

# Top Take-Aways for Teachers

## NM-MSSA Writing Assessment for Grades 3–5

This guide can be used to orient you and your students to some important aspects of the new writing assessment. The following explains the components of the writing prompts.

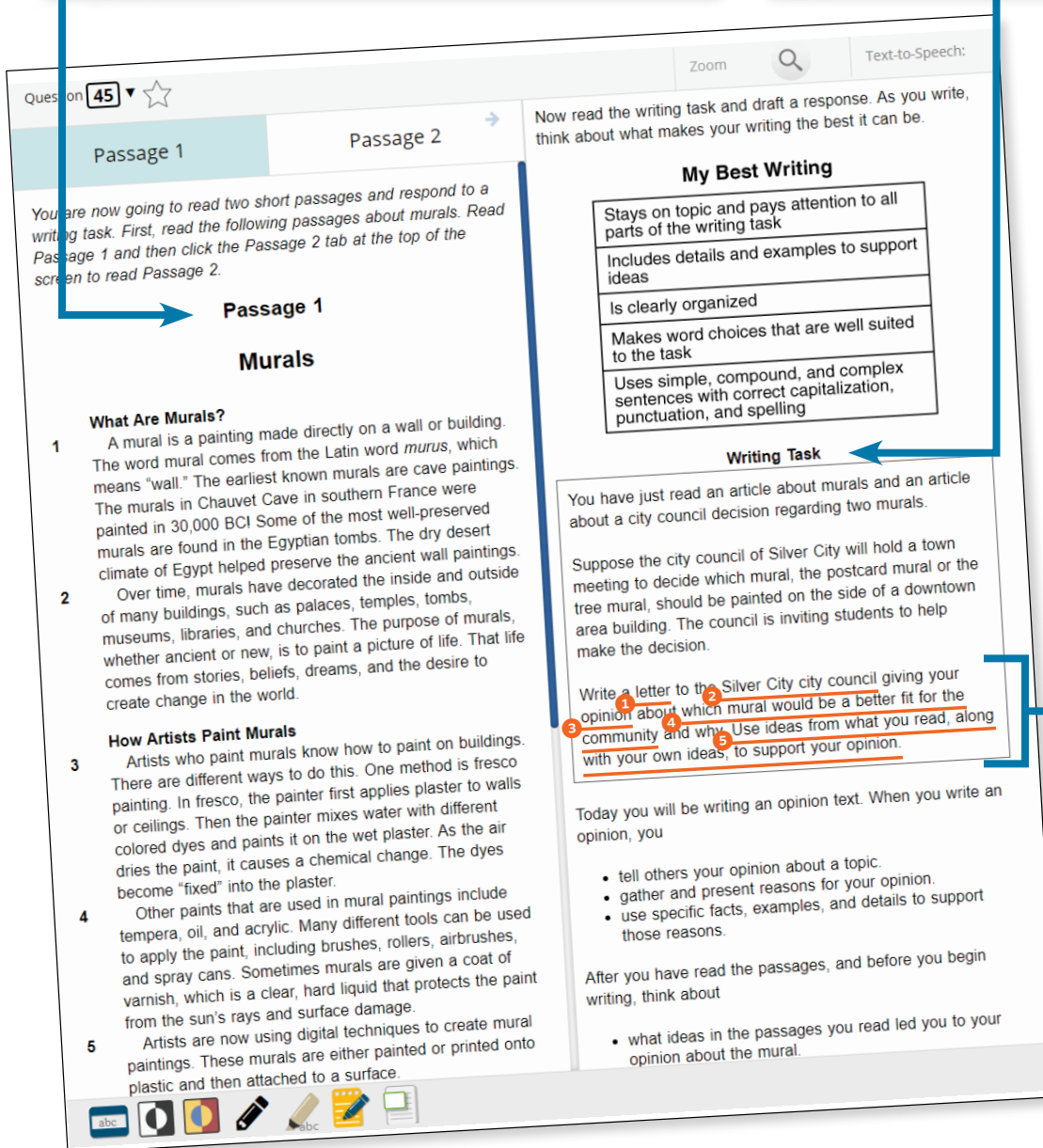
### Passages

Students will see 1–3 passages per prompt, which will not exceed a total maximum word count per grade level.

Passages will serve as a source of some of the ideas, examples, and details that students can incorporate in their response.

### Writing Task

The writing task will present a plausible context for writing and identify the topic, audience, purpose, and form for the student's written response.



The screenshot shows the assessment interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Passage 1' and 'Passage 2'. Below 'Passage 1' is the text: 'You are now going to read two short passages and respond to a writing task. First, read the following passages about murals. Read Passage 1 and then click the Passage 2 tab at the top of the screen to read Passage 2.' Below this is the title 'Murals' and a list of five numbered items. Item 1 is 'What Are Murals?' with a paragraph. Item 2 is a paragraph about murals over time. Item 3 is 'How Artists Paint Murals' with a paragraph. Item 4 is a paragraph about different painting techniques. Item 5 is a paragraph about digital techniques. To the right of the passages is the 'Writing Task' section. It starts with 'Now read the writing task and draft a response. As you write, think about what makes your writing the best it can be.' Below this is a box titled 'My Best Writing' with four criteria: 'Stays on topic and pays attention to all parts of the writing task', 'Includes details and examples to support ideas', 'Is clearly organized', and 'Makes word choices that are well suited to the task'. Below that is another box titled 'Writing Task' with a paragraph: 'You have just read an article about murals and an article about a city council decision regarding two murals. Suppose the city council of Silver City will hold a town meeting to decide which mural, the postcard mural or the tree mural, should be painted on the side of a downtown area building. The council is inviting students to help make the decision.' Below this is a prompt: 'Write a letter to the Silver City city council giving your opinion about which mural would be a better fit for the community and why. Use ideas from what you read, along with your own ideas, to support your opinion.' Below the prompt are two bullet points: 'tell others your opinion about a topic.' and 'gather and present reasons for your opinion.' Below the bullet points is another paragraph: 'Today you will be writing an opinion text. When you write an opinion, you' followed by three bullet points: 'use specific facts, examples, and details to support those reasons.', 'After you have read the passages, and before you begin writing, think about' followed by one bullet point: 'what ideas in the passages you read led you to your opinion about the mural.'

### Task Cues

- 1 Form**  
Possible forms of writing include (but are not limited to) an essay, letter, article, or speech.
- 2 Audience**  
May be familiar (e.g., classmates, teacher, family) or unfamiliar (e.g., members of a school board).
- 3 Purpose**  
A word or words to indicate whether the task calls for narrative, informative, or opinion/argument writing.
- 4 Topic**  
Identified by NM teachers as suitable for and engaging to students.
- 5 Support Cues**  
Identifies the sources of ideas and details the student should draw upon when writing a response.  
For their writing to be effective, students must connect with and build upon the passages by integrating their own ideas, observations, and prior knowledge.

# Top Take-Aways for Teachers

## NM-MSSA Writing Assessment for Grades 3–5

The following provides additional information related to the writing assessment scoring rubrics.

The rubrics, additional information about the writing prompts, as well as instructional activities related to various features of the writing assessment can be found in the following resource packet: *Supporting New Mexico Students as Writers: Resources for Teachers* ([newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/resources-nm-mssa](http://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/resources-nm-mssa)).

### Rubrics for Opinion, Informative/ Explanatory, and Narrative Writing

#### Two Scores:

**Production of Writing:** evaluates development, organization, and language on a 1–4 point scale.

**Use of Conventions:** evaluates grammar and mechanics on a 1–3 point scale.

### Standards

The rubrics were developed to address skills outlined in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Although the writing assessment is passage-based, it only addresses CCSS in Writing and Language, not standards in Reading.

### Grade Level

Rubrics are customized by grade band for Grades 3–5 and Grades 6–8.

Production of Writing: NM-MSSA Opinion Writing Rubric (Grades 3–5)				
	Score Point 4	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
The Writing:				
Development/ Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expresses an opinion that fully addresses the topic.</li> <li>Substantially supports the opinion with consistently pertinent facts and details from relevant sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expresses an opinion that generally addresses the topic.</li> <li>Generally supports the opinion with mostly pertinent facts and details from relevant sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expresses an opinion that partially addresses the topic.</li> <li>Partially supports the opinion with some pertinent facts and details from relevant sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expresses an opinion that only minimally addresses the topic or does not explicitly express an opinion.</li> <li>Minimally supports the opinion with few pertinent facts and details from relevant sources.</li> </ul>
Organization/ Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes and consistently maintains an organizational plan in which related ideas are consistently grouped logically to support the writer's purpose.</li> <li>Introduces the topic clearly and provides a concluding statement or section consistently related to the opinion presented.</li> <li>Consistently demonstrates effective use of words and phrases to link the opinion and reasons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes and generally maintains an organizational plan in which related ideas are generally grouped logically to support the writer's purpose.</li> <li>Introduces the topic and provides a concluding statement or section generally related to the opinion presented.</li> <li>Generally demonstrates effective use of words and phrases to link the opinion and reasons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attempts to establish and partially maintains an organizational plan in which related ideas are only sometimes grouped logically to support the writer's purpose.</li> <li>Introduces the topic and provides a concluding statement or section partially related to the opinion presented.</li> <li>Sometimes demonstrates effective use of words and phrases to link the opinion and reasons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May attempt to establish but does not maintain an organizational plan; related ideas are rarely grouped/not grouped logically to support the writer's purpose.</li> <li>May be missing an introduction and/or a concluding statement or section that is related to the opinion presented.</li> <li>Rarely demonstrates/does not demonstrate any effective use of words and phrases to link the opinion and reasons.</li> </ul>
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently uses precise language and varied vocabulary when supporting a point of view with reasons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often uses precise language and varied vocabulary when supporting a point of view with reasons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes uses precise language and varied vocabulary when supporting a point of view with reasons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rarely uses/does not use precise language or varied vocabulary when supporting a point of view with reasons.</li> </ul>

Use of Conventions: NM-MSSA Conventions Rubric (Grades 3–8)			
	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
The Writing:			
Grammar/ Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates general command of standard English grammar and usage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates partial command of standard English grammar and usage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates little command of standard English grammar and usage.</li> </ul>
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates general command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text.</li> <li>May have minor or infrequent errors that do not interfere with meaning or confuse the reader.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates partial command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text.</li> <li>May have errors or patterns of errors that somewhat interfere with meaning or confuse the reader.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates little command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text.</li> <li>May have errors that interfere with meaning or confuse the reader.</li> </ul>

### Other useful resources related to the writing assessment:

Writing Prompt Released Item Documents: [newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/resources-nm-mssa](http://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/resources-nm-mssa)

NM-MSSA Practice Tests: [newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/practice-tests-nm-mssa](http://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/practice-tests-nm-mssa)