

# Evidence-Based Writing

CORRELATED TO  
Current  
State  
Standards

CARSONDELLOSA.COM

**TOPIC**  
**DESERTS**

**K**  
dry  
lots of sand  
coyotes  
jackrabbits  
rattlesnakes

**W**  
How do  
cacti grow?

**L**  
Are all  
deserts hot?

Cacti find  
water with  
shallow  
roots.

Some  
deserts  
get snow.

- Supports the use of textual evidence to inform writing
- Provides practice for opinion, explanatory, narrative, and research writing
- Reinforces process writing through a five-page writing practice packet
- Includes a Common Core alignment chart and writing rubric

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## Introduction

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Common Core writing standards focus on three main text types: opinion/argumentative, informative/explanatory, and narrative. A fourth category, research writing, is essential to any evidence-based writing program.

Research shows that effective writing strategies include every step of the writing process: prewriting/brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing/proofreading, and publishing. Students will be walked through these steps on pages 6–10. The Writing Practice Packet can be reused for additional practice by changing the topic.

The writing exercises in this book are designed to go beyond basic writing conventions. Students will learn how to base opinions on evidence, infer facts from relevant details, convey accurate background information, and recount real or imagined experiences. Students’ critical thinking skills are engaged when they do research, consider and analyze information, and respond to writing prompts. Writing prompts are paired with graphic organizers and followed by thinking/writing challenges.

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# Common Core Alignment Chart

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Use this chart to plan instruction, practice, or remediation of a standard.

Common Core State Standards*		Practice Pages
Writing Standards		
Text Types and Purposes	3.W.1–3.W.3	11–63
Production and Distribution of Writing	3.W.4–3.W.6	11, 12, 14–18, 20, 23, 24, 30, 32, 33, 37–43, 45, 46, 48–50, 56, 57, 59–61
Research to Build and Present Knowledge	3.W.7–3.W.9	11, 12, 15, 18, 19, 21–38, 46–48, 51–63
Range of Writing	3.W.10	Adapt writing prompts to cover this standard.
Language Standards		
Conventions of Standard English	3.L.1–3.L.2	11–13, 15–17, 19, 21, 23–26, 30, 31, 33–38, 40–46, 51, 52–54, 56–63
Knowledge of Language	3.L.3	14, 18, 48, 49
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	3.L.4–3.L.6	20, 22, 25, 27–29, 32, 39, 47, 50, 55

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## About This Book

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Use this book to teach your students to read closely, or to notice words, structure, and points of fact. The writing prompts that begin on page 11 are intended to engage students' interests and then to send them off on a hunt for more information. Graphic organizers will help students organize their thoughts and research notes. Their actual writing will take place on separate sheets of paper. Encourage students to share their writing with peers, teachers, and other adults. Show students how to use the Student Writing Checklist on page 5. Allow time for thoughtful revisions. Publication is an important Common Core component of writing standards; students should be given access to computers, tablets, or copying machines.



# Common Core–Aligned Writing Rubric

Use this rubric as a guide to assess students' written work. You may also offer it to students to help them check their work or as a tool to show your scoring.

<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>_____ Offers insightful reasoning and strong evidence of critical thinking</li><li>_____ Responds skillfully to all of the items in the prompt</li><li>_____ Uses a logical organizational structure, including introductory and concluding sentences or paragraphs</li><li>_____ Skillfully connects ideas with linking words and phrases</li><li>_____ Uses vivid dialogue where appropriate</li><li>_____ Skillfully supports topic(s) and opinions with evidence</li></ul>
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>_____ Offers sufficient reasoning and evidence of critical thinking</li><li>_____ Responds to all items in the prompt</li><li>_____ Uses introductory and concluding sentences</li><li>_____ Connects ideas with appropriate linking words and phrases</li><li>_____ Uses dialogue where appropriate</li><li>_____ Supports topic(s) and opinions with evidence</li></ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>_____ Demonstrates some evidence of critical thinking</li><li>_____ Responds to some items in the prompt</li><li>_____ Shows some understanding of paragraph formation</li><li>_____ Connects some ideas with linking words and phrases</li><li>_____ Uses some dialogue where appropriate</li><li>_____ Supports topic(s) and opinions with little evidence</li></ul>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>_____ Demonstrates limited or no evidence of critical thinking</li><li>_____ Responds to some or no items in the prompts</li><li>_____ Shows little or no understanding of paragraph structure</li><li>_____ Presents ideas or events in random sequence</li><li>_____ Uses little or no dialogue where appropriate</li><li>_____ Topic(s) or opinions are not supported by evidence.</li></ul>

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# Student Writing Checklist

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## Prewrite/Brainstorm

- \_\_\_\_\_ Consider and choose the topic for your essay.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Research your topic on the Internet, in books, or in magazines.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take notes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Summarize what you have learned.

## Draft

- \_\_\_\_\_ Organize the essay by topics. Separate topics by paragraphs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide an introduction, a body, and a conclusion in the essay.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Support opinions and points of view with reasons.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Develop the topic with facts and definitions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Include details to describe thoughts, feelings, or actions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Show evidence in your writing (*for example, because, The author said, I noticed on page \_\_\_\_\_, Based on what I read online*).

## Revise

- \_\_\_\_\_ Write each sentence with a subject and verb.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sequence events in the order they occurred.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make sure sentence meaning is clear.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Use specific nouns, lively verbs, and interesting adjectives.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Use a variety of sentence structures.

## Edit/Proofread

- \_\_\_\_\_ Indent each paragraph.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Capitalize the first letter in each sentence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Capitalize all proper nouns.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spell all words correctly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Use proper grammar, including subject/verb agreement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Use proper punctuation, including quotation marks.

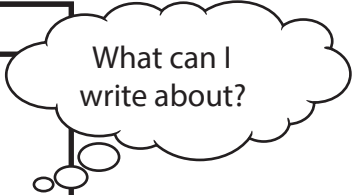
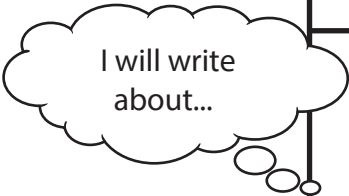
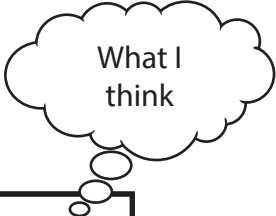


## Publish

- \_\_\_\_\_ Make sure your final copy is neat—no wrinkles, creases, or holes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Erase any smudges or dirty spots.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Use good spacing between words.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Use your best handwriting or typing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Include illustration(s) if appropriate.

**Step 1: Prewrite/Brainstorm**

Read the prompt. Think about, plan, and organize your writing. Use the Internet, books, or magazines to find new information about your topic. Use the organizer to take notes.

**Prompt:** What is your favorite sports team or music group? Give reasons for your response.

Possible Topics				
	My Topic			
Reason 1	Reason 2	Reason 3		
Fact to Support	Fact to Support	Fact to Support		
				
Conclusion				

## Step 2: Draft

Use the information from the organizer on page 6. Write a paragraph about your topic. Remember to give reasons to support your opinion. Use linking words or phrases such as *because* and *for example*. In your conclusion, restate your opinion.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**Step 3: Revise**

Read your paragraph. Then, answer the questions.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I start my paragraph with an interesting introduction that will make readers want to read more?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I list reasons to support my opinion?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I use words such as *because* and *for example* to link my reasons with my opinion?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are all of my sentences about the topic?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Should I add more details?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have I used exciting verbs?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have I used interesting adjectives?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have I used the same words too often?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does my conclusion provide a good summary?

The best part of this paragraph is	The part that needs a little work is



**Step 4: Edit/Proofread**

Place a check mark before each item when you have checked your work.

**My Paragraph**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I have read my paragraph, and it makes sense.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It has an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I stayed on topic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My sentences are easy to understand.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I used a variety of words.

**Capitalization**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Each sentence begins with a capital letter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ All proper nouns begin with capital letters.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My title words are capitalized except for articles and prepositions.

**Punctuation**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Each sentence ends with the correct ending punctuation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have placed commas where they belong.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have used quotation marks to show where speech starts and ends.

**Spelling**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I have checked to see that all of the words are spelled correctly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have looked up words when needed.

**Grammar**

- \_\_\_\_\_ My subjects and verbs match.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have used suffixes and prefixes properly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have used italics or underlining to mark titles of works.

**Peer Editing Checklist**

Ask another student or teacher to look at your essay and circle *Yes* or *No*.

Does the first word of each sentence start with a capital?	Yes	No
Are the proper nouns capitalized?	Yes	No
Does each sentence end with a punctuation mark?	Yes	No
Are the words spelled correctly?	Yes	No
Are the paragraphs indented?	Yes	No
Is the handwriting or typing easy to read?	Yes	No

Editor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

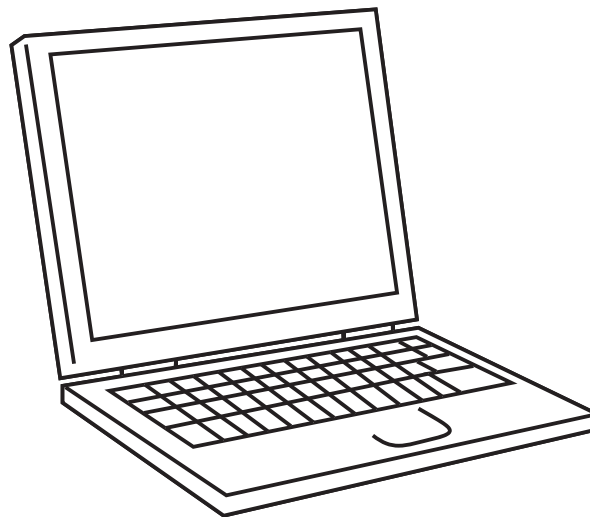
**Step 5: Publish**

When you publish your writing, you make it possible for others to read it. Your readers might be teachers, students, or family members.

1. I choose to publish my writing by  
\_\_\_\_\_ writing it in neat handwriting.  
\_\_\_\_\_ typing it on a computer.  
\_\_\_\_\_ typing it on a tablet.  
\_\_\_\_\_ copying it on a copier.
2. If I use a cover page, it will include  
\_\_\_\_\_ the title.  
\_\_\_\_\_ the author's name.  
\_\_\_\_\_ the illustrator's name.  
\_\_\_\_\_ art or decoration.
3. If appropriate, my presentation will include  
\_\_\_\_\_ illustration(s) or art.  
\_\_\_\_\_ captions for the illustration(s) or art.  
\_\_\_\_\_ a graph, chart, or time line.
4. I will share my writing with

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# Answer Key

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*Because writing is personal and presentations are unique, there are no “correct answers” to be applied to students’ work. However, students should follow the instruction of the writing prompts, fill in the graphic organizers, and apply the steps of the writing process. Use the guidelines below or the Common Core–Aligned Writing Rubric on page 4 to help you assess students’ work.*

## **Pages 6 to 10: Writing Practice Packet**

Check students’ work throughout the writing process practice pages. Help students master each step before going on to the next step. This process can be used with other writing prompts if more practice is needed before independent writing can begin. Refer students back to specific practice pages as needed.

## **Pages 11 to 63: Reflect and Revise**

The Reflect and Revise section at the end of each page asks students first to consider an alternative or additional slant to their topic. Often, they are requested to add this additional layer of thought to their writing. Check that they have fulfilled the challenge and that their conclusions have been applied to the writing if asked. Because the Common Core language standards are tied so tightly to the writing standards, the second part addresses specific language skills. Check through written work for mastery.

## **Pages 11 to 24: Opinion/Argumentative Writing**

Check graphic organizers. Writing will vary, but opinions should be supported with reasons and show evidence based on research, interviews, or recollection of experiences. Look for application of critical thinking and personal reflection.

## **Pages 25 to 40: Informative/Explanatory Writing**

Check graphic organizers. Writing will vary but should be based on research or interviews. Look for facts rather than opinions. Information should be presented using the structure of an introduction, body, and conclusion. Facts should be grouped in paragraphs according to subtopic. Ideas should be connected with linking words and phrases.

## **Pages 41 to 53: Narrative Writing**

Check graphic organizers. Stories and other narrative formats will vary but should respond to all of the items in the prompt. Look for clear and logical sequences of events using a variety of transitional words and phrases. Stories should include characters and setting as well as problems and solutions.

## **Pages 54 to 63: Research Writing**

Check graphic organizers. Reports will vary but should be based on research or interviews. Assess students’ abilities to examine topics and convey ideas and information clearly to their readers. Students should use logical organizational structures, including introductory and concluding sentences or paragraphs.