

Assessment of Writing and Producing

Accomplished English language arts teachers align their assessments to what they teach about writing and producing. Accomplished teachers know that the primary purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning, so they design classroom assessments that allow each student to show what he or she knows and is able to do. The results of these assessments inform the teacher's future instruction. Teachers are also aware of large-scale assessments their students will be encountering, and they adjust and align their curriculum and instruction to prepare their students for these assessments. When possible, accomplished teachers advocate for assessment programs that are research-based and proven effective in the development of student writers and writing programs. (See [Standard XII—Advocacy](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers prepare their students for high-stakes writing tests by teaching them to produce high-quality text on demand and within a designated time frame. Accomplished teachers model prewriting strategies for quickly organizing ideas and making efficient choices of topics based on one's knowledge base. To improve on-demand writing skills, an accomplished teacher might assign a writing assessment for which only the students' content, organization, or style would be assessed and then provide students with targeted feedback.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that multiple assessments are necessary for a rich portrait of students' current capabilities. Accomplished teachers know which kind of writing or producing prompts to present to assess what students know, how students engage in writing and producing for various purposes (e.g., persuading, informing, or storytelling), and how students write or produce for both personal and public audiences. For example, a student's response to a writing prompt might give insights into the student's facility with the formal structures of the English language. However, the same student's online composing might better reveal the student's ability to translate thought into compelling text. Accomplished teachers know that students might be better at communicating through certain formats; therefore, they give students opportunities to perform in various contexts. Ideally, writing and producing skills must be assessed by more than one product and in more than one genre to gain a more complete picture of patterns in student work over time.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that students should be evaluated by many readers and viewers, including peers, as part of a substantial and sustained process of assessment. Accomplished teachers recognize that peer involvement can be powerful at many stages of the writing process; peers can be

valuable editors and critics, helping shape future drafts and suggesting new strategies and styles. Teachers understand that to realize their potential as critics and to avoid pitfalls such as hurting others' feelings or being overly directive, students need instruction in peer-assessment techniques. Therefore, teachers create structures for providing feedback on writing and have students practice using those structures with samples before engaging in peer review with one another. Accomplished teachers examine the feedback peers give one another, learning both from the comments students give and the comments they receive.

Accomplished English language arts teachers also encourage students to engage in self-assessment as they revise and edit their own work. Teachers provide students with many tools for self-assessment, such as rubrics or checklists, each tailored to the specific writing task and to the developmental level of the students. Accomplished teachers use the process of self-assessment to help students build metacognitive skills that support writing. A teacher might build a student's ability to self-assess by identifying an area of weakness but then having the student make decisions about how to ameliorate the problem. A student might then progress to the stage of independently evaluating a single piece of their writing in the light of clear criteria. Ultimately, students might build portfolios of work created over time and write final reflective pieces about what the portfolios reveal about their development as writers. In this way, accomplished teachers prepare students to engage in their own independent writing and producing.

Accomplished English language arts teachers assess the progress of their students and reflect on their instruction, considering ways in which they can help their students develop in their writing and producing skills, including enriching their voices and the scope of their writing, building on out-of-school experiences, and learning how to use writing and producing in multiple contexts for many purposes and audiences. (See [Standard X—Assessment](#).)