

**Eighth Grade**  
**Instructions and Examination Topics**  
**Nevada Eighth Grade Proficiency Examination in Writing**

Spring 2010

Your district makes this determination.

*(USE ON ANY OTHER DATE REQUIRES PERMISSION FROM NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION)*

**In this writing examination, you will be expected to write on two topics—Topic A and Topic B—in 120 minutes. Be very careful to write your response to Topic A on the side of the paper labeled “WRITING TEST – TOPIC A” and your response to Topic B on the side labeled “WRITING TEST – TOPIC B.”**

Please pay close attention to the instructions for each writing exercise, and be sure that you write on the assigned topics. You may use scratch paper to plan your writing and to write your rough draft. As you plan your writing, think about your ideas, development, organization, and voice.

After you have finished your rough draft, check your writing for spelling, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, word choice, and paragraphing. When you transfer your rough draft to the answer document, please be as neat as possible, **press firmly**, and write legibly so that your writing can be easily read.

Your writing can be no longer than one page for each topic. Do not attach extra sheets of paper to the answer document.

**Regardless of the quality of your writing, you will receive a failing score if you do not write on the assigned topics, if your writing is too short, if your writing is written in a language other than English, or if the content of your writing sample is judged to be obscene or objectionable.**

TOPIC A

Winter, spring, summer, and fall—there are many holidays, events, and advantages for each season. Decide which season is your favorite and explain why.

TOPIC B



## Writing Sample AA

My favorite Days are in Summer because in summer is no school Summer You could do a lot of sports I like Soccer that why I like summer I like Summer! because is no school and you could play more sports I like the summer because I could play sport in winter I can play soccer I dont like the winter when is Summer I go play Soccer a lot when is summer their are really fun places to go and a remember that one time I was not good at soccer because I was just five that why I wasn't good at soccer



### Writing Sample AA (Pure 1)

While the reader knows the writer likes summer because of soccer and no school, the paper does not develop beyond that. The paper randomly repeats these two ideas. There is no organization in this paper, although a final thought is thrown in at the end (the time he was not good at soccer). The word choice is also very repetitious with “summer” used eight times and “soccer” five times in this short piece. The spelling on the limited word choice is generally correct, but the writer does not have a concept of sentence; there is no punctuation in this paper. Missing words (“that why I like summer” and “because is no school”) are indicative of the writer’s overall lack of control.

Overall, this paper is extremely weak, has few redeeming qualities, and fails to connect with the reader. This paper is considered emerging/developing because it requires substantial revising, editing, and does not pass the Writing Proficiency Exam. Providing more details, some attention to structure (such as an opening and closing), editing for mechanics (such as punctuation), and replacing missing words would move this writing to a higher score.



## Writing Sample BB

my favorite season is summer because you can just sleep and eat all day! my birthday is also during summer. I usually go to a different state most every summer. During summer the pools are open in almost every part of town, and people usually have barbecues at their houses or at the park. Also so you can just stay up all day and night to do nothing but play video games and watch television. All day and night! during summer it will be hot and people could get extra money by doing work like mowing lawns or by having a yard sale and selling stuff you don't need. A lot of people will probably call their friends and have them come over to play video games and watch TV!



## Writing Sample BB (Pure 2)

This paper has some focus and idea development. The writer likes summer and gives a variety of reasons (e.g., pools, barbecues, playing video games, etc.). However, the paper has no coherence because it reads like a random list of activities with little development. The writer attempts to show why he likes summer, but the list falls short of involving the reader. The writer does have a sense of sentence, but many are run on and fragmented (e.g., “My birthday is also during summer I usually go to a different state every summer.”) Not only is this sentence run-on, but it also has two completely unrelated ideas. There are a few spelling issues as well (e.g., “there” for “their” and “sall” for “sale”). It is difficult to decide if capitalization is a function of handwriting or if the writer does not know to capitalize at the beginning of a sentence.

Overall, this paper is very weak with serious and persistent problems. This paper is also considered “emerging/developing” because it requires considerable revision, editing, and does not pass the Writing Proficiency Exam. This paper would move to a higher score if the writer organized ideas in paragraphs, eliminated unrelated ideas, used varied sentence structures, and revised and edited for capitalization and run-on sentences.



## Writing Sample CC

Summer, best time of the year. Mostly because of the 3 best parts of summer, my friends, the beach, and all the long shopping trips to the mall.

My friends are one of the huge things in my life. Mostly because their awesome to go to the beach and mall with. They are fun to be around, all the crazy sleepovers we have, and we are all exactly the same.

The beach is another great activity that I like to do in the summer. I really like the beach because I love to swim. And sand castles are another fun thing to make, until they fall.

And you definitely can't start the summer or end the summer with the same clothes. This is where all those shopping trips come in. And believe me they are fun.

And now you know the three reasons I love summer vacation. If only it would be summer all year around.



### Writing Sample CC (Pure 3)

This paper focuses on summer and gives three reasons why it is the writer's favorite season. None of the reasons are developed, however. The paper digresses in the second paragraph when the writer talks about friends in a general sense but fails to tie it into the main idea of summer. The writer uses two transitions in the paper ("another great activity" and "and"). Because it is so general, the reader does not feel the writer's commitment. The writer's voice does come through in the last line, "If only it would be summer all year around." Word choice is very simplistic. The first two sentences of the paper are fragments, and there are numerous run on, flawed sentences (e.g., "They are fun to be around, all the crazy sleepovers we have, and we are all exactly the same.") The unflawed sentences are very simplistic. Many basic words are misspelled (e.g., "untill" for "until," "beilive" for "believe," and "their" for "there").

Overall, this paper is flawed and does not pass the Writing Proficiency Exam. It is an example of an "Approaches Standard" paper. More elaboration of ideas, varied sentences, more sophisticated word choice, proofreading/editing for basic spelling and fragmented sentences would improve this paper.



## Writing Sample DD

Many people would choose ~~summer~~<sup>Summer</sup> as their favorite season. Not me. I think it is too hot during the summer. I like spring the most. It is the season everything comes to life.

My favorite season is spring because the cold season (winter) has ended. ~~and~~<sup>During</sup> spring it is starting to get ~~and~~<sup>warm</sup> outside. It gets warm not blazing hot like during the summer. There are also light breezes during spring and during the summer it is mostly hot all the time.

I like spring because the world isn't so plain anymore. The blossoms start to bloom and the world comes to life again. What I mean by the world comes to life again is that the animals <sup>start to</sup> wake up. The trees start to bloom. The flowers start to emerge. The birds start to sing.

At the end of spring the world is completely awake. There are ~~beautiful~~<sup>beautiful</sup> flowers everywhere. The trees are green, with fruit hanging from them. The birds come out and sing. Everything is alive again.

There are so many more reasons why I like spring. Birthdays, <sup>h</sup>olidays and so on but these are my three reasons why I like this season so much.



### Writing Sample DD (Pure 3 High)

This paper is very close to being adequate, but the flaws in it keep it in the “THREE” range. It is focused on spring, and there are relevant examples of why spring is the writer’s favorite season (e.g., the temperature, the blossoms, the light breezes, etc.). Many of the ideas are repetitious, however, as the paper revisits the flowers blooming and the birds singing numerous times. Although there is some organization, much of the paper lacks coherence as it moves from flowers blooming to animals waking up back to blooming flowers. The paper does have some voice (e.g., “The blossoms start to bloom, and the world comes to life again.”) The grammar and usage, while readable, is flawed. Sentences are very simplistic (e.g., “The birds come out and sing.” and “Everything is alive again.”) Other sentences are run on and incorrect (e.g., “I think it is to hot during the summer I like spring the most.”) The writer has trouble knowing when to use apostrophes (e.g., “tree’s” for trees” and “its” for “it’s”).

Overall, this paper is very close to meeting standards in writing but does not pass the Writing Proficiency Exam. It is an example of an “Approaches Standard” paper. This paper a draft or two away from passing the exam. Helping the writer to stay on topic in paragraphs, combining simple sentences, using varied sentence structures, and editing for use of apostrophes would help this paper move to the “Meets Standard” range.



## Writing Sample EE

Out of all the seasons each year, my all time favorite is Summer. Summer is the most supreme because it's hot and there are lots of advantages in Summer.

Every Summer my family and I go on grand vacations. We visit family, go to different beaches, and try to travel to different parts of the world. We can only do this at Summer time because every other season there's school. Which brings me to my next point. No school.

The best thing about no school is no homework. You can just unwind and don't worry about a thing. You can also hangout with friends more often. During school you don't see your friends outside of school as much because of homework.

My final reason is that there are a lot more activities to do. You can do watersports, baseball, soccer, more theme parks are open, and so much more. In summer I'm a lot more active and I like to keep myself busy.

Summer will always be my favorite season because of the wide range of activities. It is also the only time I get to see my family. I'm always waiting for summer to get back.



### Writing Sample EE (Pure 4 Low)

This paper is just adequate. It focuses on summer and develops with some relevant details. More details are necessary, however, to see it as a strong “FOUR” paper. For example, the family goes on vacation, but the reader is left wondering where they went specifically. The paper’s organization is adequate. It ties the reasons the writer likes summer together. In the second paragraph, the last line previews the next reason (“Which brings me to my next point. No school.”) However, in the fourth paragraph, the random list of summer activities throws off the organization. There is some commitment to the topic. The author’s word choice is generally simplistic and unvaried. The grammar and usage in this paper are generally correct. While the sentences are generally correct, there is very little variety.

This Meets Standard paper just passes the exam and is barely adequate. With greater attention to certain details, such as developing the parents’ responses to the writer’s cooperative nature, tighter organization, more varied sentence structures, and less bland word choice would help improve this paper.



## Writing Sample FF

My favorite season is summer. Let me explain. Summer is a great time to take a dive in the pool, or just relax. My family and I do some activities. My birthday, my dad's birthday, and much more.

To start off with is the last day of school. Want to know what that means? The last day of school means no more homework, no more tests, and obviously, no more torture by the teachers. I'm serious, the teachers just want to pound all that social studies, English, math, science, and whatever else they want to put their hands on in YOUR head! We really don't get a break this long too often. What I mean is that middle school and high school students especially have to go to school CONSTANTLY...ugh.

Don't forget MY BIRTHDAY! This is my favorite time of the year besides Christmas. My astro sign is a Leo, so my birthday is August 12, 1997. I'm also going to be 13, and also in the eighth grade. Since I'm getting older, my parents don't know what I like anymore; I have to buy it myself. What I mean is that I only have a short amount of time until I'm 18.

Lastly, the thing I like about summer is going to the Boys & Girls Club. The activities are out-of-this-world. For example, there's computers, art, outside area, game room, and of course the teen area. I even went to "Wild Island" during the summer. We even have special events every Friday. I wonder what's in store for me this summer.

As you saw, my favorite season of ALL time is summer. If you like having fun, you should try a water park, like "Wild Island." Better yet, do what you want to do, even if it sounds risky.



### Writing Sample FF (Pure 4 High)

This is a very strong 4 paper. It is focused on summer and there are many relevant details. For example, the writer says there are numerous activities at the Boys and Girls Club, and then goes on to detail those activities. The paper, while adequate, is weakest in organization as the entire second paragraph is more a rant about why the writer dislikes school than why he likes summer. Transitions such as “Don’t forget MY BIRTHDAY” are less effective in terms of organization but do enhance the voice, which is the strongest aspect of this paper. There is no doubt about this writer’s commitment to summer. He loves his birthday and spends some time reflecting on his age. Word choice at times is refreshing (e.g., “students have to go to school CONSTANTLY”). Grammar and usage, sentence variety, and interior punctuation are generally correct.

This Meets Standard paper is clearly adequate and passes the exam. This paper could be improved by enhancing transitions, improving organization, and controlling word choice for style.



## Writing Sample GG

Summer, the season of the sun. Nothing makes me happier than the freedom of summer. School ends and the adventure begins: camping among nature's beauty and American barbecue in the midst of July. Let's explore that marvelous journey, right here, right now. Shall we?

It all begins with the ringing of a bell, the scream of students, and the relief of stress that has been building for nearly a year. The second school is out, a door opens to a world of sleeping in and playing to your heart's content. No more homework or books, just you and summer bliss.

Shortly into summer, my family and I often go camping. There, under a canopy of trees and an array of birds is where I find myself at peace. Even when the occasional bear is simply passing through, I wouldn't be anywhere else. The bright blue reservoir and rustling trees sing a song of grace, and the sparkling stars watch over you as you sleep.

Enough of this calmness! Get ready for a boom! The Fourth of July lights up the heavens with awesome fireworks and the sound of joy. Celebrating our independence is always a pleasure to spend with family. July 4<sup>th</sup> makes summer amazing.

Are you persuaded yet, or shall I continue? Summer is definitely my favorite season, and it always leaves me excited. Maybe you feel the same way?



## Writing Sample GG (Pure 5)

This is a mid-range “FIVE” paper. It is clearly above average, especially in the sophistication of the word choice and sentence structure. The paper focuses on summer and effectively details why it is the writer’s favorite season. Organization contributes to the flow of ideas with transitions (e.g., “Enough of this calmness!” and “Get ready for a boom!”). The introduction, a deliberate fragment, is very effective (“Summer, the season of the sun.”) The question at the end of the paper is less satisfying and weakens the conclusion. Voice is this paper’s strongest aspect with each paragraph conveying a distinct mood. Word choice such as “canopy of trees” contributes to the overall effect. The sentence structure is very mature. Consider this parallelism as an example: “It all begins with the ringing of a bell, the scream of students, and the relief of stress that has been building for nearly a year.” There are, however, some sentences that are somewhat confusing (e.g., “Celebrating our independence is always a pleasure to spend with family.”) Interior punctuation is correct.

This “Exceeds Standard” paper is clearly above average and passes the exam. This paper could be improved by revising the awkward sentences, strengthening the conclusion, and controlling ideas in the introduction for insight and engaging the audience.



## Writing Sample HH

Year after year for countless years, winter, spring, summer, and fall have always made their appearance whether we're ready or not. We humans complain and bellyache (to no avail) through each season with its irritations and inconveniences. While there is no "perfect" season there is one that brings fewer annoyances than the others... summer.

Warmth! I crave it, I adore it, I cherish it right up to about 98°, and then I begin to whine like a baby. Of course here in northern Nevada that means I'm only a "happy camper" for about ten days. I can never count on a warm extended spring with its chilly days, rain showers, and those infuriating BLIZZARDS! So when spring finally gives way to summer (sometimes in June for crying out loud!) it often goes straight into those stifling "dog days" of summer, days too hot to even enjoy my favorite activities. For example, that much anticipated picnic is ruined because that noisy group of "crazies" just took the last table in the shade! Therefore, the next week is spent nursing a third-degree sunburn inside our sweltering house. I would go hang with my friends but they're all on vacation in fabulous destinations like Hawaii and Puerto Vieja. Oh, but don't worry about me, my parents promised to take me to lovely Sacramento to visit all my cousins, and yep, they made good on that promise. By the end of summer, my favorite season, I begin looking forward to fall. I can't wait for those gale-force winds and early snowstorms that freeze the fun out of poor little trick-or-treaters.



## Writing Sample HH (Pure 6)

This paper reveals a writer clearly in control. The approach to the prompt is refreshing and the tongue-in-cheek review of the weather is insightful. Relevant details go beyond the ordinary and also contribute to voice (e.g., “‘crazies’ who take the last table in the shade” and “the next week is spent nursing a second degree sunburn”). The organization is subtle and contributes to the main idea. The introduction is effective, but the conclusion is weaker. The strength of this paper is in the unique voice. The reader can relate to the “spring blizzards” and the fact that the weather goes straight to “those stifling dog days of summer.” Word choice contributes to the mood of the piece (e.g., “bellyache (to no avail)” and “happy camper”). The conventions are not only correct, but contribute to the piece stylistically. Consider the parallelism in the following: “Warmth! I crave it, I adore it, I cherish it right up to 98, and then I begin to whine like a baby.” and “Oh, but don’t worry about me, my parents promised to take me to lovely Sacramento to visit my cousins, and yep, they made good on their promise.” Not only are these sentences structured well, they also demonstrate the sentence variety in the paper. This paper definitely exceeds standards in writing.

This “Exceeds Standard” paper is superior and passes the exam with the highest score for eighth grade. This paper could be improved by strengthening the conclusion.



## Writing Sample II

"Yea"! School's out, and no more worrying about homework. You can swim, go to friends houses, go shopping, wow, there's a lot to do. Every day gets better by the minute. Summer is my favorite season and always will be!

The weather is blazing hot out almost every day. I remember one day it was so hot out, no one was even swimming outside! But to fix that, a pb&j sandwich and some fruit salad is all you need to have a great day.

After lunch, it's a perfect time to go swimming, but wait 20 minutes, though. At the pool, at the beach, even in the backyard, it is perfect anywhere. After swimming you can spend the night at a best friends house. Then the next day you can shop till you drop! There's always something amazingly fun to do.

But my favorite thing to do is go to the beach! The hot sand on my feet and that ice cold water is the perfect place to have an awesome time. When you're hungry you can always have a sandwich, a yogurt, and a cookie with a big water bottle. One day the waves were so big I stayed in the water the whole time!

Who new there were so many things to do during Summer? Sometimes I wish it was Summer everyday for the rest of my life. Summer is and always will be my favorite season!!



## Writing Sample II (RangeFinder 4)

Sample II is a “FOUR” paper. It closely resembles the qualities of Writing Samples EE. It does not reach the level of the “FOUR” high as in Writing Sample FF but is better in quality than the “THREE” Writing Sample DD.

Your annotation might include some or all of the following: It focuses on summer and provides adequate examples such as swimming, shopping and going to the beach. The weakest aspect of this paper is organization. While there are transitions, the paper does not flow smoothly (e.g., “After lunch, it’s a perfect time to go swimming, but wait 20 minutes though.” and “At the pool at the beach even in the back yard. . .”). The ideas here are difficult to follow. There is an effective introduction and it contributes to the strong voice in this paper (“Yea! School’s out and no more worrying about homework.”) Even when it is “blazing hot” the writer can have a great day with “ a p b & j sandwich and some fruit.” The word choice is adequate and conveys the writer’s commitment to the topic. This writer does not commit many errors in grammar or usage, but the sentences are simplistic and predictable. Words like “sandwitch” for “sandwich” and “new” for “knew” should be spelled correctly.

This paper would improve if the writer included transitions, used varied sentence structures, used less mundane vocabulary, and edited for correct spelling.



## Writing Sample JJ

What is your favorite season? My is summer. I love summer because school is over and can spend more time with friends and family.

In the summer you have a lot of freedom. Like no school or no more bed time and the best one no WACKING UP EARLY.

Another reason why summer is my favorite season is because you can get involved in sports and don't have to worry if it is going to snow or rain. Also in the summer the football, soccer, and basketball seasons start. And you get play them and don't worry about school work like in another seasons we are in school.

Lastly I love summer because of all the things that nature and you can do like grow flowers and trees. Also animals come out to get food or to show their bodies around. You can also go to lakes, rivers, and beaches too.

Then you have it 3 reasons why summer is my favorite season. If summer is also your favorite season too then you are awesome.



### Writing Sample JJ (Rangefinder 3)

This paper does not reach the qualities of score “THREE” high as in Writing Sample DD but is better in quality than Writing Sample BB and the score point “TWO.”

Your annotation might read like this: While the paper focuses on summer, the details are more a random list than a coherent piece of writing. The ideas go from freedom to friends to weather to sports to growing flowers and trees. The paper rambles. There is an introduction and conclusion, but they are predictable. There is a commitment to the topic, but the word choice is simplistic and does not enhance the paper. While there are numerous spelling errors (e.g., “wacking” for “waking” and “their” for “there”) the conventions are generally correct. The whole paper, however, from word choice to sentence structure is very simplistic, awkward, and has run-on sentences (e.g., “And you get play them and don’t worry about school work like in another seasons we are in school.”) The paper confuses the reader.

This paper would improve if the writer elaborated on the many details, tried to link details to the conclusion, used varied sentence structures, revised awkward sentences, and edited for correct spelling and run-on sentences.

