

## Writing

The five writing topics included here may be found on PASS at [www.louisianapass.org](http://www.louisianapass.org). For students who have never used PASS, the initial password is *tiger*. Students may sign on to PASS and write a composition on one of these five topics, and then check back two days later to review their scores. Students must sign on to PASS using their unique Screen Name and password. The written composition is included on PASS at the middle and high school levels under the English Language Arts, Proofreading/Writing units. After answering eight proofreading questions, students are provided a writing prompt.

Because of the nature of online writing (the ability to cut and paste, to quickly delete), students are not asked to write a rough draft on PASS. However, if students do not have regular access to a writing lab, it is recommended that they go through a prewriting phase and then write a rough draft before writing their final draft on PASS. Students who are not proficient at composing at the keyboard may even choose to hand-write a composition and later type it into PASS to submit for scoring.

Teachers may want to have their students explore these five writing topics in different ways. Any variation of the following would be good writing practice:

1. Write the composition online on PASS and submit it for scoring. After scored compositions are returned, students may volunteer to have their compositions printed out and placed on a transparency for the class to revise based on the scoring checklist.
2. Hand-write the composition and have a fellow student (or the teacher) score it using the rubric included.
3. Revise a composition that has been scored on PASS and re-submit it for scoring.
4. Transfer to a transparency one of the student compositions included here, and analyze its strengths and areas that could be improved by additional specific details, more colorful language, further development, or other techniques.

Also included is a PASS Scoring Checklist or rubric, along with more detailed comments to accompany this checklist.



## PASS Compositions: Scoring Checklist

Okay	Needs Improvement
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### Composing

<input type="checkbox"/> You wrote on the assigned topic. <input type="checkbox"/> You presented a clear main idea. <input type="checkbox"/> You gave enough details to support the main idea. <input type="checkbox"/> You organized your ideas in a logical order.	<input type="checkbox"/> You did not write on the assigned topic. <input type="checkbox"/> Your central idea is not clear. <input type="checkbox"/> Your details are vague or need development, and your composition is too short. <input type="checkbox"/> Your ideas are repeated or show gaps.
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Composing score: \_\_\_\_\_

Score one point for each mark in the left column (4 possible points).

### Style/Audience Awareness

<input type="checkbox"/> You wrote with your audience in mind. <input type="checkbox"/> You used vocabulary (words) that expressed your meaning well. <input type="checkbox"/> You used sentences that made your main idea interesting to your audience. <input type="checkbox"/> Your voice (or personality that shows in your writing) was clear and interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/> You wrote without an audience in mind. <input type="checkbox"/> Your vocabulary is vague and does not express your meaning well. <input type="checkbox"/> Your sentence structure is repetitive. <input type="checkbox"/> Your voice (or your personality that shows in your writing) is not strong enough to make your writing as interesting as it could be.
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Style/Audience score: \_\_\_\_\_

Score one point for each mark in the left column (4 possible points).

### Sentence Formation

<input type="checkbox"/> For the most part, you wrote complete and correct sentences.	<input type="checkbox"/> Your composition contains a pattern of run-ons and/or sentence fragments.
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Sentence Formation score: \_\_\_\_\_

Score one point for each mark in the left column (1 possible point).

### Usage

<input type="checkbox"/> For the most part, you wrote using appropriate subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, word meaning, and word endings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Your composition contains a pattern of errors in subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, word meaning, and/or word endings.
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Usage score: \_\_\_\_\_

Score one point for each mark in the left column (1 possible point).

### Mechanics

<input type="checkbox"/> For the most part, you wrote using correct punctuation and capitalization.	<input type="checkbox"/> Your composition contains many errors in punctuation and/or capitalization.
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Mechanics score: \_\_\_\_\_

Score one point for each mark in the left column (1 possible point).

### Spelling

<input type="checkbox"/> For the most part, you wrote using correct spelling.	<input type="checkbox"/> Your composition contains many spelling errors.
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Spelling score: \_\_\_\_\_

Score one point for each mark in the left column (1 possible point).

<b>Total Score: _____ out of 12 points</b>
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## Comments on the PASS Scoring Checklist

The following are some comments that further explain the PASS Composition Scoring Checklist.

**1. *You did not write on the assigned topic.***

You must write on the assigned topic to get credit for composing and style/audience awareness.

**2. *Your central idea was not clear.***

Your central idea (what your composition is about) is not very clear. Make sure that you state exactly what your composition is about. This will help the persons who read your composition to understand what you say.

**3. *Your details were vague or minimal.***

You need to give details that explain what you mean in your composition. When you give more information (also called "elaboration"), a person reading your paper will understand what you mean. Try explaining what something looked like, smelled like, felt like, or sounded like. This makes your writing more specific (instead of vague) and interesting.

**4. *Your ideas were repeated or showed gaps.***

You need to work on the organization of your composition. Remember that every composition needs a beginning (where you tell what you are going to write about), a middle (where you give details to explain what you mean), and an end (where you give a sense of finishing up what you were writing about).

You also need to present facts or events (things that happen) in an order that makes sense. The details you use should support your main idea. This will make your writing seem whole or unified. If your details skip around or you leave out important information, it will be hard for a person reading your composition to follow what you are trying to say.

**5. *You wrote without an audience in mind.***

When you write, remember who will be reading your composition. Use words that your audience will relate to and understand.

**6. *Your vocabulary was weak and did not express your meaning well.***

Try to use words that make your composition more interesting. Using specific words and action verbs helps a person reading your paper picture your ideas. You may even want to use a thesaurus and a dictionary.

Try to use examples and details in your composition that make it easy for someone reading your paper to know how you think and feel about the ideas you have presented. Make sure these examples and details relate to the writing topic.

**7. Your sentences were mostly simple.**

Try to use sentences that help make your composition "sound" better. If you write the same kind of sentence over and over, your composition can be boring to read. Try starting your sentences with different words and using both long and short sentences. Instead of the usual subject and then verb pattern (I went to the store), interest your reader in what you write by changing your patterns (Pedaling as fast as I could on my bike, I went to the store).

**8. Your voice (or your personality that shows in your writing) is not strong enough to make your writing as interesting as it could be.**

Try to let your personality show through in your writing and to include specific details that show your reader your own unique way of looking at the world. You can do this through different ways, such as by using dialogue (Their mom said, "Hold it right there. Where are y'all going?"), exaggeration for humor ("I was crying so hard I bet Covington could hear me!"), or similes and metaphors ("We found a hula skirt, orange slippers, curlers, and a red Christmas tree skirt. My sister put them all on. She looked like a Hawaiian queen who had just woken up from hibernating.")

**9. Your composition contained run-ons and/or sentence fragments.**

Be careful to use complete sentences when you write. Make sure that every sentence has a subject and verb.

**10. Your composition contained a pattern of errors in subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, word meaning, and/or word endings.**

Make sure that you have checked for correct subject-verb agreement in your writing (for example, you should say "We **are** happy" instead of "We is happy"). Also, you should check to make sure that you use correct verbs (for example, "We **came** back yesterday" instead of "We come back yesterday") and adjectives and adverbs (for example, "I talked **quietly**" instead of "I talked quiet").

**11. Your composition contained many errors in punctuation and/or capitalization.**

Make sure that you use correct capitalization and punctuation in your composition. Be sure to read your final draft and correct any careless mistakes.

**12. Your composition contained many spelling errors.**

There are quite a few misspelled words in your composition. The next time you write, be sure to go back and check your spelling. Remember, you may use a dictionary on this part of the test.

**Grade 10, PASS Unit 1**

**Read the topic in the box below, and write a well-organized, multi-paragraph composition of at least 250–300 words. Be sure to follow the suggestions listed under the box.**

**Writing Topic**

Your school counselor has asked about your plans for a career after you graduate from high school, college, vocational, or technical school. You have been asked to write an essay explaining the career you would like to have.

Before you begin to write, think about a career that you are interested in. What is that career? Why does it interest you? Why would this be a good career for you?

Now write an essay for your school counselor explaining the career you would like to have. Be sure to give specific details and to support those details with clear examples and evidence. Explain why you think the way you do so that your counselor will understand.

- Remember that your audience is your school counselor; use appropriate language, and explain your ideas clearly.
- Be sure to write clearly and to check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

**Sample Student Essay, Topic 1**

After college, I would like to pursue a career as a psychiatrist. As a high school student, I have already begun to look into colleges that specialize in the psychiatric field. I am interested in this career for many reasons.

Some of the reasons that I think I would enjoy psychiatry are because I am constantly analyzing situations, and I especially enjoy helping people with their problems. I like looking for a deeper reason for the causes of the problems that my peers and I face every day. Instead of trying to find a temporary solution, I attempt to find the underlying source of the problem at hand.

Many of my peers have noticed that I always look for the psychological source of people's downfalls and shortcomings. When dealing with someone who has come to me for advice, I look for the root of the troubles this person is having. I always imagine what might have been the cause of the problem. Although the reasons I come up with are sometimes far-fetched, I still like wondering about the quiet things that no one knows about that could be the source of the problem.

I also enjoy literature and media that have to do with this aspect of life. My favorite types of books and films are psychological thrillers because I enjoy seeing the dark side of the human mind. Something about mental and psychological disorders interests me. I enjoy reading about certain disorders and learning more about how the human brain functions.

Psychiatry would be an excellent career for me because it is one of the few fields I really enjoy looking into. I would love to be able to dispense help to emotionally disturbed people and prescribe medication to further aid them in reaching emotional health. The more I learn about psychology, the more my mind inquires.

**Grade 10, PASS Unit 2**

**Read the topic in the box below, and write a well-organized, multi-paragraph composition of at least 250–300 words. Be sure to follow the suggestions listed under the box.**

**Writing Topic**

Your English teacher has assigned you to write an essay about a challenge that you have met successfully.

Before you begin to write, think about a challenge that you met successfully. What was the challenge, and how did you deal with it? Why do you think you were able to succeed?

Now write an essay in which you describe a challenge and how you responded to it. Describe the experience clearly so that your teacher and other students in the class will know exactly what the challenge was and the outcome. Be sure to include specific information, such as details, description, and examples in your essay.

- Remember that your audience is your English teacher; use appropriate language, and explain your ideas clearly.
- Be sure to write clearly and to check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

**Sample Student Essay: Topic 2**

Throughout life, we must deal with many challenges. As people grow older, these challenges become more intense and difficult to handle at times. From childhood challenges such as completing all of your homework to more adult and life-altering obstacles such as getting into college, we must learn to surpass everything. As a child, I faced slightly larger difficulties than the typical trivial elementary school challenges. I had to learn to constantly adjust to new surroundings many times.

Because my father was in the military, we were always moving. We would usually live in a place for about two years and then pick up and move again. I have lived in two states, seven cities, and eight houses. When I was four, this started to get more difficult for me because I was beginning to make friends in school. Unfortunately, you can't fight the government or your family, so I just left my friends behind. My challenge became making friends. After about two years of becoming close with someone, I would have to hop in the family car and speed away to another city.

Dealing with this challenge has become almost easy for me. After the first few awkward days associated with any transition, I would begin to settle into my environment. Because we usually moved at the end of the summer when school was about to start up, I would acclimate myself to my house and the neighborhood the first week or so and then begin my venture into the social world when school started. I always managed to be accepted into a group of friends in a short amount of time. I think I succeeded so well in friendships because I have always been determined to be accepted by my peers. I was never shy as a child, and these experiences built my confidence level.

Having to deal with these types of obstacles at such a young age changed my life. I have always had to be the outgoing one and maneuver my way into relationships with people, but this challenge has finally been completed. It will no longer exist. I have begun dealing with problems that some people don't ever have to deal with. This challenge has greatly affected my life, and I am a stronger person because of it.

**Grade 10, PASS Unit 3**

**Read the topic in the box below, and write a well-organized, multi-paragraph composition of at least 250–300 words. Be sure to follow the suggestions listed under the box.**

**Writing Topic**

Your town is considering turning 10 acres of land into a park that will have a bike path, basketball courts, and a playground. Your friends have asked you to write a letter to your local newspaper convincing your town officials to build the park.

Before you begin to write, think about the ways the park would benefit your town. What specific ways would the park improve your town, your life, and the lives of the people you know?

Now write a letter to your local newspaper stating your reasons for building the park. Express your position clearly so that the readers of the newspaper will know exactly what you think. Be sure to include specific reasons why this park should be built, and support those reasons with clear examples and evidence. Persuade the readers to support building the park.

- Remember that your audience is the readers of your local newspaper; use appropriate language, and explain your ideas clearly.
- Be sure to write clearly and to check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

**Sample Student Essay, Topic 3**

Imagine getting off work early one day and instead of going home, heading over to the city park, relaxing after a long day's work, and watching all the children laughing and playing. However, as it turns out, our town does not have such a park. On the other hand, it does have ten acres of unused land. Our town officials should build a park on these ten acres. If a park were available, teenagers would have a place to go instead of getting into trouble, stressed-out parents would have a place to take their children to play, and the elderly could exercise and enjoy the outdoors.

In building a park, our city would provide a safe-haven for all teenagers. Instead of wandering around the streets looking for trouble, teens would be able to interact with other teens and enjoy themselves. They could play games together or just hang out and talk about their day. Also, the park would be a good place to meet for birthday parties or other festive celebrations. A city park could really benefit our town's youth and help make our community a happier and safer place for our kids.

Many families do not have access to safe playground equipment. If our town provides an enjoyable place to take children, working parents would not have to waste their money buying their own playground equipment. They could stop by after school or on the way home to socialize for a few minutes. The children would enjoy it because it would be a place to make friends and have fun. They would not be cooped up inside all day watching cartoons. Families would also enjoy the park because they would have a safe environment to bring their children.

It has been proven that exercise and fresh air can help elders live longer. If they do not have a pretty and clean place to go, however, they will just stay inside, gradually deteriorating. If the city would spend a little extra money, it could have a lasting effect on the years these people have left to live. Elders enjoy getting out for a little while each day and seeing their city. At the park, they will have a chance to get the exercise they need and to enjoy the sights and fresh air.

These are some reasons our city officials should build a park on the ten acres of land. Besides benefiting the attractiveness of our town, it will also benefit a wide variety of age groups. We have gone long enough without a common stomping ground. A city park would be ideal for school activities, community gatherings, and many other get-togethers. Got ten extra acres of land? Put a park on it!

**Grade 10, PASS Unit 4**

**Read the topic in the box below, and write a well-organized composition of at least 250–300 words. Be sure to follow the suggestions listed under the box.**

**Writing Topic**

Your English teacher has asked you to write about a situation that turned out differently from what was expected. This could be an everyday happening, a special event, a historical occurrence, or an example from your reading. Explain how this situation turned out differently from what was expected.

Before you begin to write, think about the difference between the way the event actually turned out and how it was expected to turn out. What were the expectations? What was the outcome? Why did it turn out differently than expected?

Now write an essay for your English teacher explaining how this situation turned out differently from what was expected. Be sure to give specific details and to support those details with clear examples and evidence. **Explain** the situation.

- Remember that your audience is your English teacher. Use appropriate language and explain your ideas clearly.
- Be sure to write clearly and to check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

**Grade 10, PASS Unit 5**

**Read the topic in the box below and write a well-organized composition of at least 250–300 words. Be sure to follow the suggestions listed under the box.**

**Writing Topic**

For English class, you need to write an essay in which you persuade a friend to do or not to do something. Your friend wants to find a full-time job while attending high school, but you believe he/she should not do this. Use specific reasons to persuade your friend **not** to work full time.

Before you begin to write, think about the reasons why working full time while attending high school would be the wrong decision for your friend. When will he/she get schoolwork done? What about a social life? Would part-time work be better?

Now write an essay for English class in which you **persuade** a friend not to work full time while attending school. Be sure to give specific details and to support those details with clear examples and evidence.

- Remember that your audience is your English teacher. Use appropriate language and explain your ideas clearly.
- Be sure to write clearly and to check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITER'S CHECKLIST

As you write your composition, remember these important points.

### Composing:

- Write on the assigned topic.
- Present a clear main idea.
- Give enough details to support and elaborate your main idea.
- Present your ideas in a logical order.

### Style/Audience Awareness:

- Write with your audience (the person or group identified by the topic) in mind.
- Use vocabulary (words) that expresses your meaning well.
- Use sentences that make your main idea interesting to your audience.

### Sentence Formation:

- Write in complete sentences and use a variety of sentence patterns.

### Usage:

- Write using appropriate subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, word meaning, and word endings.

### Mechanics:

- Write using correct punctuation.
- Write using correct capitalization.
- Write using appropriate formatting (e.g., indentations, margins).

### Spelling:

- Write using correct spelling.







**Remember to print or write neatly.**

**Turn this card over for directions for writing your composition.**






# DIRECTIONS FOR WRITING

**This is a test of writing ability. Therefore, you should follow the steps below to help you write a successful composition.**




## **Step 1: Planning and Drafting**

-  Read the writing topic in your test booklet carefully.
-  Think about what you will write before you begin.
-  Use the space provided in your test booklet for planning your composition and writing your rough draft.
-  Remember that your planning notes and rough draft will not be scored.

## **Step 2: Revising**



-  Review the Writer's Checklist to make sure you have covered all the points.
-  Reread what you have written for your rough draft.
-  Rearrange ideas or change words to make your meaning clear and improve your paper.
-  Rewrite your composition neatly on the correct page(s) in your answer document.
-  Write your final paper in either print or cursive using a No. 2 pencil.

## **Step 3: Proofreading**

-  Review the points on the Writer's Checklist after you have finished writing your final draft.
-  Make any needed corrections.
-  Erase or strike through words if necessary.



## **Points to Remember:**

-  Only the writing on the **Final Draft** pages in your answer document will be scored.
-  Your paper will be scored on  
(1) development and support of ideas,  
(2) expression of ideas, (3) correct sentence formation, (4) usage,  
(5) mechanics, and (6) spelling.