



Kentucky Department of  
**E D U C A T I O N**

**Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment (AKSA)  
Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)  
Grade Eight**

**Reading**

<b>Performance Level</b>	<b>DESCRIPTOR</b>
<b>Reading Skills/Concepts</b>	<p>The Kentucky Alternate Summative Assessment is aligned with the Kentucky Academic Standards. The depth and breadth of the standard may be reduced for the Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment (AKSA), but the intent of reading instruction remains consistent with the <a href="#">purposes and practices outlined in the KSA documents</a>. The specific limitations for assessment on the AKSA can be found in the targets that are embedded in each standard in the <a href="#">AKSA Targets documents</a>; found by content and grade level on the KDE website. Specified reading skills/concepts which represent a portion of these grade level content expectations are referenced here:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. (RL.8.3)</li><li>2. Analyze characters' perspectives and how the differences create effects, including but not limited to suspense, humor, and empathy. (RL.8.6)</li><li>3. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in text, including figurative and connotative meanings, analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies between two texts. (RL.8.4)</li><li>4. Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events or character types from myths and traditional stories, including describing how the material is rendered new. (RL.8.9)</li><li>5. Cite relevant textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RI.8.1)</li><li>6. Determine central ideas of a text and analyze how they are developed through relationships of key details, citing textual evidence, paraphrasing, or summarizing. (RI.8.2)</li><li>7. Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of specific sentences in developing and refining a key concept. (RI.8.5)</li><li>8. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using print and non-print formats for presenting particular topics or ideas. (RI.8.7)</li><li>9. Determine an author's perspective and purpose in a text and analyze how the author responds to two conflicting viewpoints. (RI.8.6)</li></ol>

	10. Evaluate the relevance of evidence in a text, assessing if evidence is insufficient. (RI.8.8)
<b>Distinguished</b>	<p>The student exceeds the expectations for demonstrating an independent and accurate understanding of the specified reading skills/concepts. The student demonstrates the ability to apply the skills/concepts to an authentic task and/or environment with analysis and reflection by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using authentic reading materials (e.g., grade/age-appropriate novels, nonfiction text, reference materials, magazines, newspapers, print and non-print formats, etc.)</li> <li>• applying reading skill/concepts to solve real-world problems that represent a variety of contexts and environments to answer questions and locate information</li> <li>• solving problems that require analyzing or reflecting on the task (e.g., examine the author’s purpose and perspective in a text, identify opposing viewpoints, analyze the structure of specific paragraphs and the development of key concepts in those paragraphs, cite relevant textual evidence to support explanations and inferences, identify meaning, impact and tone of words used in text, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Proficient</b>	<p>The student demonstrates an independent and accurate understanding of the specified reading skills/concepts. <i>Occasional inaccuracies, which do not interfere with conceptual understanding, may be present.</i> The student demonstrates the ability to apply the skills/concepts to an authentic task and/or environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using authentic reading materials (e.g., grade/age-appropriate novels, nonfiction text, reference materials, magazines, newspapers, print and non-print formats, etc.)</li> <li>• applying reading skill/concept to solve real-world problems that represent a variety of contexts and environments to answer questions and locate information</li> <li>• using relevant details (e.g., context or words/phrases, comparison and contrast, purpose, relationships, details, etc.)</li> <li>• using reading vocabulary (e.g., structure, context, tone, central idea, character, evidence, perspective, viewpoint, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Apprentice</b>	<p>The student demonstrates basic understanding of the specified reading skills/concepts. <i>Inaccuracies may interfere with or limit the conceptual understanding.</i> The student demonstrates some understanding and can apply the skills/concepts to a few authentic tasks, materials, and/or environments by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• answering the questions (e.g., match the word to the meaning, identify the author’s purpose, what is a different viewpoint, etc.)</li> <li>• using relevant details (e.g., context or words/phrases, comparison and contrast, purpose, relationships, details, etc.)</li> <li>• using reading vocabulary (e.g., structure, context, tone, central idea, character, evidence, perspective, viewpoint, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Novice</b>	<p>The student demonstrates little or no understanding of the reading skills/concepts. <i>Inaccuracies interfere with the conceptual understanding.</i> The student demonstrates this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inaccurate use of details (e.g., context or words/phrases, comparison and contrast, purpose, relationships, details, etc.)</li> </ul>

- inaccurate or no use of reading vocabulary (e.g., structure, context, tone, central idea, character, evidence, perspective, viewpoint, etc.)

## Math

Performance Level	DESCRIPTOR
Math Skills/Concepts	<p>The Kentucky Alternate Summative Assessment is aligned with the Kentucky Academic Standards. The depth and breadth of the standard may be reduced for the Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment (AKSA), but the intent of math instruction remains consistent with the <a href="#">purposes and practices outlined in the KSA documents</a>. The specific limitations for assessment on the AKSA can be found in the targets that are embedded in each standard in the <a href="#">AKSA Targets documents</a>; found by content and grade level on the KDE website. Specified math skills/concepts which represent a portion of these grade level content expectations are referenced here:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand that rational numbers expressed as decimals repeat or end in 0 and other numbers are called irrational, limit to numbers up to 20 (KY.8.NS.1)</li> <li>2. Interpret slope as the unit rate, compare two different proportional relationships represented in different ways, limit coordinates of ordered pairs to -20 to 20 (KY.8.EE.5)</li> <li>3. Solve linear equations with one variable, limited to equations with one solution between -100 and 100, including problems that require expanding expressions and combining like terms (KY.8.EE.7)</li> <li>4. Understand that a function is a rule that assigns to each input exactly one output and that the graph of a function is the set of ordered pairs, limit coordinates of ordered pairs to -20 to 20 (KY.8.F.1)</li> <li>5. Compare properties of two functions each represented in a different way (algebraically, graphically, numerically in tables, or by verbal descriptions), limit coordinates to -20 to 20 (KY.8.F.2)</li> <li>6. Understand properties of linear functions, interpreting the equation <math>y=mx + b</math> as a linear function whose graph is a straight line, and limiting intercepts to -20 to 20 (KY.8.F.3)</li> <li>7. Verify experimentally the properties of rotations, reflections and translations (KY.8.G.1)</li> <li>8. Describe the effect of dilations, translations, rotations, and reflections on quadrilaterals and triangles using coordinates (KY.8.G.3)</li> <li>9. Apply the formulas for the volumes and surface areas of cones, cylinders and spheres and use them to solve real-world and mathematical problems. (KY.8.G.9)</li> <li>10. Construct and interpret scatter plots for bivariate numerical data to investigate patterns of association between two quantities. Describe</li> </ol>

	patterns such as clustering, outliers, positive or negative association, linear association and nonlinear association. (KY.8.SP.1)
<b>Distinguished</b>	<p><i>The student exceeds the expectations for demonstrating an independent and accurate understanding of the specified math skills/concepts.</i> The student demonstrates the ability to apply the skills/concepts to an authentic task and/or environment with analysis and reflection by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• solving a real-world problem (e.g., examining slope to compare the speed of two different cars; solving the equation <math>2x = 12</math> where 2 is the number of meals purchased and 12 is the total cost of the meals; finding the volume of a sphere using a formula; plotting the cost of cellphone usage using a rate per minute; etc.)</li> <li>• solving real-world problems that represent a variety of contexts and environments</li> <li>• solving problems that require analyzing or reflecting on the problem (e.g., explaining why the slope of the faster of two cars is steeper; explaining why two figures are similar; explaining why the relation between a student and his/her age is a function; explaining patterns of association between two quantities; explaining how shapes within the coordinate plane are affected by translations, rotations, and dilations; etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Proficient</b>	<p>The student demonstrates an independent and accurate understanding of the specified math skills/concepts. <i>Occasional inaccuracies, which do not interfere with conceptual understanding, may be present.</i> The student demonstrates the ability to apply the skills/concepts to an authentic task and/or environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• solving a real-world problem (e.g., using slope to compare the speed of two different cars; solving the equation <math>2x = 12</math> where 2 is the number of meals purchased and 12 is the total cost of the meals; finding the volume of a sphere using a formula; plotting the cost of cellphone usage using a rate per minute; etc.)</li> <li>• solving real world problems that represent a variety of contexts and environments</li> <li>• using relevant details (e.g., steepness, size, shape, input, output, measurements, etc.)</li> <li>• using math vocabulary (e.g., slope, add, subtract, multiply, divide, variable, proportional, function, input, output, cone, cylinder, sphere, height, radius, volume, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Apprentice</b>	<p>The student demonstrates basic understanding of the specified math skills/concepts. <i>Inaccuracies may interfere with or limit the conceptual understanding.</i> The student demonstrates some understanding and is able to apply the skills/concepts to a few authentic tasks or environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• solving a problem (e.g., using slope to compare the speed of two different cars; solve the equation <math>2x = 12</math> where 2 is the number of meals purchased and 12 is the total cost of the meals; find the volume of a sphere using a formula; plot the cost of cellphone usage using a rate per minute; etc.)</li> <li>• using relevant details (e.g., steepness, size, shape, input, output, measurements, etc.)</li> <li>• using math vocabulary (e.g., slope, add, subtract, multiply, divide, variable, proportional, function, input, output, cone, cylinder, sphere, height, radius, volume, etc.)</li> </ul>

<b>Novice</b>	<p>The student demonstrates little or no understanding of the math skills/concepts. <i>Inaccuracies interfere with the conceptual understanding.</i></p> <p>The student demonstrates this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inaccurate use of details (e.g., steepness, size, shape, input, output, measurements, etc.)</li> <li>• inaccurate or no use of math vocabulary (e.g., slope, add, subtract, multiply, divide, variable, proportional, function, input, output, cone, cylinder, sphere, height, radius, volume, etc.)</li> </ul>
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## Social Studies

Performance Level	DESCRIPTOR
<b>Social Studies Skills/Concepts</b>	<p>The Kentucky Alternate Summative Assessment is aligned with the Kentucky Academic Standards. The depth and breadth of the standard may be reduced for the Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment (AKSA), but the intent of social studies instruction remains consistent with the <a href="#">purposes and practices outlined in the KSA documents</a>. The specific limitations for assessment on the AKSA can be found in the targets that are embedded in each standard in the <a href="#">AKSA Targets documents</a>; found by content and grade level on the KDE website. Specified social studies skills/concepts which represent a portion of these grade level content expectations are referenced here:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess how regions of the United States specialized based on supply and demand due to their geographic locations. (8.E.MA.2)</li> <li>2. Assess the ways factors of production are combined in innovative ways resulting in economic growth and increased standards of living (8.E.MI.2)</li> <li>3. Explain the relationship between state and national government (8.C.PR.1)</li> <li>4. Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, with attention to the definition of who is a citizen, expansion of that definition over time and changes in participation over time. (8.C.RR.1)</li> <li>5. Explain the origins, functions, and structure of government, with reference to the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, and Bill of Rights and their impacts on citizens. (8.C.CP.2)</li> <li>6. Use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to analyze settlement patterns in the United States from the Colonial Era to Reconstruction from 1600-1877. (8.G.GR.1)</li> <li>7. Interpret how political, environmental, social and economic factors led to both forced and voluntary migration in the United States from the Colonial Era to Reconstruction from 1600-1877. (8.G.MM.1)</li> <li>8. Explain how colonial resistance to British control led to the Revolutionary War. (8.H.CO.1)</li> <li>9. Analyze how the political, geographic, social and economic choices of the Colonial Era impacted the Revolutionary Period and Early Republic Period (8.H.CE.1)</li> <li>10. Evaluate the impact technological innovations made on agriculture, trade and commerce in the years leading up to the Civil War between 1840-1860. (8.H.CH.4)</li> </ol>

<b>Distinguished</b>	<p>The student exceeds the expectations for demonstrating an independent and accurate understanding of the specified social studies skills/concepts. The student demonstrates the ability to apply the skills/concepts to an authentic task and/or environment with analysis and reflection by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using authentic social studies materials (e.g., grade/age-appropriate texts, nonfiction text, reference materials, technology, magazines, newspapers, etc.)</li> <li>• applying social studies skills/concepts to solve real-world problems that represent a variety of contexts and environments to answer questions and locate information</li> <li>• solving problems that require analyzing or reflecting on the task (e.g., explaining the factors which led to the revolutionary war; explaining economic, social, and geographic factors that contribute to migration and settlement patterns; giving an example of a citizen's duty in a democracy; from a map determine what would be the best area for cultivation, logging, or transportation; explaining the conception and development of government based on foundational documents; etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Proficient</b>	<p>The student demonstrates an independent and accurate understanding of the specified social studies skills/concepts. <i>Occasional inaccuracies, which do not interfere with conceptual understanding, may be present.</i> The student demonstrates the ability to apply the skills/concepts to an authentic task and/or environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using authentic social studies materials (e.g., grade/age-appropriate texts, nonfiction text, reference materials, technology, magazines, newspapers, etc.)</li> <li>• applying social studies skill/concept to solve real-world problems that represent a variety of contexts and environments to answer questions and locate information (e.g., using a map to determine barriers to trade and travel or to identify natural resources)</li> <li>• using relevant details (e.g., descriptions, sentence meaning, passages from documents, charts, graphs, map keys, symbols, etc.)</li> <li>• using social studies vocabulary (e.g., conflict, compromise, cooperation, democracy, voting, citizen, duty, trade, migration, settlement, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Apprentice</b>	<p>The student demonstrates basic understanding of the specified social studies skills/concepts. <i>Inaccuracies may interfere with or limit the conceptual understanding.</i> The student demonstrates some understanding and is able to apply the skills/concepts to a few authentic tasks, materials, and/or environments by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• answering social studies questions (e.g., matching word to meaning; identifying an event in history; identifying a city on map; etc.)</li> <li>• using relevant details (e.g., descriptions, sentence meaning, charts, graphs, map keys, symbols, etc.)</li> <li>• using social studies vocabulary (e.g., conflict, compromise, cooperation, democracy, voting, citizen, duty, trade, migration, settlement, etc.)</li> </ul>

<b>Novice</b>	<p>The student demonstrates little or no understanding of the social studies skills/concepts. <i>Inaccuracies interfere with the conceptual understanding.</i> The student demonstrates this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inaccurately answering social studies questions</li> <li>• inaccurately using details (e.g., descriptions, sentence meaning, charts, graphs, map keys, symbols, etc.)</li> <li>• inaccurate or no use of social studies vocabulary (e.g., conflict, compromise, cooperation, democracy, voting, citizen, duty, etc.)</li> </ul>
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## Editing and Mechanics

Performance Level	DESCRIPTOR
<b>Writing Skills/Concepts</b>	<p>The Kentucky Alternate Summative Assessment is aligned with the Kentucky Academic Standards. The depth and breadth of the standard may be reduced for the Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment (AKSA), but the intent of writing instruction remains consistent with the <a href="#">purposes and practices outlined in the KSA documents</a>. The specific limitations for assessment on the AKSA can be found in the targets that are embedded in each standard in the <a href="#">AKSA Targets documents</a>; found by content and grade level on the KDE website. Specified writing skills/concepts which represent a portion of these grade level content expectations are referenced here:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In both written and oral expression:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Demonstrate appropriate use of verbs in the active and passive voice.</li> <li>c. Demonstrate appropriate use of verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, and conditional mood, while recognizing and correcting inappropriate shifts. (L.8.1)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. When writing:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Demonstrate appropriate use of strategies and resources (print and electronic) to identify and correct spelling errors. (L.8.2)</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading or listening.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use verbs in the active and passive voice to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action, expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact). (L.8.3)</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</li> <li>d. Accurately use grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases. (L.8.4)</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Interpret figurative language, including but not limited to irony, in context.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>b. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.</p> <p>c. Distinguish among the connotations of words with similar denotations. (L.8.5)</p>
<b>Distinguished</b>	<p>The student exceeds the expectations for demonstrating an independent and accurate understanding of the specified writing skills/concepts. The student demonstrates the ability to apply the skills/concepts to an authentic task with analysis and reflection by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applying writing skills/concepts to answer questions and locate information</li> <li>• analyzing or reflecting on writing stimuli (e.g., demonstrating appropriate use of verbs (i.e., active and passive voice) and mood; analyzing shifts in mood, examining resources to identify and correct spelling errors; analyzing sentences to ensure best word choice [including multi-meaning, unknown and specific content words]; analyzing figurative language and nuances of word meaning, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Proficient</b>	<p>The student demonstrates an independent and accurate understanding of the specified writing skills/concepts. <i>Occasional inaccuracies, which do not interfere with conceptual understanding, may be present.</i> The student demonstrates the ability to apply the skills/concepts to an authentic task by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applying writing skills/concepts to answer questions and locate information</li> <li>• applying writing skills across stimuli (e.g., using correct verb tense (i.e., active and passive voice); identifying shifts in mood; identifying and correcting spelling errors; reviewing sentences for best word choice [including multi-meaning, unknown and specific content words]; explaining figurative word meaning, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Apprentice</b>	<p>The student demonstrates basic understanding of the specified writing skills/concepts. <i>Inaccuracies may interfere with or limit the conceptual understanding.</i> The student demonstrates some understanding and is able to apply limited skills/concepts to an authentic task by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using writing skills across stimuli (e.g., identifying verbs in active and passive voice; identifying shifts in mood; correcting spelling errors; selecting the best word choice for a sentence [including multi-meaning, and specific content words]; identifying meaning of figurative words, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Novice</b>	<p>The student demonstrates little or no understanding of the writing skills/concepts. <i>Inaccuracies interfere with the conceptual understanding.</i> The student demonstrates this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inaccurate or no use of writing skills across stimuli (e.g., identifying verbs in active and passive voice; identifying shifts in mood; correcting spelling errors; selecting the best word choice for a sentence [including multi-meaning, and specific content words]; identifying meaning of figurative words, etc. etc.)</li> </ul>



## On-Demand Writing

Performance Level	DESCRIPTOR
<b>Writing Skills/Concepts</b>	<p>The Kentucky Alternate Summative Assessment is aligned with the Kentucky Academic Standards. The depth and breadth of the standard may be reduced for the Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment (AKSA), but the intent of writing instruction remains consistent with the <a href="#">purposes and practices outlined in the KSA documents</a>. The specific limitations for assessment on the AKSA can be found in the targets that are embedded in each standard in the <a href="#">AKSA Targets documents</a>; found by content and grade level on the KDE website. Specified writing skills/concepts which represent a portion of these grade level content expectations are referenced here:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compose arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</li> <li>b. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish opposing claim(s) and counter/refute them, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.</li> <li>c. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.</li> <li>d. Use transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons and evidence.</li> <li>f. Provide a concluding statement or section that supports the argument presented.</li> <li>g. With some guidance, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, re-writing or trying. (C.8.1)</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b><i>Distinguished</i></b>	<p><i>The student exceeds the expectations for demonstrating an independent and accurate understanding of the specified writing skills/concepts.</i> The student demonstrates an understanding of the skills/concepts used to compose an argumentative piece that is clear and coherent and demonstrates development and organization in which ideas are logically grouped and appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student applies writing skills/concepts to answer questions that represent a variety of contexts (e.g., reflecting on purpose and audience for writing from the given scenario; analyzing information from sources to determine its relevance; introducing a topic; constructing an introduction, body and concluding paragraphs; providing clear reasoning and evidence; utilizing appropriate transitions; reviewing writing to find and correct errors through editing and revising, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b><i>Proficient</i></b>	<p>The student demonstrates an independent and accurate understanding of the specified writing skills/concepts. <i>Occasional inaccuracies, which do not interfere with conceptual understanding, may be present.</i> The student demonstrates an understanding of the skills/concepts used to compose an</p>

	<p>argumentative piece that is clear and coherent and demonstrates development and organization in which ideas are logically grouped and appropriate to task, purpose and audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student uses writing skills/concepts to answer questions that represent a variety of contexts (e.g., determining appropriate writing style for audience; identifying relevant information from sources; introducing a topic; crafting an introduction, body, and concluding paragraphs; providing evidence and reasoning; using transitions; editing and revising writing, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Apprentice</b>	<p>The student demonstrates basic understanding of the specified writing skills/concepts. <i>Inaccuracies may interfere with or limit the conceptual understanding.</i> The student demonstrates some understanding and is able to recognize some of the skills/concepts used to compose an argumentative piece with limited development and some organization appropriate to task, purpose and audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student answers questions related to writing skills/concepts (e.g., identifying writing style for audience; using information from sources; introducing a topic; crafting an introduction, body, and concluding paragraphs; providing evidence; using transitions; editing and revising writing, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Novice</b>	<p>The student demonstrates little or no understanding of the writing skills/concepts. <i>Inaccuracies interfere with the conceptual understanding.</i> The student demonstrates this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inaccurate or no response to questions related to writing skills/concepts (e.g., identifying writing style for audience; using information from sources; introducing a topic; crafting an introduction, body, and concluding paragraphs; providing evidence; using transitions; editing and revising writing, etc.)</li> </ul>