# Nebraska State Accountability-Writing (NeSA-W) Performance Level Descriptors

## Grade 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Below the Standards</th>
<th>Meets the Standards</th>
<th>Exceeds the Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall the student’s writing reflects an unsatisfactory performance of the standards and an insufficient understanding of the traits of writing. The student’s writing is still under development. Extensive revision and/or editing is necessary.</td>
<td>Overall the student’s writing reflects a satisfactory performance of the standards and a sufficient understanding of the traits of writing. The student’s writing demonstrates more strengths than weaknesses. Some revision and/or editing is necessary.</td>
<td>Overall the student’s writing reflects an advanced performance of the standards and a thorough understanding of the traits of writing. The student’s writing demonstrates numerous strengths. Only minor revision and/or editing is necessary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student’s writing is below the standards if the . . .

- Picture of what is being described is limited or unclear.
- Content has some digressions from the topic.
- Sensory details are limited, unrelated, or lacking.
- Structural development of an introduction, body, and conclusion is limited or lacking.
- Pacing is inconsistent or awkward.
- Transitions are repetitious, weak, unclear, or missing.
- Paragraphing is irregular, ineffective, or missing.
- Wording is inexpressive and lifeless, conveying a limited sense of the writer.
- Voice is sometimes inappropriate for the purpose and audience.
- Language is seldom specific, precise or varied.
- Writing lacks vivid words and phrases.
- Sentences seldom vary in length or structure.
- Phrasing sounds awkward and unnatural.
- Writing has fragments or run-ons that confuse the reader.
- Grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling errors distract the reader.

The student’s writing meets the standards if the . . .

- Picture of what is being described is clear.
- Content is generally focused on the topic.
- Sensory details are adequate and related.
- Structural development of an introduction, body, and conclusion is functional.
- Pacing is generally controlled.
- Transitions are functional.
- Paragraphing is generally successful.
- Wording is generally expressive, conveying a sense of the writer.
- Voice is generally appropriate for the purpose and audience.
- Language is generally specific, precise, and varied.
- Writing has adequate vivid words and phrases.
- Sentences generally vary in length or structure.
- Phrasing generally sounds natural.
- Fragments and run-ons do not generally confuse the reader.
- Grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling are usually correct and rarely distract the reader.

The student’s writing exceeds the standards if the . . .

- Picture of what is being described is clear and vivid.
- Content is well-focused on the topic.
- Sensory details are numerous and relevant.
- Structural development of an introduction, body, and conclusion is effective.
- Pacing is well-controlled.
- Transitions effectively show how ideas connect.
- Paragraphing is sound.
- Wording is expressive and engaging, conveying a strong sense of the writer throughout.
- Voice is well-suited for the purpose and audience throughout.
- Language is specific, precise, and varied throughout.
- Numerous vivid words and phrases are used effectively.
- Sentences vary in length and structure throughout.
- Phrasing consistently sounds natural and conveys meaning.
- Fragments and run-ons, if present, are intended for stylistic effect.
- Grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling are consistently correct and may be manipulated for stylistic effect.