

**Pennsylvania Department of Education**  
**Grade 11 Writing**  
**Performance Level Descriptors**

A student scoring at the **Advanced Level** produces narrative, informational, and persuasive pieces of writing that demonstrate a comprehensive command of composition skills. A student writing at this level

1. writes with a sharp, distinct focus that identifies topic and task
2. shows a sophisticated awareness of audience and mode
3. establishes and maintains a single point of view when appropriate
4. gathers and organizes valid and reliable information; analyzes substantial, effective content appropriate for topic
5. employs most effective format for purpose and audience
6. writes fully-developed paragraphs with illustrative supporting details specific to the topic and relevant to the focus
7. crafts effective introductions and conclusions
8. uses logical and sophisticated organizational structures and strategies to thoroughly develop content
9. uses a variety of effective transitions to develop a controlling idea
10. varies lengths, types, and patterns of sentences
11. utilizes vivid and precise language throughout to maintain a consistent voice and tone
12. revises writing to effectively improve style, word choice, sentence variety and subtlety of meaning after rethinking purpose, audience, and genre
13. demonstrates skill in editing to eliminate most errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence structure

A student scoring at the **Proficient Level** produces narrative, informational, and persuasive pieces of writing that demonstrate a thorough understanding of composition skills. A student writing at this level

1. writes with a clear focus that identifies topic and task
2. shows a general awareness of audience and mode
3. establishes and maintains a single point of view when appropriate
4. gathers and organizes valid and/or reliable information; analyzes content appropriate for topic
5. employs effective format for purpose and audience
6. writes well-developed paragraphs with relevant supporting details specific to the topic and relevant to the focus
7. produces adequate introductions and conclusions
8. uses logical organizational structures and strategies to sufficiently develop content
9. uses functional transitions to develop a controlling idea
10. varies lengths, types, and patterns of sentences
11. utilizes precise language to maintain a consistent voice and tone
12. revises writing to sufficiently address style, word choice, sentence variety and subtlety of meaning after rethinking purpose, audience, and genre

13. demonstrates skill in editing to eliminate common errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence structure

A student scoring at the **Basic Level** produces narrative, informational, and persuasive pieces of writing that demonstrate a limited understanding of composition skills. A student writing at this level

1. writes with a vague or indistinct focus to identify topic and/or task
2. shows a limited awareness of audience and mode
3. may establish but not maintain a single point of view
4. needs assistance to gather valid and/or reliable information and organize content appropriate for topic
5. may employ ineffective format for purpose and/or audience
6. constructs under-developed paragraphs with insufficient supporting details
7. produces inadequate introductions and/or conclusions
8. shows a limited ability to use logical organizational structures and/or strategies to develop content
9. uses few and/or ineffective transitions
10. lacks variety in types and patterns of sentences
11. utilizes vague or imprecise language often leading to an ineffective voice and/or tone
12. demonstrates limited ability to revise writing
13. shows a limited ability to eliminate errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence structure

A student scoring at the **Below Basic Level** produces writing that demonstrates a below grade-level understanding of composition skills and requires extensive assistance with composing, revising, and editing.