

Blueprint for Exceptional Writing Guide to California State Standards

California state writing assessment is part of the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. The California Writing Standards Tests (CSTs) are administered in grades four and seven as part of the California English-Language Arts Standards Tests (CSTs in English-language arts).

The CSTs in writing address specific state Writing Applications content standards for each grade level.

- Grade four: The standards require students to produce four types of writing: narratives, summaries, information reports, and responses to literature.
- Grade seven: The standards require students to produce five types of writing: narratives, persuasive essays, summaries, responses to literature, and research reports.

The CSTs in writing do not assess information reports in grade four or research reports in grade seven because these writing assignments require extended time for students to select research topics and gather information before writing can begin. In addition, the narrative writing tested in grades four and seven does not include personal or autobiographical narrative. Writing that would invite personal disclosure is not tested in any genre on the CSTs in writing. It is important to note that when readers score the CSTs in writing, they take into account that student responses are first draft writings.

Blueprint for Exceptional Writing (BEW) focuses on developing students' writing skills and mastery of various genres.

In addition to the CSTs in writing, the 2007 CSTs in English-language arts in grades four and seven contained seventy-five multiple-choice questions. The writing test in each of these grades may address any of the writing types identified as appropriate for testing at that grade level. This document is the latest in a series of teacher guides for the CSTs in writing in grades four and seven that have been provided each year since writing assessments were added to the STAR Program's CSTs in English-language arts. Each guide has featured the writing tasks administered that year, sample student responses, teacher commentaries, and scoring rubrics used to score student responses. The guides for the 2005, 2006, and 2007 CSTs in writing provide multiple sample student responses at each score point for all writing tasks administered. Teacher guides from previous years are available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

California has developed a separate test for English language learners (ELLs). Current CSTs scores suggest that implementing a writing model that supports all students, including English language learners, would benefit the state. *Blueprint for Exceptional Writing (BEW)* focuses on developing students' writing skills and mastery of the genres. By incorporating the BEW model into classroom instruction, teachers can help ELLs develop the understanding and foundation they need to meet writing proficiency by 2014.

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Grade Level	State	Genre Tested	BEW Chapters
Fourth Grade	California	Narrative Summaries Informational Response to Literature	Chapter 6: Narrative Section I: BEW Summary Section I: BEW Format Chapter 10: Response to Reading Section III: Creative Teaching Strategies
Seventh Grade	California	Narrative Persuasive Summaries Response to Literature Research	Chapter 10: Response to Reading Section I: BEW Format Section III: Creative Teaching Strategies