

# Writing Testlet FAQ

***Which DLM students are assessed in writing? When are students assessed in writing?***

All students in every grade are assessed every year in writing as a part of the English language arts blueprint. Writing testlets are available for all DLM students during the instructionally-embedded window.

***How is writing assessed in DLM testlets?***

There are two types of writing testlets: emergent writing testlets for students who do not yet have or are working on early symbolic understanding, and conventional writing testlets for students who have symbolic understanding and can use writing tools to communicate. Writing testlets are similar to teacher-administered testlets in reading and math where the test administrator engages in a scripted activity with a student outside of KITE™ Client and then enters observations and ratings of the student’s behavior into KITE Client. Emergent writing testlets and conventional writing testlets require the test administrator to engage the student in writing about information using the tools the student normally writes with as a part of instruction and then observing the student’s writing processes and products. Some items focus on teacher observation of the student’s writing process. Other items require the teacher to evaluate the student’s written product. Writing testlets are expected to take 10-15 minutes to administer.

***How do the Blueprint and ITI align? What will I choose in Educator Portal/ITI?***

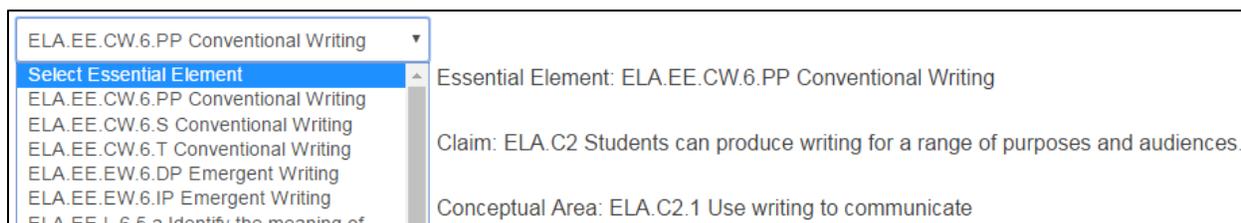
What you see in Educator Portal, when choosing Essential Elements (EEs) through the ITI, is not an exact match to the blueprint. This is because EEs and linkage levels are combined into testlets. In high school, C2.1 AND C2.2 testlets are placed under ONLY the C2.1 heading in ITI.

What you see on the blueprint (Grade 6 example):

ELA.C2.1	All students are assessed in all three of these EEs through the writing assessment. <b>In ITI, choose one Conventional EE or one Emergent EE. See Writing Testlet FAQ for more detail.</b>	
	EE.L.6.2.b	Spell untaught words phonetically, drawing on letter-sound relationships and common spelling patterns.
	EE.W.6.2.a	Introduce a topic and write to convey ideas and information about it including visual, tactual, or multimedia information as appropriate.
	EE.W.6.2.b	Provide facts, details, or other information related to the topic.



What you see in ITI (Grade 6 example):



Each of the writing EEs available for selection includes items that cover all the requirements for the ELA blueprint. For a conventional writing testlet, choose an EE with CW in the name. For an emergent writing testlet, choose an EE with an EW in the name.

### ***How do I submit the student's writing for scoring?***

You do not submit the student's writing product. Test administrators evaluate the students' writing product according to the directions in KITE Client and enter their observations on rating scales similar to other teacher-administered testlets.

### ***Are there linkage levels for the writing EEs?***

Yes, and the linkage levels are grouped together in writing testlets. The initial and distal precursor levels are combined in an "Emergent Writing" testlet. The proximal precursor, target, and successor levels are combined in a "Conventional Writing" testlet. Emergent and Conventional Writing testlets will be available for every grade. Since EEs are combined into a single writing testlet at every grade level, the codes used in KITE Client will look different than the EEs that appear on the blueprint. Emergent Writing testlets will be labeled with an "EW" in the EE code. Conventional writing testlets will be labeled with a "CW" in the EE code.

For example, Grade 4 Writing EE codes will appear in KITE as:

<b>ELA.EE.EW.4.IP</b>	This is an ELA Essential Element for Emergent Writing, Grade 4, Initial Precursor
<b>ELA.EE.EW.4.DP</b>	This is an ELA Essential Element for Emergent Writing, Grade 4, Distal Precursor
<b>ELA.EE.CW.4.PP</b>	This is an ELA Essential Element for Conventional Writing, Grade 4, Proximal Precursor
<b>ELA.EE.CW.4.T</b>	This is an ELA Essential Element for Conventional Writing, Grade 4, Target
<b>ELA.EE.CW.4.S</b>	This is an ELA Essential Element for Conventional Writing, Grade 4, Successor

### ***What is emergent writing?***

Emergent writing describes the marks, scribbles, and random selection of letters seen in beginning writers' work. The EEs focus on having students work toward an understanding of writing as a form of communication and the ability to write about information. Emergent writing testlets focus on nodes in the learning map that are identified as being important precursor skills on the way toward conventional

writing. The DLM professional development module called Emergent Writing includes examples of strategies teachers can use to start writing with students as a part of instruction.

***What is conventional writing?***

Conventional writing includes methods of writing that use orthography (letters, words) assembled in ways that are meaningful to others. Key conceptual components of conventional writing include an understanding that words are comprised of letters, that words have meanings, and that written words can be put together in order to communicate to others. Key behaviors associated with conventional writing include writing letters and words through the use of a traditional writing tool or alternate pencil. Examples of conventional writing by students with significant cognitive disabilities can be seen in the DLM professional development module called Writing: Production and Distribution.

***What are the general principles of assessing writing in the DLM system?***

1. Maximize student independence while he or she writes.
2. Assess writing in a way that is appropriate for all students. This is accomplished through a set of structured tasks within a testlet. Tasks assess the student's writing process and product, for both emergent and conventional writers.

***What will students write about?***

Testlets that assess writing allow students to select their own topic, or to select a topic with assistance from test administrators. The writing-related EEs in the ELA blueprint focus on writing about information. Since writing is a complex process, students should be allowed to write about familiar informational topics. A student highly motivated to write about types of cars should be allowed to write about cars as part of the writing testlets. The tasks that the test administrator will guide the student through will focus on whether the student can write about information related to the selected topic. More information about instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities in writing can be found in the professional development module called Writing Information and Explanation Texts.

***What counts as "writing" for students taking the DLM assessment?***

When the testlet refers to "writing" or "the student wrote" in an answer option, observations can be of any method the student uses for writing, including eye-gaze or dictation of letters. Students may use word prediction, but selection of pictures or words from a word bank is not acceptable when the testlet requires writing. Dictation of whole words or sentences to the test administrator is not permitted.

***How are students who do not physically write using paper and pencil or a traditional keyboard assessed?***

The student can use whatever writing tool he or she uses during regular instruction, provided that it includes access to all 26 letters of the alphabet. These tools can include: pencil, pen, marker, whiteboard, keyboard, tablet keyboard, alternate keyboard, keyboard with word prediction software, alphabet flipbooks, and eye-gaze displays of letters. Students who use symbol systems or AAC devices should use them to communicate about the topic during the writing testlet, but should use the keyboard in the device or have access to an alternate pencil when the testlet requires writing.

Many students will need the support of test administrators to assist them in accessing a tool for writing. Some examples of partner-assisted alternate pencils that can be used by students who cannot physically access a traditional pencil include: eye-gaze systems, alphabet flip-charts used with partner-assisted scanning, adapted keyboards and onscreen switch-enabled keyboards. Specific information about allowable tools is included in the updated TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL. More information about alternate pencils and emergent writers can be found in these professional development modules called Writing with Alternate Pencils and Emergent Writing.

***How can I prepare to give a student a writing testlet?***

- The following professional development modules are recommended for test administrators who will deliver writing testlets.
  - Module: Writing: Text Types and Purposes
  - Module: Writing: Production and Distribution
  - Module: Writing Information and Explanation Texts
  - Module: Emergent Writing
- Before administering a writing testlet, access the Testlet Information Page (TIP) to learn more about what is needed for the specific testlet.

***How do I access professional development modules?***

Professional development modules are available here: <http://www.dlmpd.com>