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**MISSISSIPPI ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (MAP)
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING RUBRIC
INTERPRETIVE GUIDE
Grade 4 Example**

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

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1.0 Application of the Rubric in the Classroom

1.1 Purpose of the Rubric

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

1.2 Scoring with the Rubric

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

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

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

1.3 Annotated Scored Writing Samples

The following pages contain an example of a Grade 4 text and a writing prompt. Immediately following the text and prompt are five example student responses. Each response has been scored using the MAP writing rubric. Following the scores is a description of the rationale for the scores for each component.

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Grade 4 Sample Text and Prompt

DIRECTIONS: Read the passage and answer the prompt that follows.

Excerpt from *Bambi*

by Felix Salten

1 These were the earliest days of Bambi’s life. He walked behind his mother on a narrow track that ran through the midst of the bushes. How pleasant it was to walk there. The thick **foliage**¹ stroked his **flanks**² softly and bent **supplely**³ aside. The track appeared to be **barred and obstructed**⁴ in a dozen places and yet they advanced with the greatest ease. There were tracks like this everywhere, running crisscross through the whole woods. His mother knew them all, and if Bambi sometimes stopped before a bush as if it were an **impenetrable**⁵ green wall, she always found where the path went through, without hesitation or searching.

2 Bambi questioned her. He loved to ask his mother questions. It was the pleasantest thing for him to ask a question and then to hear what answer his mother would give. Bambi was never surprised that question after question should come into his mind continually and without effort. He found it perfectly natural, and it delighted him very much. It was very delightful, too, to wait expectantly till the answer came. If it turned out the way he wanted, he was satisfied. Sometimes, of course, he did not understand, but that was pleasant also because he was kept busy picturing what he had not understood, in his own way. Sometimes he felt very sure that his mother was not giving him a complete answer, was intentionally not telling him all she knew. And at first, that was very pleasant, too. For then there would remain in him...such anticipation, that he would become anxious and happy at the same time, and grow silent.

3 Once he asked, “Whom does this trail belong to, Mother?”

4 His mother answered, “To us.”

5 Bambi asked again, “To you and me?”

6 “Yes.”

¹ A cluster of leaves

² An animal’s sides

³ Bending easily

⁴ Difficult to enter

⁵ Cannot be entered

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- 7 “To us two?”
- 8 “Yes.”
- 9 “Only to us two?”
- 10 “No,” said his mother, “to us deer.”
- 11 “What are deer?” Bambi asked, and laughed.
- 12 His mother looked at him from head to foot and laughed too. “You are a deer and I am a deer. We’re both deer,” she said. “Do you understand?”
- 13 Bambi sprang into the air for joy. “Yes, I understand,” he said. “I’m a little deer and you’re a big deer, aren’t you?”
- 14 His mother nodded and said, “Now you see.”
- 15 But Bambi grew serious again. “Are there other deer besides you and me?” he asked.
- 16 “Certainly,” his mother said. “Many of them.”
- 17 “Where are they?” cried Bambi.
- 18 “Here, everywhere.”
- 19 “But I don’t see them.”
- 20 “You will soon,” she said.
- 21 “When?” Bambi stood still, wild with curiosity.
- 22 “Soon.” The mother walked on quietly. Bambi followed her. He kept silent for he was wondering what “soon” might mean. He came to the conclusion that “soon” was certainly not “now”. But he wasn’t sure at what time “soon” stopped being “soon” and began to be a “long while.” Suddenly he asked, “Who made this trail?”
- 23 “We,” his mother answered.
- 24 Bambi was astonished. “We? You and I?”
- 25 The mother said, “We, we...we deer.”
- 26 Bambi asked, “Which deer?”
- 27 “All of us,” his mother said sharply.

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Writing Prompt

You have read the excerpt from *Bambi* in which Bambi's walks with his mother are described in detail. What does the description of the walks tell you about Bambi's relationship with his mother? Write a response in which you discuss the specific details in the passage that provide information about Bambi's relationship with his mother.

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

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Grade 4 Example Student Responses

RESPONSE 1

Even though Bambi is a very young deer, it is obvious that he and his mother have a good relationship. The story shows that they enjoy spending a lot of time together by telling about the good time they have on a walk through the woods. The story also tells how Bambi trusts his mother and feels safe when he is with her.

The first line of the passage tells how he “walked behind his mother on a narrow track that ran through the midst of the bushes trusting that she will keep him safe and on the correct path.” The first paragraph also says the trails in the forest are crisscrossed and difficult to pass but Bambi’s mother always knows where to go. An example of this in the text is, “His mother knew them all, and if Bambi sometimes stopped before a bush as if it were an impenetrable green wall, she always found where the path went through, without hesitation or searching.” Because of this, Bambi is not frightened by the heavy brush. Instead, the story says the walks are pleasant and readers know that Bambi and his mom like to be together.

Bambi and his mother are very comfortable talking with one another. They spend time on their pleasant walk having a pleasant conversation. The fact that “he loved to ask his mother questions” proves this. Bambi is curious and loves for his mother to teach him new things. Paragraph two shows how Bambi loves to ask his mother questions. The third sentence, “It was the pleasantest thing for him to ask a question and then to hear what answer his mother would give.”, shows the reader how much he enjoys this. Bambi is not discouraged when the answer is not what he wants to hear either. He just keep asking questions. The passage shows that Bambi and his mom are comfortable with each other beginning in paragraph three. Bambi asks, “Whom does this trail belong to, Mother?” His mother replies, “to us.” Bambi continues to ask his mother for more details and she continues to answer his questions. In paragraph 12 they are laughing together which is another example of how their relationship is pleasant.

Readers can tell that Bambi and his mother have a great relationship. The passage provides many examples of how the two get along. From enjoying long walks in the woods to laughing about all of Bambi’s question, it is easy to see that they really enjoy each other.

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RESPONSE 1 SCORING

Development of Ideas

Score Point 3

The student shows a general understanding of the task and is generally focused on the task. Throughout the response, the student attempts to connect the relationship between Bambi and his mother with the walk through the woods showing an understanding of the task, but the student is not consistently focused. For example, the second paragraph of the response states, “The first paragraph also says the trails in the forest are crisscrossed and difficult to pass but Bambi’s mother always knows where to go.” The student could have shown more analysis to connect this idea to the relationship between Bambi and his mother. The student uses strong evidence to support the claims throughout the response. Overall, the student shows a general understanding of the task, and the response is generally clear and focused. However, it is not consistently focused with a clear understanding of the task.

Writing Organization

Score Point 4

The student’s response is written with a logical progression of ideas. There is a clear introduction that leads into the first paragraph, which discusses the terrain and the walk itself and how this compares to the relationship. The second paragraph analyzes the dialogue between Bambi and his mother during the walk and how this impacts their relationship. There is an effective conclusion that contributes to the cohesiveness of the response. The transitions throughout the response (especially within paragraphs) are effective in clarifying relationships between thoughts and ideas (e.g., “...also says...”, “Because of this...”, “...shows the reader how much he enjoys this.”).

Language Conventions of Grammar and Usage

Score Point 2

The student’s response maintains a tone, which is effective and appropriate for the task. The sentence structure is varied, and word choice is effective and purposeful (e.g., “crisscrossed,” “frightened,” “pleasant,” “discouraged,” “provides”).

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Language Conventions of Mechanics

Score Point 2

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

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RESPONSE 2

Bambi is a deer that loves his mother. They have a very special relationship. He loves going on long long walks with her in the woods.

Walking on the trails, Bambi knows he is safe if he stays with his mother. The trails are thick with lots of bushes and leaves. Sometimes it is like the trail will end, but his mother always finds another way to go. Bambi knows to trust his mother. She will keep him safe and knows where to go.

As they walk down the paths he asks his mom tons of questions. Just like my sister does with my mom. His mom is very patient with him and all his question. She loves him and answer each one. All of them! Bambi is delighted when she answers even if he doesn't understand her answer. He will just ask another question. Bambi is lucky his mom takes him on long walks in the forest.

The mother deer is very patent with her son asking all his questions. At least until the end of the story when she answers him sharply.

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RESPONSE 2 SCORING

Development of Ideas

Score Point 2

The student shows a general understanding of the task. The student uses logical reasoning to develop the response (e.g., "...Bambi knows he is safe with his mother."; "Bambi is delighted when she answers even if he doesn't understand her answer."). The student uses some reasoning and evidence (e.g., "The trails are thick with lots of bushes and leaves.") but does not include a sufficient amount of evidence. For example, the student did not include many details or use evidence from the text in the third paragraph. The student provides little analysis explaining why Bambi's questions to his mother and her subsequent responses contribute to the understanding of their relationship.

Writing Organization

Score Point 3

The student's response shows evidence of planning with a progression of ideas that is easy for the reader to follow. Words and clauses are used effectively while transitions between ideas within paragraphs are used to clarify the relationship among claims and evidence (e.g., "The trails are thick with lots of bushes and leaves. Sometimes it is like the trail will end, but his mother always finds another way to go."). The response includes an introduction and conclusion; however, the conclusion introduces new information in the last sentence.

Language Conventions of Grammar and Usage

Score Point 2

The student's response maintains a consistent, effective tone while using precise and effective word choice (e.g., "tons of questions," "very patient," and "delighted"). Sentences are effective and varied in length and structure.

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Language Conventions of Mechanics

Score Point 2

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

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RESPONSE 3

Bambi and his mother are described in their walk through the woods. Based on what I read, “He walked behind his mother on a narrow track that ran through the midst of the bushes. How pleasant it was to walk there.”

Bambi and his mother make their way through the forest, Bambi is curious and asks his mother a lot of questions. He is looking to her to educate him about the woods. Bambi loves to hear what his mother is going to say to his questions. For instance, “He loved to ask his mother questions. It was the pleasant thing for him to ask a question and then to hear what answer his mother would give.” The walk Bambi and his mother are taking through the woods is fun.

The walk in the story shows Bambi and his mother enjoy their time together. The story often describes the walk as “pleasant.” She likes that he asks her lots of questions. Bambi and his mother have a relationship with a strong bond.

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RESPONSE 3 SCORING

Development of Ideas

Score Point 1

The student shows a lack of understanding of the task. The student does not connect the relationship between Bambi and his mother to their walks. The student uses reasoning and evidence, but the student uses direct quotes to summarize the walks (e.g., “He walked behind his mother on a narrow track that ran through the midst of the buses.”) or the discussions the two had (e.g., “He loved to ask his mother questions.”). The details are irrelevant and do not support the task from the prompt. The student mentions the relationship briefly in the conclusion, stating the relationship is strong and Bambi and his mother enjoy their time together.

Writing Organization

Score Point 1

The student’s response shows an attempt at planning. The student attempted to introduce the topic (e.g., “Bambi and his mother are described in their walk through the woods.”), but the response lacks a transition into the next thought. Throughout the paper, a lack of transitions makes the ideas difficult to follow. It is difficult to discern between claims and ideas. Evidence is provided with little to no analysis or transition. The student attempts to provide a conclusion, but the conclusion is disconnected.

Language Conventions of Grammar and Usage

Score Point 1

The student’s response maintains a consistent tone, but it is ineffective for the purpose and audience. The sentences are awkward and contain errors that make it difficult to read.

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Language Conventions of Mechanics

Score Point 1

The student demonstrates an inconsistent command of conventions of standard English, with errors in spelling and punctuation. Student has issues with subject / verb agreement. The errors in mechanics make the response difficult to read.

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RESPONSE 4

The description the walks tell me that Bambi and his mother spend lots of time together. The relationship with Bambi and his mother is timewise. The story tells the relationship as timewise because the understanding of the walks show that the spend lots of time.

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RESPONSE 4 SCORING

Development of Ideas

Score Point 0

The response shows a lack of understanding of the given task, as the student simply states the relationship is “timewise.” The student uses little evidence from the text (e.g., “...Bambi and his mother spend time together.”), and no details and descriptions as support.

Writing Organization

Score Point 1

The response lacks evidence of planning. There are some transitions between ideas (e.g., “...lots of time together,” “timewise,” “The story tells the relationship as timewise....”). There is no clear introduction or conclusion.

Language Conventions of Grammar and Usage

Score Point 1

The response fails to maintain an appropriate tone for the task. Sentences lack variety, and errors make it difficult to read. Sentence structure and wording are awkward and impede meaning.

Language Conventions of Mechanics

Score Point 2

The response demonstrates a consistent command of mechanics with infrequent errors in mechanics that do not impede meaning.

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RESPONSE 5

His mother knew them all and if Bambi sometimes stopped before a bush as if it were an impenetrable green wall but she always found where the path went through without hesitation or searching. Bambi questioned her he loved to ask his mother questions.

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RESPONSE 5 SCORING

NO SCORE-Direct copy.

Student directly copied from the passage.

Development of Ideas

Score Point

Writing Organization

Score Point

Language Conventions of Grammar and Usage

Score Point

Language Conventions of Mechanics

Score Point

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Appendix A: English Language Arts Writing Rubric

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

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

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

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

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