First Grade Fall Summative Tips

As you might have noticed, there is no fall assessment for the first grade. In order to assist your endeavors as a teacher, the writing committee decided to share some helpful hints as you prepare emerging writers for the mid-year assessment.

1. For first grade, the importance of demonstrating basic sentence structure is critical. Give lessons on what makes a sentence, and what are the "tricks" of a good sentence? (capitals, periods, etc.)

2. Begin the year by working with students on main idea. Stress the importance of talking about only one idea using descriptive words. Journaling and free writes are good places to begin... what shall we write about today? Let's write about one toy. Choose your favorite toy and let's make a list of the things we like about the toy. As a writing teacher, you are stressing the importance of staying on one topic for the main idea.

3. Next, you may want to do some instruction on sensory details and using the senses to guide the descriptive words. Go through the five senses and help students to gather words that describe things. Object lessons are wonderful for this type of writing. Describe your shoe. Make popcorn and describe what you see, hear, smell, taste, and feel.

4. Use some of the same prompts for main idea (favorite toy), and begin to show how students can write a main topic sentence with one idea, and then other sentences to describe the one idea. Example: I have a teddy bear. It is soft and brown. It has black eyes. Sometimes I sleep with it at night.
Introduction Section:

Writing Application:

In all manuals there is an introduction section that gives a description of the sections of the test. The Writing Application is very specific:

Grade 1: “Beginning in the Midyear Tests, children are asked to write a composition in response to a prompt. The test page gives children tips for writing in the mode being tested. These tips are based on the rubric that you will use to evaluate their writing.”

Grades 2 - 6: “In this section, children are asked to write a composition in response to a prompt. The test page gives the children tips for writing in the mode being tested. These tips are based on the rubric that you will use to evaluate their writing.”

Test-Taking Strategies:

Also included in the manual after the introduction pages are the Test-Taking Strategies Section. Included in this section are strategies for Writing to a Prompt. It is suggested that teachers refer these strategies with the students prior to test-taking.

Grade 1: In the Test-Taking Strategies it says to the student: “Listen to the directions carefully…….” The teacher is to read the Writing Application Prompt directions to the student.

Grade 2 - 6: In the Test-Taking Strategies it says to the student: Read the instructions carefully…….” The teacher is not to read the Writing Application Prompt to the student. The student is to read the prompt and the tips by himself/herself.

Writing Application Test Page:

Grade 1: At the bottom of the test page, it says: “Read this entire page aloud to the children…….”

Grade 2 - 6: The student is to read the Directions & Tips – not the teacher. The student is not to plan with the teacher or do “webbing” with the teacher. This test is designed to evaluate how well the student learned from the themes HM Writer’s Workshop.
Q & A

The writing committee spent a great deal of time debating how to best help teachers use the following anchor papers. Understanding that each teacher, grade level, and school site might have a different approach to using these materials, the committee decided on a “Question and Answer” format to help facilitate discussions about student writing. It is the committee’s hope that this section will guide, but not dictate, specific your decisions.

Q: When grading the writing assessments, how should I incorporate the Tips with the Directions?

A: Great question! The writing committee discussed this at length and came upon the decision that the writing directions with the specific prompt are key to meeting the standards for that writing domain (Personal Narrative, Story, etc.) The tips are included to assist with a greater understanding of what is required at that grade level. As a committee, we began with the writing prompt and looked for those requirements that were being asked of the student. Then, the committee looked at the paper again to see if the tips were incorporated.

Also, remember that the Houghton Mifflin Rubrics are there to guide your decision. These rubrics incorporate both content and mechanics and can be very helpful with specific domain questions.

You may want to consider meeting together with your grade level and concentrate on the mechanics first, separating the papers into two piles: those that follow the tips for mechanics, and those that do not follow the tips. Then your grade level can begin to study the content of the prompt and how the student has attempted to answer the full prompt, using the rubrics to determine the final score.

Q: What was the greatest help to the committee when deciding between a 2 and 3 paper, or a 3 and 4 paper?

A: The tips were very helpful when making those decisions between scores. For the committee, the tips seem to center around mechanics, wherein the directions center around the content of the prompt. Here is where mechanics played a key role. If the tips said to have more than one paragraph in the organization of the
writing piece, and the student did not follow this request, then the paper was moved down to the next score. The committee found this to be true among the 3 and 4 papers most often. Oftentimes, the committee would use the rubric to make a final decision for a score because the rubric gives specific guidelines for that domain (Personal Narrative, Story, etc.)

Q: When the prompt asks for a story, is it acceptable if the student uses a plotline from a book or movie?

A: If the prompt states that the story must be original, then it is important that a student understands this and writes to their own creative ideas. Should the prompt state that the student is to write a story, with no specific guidelines, then it is acceptable if the student seems to write about a story that is familiar in our culture. The committee noticed several papers where students did their best to summarize a movie or book, and yet they met the requirements of the prompt with all mechanical tips included. It may be helpful and wise to discuss plagiarism with older students before the prompt is given.

Q: How should my grading change when the domain of writing changes?

A: An excellent question! The committee recommends that the teacher maintains a high standard of assessment no matter what the domain of writing is requested. It is true that story and personal narrative domains are much more fluid in their creativity, and yet the student must still be able to control plot, organization, and mechanics no matter what age or grade level. Of course, the higher the grade level, the more that is required.

With regard to the friendly letter or persuasive writing domains, there is an added element of format that the student must follow. The form and critical thinking levels are much more of an extension for the student. The student not only has to think about the writing task, but must also organize the writing into the required format. The committee recommends that the teacher pays close attention to the mechanics with these types of domains.
Name ___________________________ 

Writing Application

Personal Narrative

Directions: Think about a special present someone gave you. Write a story for your teacher about this present. Tell who gave the present to you, why it is special, and what you like to do with the present. Use the tips below.

Tips

• Tell about just one present.
• Use details to help your teacher picture the present.
• Write complete sentences.
• Check that your words are spelled correctly.
• Print neatly and check your work for mistakes in beginning and ending sentences correctly.
1st Grade Narrative Rubric

I put a CAPITAL letter at:
- beginning of a sentence
- a name (Jose, Dr. Corral)
- the word “I”

I put a ( . ) at the end of a sentence
- Yes
- No

My story tells:
- who it is about
- what the problem is
- how the problem is solved

My story has:
- a beginning
- a middle
- an end
Writing Application

Personal Narrative
Directions: Think about a special present someone gave you. Write a story for your teacher about this present. Tell who gave the present to you, why it is special, and what you like to do with the present.

4 points
- The writing focuses on the assigned writing task and indicates clear understanding of purpose.
- Main idea is clear and supported by some examples, facts, details, or explanations.
- Ideas are mostly complete and in logical order.
- Most high-frequency words are spelled correctly.
- Errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling do not interfere with the reader’s understanding.

Narrative
- Events are told in logical order.
- Exact words are used.

Rationale
This paper addresses all aspects of the prompt. The main idea is clear and supported by strong details. High-frequency words are spelled correctly and the writer attempts to use more challenging vocabulary. Mechanics are accurate and assist in understanding.
I have a easy bake oven. I cooked lots of things. Santa gave it to me. On Christmas I got some more of it. I cook in it. I have made cupcakes, cakes, and cookies.
Writing Application

Personal Narrative

Directions: Think about a special present someone gave you. Write a story for your teacher about this present. Tell who gave the present to you, why it is special, and what you like to do with the present.

3 points

- The writing focuses on the assigned writing task and indicates general understanding of purpose.
- Main idea is apparent and supported by some examples, facts, details, or explanations.
- Ideas are mostly complete and in logical order.
- Most high-frequency words are spelled correctly.
- Errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling do not interfere with the reader’s understanding.

Narrative

- Sequence of events is adequate.
- Some exact words are used.

Rationale

This paper focuses on the assigned writing task and addresses all three components of the prompt. There is a logical order supported by strong details. The explanation as to “why the gift is important” is demonstrated through the writing. High-frequency words are spelled correctly. There are few mechanical errors; these do not take away from the readers understanding.
My special present was a boy.

A Tereng! plane gave it to my
car. At Christmas, it was fun to play
with. It was pink. I took it to play
with. And the doll came with
an apron of asp.
Writing Application

Personal Narrative

Directions: Think about a special present someone gave you. Write a story for your teacher about this present. Tell who gave the present to you, why it is special, and what you like to do with the present.

Rationale

This paper attempts to address the three components of the prompt. A logical order is present; however the paper provides limited details. Phonetic spellings can be understood and errors in grammar do not interfere with understanding.
My favorite present is a paper lace and is black and he like to run and wen
I sar to jump he jump and
he like to get and he can jump and the most teg is playn wet me.
Writing Application

Personal Narrative
Directions: Think about a special present someone gave you. Write a story for your teacher about this present. Tell who gave the present to you, why it is special, and what you like to do with the present.

There may be no focus on the assigned writing task. The writing indicates a lack of understanding of purpose.

Main idea is unclear. There are few or no examples, facts, details, or explanations.

Ideas are incomplete. The writing is confused and demonstrates no attempt at logical order.

Most words are spelled phonetically. Only beginning or ending sounds of words are spelled.

Errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling seriously interfere with the reader’s understanding.

Narrative
• Events are told in no particular order.
• Language is vague.

Rationale
This paper demonstrates limited understanding of the task and does not follow the prompt. Details are unclear and undeveloped. Most words are spelled phonetically and there are many mechanical errors that interfere with the reader’s comprehension.
CALIFORNIA SUMMATIVE TESTS
Writing Application

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Writing Application Test Page:

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Writing Application

Description

Directions: What is your favorite place? Is it the beach or a park? Is it the mountains or your room? Describe your favorite place for your teacher. Tell what the place looks, sounds, feels, and smells like. Use the tips below.

Tips

• Name the one place you will tell about at the beginning of your description.

• Use all your senses to help your teacher picture what this place is like.

• Use exact words to give a clear picture of the place.

• Print neatly and check that your words are spelled correctly.

• Check your work for mistakes in using capital letters and in beginning and ending sentences correctly.

Directions: Read this entire page to children. The first paragraph explains the purpose for writing and the audience for whom children will be writing. The information in the box provides children with writing tips. If needed, help children think of ideas for writing. Have them write their description on another sheet of paper.
Writing Application

Description

Directions: What is your favorite place? Is it the beach or a park? Is it the mountains or your room? Describe your favorite place for your teacher. Tell what it looks, sounds, feels, and smells like.

Narrative

• Events are told in logical order.
• Exact words are used.

Rationale

This paper focuses on the assigned writing task and completely responds to the prompt. The main idea is clear, ideas are complete, and the writer presents many supporting sensory details. High-frequency words are spelled correctly and the writer attempts to use more challenging vocabulary. There are few grammatical or spelling errors. The writing is clear and easy to understand.
Hawaii IS The Best

My most favorite place is Hawaii. I like to look at all the beaches and pools as well as beautiful hula dancers. I love to relax in my bice after a nice long swim in the pool and hear all of the sounds like waves crashing. Hawaii feels warm and cool after. I have a shaved ice. It smells salty and fresh when I take a breath in the warm sunlight. After a long
It is nice to take a nap in a swinging hammock in the sun. Hawaii is the best place.
Writing Application

Description

Directions: What is your favorite place? Is it the beach or a park? Is it the mountains or your room? Describe your favorite place for your teacher. Tell what it looks, sounds, feels, and smells like.

3 points

• The writing focuses on the assigned writing task and indicates general understanding of purpose.
• Main idea is apparent and supported by some examples, facts, details, or explanations.
• Ideas are mostly complete and in logical order.
• Most high-frequency words are spelled correctly.
• Errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling do not interfere with the reader’s understanding.

Narrative

• Sequence of events is adequate.
• Some exact words are used.

Rationale

This paper focuses on the assigned writing task and demonstrates an understanding of purpose. The main idea is apparent, ideas are complete, and the writer presents some supporting sensory details. High-frequency words are spelled correctly. There are few grammatical or spelling errors, these do not take away from the readers understanding.
The Beach

My favorite place is the beach.

Every summer I go to the beach. I pick up shells and bring them home. The beach smells salty.

The sand is smooth. I play in the sand. I play in the water too.
Writing Application

Description
Directions: What is your favorite place? Is it the beach or a park? Is it the mountains or your room? Describe your favorite place for your teacher. Tell what it looks, sounds, feels, and smells like.

2 points
• The writing attempts to focus on the assigned writing task but may indicate a lack of understanding of purpose.
• Main idea is apparent, but examples, facts, details, or explanations are limited.
• Ideas are generally complete. The writing demonstrates little attempt at logical order.
• Most words are spelled phonetically.
• Errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling may interfere with the reader's understanding.

Narrative
• Sequence of events is minimally developed.
• Few exact words are used.

Rationale
This paper attempts to focus on the writing task. The main idea is apparent, but the writer uses few sensory details to describe this place. Some words are spelled phonetically, and some high-frequency words are apparent. Grammatical and spelling errors do make this writing more difficult to understand and challenge the reader to infer meaning.
My favorite Place.

My favorite Place is chaceches. It smells good there. I taste pezza there. We tuch games their. I like it their.
Writing Application

Description
Directions: What is your favorite place? Is it the beach or a park? Is it the mountains or your room? Describe your favorite place for your teacher. Tell what it looks, sounds, feels, and smells like.

1 point

- There may be no focus on the assigned writing task. The writing indicates a lack of understanding of purpose.
- Main idea is unclear. There are few or no examples, facts, details, or explanations.
- Ideas are incomplete. The writing is confused and demonstrates no attempt at logical order.
- Most words are spelled phonetically. Only beginning or ending sounds of words are spelled.
- Errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling seriously interfere with the reader's understanding.

Narrative
- Events are told in no particular order.
- Language is vague.

Rationale
While this paper attempts to focus in the writing task, it indicates a lack of understanding as to the purpose of the writing. The writer tells what is at their favorite place without giving sensory details about the place itself. Most words are spelled phonetically, and grammar and capitalization errors are apparent. The writing is difficult to understand.
Favorite place: Beach.

Music: Beach House.

Tea: Buzz.