

Prose Constructed Response Writing Guide

This resource is a tool designed to prepare students for writing, not to prompt students during administration of the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR).

Please ensure that students understand the following points before they begin writing at the end of each ELA section of the IAR:

There are three task types: Research Simulation Task (RST), Literary Analysis Task (LAT), and Narrative Writing Task (NWT). Approximately 50% of the student's ELA total score is derived from the sum of the two writing prompts they receive. It's important to understand the definitions of terms in the standards, such as narrative, compare/contrast, theme, main idea(s), structure, etc.

1. Students should read and reread prompts carefully to fully understand the instructions.
2. Students must address all parts of the prompt by showing an understanding of what is being asked and responding accordingly.
3. In the online testing environment, the answer box expands, so students should aim to write multiple-paragraph responses rather than just a few sentences.
4. Copying and pasting from stimulus material is allowed when quoting text evidence, but students should not rely solely on copying and should use their own words as well. To copy, students must highlight the desired text, hold down the Control (ctrl) key, and then press C. To paste, students must hold down the Control (ctrl) key and then press V.
5. Students should use the remaining time to write and review their responses. Students will be limited to 20,000 characters (including spaces).

Best Practices for Students

Plan your response: Make an outline or sketch. Be sure to have a blank piece of paper at the start of the test to use for your outline. Identify and jot down the key points you want to include in your response. Make sure to address each part of the prompt. Then, list the details or reasons you will use to support your claim or topic. Review the writing checklist provided with each PCR.

Manage your time: Allocate specific planning, writing, and revising time. Try to follow this schedule to ensure you have enough time to fully answer each part of the prompt. A typical time plan would be to spend 20% of your time planning, 70% of your time writing, and 10% of your time revising. For example, if you had 45 minutes to complete your response, use approximately 9-10 minutes for planning, 30 minutes for writing the response, and the remaining time for proofreading.

Write your response: Use complete sentences and multiple paragraphs to write the response you planned in the previous step. Ensure that you answer the prompt fully. Structure your writing with clear and coherent paragraphs. Each paragraph should focus on a single idea and provide supporting examples, evidence, and reasoning from the passages or media. Ensure that there is a logical connection between each paragraph. Focus on writing clearly and precisely to effectively communicate ideas. Use transitional phrases and words to guide the reader through the response.

Proofread your response. Finally, if time allows, review the response. Look for any grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, or inconsistencies. Check that the response presents clear and well-supported ideas.

Links: Rubrics and Evidence Statements

[IAR ELA Writing Rubrics](#)

2027 Addition: Prose Constructed Response Writing Checklist

Beginning with the 2027 administration (operational and field test)

Students are encouraged to use the writing checklists that adhere to their grade and task model. Checklists are a way for students to ensure they have reviewed their work and have included essentials for success in their Prose Constructed Response. Checklists will accompany each PCR (the final item of the section).

Grades 3-4 LAT and RST Writing Checklist

- ☐ I addressed each part of the prompt using complete sentences.
- ☐ I organized my ideas clearly using multiple paragraphs.
- ☐ I showed understanding using text-based evidence.
- ☐ I read over my completed response and checked for correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Grades 3-4 NWT Writing Checklist

- ☐ I wrote a multiple-paragraph story according to the prompt.
- ☐ I used details from the original story to write my story.
- ☐ I included a logically sequenced beginning, middle, and end in my story.
- ☐ I read over my completed story and checked for correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Grades 5-8 LAT and RST Writing Checklist

- ☐ I addressed each part of the prompt in my response.
- ☐ I clearly organized my ideas, used transitions, and effectively developed the topic in multiple paragraphs.
- ☐ I developed strong support for my ideas with accurate and relevant evidence from the texts.
- ☐ I read over my completed response and checked for correct grammar and mechanics.

Grades 5-8 NWT Writing Checklist

- ☐ I wrote a multiple-paragraph story according to the prompt.
- ☐ I used details from the original story and incorporated narrative techniques (such as dialogue) to write my story.
- ☐ I included a logically sequenced beginning, middle, and end in my story.
- ☐ I read over my completed story and checked for correct grammar and mechanics.