



ISA
Writing
Sample Materials
Grades 3 – 10

Sample

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Writing Task A

Notes on Writing Samples

Students responses to the narrative prompt (“Just in Time”) are rated on Content - the kinds of ideas generated and the quality of thinking and reflection; Language - expressiveness (for instance, in the use of vocabulary and the variety of sentence forms) and accuracy in technical aspects such as punctuation and grammar; and Spelling - taking account of both accuracy and range.

Student responses to the Expository/Argumentative prompt (“Should lions be kept in cages?”) are rated on Content (the kinds of ideas generated and the quality of thinking demonstrated about the issue); Organisation - the way the writing is structured at both global and local levels; and Language, with an emphasis on features such as grammar and syntax that may be of special challenge to students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

In many schools, students are not often asked to sit and write for an extended period without preparation. They typically have time to plan and discuss their piece, and perhaps to write several drafts. As far as possible - given that standardised administration is required in order to make meaningful judgments of student performance - the way the ISA writing tasks are presented to students aims to emulate these features of good practice in writing pedagogy. To give the flavour, we present the introduction to the narrative writing task, “Just in time!”, and the introduction to the Expository/Argumentative writing task, “Should lions be kept in cages?”.

Annotated writing samples can be downloaded from our web site www.acer.edu.au/isa/writingsamples.html.

Introducing the Writing task

SAY

Now you are going to do a Writing task. Turn your booklet to the page with Writing Task A1 on the bottom. Check that the page number says “Writing Task A1”.

Check that everyone is looking at the first page of the Writing Task A section.

SAY

On the page you can see some sentences to tell you what to write about. Follow while I read them.

READ

“Just in time!”

Write a story with these words in it. You may use these words at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of your writing. Or you could use “Just in time” as the title of your story.

SAY

This is what you are going to do now.

You are going to write a story that includes the words, "Just in time!" You must write a story. Do not write a piece giving your opinion.

You need to show how well you can write a story. Make your story interesting for someone else to read. Your story needs a plot, a setting and characters.

You can choose to write about something that really happened or something that is made up. You might like to write about something that happened to you just in time, or about something you hope will happen just in time. You might write about something strange, or about an everyday things that happens just in time. It might be something you see, or something on-one has ever seen before. Your story might be about you and your friends, or about a completely different group of characters.

Does anyone have a suggestion for a story?

Conduct a short discussion (no more than 5 minutes) to focus students on writing a story using this picture as an idea. Encourage students to suggest a range of different story ideas. Make sure students understand that they must write a story and not an opinion piece.

SAY

You should write the best first draft that you can. If you make a mistake, just correct it neatly. If you don't know how to spell a word, you should write it using the best spelling you can.

Your story will be judged on how well you develop your ideas into a story, the way you use language, and your spelling.

There is some space on the first page for you to do a plan or make some notes if you wish to.

Start your story on the next page. There are lined pages for writing you to write on. You do not have to use all the pages.

You have 30 minutes to do your writing, and I will tell you when you have ten minutes left. Are there any questions?

Check that everyone understands what is required.

Starting the test

SAY

Remember that you must write a story. Somewhere in your writing you need to use the phrase, "Just in time!"

You may start now.

Just in time!

Write a story with these words in it.

You may use these words at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of your writing.

Or you could use 'Just in time' as the title of your story.

Use this space to plan your writing.

Writing Task B

Introducing the Writing task

SAY

Now you are going to do a task where you write about what you think. Turn your booklet to the page with Writing Task B1 on the bottom.

Check that everyone is looking at the first page of the Writing Task B section.

SAY

On the page you can see the topic for your writing. Follow while I read it aloud.

READ

Should lions be kept in cages?

[The boy says]

I think lions are lucky to live in a zoo. They never have to worry about anything.

[The girl says]

I don't think so. It is cruel to lock them up. They should be free.

[Then underneath it says]

Should lions be kept in cages?

Write about what you think and give your reasons why.

Do not write a story for this piece of writing.

Use the space below to plan your writing.

SAY

This is what you are going to do now. You are going to write on the topic, "Should lions be kept in cages?" What is your opinion about this? Do you think lions should be kept in cages or not? You need to write what you think and give good reasons to show why you think this way. You can think whatever you want about whether lions should be kept in cages but you must give good reasons to support what you think.

Conduct a short discussion (no more than 5 minutes) to focus students on the reasons for their opinions about keeping lions in cages. Encourage students to think of some different reasons to support different opinions. Ensure students know that interesting and unusual thoughts are welcome, and encourage them to develop an individual position. Ensure students understand that they can have any opinion they like about the topic as long as they support it with good reasons. Do not make any notes for the students (e.g. on a chalkboard).

Discussion could be prompted with questions such as:

- Why do you think that?
- Do you have other different opinions?
- What reasons do you have for thinking that?
- Do you agree with what (student name) said?

After a brief discussion:

SAY

You should write the best first draft that you can. If you make a mistake, just correct it neatly. If you don't know how to spell a word, you should write it using the best spelling you can.

You need to write what you think about the question, "Should lions be kept in cages?" You can answer by arguing just on one side or just on the other side, or by giving arguments for both sides. Make sure that you include reasons for your opinions.

Your writing will be judged on your ideas and on how well you write about them, and on the way you organise your writing.

There is some space on the first page for you to do a plan or make some notes if you wish to.

Start writing what you think on the next page: Writing Task B 2. There are lined pages for you to write on. You do not have to use all the pages.

You have 30 minutes to write what you think, and I will tell you when you have ten minutes left.

Check that everyone understands what is required.

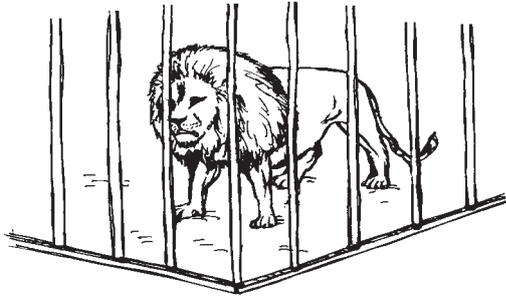
Starting the test

SAY

Remember you need to write about your opinions and to give reasons to support what you think.

You may start now.

Should lions be kept in cages?



I think lions are lucky to live in a zoo. They never have to worry about anything.



I don't think so. It is cruel to lock them up. They should be free.



Should lions be kept in cages

Write about what you think and give your reasons why.

Do not write a story for this piece of writing

Use the space below to plan your writing.

