

WRITING DOMAINS AND DEFINITIONS

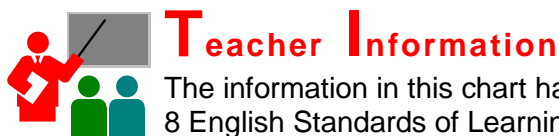
Composing	Written Expression	Usage/Mechanics
<p>The Composing domain includes the focusing, structuring, and elaborating that a writer does to construct an effective message for readers. It is the creation of a product, the building of a writing intended to be read. The writer crafts his/her message for readers by focusing on a central idea, providing elaboration of the central idea, and delivering the central idea and its elaboration in an organized text.</p> <p>Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • central idea • elaboration • unity • organization 	<p>The Written Expression domain comprises those features that show the writer purposefully shaping and controlling language to affect readers. This domain focuses on the vividness, specificity, and rhythm of the piece and the writer's attitude and voice.</p> <p>Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliberate word choice • selected, precise information • sentence variety • tone • voice 	<p>The Usage/Mechanics domain comprises the writer's ability to form competent, appropriately mature sentences and the use of word-level features that cause written language to be acceptable and effective for standard discourse. This domain includes the system of symbols and cueing devices a writer uses to help readers make meaning.</p> <p>Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sentence formation • usage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ standard inflections ◇ comparisons of adjectives and adverbs ◇ agreement • mechanics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ capitalization ◇ spelling ◇ punctuation ◇ formatting

GRADE 8 ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS

Sentence Formation, Usage, and Mechanics Skills

Listed below are skills in the areas of sentence formation, usage, and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, formatting, and spelling). This list is not exhaustive but is intended to provide examples of the skills that students should acquire.

Sentence Formation	Usage	Mechanics
<p>In the area of sentence formation, students should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use complete sentences • use standard word order • avoid comma splices • avoid fused sentences (run-ons) • avoid beginning sentences with coordinating conjunctions (e.g., <i>and</i>, <i>so</i>). 	<p>In the area of usage, students should use the following correctly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subject-verb agreement • the word <i>I</i> in compound subject situations • the word <i>me</i> in the objective-case • <i>a/an</i> • <i>them/those</i> • <i>good/well</i> • pronoun-antecedent agreement • adjective comparisons • adverb comparisons • adverbs instead of adjectives where appropriate (e.g., “He played <i>really</i> well.” instead of “He played <i>real</i> well.”) • verb tenses, including the use of helping verbs • plurals (-s, -es, changes in spellings) • possessives (singular and plural) • negatives, including avoidance of double negatives • homophones • choice of words (e.g., “I <i>could</i> have ridden the bike.”) • tense consistency 	<p>In the area of mechanics, students should use the following correctly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • punctuation including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ periods, questions marks, and exclamation points at the end of sentences ◇ periods after abbreviations ◇ commas around interrupters, including nouns of address and appositives ◇ commas in dates, series, and addresses ◇ commas before/after certain clauses, e.g., after introductory clauses ◇ punctuation in and around dialogue ◇ quotation marks as appropriate ◇ italics/underlining as appropriate ◇ apostrophes in contractions and in singular and plural possessives ◇ punctuation of letter parts • capitalization including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ the first word of sentences ◇ proper nouns ◇ the word <i>I</i> ◇ school subjects as appropriate ◇ <i>Mom</i> and <i>Dad</i> as appropriate • formatting including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ indenting or double spacing between paragraphs ◇ paragraphing dialogue ◇ hyphenating words at ends of lines between syllables • spelling including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ spelling frequently used and common words correctly, including common homophones



Teacher Information

The information in this chart has been adapted from the Skills List found in the Grade 8 English Standards of Learning Assessment Blueprints.

