. All Scoring Guides are aligned to the expectations in the CCSS ELA for writing.



Informative/Explanatory Essay and Report Scoring Guide

Topic/Prompt =

Name:

	No Credit (0)	Below Basic (1)	Basic (2)	Proficient (3)	Advanced (4)	Score
Organization	— No introduction, topic sentence or thesis statement, and/or plan — Paragraphs and ideas are unrelated to prompt, task, or topic — Absent/unrelated transition topic sentences — Conclusion is absent, unclear, or unrelated — Formatting* or text features absent or distracting and off-topic	— No plan, or introduction is not clearly related to topic, task, or audience — Some paragraphs not relevant to topic or plan — Transition topic sentences are missing or unclear — Conclusion is vague or drifts from topic/content — Formatting* or text features are irrelevant	— Introduction's topic sentence and plan partially addressed topic, task or audience — Mostly relevant paragraphs, in a reasonable order — Transition topic sentences are clear — Conclusion restates the topic sentence or thesis statement — Formatting* or text features do not address important information	— Topic sentence/thesis statement and plan clearly fit prompt, task, or topic — Relevant paragraphs follow the plan — Transition topic sentences connect ideas and fit purpose — Conclusion is consistent with topic/body content — Formatting* or text are relevant	— Introduction topic sentence/thesis statement and plan engagingly address topic and may include a lead or the Rhun — Logically ordered paragraphs follow the plan — Varied transition topic sentences connect ideas and enhance flow — Strong conclusion follows topic and purpose — Formatting* or text features inform readers	
Ideas/Content	— Insufficient or no elaboration (Els) — Elaboration is unrelated to ideas or topic — Prompt, task, and topic remain undeveloped — Graphic or multimedia* features are omitted, irrelevant, or distracting	— Limited elaboration (Els) does not fulfill purpose — Elaboration is inaccurate, confusing, or off-topic — Prompt, task, topic, or ideas are largely underdeveloped — Graphic or multimedia* features wander from topic	— Some elaboration (Els) — Elaboration may be incomplete, unclear, repeat, or wander from topic — Prompt, task, topic or some ideas are developed, but incompletely — Graphic or multimedia* features relate to topic	— Sufficient elaboration (Els) — Elaboration is relevant to topic and purpose — Prompt, task, topic, and ideas are well-developed — Graphic or multimedia* features are relevant	— Appropriate quantity of elaboration (Els) — Interesting/varied elaboration bring topic to life — Fully develops prompt, task, topic, and ideas — Graphic or multimedia* features enhance reader understanding	
Language/Style	— Incorrect sentence structures (Fragments, run-ons) — Basic and inaccurate words/ phrases — Language is unclear and confusing — No clear style, voice, or tone used	— Incorrect sentences make reading difficult — Basic words/phrases repeat, with some inaccuracy — Language is simple and unclear — Style, voice, and tone do not address purpose/audience	— Little sentence variety — Basic, accurate words fit topic — Language includes passive voice and little description — Style needs voice/tone development to fit audience	— Varied sentences support purpose — Some academic/content-related words fit topic — Language uses limited description, strong verbs, or vocabulary — Style, voice, and tone are appropriate to purpose/ audience	— Varied sentences enhance purpose — Academic and specific content-related vocabulary enriches topic — Rich and precise words, strong verbs, active voice, figurative language, or quotations are used — Style, voice, and tone precisely fit purpose/audience	
Conventions/CUPS	Text is confusing due to frequent errors in: — Capitalization — Usage — Punctuation — Spelling — Paragraphing	Misunderstandings result from many errors in: — Capitalization — Usage — Punctuation — Spelling — Paragraphing	Text understood, despite some errors in: — Capitalization — Usage — Punctuation — Spelling — Paragraphing	Text clearly understood, due to few errors in: — Capitalization — Usage — Punctuation — Spelling — Paragraphing	Text communicates clearly with minimal errors in: — Capitalization — Usage — Punctuation — Spelling — Paragraphing	
					Total Score (36 possible)	

*Not all topics, prompts, or tasks require formatting, graphics, or multimedia.

Tool S4-62a

It is recommended that teachers introduce students to the Scoring Guides early in the writing process so that students understand grading expectations for each type of writing and can self-assess the quality of their work as they write. For each Scoring Guide, a strategy is included in the Teacher Edition that can be taught to introduce students to the Scoring Guide and give them practice assessing writing samples.

Copies of the Scoring Guides can be found in the back of this book as well as in the Assessment Materials posted online at **www.stepuptowriting.com**.

Scoring Guides for longer compositions	Page	Strategy to teach students about this Scoring Guide
Informative/Explanatory Essay and Report Scoring Guide	50	S4-62
Argument Essay and Report Scoring Guide	51	S5-41
Narrative Writing Scoring Guide	52	S6-38
Personal Narrative Writing Scoring Guide	53	S6-39
Research Report Scoring Guide	54	S7-21

Scoring Guides for one-paragraph responses	Page	Strategy to teach students about this Scoring Guide
Informative/Explanatory Paragraph Scoring Guide	55	S5-40
Argument Paragraph Scoring Guide	56	S4-61

Progress Monitoring Options

Progress Monitoring is any activity that allows teachers to collect data to determine whether students are mastering a particular skill or group of skills. Progress Monitoring is usually less formal, and can include self-assessment or peer-review activities. The goal of Progress Monitoring is to identify skills that students may be struggling with early in the process and have time to reteach or review those skills before the Formal Assessments.

Step Up to Writing provides a variety of options for monitoring student progress in between Formal Assessments:

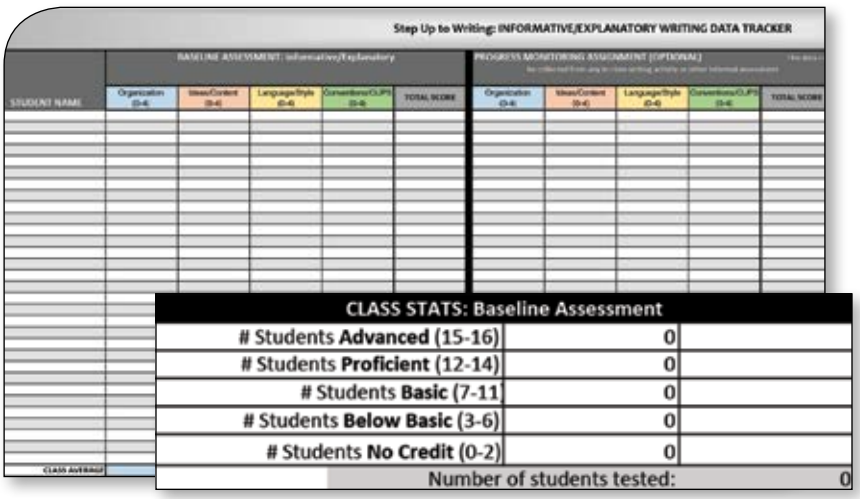
1. **Teach the Progress Monitoring Strategies:** Most sections of the Teacher Edition include a subsection entitled Progress Monitoring. This subsection includes strategies that can be taught to students in order to introduce them to the Scoring Guide for a given type or writing, allow them to analyze Proficient and Advanced writing samples, and then self-assess their writing to determine what areas need improvement. Some Progress Monitoring subsections may also include other strategies to check more discrete skills learned in that section.
2. **Use short writing assignments:** You can design short, in-class writing assignments that can be used to assess a subset of writing skills for a particular type of writing. See suggested prompts for short, in-class writing assignments at **www.stepuptowriting.com**. To assess these shorter writing assignments, use the Scoring Guides for shorter compositions provided in the program (e.g., the Argument Paragraph Scoring Guide, Informative/Explanatory Paragraph Scoring Guide).
3. **Collect student work or give a quiz:** After teaching any of the *Step Up to Writing* strategies, teachers can give a short quiz, or collect work to allow students to demonstrate learning of the concept or the skill that was recently taught.
4. **Use peer review activities:** At any point in the writing process, teachers can ask students to swap their work and assess one particular aspect of writing (e.g., evaluate sentence variety or types of transition words). To guide the peer revision process, teachers can teach the peer review strategies for each type of writing (see the Revising and Editing subsections in the Teacher Edition).

Data Tracking

The following resources can be used to track and analyze data from the *Step Up to Writing* Assessments.

For teachers:

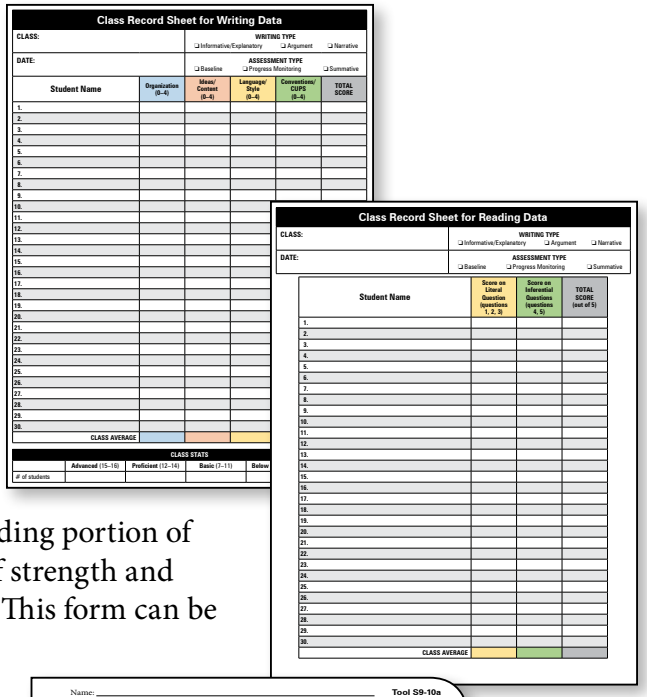
A. **Digital Data Tracker**: The Digital Data Tracker can be downloaded at **www.stepuptowriting.com**. Teachers can enter assessment data for all students, and the tracker will automatically calculate class averages in each category of writing, as well as class statistics on the total number of students that are Advanced/Proficient/Basic/Below Basic/No Credit. There is also a Progress Report Sheet built into the tracker that allows teachers to see and print the assessment data for an individual student, which can be shared during progress report conferences or meetings with the student.



Digital Data Tracker

Teachers also have the option of using the paper Data Tracking forms instead of the Digital Data Tracker. The following forms are available to help teachers analyze data:

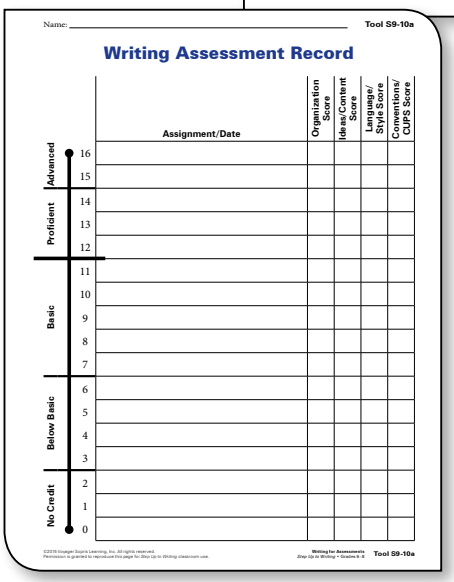
B. Class Record Sheet for Writing Data (paper): After students' writing has been scored, this sheet can be used to analyze the writing data and pinpoint areas of strength and weakness in the major categories of writing (Organization, Ideas/Content, Language/Style, and Conventions/CUPS). This form can be found on page 57.



C. Class Record Sheet for Reading Data (paper): This sheet can be used to analyze the data from the reading portion of the assessments and pinpoint areas of strength and weakness in reading comprehension. This form can be found on page 58.

For students:

A. Student Writing Assessment Record: Tool S9-10a, Writing Assessment Record, allows students to track their own scores on writing assignments over the course of the year. Students track their overall scores and their scores in the four categories of writing (Organization, Ideas/Content, Language/Style, and Conventions/CUPS). Use strategy **S9-10 Recording and Monitoring Progress** in the Teacher Edition to teach students how to use this Tool for tracking.



Tool S9-10a

Prompts

At **www.stepuptowriting.com**, suggested prompts for writing assignments are provided for each of the three types of writing (informative/explanatory, argument, and narrative), as well as ideas for presentations, research papers, and content-area writing assignments. These prompts can be used to create rigorous, CCSS-aligned writing assignments throughout the school year.

Cycle of Assessment

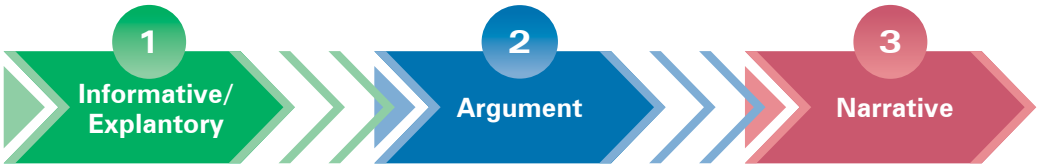
All of the *Step Up to Writing* Assessment materials can be used to help teachers collect meaningful writing data and adapt their instruction to ensure that they are helping students achieve the rigorous goals set by the CCSS ELA.

The following cycle can be repeated with each of the three major writing types (informative/explanatory, argument, and narrative) by using the *Step Up to Writing* assessment materials.

1. Baseline Assessment	• Administer grade-level Baseline Assessment to obtain data on the starting skill levels.
2. Analyze Data & Plan Instruction	• Record the Baseline Assessment data on the Digital Data Tracker (or paper Record Sheets) to determine students' strengths and weaknesses. • Plan instruction and set goals based on the data. • See the Differentiation sections throughout the Teacher Edition for ideas on how to meet different students' needs.
3. Progress Monitoring	• After teaching a writing concept or concepts, collect data from informal assessments (this could be quizzes, student work, students' self-assessment, peer-assessment, etc.) to determine what skills need additional practice before the Summative Assessment.
4. Summative Assessment	• Administer grade-level Summative Assessment to obtain data on the mastery of skills taught.
5. Analyze Data & Plan Instruction	• Record data from Record the Summative Assessment data on the Digital Data Tracker (or paper Class Record Sheets) to determine students' strengths and weaknesses. • Plan instruction and set goals for the next unit based on the data.

Sequencing the Three Types of Writing

The three major types of writing (informative/explanatory, argument, and narrative) are taught and assessed in a purposeful sequence in the Implementation Plan for *Step Up to Writing*. Because of its foundational nature, informative/explanatory writing is taught and assessed first. Argument writing is taught second, as it builds on core skills from informative/explanatory writing. Narrative has a decreasing emphasis in the CCSS ELA as students progress through the grades, and therefore is taught last, and in less depth than the other writing types (see CCSS ELA Introduction, page 5). Although teachers can choose their own sequence of instruction and assessment, the following order is suggested:



Preparing Students for the Formal Assessments

Preparing Students for Baseline Assessments

The Baseline Assessments are meant to assess the starting skill levels of students. Therefore, the Baseline Assessments should be given to students before they receive any instruction on writing that type of text, with the expectation that they should do their best work, even if the content is unfamiliar. It may be helpful to point out the different sections of the assessment and explain the directions before students begin. However, students should not receive help completing the Baseline Assessment (unless they require specific accommodations—see the Accommodations section on page 18).

Preparing Students for Summative Assessments

The Summative Assessments are meant to be administered at the very end of a unit, after students have had plenty of practice with the skills associated with that type of writing. To ensure students are adequately prepared for the Summative Assessment, the following should be covered with students prior to administering the Summative Assessment:

- **Teach the *Step Up to Writing* Strategies** outlined in the Unit Maps in the Implementation Guide (or a modified sequence, depending on the needs of students). This will ensure students are equipped with the skills needed to successfully complete the Summative Assessment.
- **Make grading criteria clear**. Introduce the Scoring Guide (or whatever rubric will be used for grading) well before the Summative Assessment. Teach the strategy associated with the appropriate Scoring Guide (see list on page 12). Students should have clear expectations of the grading criteria for each type of writing, and be able to use that knowledge to craft exemplary writing on the Summative Assessment.

- **Instruct students in how to budget time on assessments.** In **Section 9: Writing for Assessments** in the Teacher Edition there are many strategies that prepare students for formal assessments. It is highly recommended that teachers cover **S9-7 Simulating Standard Writing Assessments**, which walks students through how to tackle the different sections of the Formal Assessments.

Administering the Formal Assessments

Prior to Administration

1. Go to **www.stepuptowriting.com** and print out the appropriate assessment. Be sure to select the correct grade level, correct writing type, and correct assessment (Baseline or Summative).
2. Make sure to print out all pages. Each assessment packet includes:
   - Cover sheet
   - Sources page (includes authentic text, charts, illustrations, etc.)
   - Questions page
   - Prompt, directions, and planning page
   - Draft pages
   - Final Draft pages

   Note: If students have access to computers (one-to-one ratio), then the student response can be typed instead of handwritten, for final draft only, or for both the draft and final draft.
3. Make packets for each student.
   - Make all copies single-sided and avoid stapling the pages of the packet together so that students can easily refer back to the sources while responding to questions and writing.
   - Create one packet for each student, with each page listed above.

Note: Teachers may choose to provide students with additional Draft and Final Draft pages if students need more space or this better matches school or district standardized testing materials.

During Administration

1. **Prepare the class and the classroom for assessment.** Teachers may want to follow the guidelines that are required by the school or the district in order to provide students with practice and familiarity with those requirements. For example, prepare students for testing procedures, such as what they are allowed to have on their desks, what to do when they finish, etc.
2. **Provide a means of tracking the time,** whether a wall clock, a count-down timer, or notifications on the board. Remind students to budget their time so they can complete all sections.

> **Recommended Time Budget**
> - 5 min.—Distribute assessment and give directions
> - 60 min.—Students complete assessment.
>
> At the teacher's discretion, suggest that students' pacing within the 60 minute test time would include:
> - 10 min.—Read sources
> - 5–9 min.—Answer questions
> - 1 min.—Read and analyze prompt
> - 5–8 min.—Planning
> - 25 min.—Drafting
> - 10 min.—Revise and edit (and write a final draft if time allows)
>
> See also strategy **S9-8 Writing for Timed Tests and Assignments** in the Teacher Edition.

3. **Distribute the packets,** and make sure students write their names on the top of each page of the assessment.

Accommodations

In some cases, a student will require an adapted or amended form of assessment in order to accurately assess his or her writing ability. Here are some possible accommodations that could be used to meet the needs of individual students. However, be sure to consider any accommodation procedures mandated by the school, district, or state.

Writing or process accommodations:

1. Alter the timetable to provide more time.
2. Alter the timetable to accommodate two separate sessions. This supports those with a shorter attention span and supports the revision process; some state tests have two sessions for writing assessments.
   - Day 1. Complete the following steps: reading, answering questions, reading prompt and directions, planning.
   - Day 2. Complete remaining steps: drafting, revising, editing, producing a final copy, proofreading.

3. Provide more pages for Draft and Final Draft. This supports students with larger handwriting, or can encourage students to produce a longer written response.
4. Allow students to type their response using a computer or assistive device. This supports students with handwriting difficulties, as well as provides practice for computer-based assessment.

Reading accommodations:

1. Omit the text-based component. Create a writing assessment that asks students to write in response to a generic prompt using their background knowledge rather than writing in response to a text. This will support less proficient readers, as may be the case for students who are ELL. *Step Up to Writing* provides many such prompts in the Classroom Set materials at **www.stepuptowriting.com**.
2. Create an alternate assessment. Use strategy **S9-7 Simulating Standardized Writing Assessments** for guidance on creating an assessment similar to the formal assessments in *Step Up to Writing*. Less proficient readers can be supported by selecting texts appropriate for their reading levels.
3. Read the authentic texts or review the sources aloud with students (without providing interpretation or synthesis).

Scoring the Formal Assessments

The Formal Assessments include both a reading and a writing component. Although *Step Up to Writing* is primarily a writing program, this format is used to simulate new standardized test format and support the reading-writing connection.

Scoring Reading Comprehension Questions

Students' scores on the reading comprehension questions can provide a general sense of whether they were able to understand the sources they read, and whether reading comprehension may have affected their ability to write in response to those sources. However, the data from these questions are not meant to replace the more comprehensive, normed reading data from school or district reading assessments (such as *DIBELS Next*).

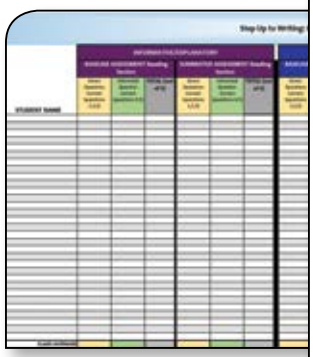
The reading section of each Formal Assessment contains five reading questions. The first three are literal questions, and the last two are inferential questions. Each question is worth one point and should be marked right or wrong. The answer keys for the reading comprehension questions for all the formal assessments are online at **www.stepuptowriting.com**.

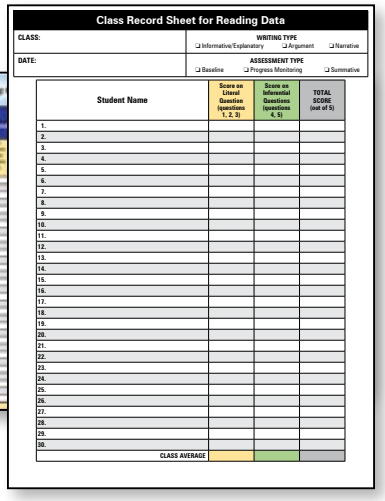
Types of Reading Comprehension Questions

Question		
Number	**Type**	**Description**
1	Literal	These multiple-choice questions are literal, meaning the answers can be found directly in the text. For example, they may be about main ideas, key facts, or sequence.
2		
3		
4	Inferential	These multiple-choice questions require inference, synthesis, and higher-level thinking about the sources.
5		

Recording Reading Data

Using the "Reading Data" tab of the Digital Data Tracker (downloadable at **www.stepuptowriting.com**), or the paper Class Record Sheet for Reading Data (page 58), record students' scores for both types of reading questions. This will help indicate areas of difficulty with these types of questions.





Class Record Sheet for Reading Data

CLASS: WRITING TYPE ❑ Informative/Explanatory ❑ Argument ❑ Narrative

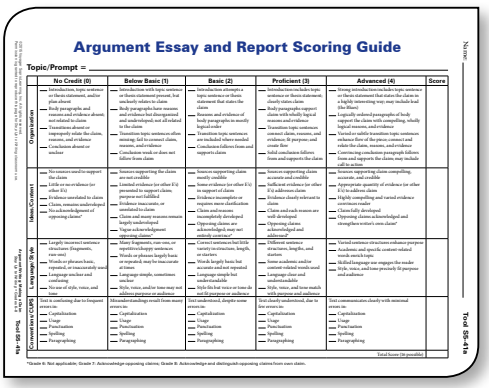
DATE: ASSESSMENT TYPE ❑ Baseline ❑ Progress Monitoring ❑ Summative

Student Name	Score on Literal Question (questions 1, 2, 3)	Score on Inferential Questions (questions 4, 5)	TOTAL SCORE (out of 5)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			
21.			
22.			
23.			
24.			
25.			
26.			
27.			
28.			
29.			
30.			
CLASS AVERAGE			

Scoring Student Writing

The writing portion of the assessment should be scored using the appropriate *Step Up to Writing* Scoring Guide for the relevant type of writing. All Scoring Guides are posted alongside the appropriate assessment at **www.stepuptowriting.com**, and copies of all the scoring guides can be found at the back of this book. Make a copy of the Scoring Guide for each student in order to quickly mark their scores in each category and return it to them along with their writing. This provides important feedback. Use the following steps when scoring student writing:

1. **Score each category (Organization, Ideas/Content, Language/Style, and Conventions/CUPS):** Follow the directions on the Scoring Guide to assess each student's composition in four categories of writing. In each category, students can earn one of the following scores:
   - 0—No Credit
   - 1—Below Basic
   - 2—Basic
   - 3—Proficient
   - 4—Advanced



Argument Essay and Report Scoring Guide

Topic/Prompt =

	No Credit (0)	Below Basic (1)	Basic (2)	Proficient (3)	Advanced (4)	Score
Organization	— Introduction, topic sentence or thesis statement, and/or plan absent — Body paragraphs and evidence absent or not related to claim — Transitions absent or improperly relate the claim, reasons, and evidence — Conclusion absent or unclear	— Introduction with topic sentence or thesis statement present, but unclearly relates to claim — Body paragraphs with reasons and evidence, but these are repeated and underdeveloped, not all related to the claim — Transition topic sentences often missing, fail to connect claim, reasons, and evidence — Conclusion weak or does not follow from claim	— Introduction attempts a topic sentence or thesis statement that states the claim — Reasons and evidence of body paragraphs in mostly logical order — Transition topic sentences are included where needed — Conclusion follows from and supports claim	— Introduction includes topic sentence or thesis statement that clearly states claim — Body paragraphs support claim with wholly logical reasons and evidence — Transition topic sentences connect claim, reasons, and evidence; fit purpose and create flow — Solid conclusion follows from and supports the claim	— Strong introduction includes topic sentence or thesis statement that states the claim in a highly interesting way; may include lead to hook — Logically ordered paragraphs of body support the claim with compelling, wholly logical reasons, and evidence — Varied or subtle transition topic sentences enhance flow of the piece; connect and relate the claim, reasons, and evidence — Convincing conclusion paragraph follows from and supports the claim; may include call to action	
Ideas/Content	— No reasons used to support claim — Little or no evidence (or other $1's) — Evidence unrelated to claim — Claim, reasons undeveloped — No acknowledgment of opposing claims*	— Sources supporting the claim are unreliable — Limited evidence (or other $1's) presented to support claim; purpose not fulfilled — Evidence inaccurate, or unrelated to claim — Claim and many reasons remain largely undeveloped — Vague acknowledgment opposing claims*	— Sources supporting claim are mostly reliable — Some evidence (or other $1's) to support claims — Evidence incomplete or requires more clarification — Claim and reasons incompletely developed — Opposing claims are acknowledged; may not unfairly convince*	— Sources supporting claim are reliable and credible — Sufficient evidence (or other $1's) addresses claim — Evidence clearly relevant to claim — Claim and each reason are well developed — Opposing claims acknowledged and addressed*	— Sources supporting claim are credible and authoritative — Appropriate quantity of evidence (or other $1's) addresses claim — Highly compelling and varied evidence convinces reader — Claim fully developed — Opposing claims acknowledged and strengthen writer's own claim*	
Language/Style	— Largely incorrect sentence structure; fragments, run-ons — Words or phrases basic, repeated, or inaccurately used — Language unclear and confusing — No use of style, voice, and tone	— Many fragment, run-on, or repetitive/choppy sentences — Words or phrases largely basic and may be inaccurate at times — Language simple, sometimes unclear — Style, voice, and/or tone may not address purpose or audience	— Correct sentences but little variation in structure, length, and style — Words largely basic but accurate and not repeated — Language simple but understandable — Style fits but voice or tone do not fit purpose or audience	— Different sentence structures, lengths, and styles — Some academic and/or content-related words used — Language clear and understandable — Style, voice, and tone match with purpose and audience	— Varied sentence structures enhance purpose — Academic and specific content-related words enrich topic — Style, voice, tone engages the reader — Style, voice, and tone precisely fit purpose and audience	
Conventions/CUPS	— Text is confusing due to frequent errors in: — Capitalization — Usage — Punctuation — Spelling — Paragraphing	— Misunderstandings result from many errors in: — Capitalization — Usage — Punctuation — Spelling — Paragraphing	— Text understood, despite some errors in: — Capitalization — Usage — Punctuation — Spelling — Paragraphing	— Text clearly understood, due to few errors in: — Capitalization — Usage — Punctuation — Spelling — Paragraphing	— Text communicates clearly with minimal errors in: — Capitalization — Usage — Punctuation — Spelling — Paragraphing	

Total Score (16 possible)

*Grade 6: Not applicable; Grade 7: Acknowledge opposing claims; Grade 8: Acknowledge and distinguish opposing claims from own claim.

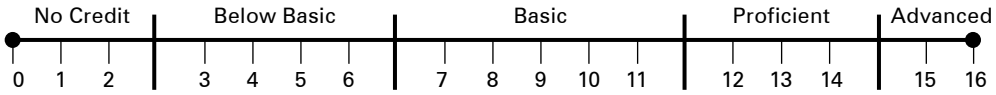
Name

Total SS+4s

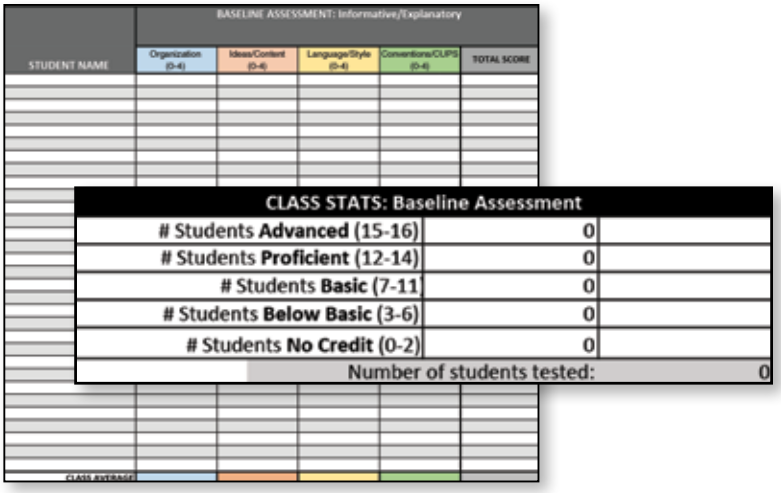
Argument Essay and Report Scoring Guide

See the Scoring Guides for detailed descriptions of attributes of writing that would lead to each score.

2. **Calculate Total Score:** After giving each student a score of 0–4 in each category, add all categories together to determine the student's total score (out of 16). Given the total score, students will fall into one of the following categories:



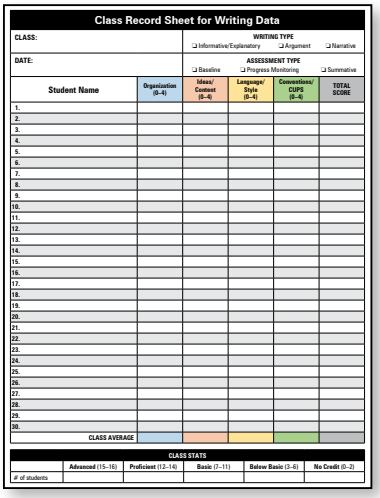
Recording Writing Data



Teachers can select the appropriate tab at the bottom of the Digital Data Tracker (downloadable at **www.stepuptowriting.com**), and enter students' writing scores after each assessment. Using this tracker will allow a teacher to see how individuals and classes progress from assessment to assessment for each type of writing.

Each type of writing has its own tab (Informative/Explanatory Writing, Argument Writing, and Narrative Writing). There are designated spaces on each of these tabs to enter students' scores on the Baseline Assessment, a Progress Monitoring assignment (optional), and the Summative Assessment.

The teacher enters the 0–4 score for each category of writing (Organization, Ideas/Content, Language/Style, and Conventions/CUPS), and the tracker automatically calculates the total score 0–16, as well as the class's average score in each of the categories of writing. This allows teachers to easily locate areas of strength and weakness. The tracker will also help teachers see how many students are Advanced/Proficient/Basic/Below Basic/No Credit on each of the assessments.



If teachers do not wish to use the Digital Data Tracker, they can track data for an assessment using the paper Class Record Sheet for Writing Data (page 58). This form will help indicate areas of strength and weakness for individual students and for the entire class.

Using Assessment Data to Guide Instruction

Assessment data can be used to make instructional decisions that best meet the needs of students. Data gathered from assessments can guide instruction for the entire class, or can be used to plan instruction for small groups and individual students.

Keep in mind that results of a single assessment may not be representative of a student's ability, and must be considered as one piece of a larger body of evidence for that student. The body of evidence may include other baseline and summative assessments, data gathered from Progress Monitoring activities, performance on longer writing projects, and other standardized assessment results.

Interpreting Reading Data from the *Step Up to Writing* Formal Assessments

The reading portion of each Formal Assessment asks students to read and analyze texts that have Lexile measures ranging from 925 to 1185 to align with the 6–8 grade band. The texts focus on topics from a wide variety of content areas, including science and history/social studies. (For information on the source texts used in the assessments, see the Bibliography in the Teacher Edition.)

If teachers feel the texts on the Formal Assessments are at an appropriate level for their students, the data from the reading questions can be used to determine areas of strength and weakness with respect to reading comprehension. Based on the patterns of student errors, here are some recommendations for how to adjust instruction:

Recommended Instruction

Question			If students make errors on these questions, use . . .
Number	Type	Description	
1	Literal	These multiple-choice questions are literal, meaning the answers can be found directly in the text. For example, they may be about main ideas, key facts, or sequence.	strategies from the first three subsections of **Section 1: Writing to Improve Reading Comprehension**, in the Teacher Edition.
2			
3			
4	Inferential	These multiple-choice questions require inference, synthesis, and higher-level thinking about the sources.	strategies from the subsection Analyzing Text in **Section 1: Writing to Improve Reading Comprehension**, in the Teacher Edition.
5			

Note that if students had significant difficulty with the reading comprehension portion of the assessment, this may indicate that they were unable to read or access the source texts. This would undermine their ability to respond to the writing prompt. In this case the writing portion of the assessment may not be a valid representation of the students' writing ability. See the Accommodations section on page 18 for alternative writing assessments that could accommodate different reading abilities.

Interpreting Writing Data from the *Step Up to Writing* Formal Assessments

Here are some recommendations for how to alter instruction based on the writing scores obtained.

1. Look for areas of weakness in the main categories: Organization, Ideas/Content, Language/Style, and Conventions/CUPS. Areas of weakness would be those in which a number of students are below a score of 3 (Proficient). After identifying areas of weakness, use the chart below to identify *Step Up to Writing* strategies that could help students improve their skills:

If students have trouble with:	Review the Teacher Edition Table of Contents to find the topics listed below.
Organization	• Planning, Organization, and Structure • Introductions • Transitions • Conclusions
Ideas/Content	• Introductions • Develop the Topic/Elaboration • Revising and Editing
Language/Style	• Revising and Editing • Types of [Informative/Explanatory, Argument] Writing Also see strategies in **Section 2: Foundational Writing Skills** and **Section 3: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**
Conventions/ CUPS	• Revising and Editing Also see strategies in **Section 2: Foundational Writing Skills** and **Section 3: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

2. Support students in these areas by allocating more instructional time and skills practice. Revisit the Teacher Edition for relevant strategies that may be used for additional instruction. Differentiation ideas are also provided at the end of every strategy in the Teacher Edition and can be used to further meet the needs of students.

3. If appropriate, create an informal assessment (see Progress Monitoring ideas) to reassess the problematic skills before the next Formal Assessment is given.

Implementation Plan

Implementation Plan

Pacing of the Implementation Plan 26
Year At-a-Glance Chart. 27

Unit Maps

Meeting the CCSS ELA with the Unit Maps 28
How the Unit Maps Are Organized 28
Unit 1 29
Unit 2 32
Unit 3 38
Unit 4 39
Unit 5 44
Unit 6 45
Unit 7 48

Pacing of the Implementation Plan

The pacing of the Implementation Plan is based on teaching writing for 150 minutes a week for 26 weeks. Some English/Language Arts teachers meet with students every day, while others see students only a few days a week for longer blocks. This Implementation Plan is designed to work for both structures, and can be implemented by teaching writing for either:

- **5 days/week** for **30 minutes** each day
- **3 days/week** for **50 minutes** each day

Teachers will likely have more than 150 instruction minutes per week with their classes. However, this pacing was designed with the assumption that English/Language Arts teachers would also need to allocate a portion of their instruction time each week to direct reading instruction.

Year-At-a-Glance

The following is an outline of all seven units that appear in the Unit Maps, along with a schedule of assessments that could be implemented over the course of a typical school year.

Year At-a-Glance

Unit	Unit Overview	Suggested Pacing
Assessment	**Baseline Assessment: Informative/Explanatory Writing**	1 day
Unit 1: Building Strong Foundations	Students will: • Be introduced to the writing process and the three types of writing (informative/explanatory, argument, narrative) • Write a well-structured informative/explanatory paragraph using essential grammar rules and proofreading skills	4 weeks
Unit 2: Informative/ Explanatory Writing—Stating the Facts	Students will: • Craft an effective informative/explanatory essay or report that conveys information about a topic and incorporates information from research • Develop strategies to read and respond to informative/explanatory texts	6 weeks
Assessment	**Summative Assessment: Informative/Explanatory Writing**	1 day
Unit 3: Show What You Know!	Students will: • Use technology to create a polished final draft of their informative/ explanatory writing for publication in a public format (blog, school website, class book of essays, etc.)	1 week
Assessment	**Baseline Assessment: Argument Writing**	1 day
Unit 4: Argument Writing—Making a Claim	Students will: • Craft an effective argument essay or report that makes a claim and supports that claim with strong, relevant evidence gathered from outside sources • Evaluate the accuracy and credibility of sources • Develop strategies to read and respond to argument texts	6 weeks
Assessment	**Summative Assessment: Argument Writing**	1 day
Unit 5: Let's Debate!	Students will: • Use the knowledge and skills learned in Unit 4 to present arguments and evidence verbally in a debate format • Strengthen speaking and listening skills and work collaboratively	1 week
Assessment	**Baseline Assessment: Narrative Writing**	1 day
Unit 6: Narrative Writing—Telling a Story	Students will: • Briefly explore the three types of narratives (nonfiction, imaginative, and personal) • Craft a well-structured nonfiction narrative	4 weeks
Assessment	**Summative Assessment: Narrative Writing**	1 day
Unit 7: Research Report—Let's Investigate!	Students will: • Develop research questions and conduct research to produce a formal research report	4 weeks
	TOTAL	26 weeks **(+6 assessment days)**