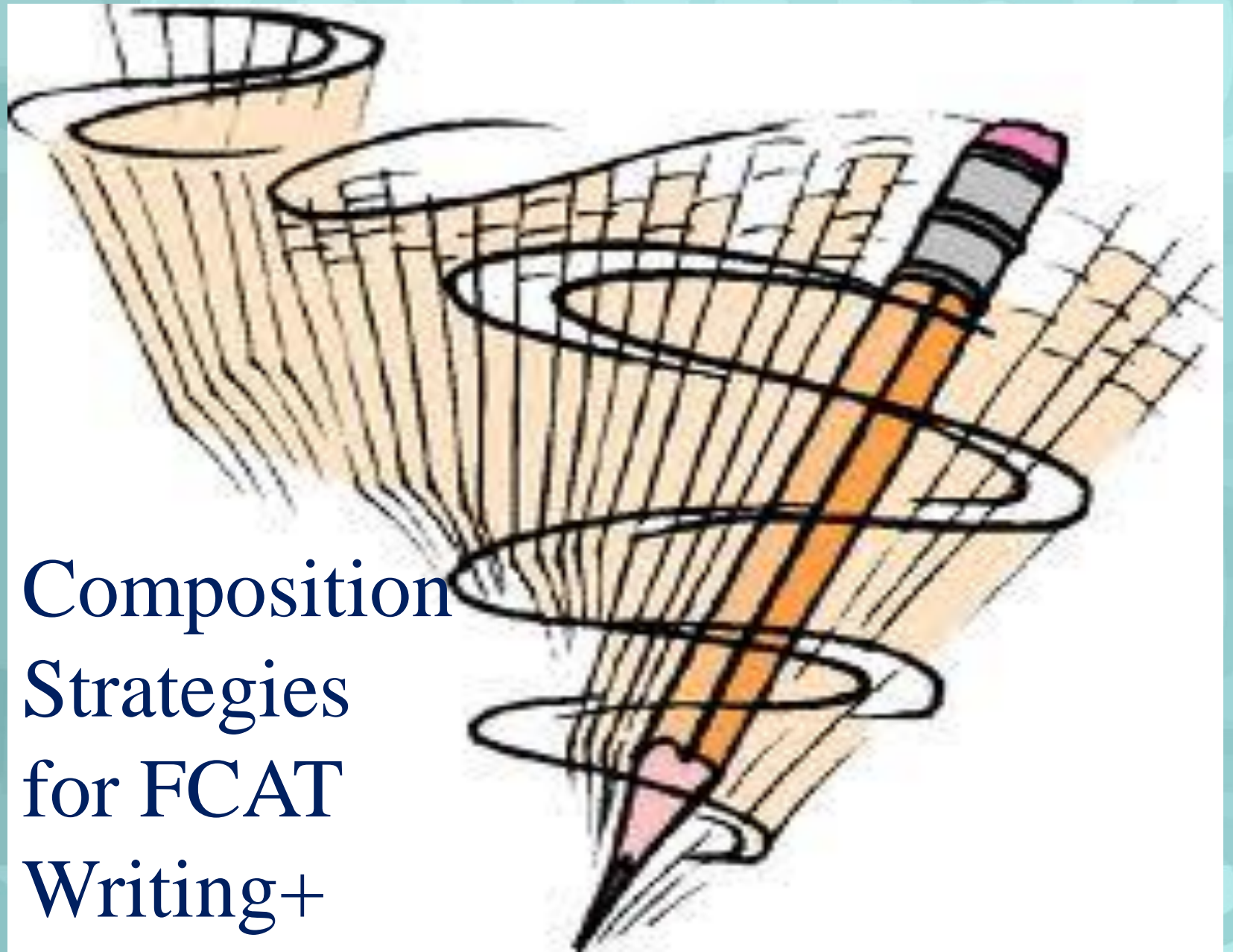


Composition
Strategies
for FCAT
Writing+





Technical assistance for teaching and learning across the curriculum can result in positive measurable outcomes.

FCAT Writing Composition Task



- Holistic scoring
- Scoring rubrics: non-scorable - 6
- Two types of prompts
- Timed – 45 minutes

FCAT Writing Composition Task

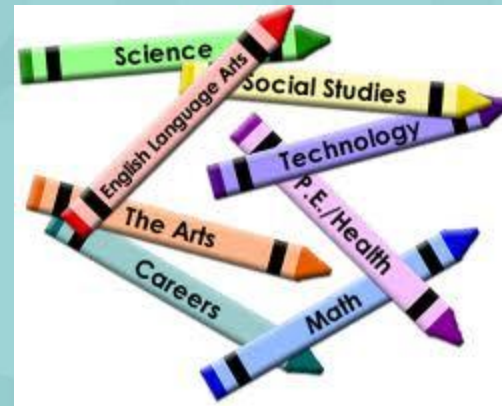
3 grade levels tested

2 types of prompts at each grade level

- 4th – narrative or expository prompts
- 8th – persuasive or expository prompts
- 10th – persuasive or expository prompts

Scoring criteria and rubrics linked to

- Focus
- Organization
- Support
- Conventions



Some ideas to remember ~

1. FCAT WRITING values the quality of writing over structure.
2. A presented writing prompt will allow for different methods of organization and development.
3. No preconceived guidelines exist for number of paragraphs nor sentences per paragraph.

Standard Structure for Compositions*



- Introductory paragraph – hook, thesis statement
- Body paragraphs – topic sentence, supports
- Concluding paragraph - summary or conclusion

* Guidelines for classroom writing may differ from criteria for success on FCAT writing prompt.

The “**Key Word Method**” for Effective Essays

1. Identify the question and audience; highlight **key words** from the prompt.
2. Make a graphic organizer to plan the essay; plan major parts and supporting details.
3. Design a thesis statement for the introductory paragraph using **key words** from the question.

The “**Key Word Method**” for Effective Essays

4. Compose a topic sentence for each body paragraph using **key words**.
5. Write an attention-grabbing introduction.
6. Develop each paragraph with supporting details.
7. Conclude with a restatement of the thesis (**key words**); reference opening statements.

Ways to Develop Content



1. Build supports - examples, quotations, facts, statistics, descriptive details, figurative language.
2. Use connectors and transitions to show relationships, logical flow of ideas.
3. Show a commitment to the topic, personalize.

Edit for ~

1. Varied sentence structure and word choice,
2. Grammar, mechanics, usage, spelling, and punctuation, and
3. Development of topic with internal supports.

Scoring will include increased attention to the correct use of standard English conventions. The current rubrics, which will be used for scoring in 2012, include expectations regarding the basic conventions of standard English, yet the scoring of this element in the past has been applied with leniency. Responses will continue to be scored holistically as draft writing, but scoring will be more stringent.

Responses earning scores of 4 or 5 must at least generally follow the conventions of sentence structure, mechanics, usage, punctuation, and spelling. To earn a score of 6, sentence structure is varied, and few, if any, errors occur in mechanics, usage, punctuation, and spelling. To review the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards expectations on the use of conventions for each grade level, go to floridastandards.org and select Reading/Language Arts for that grade level, followed by the Writing Process strand and Standard 4: Editing for Language Conventions.

Scoring will include increased attention to the quality of details, requiring use of relevant, logical, and plausible support, rather than contrived statistical claims or unsubstantiated generalities. The quality of the support depends on word choice, specificity, depth, relevance, and thoroughness.

Responses earning high scores must include specific and relevant supporting details that clarify the meaning, i.e., the point of the paragraph or the central theme of the response. Rote memorization or overuse of compositional techniques, such as rhetorical questions, implausible statistics, or pretentious language is not the expectation for quality writing at any grade level.

Sample Expository Prompt

Writing Situation - Through the years new inventions have changed the way we live.

Directions for Writing - Before you begin writing, think about one invention which has had an impact on the way you live.

Now, write to explain to your teacher how this invention has changed your life.

Sample Expository Prompt

Questions: What one invention has changed my life? How? Who is my audience?

Answers using key words –

invention

how this invention changed my life

audience is my teacher

Sample Persuasive Prompt

Writing Situation – Your school is considering a new policy that will require all students to wear uniforms.

Directions for Writing - Before you begin writing, think about the reasons why you agree or disagree with this policy.

Now, write to convince the principal that your school should or should not require students to wear uniforms.

Sample Persuasive Prompt

Question: Do I agree or disagree with the proposed new policy about school uniforms? What are my reasons for convincing the principal?

Answers using key words –

agree (or disagree) with new policy

require students to wear school uniforms

reasons

audience is my principal

Common Student Errors in Classroom Writing*



- Insufficient supports
- Loss of focus
- Failure to address the issue or topic
- Overuse of question format (“Have you ever wondered?”)
- Addressing the reader/stating the obvious: “I’m going to tell you about . . .”

* Guidelines for classroom writing may differ from criteria for success on FCAT writing prompt.