**Administration Quick Guide**

Materials needed prior to testing:

* Story starter\*
* One sheet of blank lined paper and 2 sharpened pencils for each student
* Stopwatch

\*Stated **orally**; do not display or provide to students in writing

Standardized directions:

Say these specific directions to the student(s):

***“You are going to write a story. First, I will read a sentence, and then you will write a story about what happens next. You will have one minute to think about what you will write, and three minutes to write your story. Remember to do your best work. If you don’t know how to spell a word, you should guess. Are there any questions?*** *(Pause).* ***Put your pencils down and listen. For the next minute, think about…****(insert story starter).****”***

After reading the story starter, begin stopwatch for 1 minute to allow students to think. Monitor students to make sure they do not begin writing. After 30 seconds, say: ***“You should be thinking about…****(insert story starter).****”***

At the end of 1 minute, say, ***“Now begin writing.”*** Restart your stopwatch for 3 minutes.

Monitor students’ participation. If an individual student stops writing for about 10 seconds, point to the paper and say, ***“Keep writing the best story you can.”*** This can be repeated if the student stops writing again.

After 90 seconds say, ***“You should be thinking about…****(insert story starter).****”***

At the end of 3 minutes, say, ***“Stop. Put your pencils down.”***

Considerations:

* Try to minimize distractions during test administration
* The standardized directions should always be used
* Examiners should emphasize “best work”, not fastest writing
* Students are timed to ensure the testing is standardized, not to motivate students to write as fast as they can
* If testing 1 to 1, sit across from the student and not beside the student
* If testing is done in groups, monitor students as they work; if an individual student stops writing for about 10 seconds, point to the paper and say, “Keep writing the best story you can.”
* Do not answer questions about how to spell a word
* Do not provide any corrective feedback
* Do not deviate from the standardized directions

**Scoring Instructions**

There are 3 ways to score a written expression CBM:

**Total Words Written (TWW):** Determining total words written (TWW) is quick and straightforward. The examiner underlines each word the student produced and counts the total number of underlined words. It is generally a valid indicator of overall written expression skills. However, some students may produce an appropriate number of total words, but the writing may not be mechanically, semantically, and syntactically correct. Students may sometimes focus on writing as many words as possible rather than producing a quality writing sample. For this reason, the TWW score should not be shared with students and examiners should encourage students to do their best, not fastest, writing.

**Words Spelled Correctly (WSC)**: The examiner circles the words the student spelled incorrectly and subtracts the number of circles from the total words written. Circling the misspelled words aids the examiner in determining CWS.

**Correct Writing Sequence (CWS)**: CWS is a better method of evaluating a student’s written expression skills with respect to producing “quality words”. The examiner uses caret marks (^) to indicate pairs of words that are mechanically, semantically, and syntactically correct.

**Scoring Total Words Written (TWW)**

How to score: Underline each word and count the total number of underlined words.

What is considered a word?

* Any letter or group of letters separated by a space, *even if the word is misspelled or a nonsense word*

**Rule 1.** Hyphenated words count as individual words if each morpheme separated by a hyphen can stand alone.

eight-year-old TWW = 3

**Rule 2.** If one or more of the morphemes separated by a hyphen cannot stand alone, the entire sequence counts as one word.

pre-teen TWW = 1

**Rule 3.** Commonly used abbreviations are counted as words.

Examples of commonly used abbreviations: a.m./p.m., DVD, SUV, Mr./Mrs., Dr., Blvd.

**Rule 4.** If the student includes a story title or an ending, such as “The End”, the words written in the title or ending are counted in the total words written.

**Rule 5.** Numbers, with the exception of dates, time, and currency, are not counted as words unless spelled out.

3 TWW = 0

three TWW = 1

August 5, 2011 TWW = 3

6:00 TWW = 1

6:00 p.m. TWW = 2

50 TWW = 0

$50 TWW = 1

**Rule 6.** Symbols used in writing such as **&**, **@**, and **#** that are not spelled out are not counted as words.

Molly & Susan are best friends. TWW = 5

**Rule 7:** Compound words that are separated are counted separately for TWW.

It was a beautiful day out side. TWW=7

**Scoring Words Spelled Correctly (WSC)**

What is a correctly spelled word?

* A word is considered to be spelled correctly if it is not difficult for the examiner to infer appropriateness of context within the English language

How to score: Circle each word the student spelled incorrectly and subtract the number of circled words from the total words written.

Janice has a pet bird. WSC = 5

Janice has a pet burd. WSC = 4

**Rule 1.** Each morpheme separated by a hyphen is counted as a correctly spelled word if it can stand alone and is spelled correctly.

I ran in the three-legged race. WSC = 7

I ran in the three-leggd race. WSC = 6

**Rule 2.** If one or more of the morphemes separated by a hyphen cannot stand alone, the entire sequence is counted as one word if spelled correctly.

The man re-emerged from his house. WSC = 6

The man re-emrged from his house. WSC = 5

**Rule 3.** Commonly used abbreviations that are spelled correctly are included in the WSC count.

**Rule 4.** If a student includes a story title or ending, words spelled correctly in the title or ending are included in the WSC count.

**Rule 5.** Capitalized Words -

* Proper nouns must be capitalized to be considered correct.
* The first word of a sentence does not have to be capitalized to be considered spelled correctly **unless** it is also a proper noun.
* Words that are incorrectly capitalized in the middle of a sentence (or words that contain capital letters in the middle of the word) do not count as correctly spelled words. The examiner must use his/her best judgment with letters such as “s”.
* If a name can also be a word (Pat, Bill, Rose), it should be capitalized unless the examiner cannot determine contextual appropriateness.

Alice opened the box. WSC = 4

alice opened the box. WSC = 3

she lives on main st. WSC = 3

She Lives on Main St. WSC = 4

He left the door aJar. WSC = 4

**Rule 6.** Words containing reversed letters are counted as correctly spelled words unless the reversed letter causes a word to be spelled incorrectly. This rule applies most frequently to the letters p, b, q, d, n, and u.

**Rule 7.** For a contraction to be counted as a correctly spelled word, an apostrophe in the correct place is required.

Alans car is in the driveway. WSC = 5

Alan’s car is in the driveway. WSC = 6

She cant go with us. WSC = 4

**Rule 8:** Compound words that are not spelled as one word are counted as incorrect for each part of the word.

It was a beautiful day out side. WSC=5

**Scoring Correct Writing Sequence (CWS)**

What is a correct writing sequence?

* Two adjacent writing units (including both words and punctuation) that are correct within the context of what is written

How to score: The examiner places a caret (^) between words that are

* Mechanically correct (spelled correctly with appropriate capitalization)
* Syntactically correct (proper word and sentence structure)
* Semantically correct (correct word usage and meaning)

**Rule 1.** There is an implied space at the beginning of the first sentence. The examiner will mark a caret before the first word as long as it meets the criteria for being a word and it is capitalized and spelled correctly.

^Three^dogs^were^playing.^ CWS = 5

3 dogs^were^playing.^ CWS = 3

three dogs^were^playing.^ CWS = 3

Thre dogs^were^playing.^ CWS = 3

**Rule 2.** Pairs of words must be spelled correctly. A caret “connects” two words that are correctly spelled. If a word is misspelled, it will not have a caret on either side.

^The^teacher^read^a^book^to^the^class.^ CWS = 9

^The^teacher red a^book^to^the^class.^ CWS = 7

the techer red a^book^to^the^class.^ CWS = 5

**Rule 3.** Correct punctuation must be present at the end of a sentence to earn a caret. If the first word of the next sentence is both capitalized and spelled correctly, the examiner will mark a second caret.

^It^was^snowing.^ ^The^children^went^out^to^play.^ CWS = 11

^It^was^snowing.^ the^children^went^out^to^play.^ CWS = 10

^It^was^snowing ^The^children^went^out^to^play.^ CWS = 10

it was^snowing the children^went^out^to^play CWS = 5

**Rule 4.** Pairs of words must be syntactically correct. Sentences that begin with a conjunction are considered syntactically correct. Words that are incorrectly capitalized in the middle of a sentence (or words that contain capital letters in the middle of the word) do not count as correct words. The examiner must use his/her best judgment with letters such as “s”.

^Three^dogs^were^playing.^ CWS = 5

^Three^dogs was playing.^ CWS = 3

^And^then^they^ran^off.^ CWS = 6

^And^then^they Ran off.^ CWS = 4

**Rule 5.** Pairs of words must be semantically correct.

^My^mom^took^us too the^park.^ CWS = 6

^I^could here the^thunder.^ CWS = 4

^I^don’t^like^math cause it’s^hard.^ CWS = 6

**Rule 6.** For contractions, an apostrophe in the correct place is required.

^Debbie^doesn’t^speak^French.^ CWS = 5

^Debbie doesnt speak^French.^ CWS = 3

**Rule 7.** Words containing reversed letters are counted as correctly spelled words unless the reversed letter causes a word to be spelled incorrectly.

**Rule 8.** If a student includes a story title or ending, words written in the title or ending that are capitalized and spelled correctly are included in the CWS count.

^The^Long^Day^ CWS = 4

the Long^Day^ CWS = 2

the long day CWS = 0

^The^End.^ CWS = 3

^The end.^ CWS = 2

^The^End CWS = 2

**Rule 9.** Commonly used abbreviations that are spelled correctly are included in CWS.

^I^watch^T.V.^every^day.^ CWS = 6

^He^lives^on^McDonald Bvd. CWS = 4

**Rule 10.** Hyphenated words are counted in the CWS count as long as each morpheme separated by hyphens is spelled correctly.

^Her^mother-in-law^is^a^teacher.^ CWS = 6

^Her muther-in-law is^a^teacher.^ CWS = 4

**Rule 11.** With the exception of dates, time, and currency, numbers that are not spelled out are not included in CWS.

^I^have 6 different^class^periods.^ CWS = 5

^I^go^to^math^class^at^1:30.^ CWS = 8

^He^owes^me^$20.^ CWS = 5

**Rule 12.** Symbols used in writing that are not spelled out are not included in the total CWS count.

^We^decided^to^meet @ the^mall.^ CWS = 6

**Rule 13.** Commas are not included in CWS count.

^She^likes^to^play^basketball,^and^she^also^likes^to^run.^ CWS = 12

**Rule 14:** Scoring CWS requires the examiner to make inferences about where the student intended to “end” a sentence if periods are omitted.

^It’s^supposed^to^snow.^ ^We^will^go^sledding^if^it^does.^ CWS = 13

(correct end punctuation between the two sentences + beginning capital for the second sentence = 2 carets)

^It’s^supposed^to^snow ^We^will^go^sledding^if^it^does.^ CWS = 12

(no end punctuation + beginning capital = 1 caret)

it’s supposed^to^snow we will^go^sledding^if^it^does CWS = 7

(no end punctuation + no beginning capital = 0 carets)