

Understanding Provincial Achievement Standards in Reading and Writing

Helping your child to be successful



Recognize the signs of a successful writer.

Teachers look at six areas of a student's writing to identify success, as reflected in the Provincial Achievement Standards for the end of Grade 8. The description of the game of hockey on this page is an example of acceptable writing by a student at the **end of Grade 8**.

Content is the overall topic, degree of focus and related details. In the hockey game example, the writer has included thoughtful ideas relevant to the topic ("... good hand-eye coordination") and included relevant details that enhance the ideas ("There are three forwards, two defence, and...").

Organization means the writing has a clearly established purpose in the introduction, transitions to show sequencing and connections ("There are many rules..."), and finishes with an adequate conclusion ("Hockey is a very exciting game and ...").

Word Choice means that interesting words and/or technical or subject-specific language ("watch deflections," "decks" and "passes") and figurative language ("thrown out of") enhance meaning.

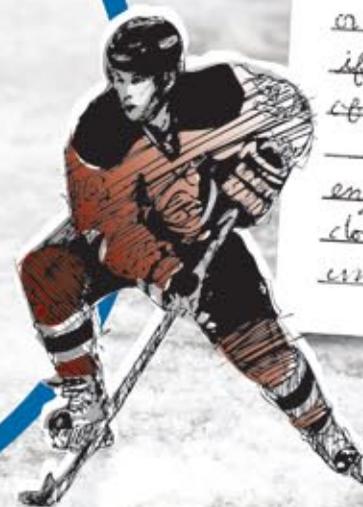
Voice means the student has skilfully connected the audience to the topic ("...watch a game on T.V. and you will fall in love with the game.") and has generated strong feeling, energy and individuality.

Sentence structure means different kinds of sentences with a variety of lengths and beginnings are used ("There are...short a player."). The sentence "Even if you don't like to play hockey, watch a game on T.V. and you will fall in love with the game," is easy to read.

Conventions include spelling, punctuation and grammar. In the hockey game example, the student uses internal punctuation (e.g., apostrophe, hyphen, comma) that creates fluency in the writing; almost all words are used and spelled correctly.

You can support your teen's development of writing strategies and behaviours.

- Provide your teen many opportunities to read different genres of interest (e.g., science fiction, realistic/historical fiction, biographies) written by different authors.
- Suggest a variety of sources in which ideas and information can be gathered.
 - Provide appropriate tools (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus).
- Encourage your teen to review the Writing Revision Checklist on the attached bookmark.
- If a part of your teen's writing is confusing, point out the specific part and explain why it confused you.
- Read the writing aloud while your teen listens for fluency.
 - Encourage the use of a variety of publishing formats (e.g., online blogging, pamphlets, letters to the editor).



"Hockey is a very challenging and fast-paced game."

Hockey is a very challenging and fast-paced game. It is played on ice with equipment, stick, and skates. The object of the game is to score on the other teams net while defending your own. There are six players on the ice for each team including the goalie.

There are three forwards, two defence, and a goalie on the ice. The forwards job is to put the puck in the other teams net, the defences job is to stop the other team from scoring while helping the forwards score, and the goalies job is stop the other teams attempts to score.

People think that the goalies have the easiest job on the ice. They think this because the net is small and you have lots of equipment on, but its harder then it looks. You have to have good hand-eye coordination because pucks can be shot up to 100 miles per hour depending on whos shooting it, and you need to watch for deflections, dekes, and passes because they usually beat the goalie.

There are many rules in the game of hockey, and if you don't go by them you get a penalty which disadvantages your team because you are short a player. In higher leagues of hockey you can check but not in lower levels. In any league of hockey you can't trip, slash, hook, spear, or fight or you will get a penalty automatically or if its serious then you will be thrown out of the game.

Hockey is a very exciting game and is enjoyed by many youth and elders. Even if you don't like to play hockey watch a game on T.V. and you will fall in love with the game.

Tear off these handy checklists. Your teen will recognize the traits of good writing and the reading strategies from school. They help develop strong independent reading and writing skills.

Writing Revision Checklist

Content

- I selected a specific topic with a main idea.
- I included relevant ideas/events.

Organization

- I used my introduction to let my readers know what I would be writing about.
- I put my ideas into a logical order and organized them into paragraphs.
- I used transitions between and within paragraphs to connect my ideas.
- I provided an appropriate conclusion.

Word Choice

- I included interesting words and specific language.
- I used figurative language (e.g. metaphor, analogy, symbolism).

Voice

- I made my reader interested in my topic.
- I showed that I care about my topic.
- I created strong feeling, energy, and individuality.

Sentence Structure

- I included a variety of sentence structures.
- I included a variety of sentence lengths and beginnings to make my writing flow.

Conventions

- I included commas, semi-colons, colons, dashes, hyphens, parentheses, and apostrophes and correctly paragraphed any dialogue.
- I used correct spelling.
- I used correct grammar (subject/verb agreement, verb tense, all parts of speech, numbers, contractions, plurals).

Reading Strategies Checklist

I can use the following strategies and thinking to help me understand what I am reading:

- Connecting – This reminds me of the character ____ in ____.
- Questioning – I am confused because the chart (or another text feature) seems to say something different from the text.
- Inferring – I think ____ because it says ____.
- Visualizing – The author describes ____ in a way that I can clearly see.
- Determining Importance – Although I find this information interesting, it is not part of the main idea.
- Analyzing – I think the author's purpose in writing this was to ____.
- Synthesizing: "This information has made me reconsider how I viewed ____."

Fix-Up Strategies Checklist

I can use the following strategies to help me when the text becomes confusing:

- Stop and think about what I have already read.
- Use writing to reflect about what I have read.
- Retell what I have read.
- Reread.
- Notice patterns in text structure.
- Adjust my reading rate: slow down or speed up.

Recognize the signs of a successful reader.

In Grade 8, your teen will read a variety of texts written by many different authors. You, your teen, and his or her teacher can tell whether your teen is reading successfully by watching for growth in the following **reading behaviours**, drawn from the Provincial Achievement Standards for the **end of Grade 8**.

Checking closely for understanding, and adjusting and using a wide range of strategies

Encourage your teen to generate questions, make connections and organize significant information in notes or with graphic organizers.

Quickly solving unfamiliar words using a variety of clues

Encourage your teen to use root words, or origins, and references to find the meanings of unknown or technical words.

Automatically reading and understanding more words in a range of contexts

Encourage your teen to read and remember important words in subjects such as science (e.g., ecosystem, heterogeneous solutions, igneous rocks).

Reading familiar texts with expression and confidence, and adjusting rates to match form and purpose

Encourage your teen to use appropriate phrasing, pausing and tone.

Using context clues, prior knowledge or experience, and knowledge of text forms and features

Encourage your teen to verify and adjust predictions while reading, and to seek information from other sources when necessary.

Using text features (e.g., glossary, captions, charts and diagrams) to interpret and locate information

Encourage your teen to use all of the information in a text—not just the words in the paragraphs—to preview, interpret and locate information.

Reflecting on reading processes and strategies to ensure deeper understanding of content

Encourage your teen to use the reading and fix-up strategies checklists on the attached bookmark.

In Grade 9, your teen will complete the English Language Proficiency Assessment (E.L.P.A.), which measures both reading comprehension and writing skills. The standards described in this brochure reflect the expectations for success on the E.L.P.A. Successful completion of the E.L.P.A. is a graduation requirement for a New Brunswick high school diploma.

Studies show that students who read longer each day perform higher on reading tests. Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1998) report on this strong correlation:

Minutes of Reading per Day	Percentile Rank
90.7	98
40.4	90
21.7	70
12.9	50
3.1	20
1.6	10

You can support your teen's development of reading skills.

Teens demonstrating appropriate achievement respond to three levels of understanding. Interpreting and evaluating what is read are necessary elements of reading at this level. You can ask the following sample questions to help support his or her comprehension:

Comprehension Task	Reading "the lines"	Reading "between the lines"	Reading "beyond the lines"
Questions you can ask:	<p>What were the key ideas in the information you read?</p> <p>Why is the ____ event or action important in the story?</p>	<p>In what ways did the weaknesses or strengths of the character affect the chain of events in the story?</p> <p>What is the theme or message of the selection?</p>	<p>How would you have solved the problem?</p> <p>Whose viewpoint is presented or missing?</p> <p>Whose interests are served?</p>

Your teen is now reading texts that are mature and contain challenging themes and ideas. Topics may include human problems, such as abuse, war, hardship, poverty and racism. These texts encourage social awareness and provide your teen insight into the struggles of humanity. Your teen will often need to interpret and connect information and ideas to other texts and subject areas. *10 Myths and Realities of the Music Industry* is an example of text that a student at the end of Grade 8 should be able to read and understand.

- The language in reading material for your teen is challenging, including:
- many long multi-syllable words (e.g., popularize, sophisticated, merchandise)
 - complex plurals and spelling patterns (e.g., realities, continuous, techniques)
 - many hard-to-decode nouns and technical words (e.g., slovenly, plethora, discipline)

Increasingly, your teen reads text with many lines of print on a page that contains few or no illustrations. Texts may contain challenging illustrations, photographs and complex graphics that add meaning; they may also contain reader's tools, such as glossaries and pronunciation guides. The music industry text example contains a pie chart, which shows how the money is divided when a CD is purchased.



Contact Us

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to your child's reading and writing success. If you have any questions about your child's progress or about how you can be an active part of his or her learning, contact your child's teacher or the provincial literacy team at 506-453-2812.