





Primary Grade Writing Continuum

Achievement Chart Criteria	Typical Skill Acquisition for Students in Kindergarten			Typical Skill Acquisition for Students in Grade 1		
	SK-1st (E1)	SK-2nd (E2)	SK-3rd (E3)	Gr. 1-1st (E4)	Gr. 1-2nd (E5)	Gr. 1-3rd (E6)
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING						
Organization - structure, logical order & sequencing; beginning, middle & end. - elements of text form taught.	Letters of name in correct order.	Picture matches sentence.	Picture matches sentences.	Picture matches writing. Most features of form (e.g., list) used correctly.	Picture matches writing. Identifiable beginning and middle. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sentences in some logical order uses some organizational words (<i>first, next, etc.</i>) appropriately Most features of form (e.g., description) used correctly.	Picture matches writing. Identifiable beginning, middle, and end. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> most sentences in order uses most organizational words (<i>first, next, then, finally</i>) appropriately Most features of form (e.g., letter) used correctly. Evidence of simple title.
THINKING						
Ideas - clear message, main idea, interesting details that help reader "picture" what is described. - critical thinking processes (i.e., creativity, perspective, opinion)	Simple picture. 1-2 words about the picture with oral elaboration.	Simple picture with some details. A simple sentence and/or pattern sentences (e.g., I see a ____.) about the topic.	Picture has many details. Two simple sentences about the topic.	Detailed picture with some simple labels. 2-3 sentences related to topic. Main idea is recognizable and matches picture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some important details (e.g., name, color) 	Detailed picture with simple labels. 3-4 sentences related to topic. Main idea is clear and matches picture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> many important details; some are developed (e.g., big black dog) Beginning evidence of simple critical thinking/creativity (e.g., imaginative idea).	Detailed pictures with some descriptive labels (e.g., black dog). 5 or more sentences related to topic. Main idea is well-defined and matches picture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> most details are important and developed Some evidence of simple critical thinking/creativity in writing (e.g., gives reasons).

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COMMUNICATION						
Voice – expression of author’s feelings about a topic; personality and individual style; evidence of audience	Picture is coloured and recognizable.	Picture shows some simple feeling (e.g., happy, sad).	Picture communicates a simple mood or feeling. May have “!” in writing.	Picture clearly more reflective of mood or feeling than text. Evidence of punctuation (!) to emphasize a word or idea. Expresses a predictable feeling (I like . . .). Audience is self.	Picture and text equally reflective of mood/ feeling. Evidence of punctuation (!) and all caps to emphasize a word or idea. Writing and drawing starts to show a personal style. Begins to show evidence of audience (e.g., friend, teacher). Text evokes some response in reader.	Picture and text clearly convey writer’s thoughts and feelings about topic. Evidence of text features (e.g., !, caps, bold, underline) to emphasize a word or idea. Writing and drawing show some personal style. Evidence of audience (e.g., friend, teacher). Text evokes considerable response in reader.
Word Choice – powerful verbs, sensory descriptions; word variety; expanded vocabulary	Evidence of one sight word (e.g., I, see). Evidence of copied print.	Evidence of at least two sight words. Writing shows attempts at some new words. Repetitive words.	Evidence of considerable mastery of K sight and spelling words. Writing shows use of simple descriptive words (<i>color, size</i>) to enhance writing. Repetitive words.	Evidence of K and some Gr. 1 sight and spelling words. Beginning use of other senses for description (e.g., smell, feel). Repetitive words. Simple verbs (e.g., <i>run, jump</i>).	Evidence of regular use of Gr. 1 sight and spelling words. Some evidence of developed sensory descriptions. Some repetitive words. Simple verbs and occasional stronger verb (e.g., <i>race</i>).	Evidence of considerable mastery of Gr. 1 sight and spelling words. Considerable evidence of developed sensory descriptions. Occasional repetitive word. Variety of simple verbs and some stronger verbs.
Sentence Fluency – rhythm and flow of writing; variety of sentence types and length	Evidence of letter strings that suggest sentences.	Evidence of a simple, understandable sentence.	Two sentences that are connected. • sentences start with different words	Sentences start to show length and some detail. • most start with different words	Some evidence of compound sentences. • some start in different ways Sentences begin to have some flow.	Variety of simple and compound sentences. • most start in different ways Some sections have rhythm and flow.

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	SK-1st (E1)	SK-2nd (E2)	SK-3rd (E3)	Gr. 1-1st (E4)	Gr. 1-2nd (E5)	Gr. 1-3rd (E6)
Conventions – capitals, punctuation, spacing, spelling, grammar	Writing is left to right. Some attempt at spacing. Upper- and lowercase letters frequently mixed. Random punctuation. Semi-phonetic spelling for unknown words.	Spacing between some words. Upper- and lowercase letters often mixed. Sentence starts with capital letter and usually has a period. Semi-phonetic to phonetic spelling for unknown words.	Spaces between most words. Upper- and lowercase letters sometimes mixed. Sentences usually start with capital letter and end with correct punctuation. Phonetic spelling for unknown words. Spells most word wall words correctly.	Most spacing is correct. Upper- and lowercase letters occasionally mixed. Most sentences have capitals. Punctuation is usually correct, sometimes varied (.!). Phonetic to transitional spelling for unknown words. Spells most word wall words correctly. Beginning evidence of correct use of picture dictionary. Evidence of connecting words (e.g., <i>and</i> , <i>because</i>). Some minor errors in grammar.	Few errors in spacing. Upper- and lowercase letters usually correct. All sentences have capitals. Punctuation is usually correct, often varied (.! ?). Most spelling of unknown words is transitional. Spells most word wall words correctly. Some evidence of correct use of picture dictionary. Evidence of connecting words (e.g., <i>and</i> , <i>because</i> , <i>so</i>). Some minor errors in grammar.	All spacing is correct. Correct case. Capitals used correctly, including names. Punctuation varied and correct (. ! ? ""'). Most spelling is correct or close to correct. Spells most word wall words correctly. Considerable evidence of correct use of picture dictionary. Evidence of connecting words (e.g., <i>and</i> , <i>so</i> , <i>because</i> , <i>but</i>). Some minor errors in grammar.
Presentation – printing, writing on lines, legibility	Most letters on the line. Most letters formed correctly. • reversals and/or irregular size common	Most letters on the line. Most letters formed correctly. • some reversals and/or irregular size	Almost all letters on the line. Letters are formed correctly. • a few reversals and/or irregular size	Most printing is neat and legible. • a few letter reversals, floating letters, and/or irregular size Some lines begin at left margin. Regular spacing between lines about half the time. Sentences might be written list-like.	Most printing neat and legible. • occasional letter reversals, floating letters, and/or irregular size Most lines begin at left margin. Regular spacing between lines most of the time. Most sentences follow each other.	Printing is neat and legible. • no letter reversals, floating letters, and/or irregular size All lines begin at left margin. Regular spacing between lines. All sentences follow each other.
APPLICATION						
Ideas and Content				Writing usually describes what the topic looks like. Evidence of some simple personal connections but usually limited to what writer likes.	Writing shows considerable knowledge of the topic. Evidence of some simple personal connections that enhance writing.	Writing shows considerable knowledge and depth of topic. Evidence of simple personal connections that enhance writing.

Achievement Chart Criteria	Typical Skill Acquisition for Students in Grade 2			Typical Skill Acquisition for Students in Grade 3		
	Gr. 2-1st (E7)	Gr. 2-2nd (E8)	Gr. 2-3rd (E9)	Grade 3-1st (E10)	Grade 3-2nd (E11)	Grade 3-3rd (E12)
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING						
Organization – structure, logical order, and sequencing; beginning, middle, and end – elements of text form taught	Solid opening and identifiable end. • logical order and sequence • organizational words (<i>first, next, then, finally</i>) used appropriately Most features of form taught (e.g., letter) used effectively.	Solid opening for both paragraphs with a suitable ending attempted. • logical order and sequence • beginning evidence of more complex transition words (e.g., <i>after awhile</i>) Most features of form taught (e.g., list) used correctly.	Solid opening sentences, with a suitable end. • logical, coherent order • some evidence of complex transition words (e.g., <i>after awhile</i>) Most features of form taught (e.g., persuasion) used correctly.	Strong lead sentences with a suitable end. • logical, coherent order • considerable evidence of complex transition words (e.g., <i>after awhile</i>) Most features of form taught (e.g., narrative) used effectively.	Strong lead sentences with a satisfying end. • logical order with some smooth transitions Most features of form taught (e.g., opinion) used effectively.	Engaging lead sentences with appealing conclusion. • logical order with many smooth transitions Most features of form taught (e.g., report) used effectively.
THINKING						
Ideas – clear message, main idea, interesting details that help reader “picture” what is described – critical thinking processes (i.e., creativity, perspective, opinion)	Detailed pictures with descriptive labels. One paragraph, on topic. • main idea is evident • most details are important and developed; some are interesting Some evidence of simple critical thinking/creativity in writing (e.g., perspective).	Pictures play a secondary role. One paragraph, on topic, with some evidence of a second. • main idea is clear • most details are important and developed; many are interesting Considerable evidence of simple critical thinking/creativity in writing (explanation).	Pictures optional. Two paragraphs about one topic. • main idea is well-developed • most details are important, developed, and interesting Some evidence of more complex reasoning/creativity in writing (persuasion).	Two paragraphs about one topic. • main idea is evident • most details are interesting; occasional one unique Some evidence of more complex reasoning/creativity in writing (narrative).	Two paragraphs about one topic with some evidence of a third. • main idea is clear • most details are interesting; some are unusual or unique Considerable evidence of more complex reasoning/creativity in writing (opinion).	Three or more focused paragraphs about one topic. • main idea is well-developed • most details are interesting; many are unusual or unique Considerable evidence of more complex reasoning/creativity in writing (report).
COMMUNICATION						
Voice – expression of author’s feelings about a topic; personality and individual style; evidence of audience	Text conveys more depth in writer’s thoughts and feelings (e.g., surprise, excitement). Evidence of emerging but incomplete personality.	Some development of complex thoughts and feelings about topic is evident. Evidence of evolving personality with some developing style.	Text effectively conveys some developed complex thoughts and feelings about a topic. Evidence of evolving personality with considerably developed style.	Some evidence of enthusiasm and passion for topic. Personality evident, with developed style and some distinctive qualities.	Considerable evidence of enthusiasm and passion for topic. Personality evident with maturing sense of different perspectives.	Text effectively conveys writer’s enthusiasm and passion for topic. Evidence of solid sense of self, perspective, and originality.

Achievement Chart Criteria	Typical Skill Acquisition for Students in Grade 2			Typical Skill Acquisition for Students in Grade 3		
	Gr. 2-1st (E7)	Gr. 2-2nd (E8)	Gr. 2-3rd (E9)	Grade 3-1st (E10)	Grade 3-2nd (E11)	Grade 3-3rd (E12)
Word Choice – powerful verbs, sensory descriptions; word variety; expanded vocabulary	Evidence of Gr. 1 and some Gr. 2 sight and spelling words. Variety of verbs; emphasis on simple verbs. Text incorporates some sequences of adjectives to create clear mental images.	Evidence of regular use of Gr. 2 sight and spelling words. Variety of verbs with some synonyms (e.g., <i>leap, jump</i>). Text incorporates some phrases to create colorful mental images.	Evidence of considerable mastery of Gr. 2 sight and spelling words. Variety of verbs with emphasis on stronger verbs and synonyms. Text effectively conveys some vivid mental images with words and phrases.	Evidence of K and some evidence of Gr. 2 and some Gr. 3 sight and spelling words. Beginning evidence of unique nouns and verbs; increasing bank of synonyms. • evidence of more precise adjectives and adverbs to add clarity and detail to writing Evidence of some experimentation with figurative language.	Evidence of regular use of Gr. 3 sight and spelling words. Some evidence of unique nouns and verbs; increasing bank of synonyms. • text often incorporates more precise adjectives and adverbs, using fewer but more quality words Figurative language used with some effectiveness to convey tone.	Evidence of considerable mastery of grade 3 sight and spelling words. Considerable evidence of unique nouns, verbs, and synonyms in writing. • text is generally concise with use of fewer, better quality adjectives and adverbs Figurative language used with considerable effectiveness to convey tone.
Sentence Fluency – rhythm and flow of writing; variety of sentence types and length	Evidence of occasional complex sentences. • most start in different ways Sections have rhythm and flow. Writing begins to sound more natural.	One or two complex sentences. • most start in different ways Most of the sentences flow easily to the next. Sections of text sound natural.	Considerable variety of simple, compound, and complex sentences. • most start in different ways Paragraphs have considerable rhythm and flow. Most of the writing sounds natural.	Evidence of some experimentation with a variety of questions, statements, exclamations, and dialogue in writing. • most vary in length and type Some of the writing is smooth and rhythmic, with a natural flow.	Some variety of sentences (structure, length, and type), beginnings, and connecting words in writing. Most of the writing is smooth and rhythmic, with a natural flow.	Considerable variety of sentences (structure, length, and type), beginnings, and connecting words in writing. Writing piece is easy to read, with a smooth, rhythmic, and natural flow.

Achievement Chart Criteria	Typical Skill Acquisition for Students in Grade 2			Typical Skill Acquisition for Students in Grade 3		
	Gr. 2-1st (E7)	Gr. 2-2nd (E8)	Gr. 2-3rd (E9)	Grade 3-1st (E10)	Grade 3-2nd (E11)	Grade 3-3rd (E12)
Conventions – capitals, punctuation, spacing, spelling, grammar	Capitals used correctly for most proper nouns. Most punctuation varied and correct (.!?"’"). Most spelling is correct. Most word wall words correct. Considerable evidence of correct use of picture dictionary for unknown words. Evidence of connecting words (e.g., <i>and, but, so, because</i>) used correctly. Most verbs in present tense used correctly. Some simple contractions (e.g., <i>I’m, don’t, can’t</i>) correct.	Capitals used correctly for all proper nouns. Most punctuation varied and correct (.!?"’ and commas in lists). Most spelling is correct. Most word wall words correct. Beginning evidence of correct use of primary dictionary for unknown words. Evidence of connecting words (e.g., <i>and, but, so, because, when</i>). Most verbs in present and past tense used correctly. Most simple contractions (e.g., <i>I’m, don’t, can’t, isn’t, doesn’t</i>) correct.	All conventions, including quotation marks, usually used correctly. Most spelling is correct. Most word wall words correct. Some evidence of correct use of primary dictionary for unknown words. Evidence of connecting words used correctly. Most verbs in present, past, and future tense used correctly. Most simple contractions (e.g., <i>I’m, don’t, can’t, isn’t, doesn’t, I’ll, let’s</i>) correct.	All conventions usually used correctly, with attempts at commas in sentences. Most spelling is correct. Most word wall words correct. Considerable evidence of correct use of primary dictionary for unknown words and/or beginning use of first and second letters in a junior dictionary. Most possessive pronouns (<i>my, mine, his, her, hers, its</i>) and action verbs in the present and simple past tenses correct. Most contractions correct.	All conventions, including quotation marks, usually used correctly; some commas correct in sentences. Most spelling is correct. Most word wall words correct. Some evidence of correct use of first, second, and third letters in a junior dictionary; often uses thesaurus to find alternative words. Most proper nouns for titles, possessive pronouns (<i>my, mine, his, her, hers, its</i>), and action verbs in the present and simple past tenses correct. Most contractions correct.	All conventions, including commas in sentences, usually used correctly. Most spelling is correct. Most word wall words correct. Considerable evidence of correct use of up to four letters in a junior dictionary; regular use of thesaurus to find alternative words. Most proper nouns for titles, possessive pronouns (<i>my, mine, his, her, hers, its</i>), and action verbs in the present and simple past tenses correct. Most contractions correct.
Presentation – printing, writing on lines, legibility	Clear visual presentation; printing is neat and legible. Considerable evidence of proper paragraph form (1) including spacing and margins.	Clear visual presentation; printing is neat and legible. Considerable evidence of proper paragraph form (1-2) including spacing and margins.	Clear visual presentation; printing is neat and legible. Considerable evidence of proper paragraph form (2) including spacing and margins.	Clear visual presentation; printing is neat and legible. Considerable evidence of proper paragraph form (2-3) including spacing, indenting, and margins. Considerable evidence of effective captions.	Clear visual presentation; printing is neat and legible. Considerable evidence of proper paragraph (3) form including spacing, indenting, and margins.	Clear visual presentation; printing is neat and legible. Considerable evidence of proper paragraph form (3+) including spacing, indenting, and margins.

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APPLICATION						
Ideas and Content	<p>Writing shows considerable knowledge and depth about the topic.</p> <p>Evidence of simple personal connections that enhance writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • events that happen inside and outside of school 	<p>Writing shows considerable knowledge and depth about the topic.</p> <p>Personal connections begin to have more detail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some simple connections between topic and things that happen inside and outside of school <p>Evidence of developing concept of perspective.</p>	<p>Writing shows considerable knowledge and depth about the topic.</p> <p>Personal connections have some added detail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple connections between topic and things that happen inside and outside of school <p>Some evidence of different perspectives.</p>	<p>Writing shows considerable knowledge and depth about the topic.</p> <p>Personal connections have considerable detail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beginning evidence of more thoughtful and detailed connections between topic and things that happen inside and outside of school <p>Considerable evidence of different perspectives.</p>	<p>Writing shows considerable knowledge and depth about the topic.</p> <p>Personal connections have considerable detail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some of the connections between topic and things that happen inside and outside of school are thoughtful and detailed <p>Evidence of developing worldly perspective.</p>	<p>Writing shows considerable knowledge and depth about the topic.</p> <p>Personal connections are considerably detailed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • many connections between topic and things that happen inside and outside of school are thoughtful and detailed <p>Some evidence of worldly perspective.</p>

Source: Karen Ault, Rosemary Dawson, & Rose MacCulloch (2009), Assessment Begins in Kindergarten. *Unpublished report, Upper Canada District School Board, Ontario, Canada. Used with permission.*