

English and Communication Benchmarks, Grades 4 – 12

COMMUNICATE INFORMATION (C) WRITING (C.1)

As students progress through the grade levels, they should write a variety of texts and communicate ideas that are increasingly complex. They should also develop in their ability to make effective choices in their writing. These benchmarks are relevant for all types of writing and should be used along with the benchmarks for Informational/Explanatory Essays, Literary Analysis Essays, Argumentative Essays, Research Essays and Work-Related Texts. These benchmarks are also applicable to and should be used alongside the benchmarks for the other modes of communicating: Speaking and Producing Digital Media. A reference source that may be useful for teachers of writing is the Alliance for Excellent Education report, *Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High School*, by Steve Graham and Dolores Perin. The benchmarks below address reading skills that students will practice across the disciplines, but it is important to note that, as research has verified, the specific set of sub-skills that students use may vary according to the discipline; students read literary texts differently from biology texts, for example, in terms of their attention to detail and to larger relationships among ideas. *(NOTE: This document does not detail the requirements of successful discipline-specific reading skills and strategies. One potential resource for information regarding subject-specific reading skills is the International Reading Association document on Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches. This document discusses the skill sets coaches need to help teachers develop, and in doing so may help to highlight possible differences between disciplines.)*

It is worth noting that ADP does not specify personal or creative writing as a writing product necessary for workplace and college success. Expressing oneself in a personal way in writing, however, can be an important way to develop students' writing and thinking and may support the more formal types of performances provided in these benchmarks.

The benchmarks for effective writing progress across the grades in the following areas:¹

C.1.1 Topics, Development and Focus

- C.1.1.1 generating and developing complex topics
- C.1.1.2 developing sufficient and effective supporting details and examples
- C.1.1.3 focusing on purpose

C.1.2 Coherence and Cohesion

- C.1.2.1 utilizing a logical and purposeful organization, including effective introductions, a relevant body of development and effective conclusions

¹ The ADP benchmarks emphasize measurable outcomes and products, as opposed to those parts of process which are less measurable, or those strategies students and teachers might use to achieve the measurable outcome, including some aspects of planning and pre-writing and certain aspects of drafting (such as strategies to develop ideas by consulting with peers). These are important to student success in writing, but the ADP focus is on measurable outcomes rather than instructional or learning processes. Drafting is addressed within the sections above on Topics, Development and Focus; Coherence and Cohesion; and Language and Technical Facility.

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C.1.2.2 using transitions which provide textual coherence and cohesion

C.1.3 Language and Technical Facility

- C.1.3.1 using effective language
- C.1.3.2 using complex syntax and varied sentence structures as appropriate for purpose
- C.1.3.3 developing an effective and varied style and tone
- C.1.3.4 demonstrating control of standard English through grammar and mechanics
- C.1.3.5 citing sources effectively and correctly

C.1.4 Writing Process: Planning, Editing, Revising and Using Technology

- C.1.4.1 planning for writing
- C.1.4.2 editing for correctness
- C.1.4.3 revising for effectiveness
- C.1.4.4 utilizing different writing technologies

These benchmarks are described in greater detail below.²

GRADES 4 – 5	GRADES 6 – 8	GRADES 9 – 10	GRADES 11 – 12
C.1.1 Topics, Development and Focus			
C.1.1.1 generating and developing complex topics			
<p>C.1.1.1.4-5 Develop topics that are familiar and concrete, rather than removed and abstract, and demonstrate a clear relationship to the students' prior knowledge and experiences. <i>For example, write a research essay on a particular animal or insect; an argument about rules at recess; a literary essay about a favorite character.</i> (ADP C4)</p> <p><i>NOTE: See strands on ADP Products (Informational/Explanatory Essays,</i></p>	<p>C.1.1.1.6-8 Develop topics that are generally familiar and concrete, but may also be abstract and somewhat removed from students' prior knowledge and experience, and that may involve analysis. <i>For example, write a research essay on a local environmental concern; an argument taking a position on a particular school requirement; a literary essay on how a character changes over the course of a novel.</i> (ADP C4)</p>	<p>C.1.1.1.9-10 Develop topics that address unfamiliar concepts that are removed from the students' personal experiences, address and analyze abstract issues. <i>For example, write an informational essay on the social and ethical impact of language used in a particular set of advertisements; an argument that takes a position on a controversial social issue; a literary analysis essay on the importance of setting in <i>My Antonia</i> by Willa Cather.</i></p>	<p>C.1.1.1.11-12 Develop topics that primarily address unfamiliar and abstract concepts that are removed from the students' personal experiences; and require in-depth analysis. <i>For example, write a literary analysis essay on societal pressures as they affect a particular character in <i>The Great Gatsby</i> by F. Scott Fitzgerald; a research essay on women as portrayed in Chinese immigrant poetry; an informational essay on various theories regarding the</i></p>

² The progression provided by ACT in *Reading between the Lines: What the ACT Reveals about College Readiness*, January 2006 was used as a resource in the development of these benchmarks. In addition, a draft of the *2011 NAEP Writing Framework* was referenced as a resource. The *College Board Standards for College Success* were also used as a source, specifically for the progression of developing skills across the grade bands. The *District of Columbia Reading/English Language Arts Pre-K through Grade 12 Standards* were used as another source in the development of these benchmarks.

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GRADES 4 – 5	GRADES 6 – 8	GRADES 9 – 10	GRADES 11 – 12
<i>Literary Analysis Essays, Argumentative Essays, Research Essays and Work-Related Texts</i>) for more specific examples.	<i>NOTE: See strands on ADP Products (Informational/Explanatory Essays, Literary Analysis Essays, Argumentative Essays, Research Essays and Work-Related Texts) for more specific examples.</i>	(ADP C4) <i>NOTE: See strands on ADP Products (Informational/Explanatory Essays, Literary Analysis Essays, Argumentative Essays, Research Essays and Work-Related Texts) for more specific examples.</i>	<i>collapse of the Mayan civilization.</i> (ADP C4) <i>NOTE: See strands on ADP Products (Informational/Explanatory Essays, Literary Analysis Essays, Argumentative Essays, Research Essays and Work-Related Texts) for more specific examples.</i>

C.1.1.2 developing sufficient and effective supporting details and examples

C.1.1.2.4-5 Use specific facts, concrete details, reasons and examples that support the thesis or expand the topic. (ADP C4)	C.1.1.2.6-8 Include specific facts, concrete details, reasons and examples that support and amplify the thesis. (ADP C4)	C.1.1.2.9-12 Use a variety of strategies when appropriate (such as comparisons, anecdotes or detailed descriptions) to provide specific facts, concrete details, reasons and examples that support and amplify the thesis. (ADP C4)
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C.1.1.3 focusing on purpose

		C.1.1.3.9-10.a Develop ideas as appropriate to audience and respond to readers' potential questions and counterarguments. (ADP C9, ADP C10 and ADP E9)	C.1.1.3.11-12.a Develop and elaborate on ideas as appropriate to audience, and anticipate and respond to readers' potential questions and counterarguments. (ADP C9, ADP C10 and ADP E9)
C.1.1.3.4-5 Develop and organize ideas and use language appropriate to the reader's needs and purpose(s) for writing. <i>For example, share an experience or emotion; write in the first person.</i> (ADP C9, ADP C10 and ADP E9)	C.1.1.3.6-8 Develop relevant details or reasons in a manner that meet the needs of the audience and purpose. <i>For example, organize the information clearly when writing to inform.</i> (ADP C9, ADP C10 and ADP E9)	C.1.1.3.9-10.b Include substantive and relevant details to meet the needs of the audience and purpose. <i>For example, begin and end the argument with strong points when writing to persuade.</i> (ADP C9, ADP C10 and ADP E9)	C.1.1.3.11-12.b Include substantive, relevant, specific and compelling details to meet the needs of the audience and purpose. <i>For example, determine which is most important, informing or persuading; decide how much to feature counter-argument in the essay.</i> (ADP C9, ADP C10 and ADP E9)

C.1.2 Coherence and Cohesion

C.1.2.1 utilizing a logical and purposeful organization, including effective introductions, a relevant body of development and effective conclusions

C.1.2.1.4-5.a Organize writing using relatively conventional organizational structures. <i>For example, if writing an informational report on an animal, organize the information on specific attributes of the animal – its habitat, behavior and feeding habits.</i> (ADP C3)	C.1.2.1.6-8.a Organize writing using structures appropriate for the topic and meet the needs of audience. <i>For example, if using an anecdote to provide an example, use chronological order with sufficient time signals for the reader to follow easily.</i> (ADP C3)	C.1.2.1.9-10.a Employ varied and appropriate organizational structures that support the topic and that focus attention on its essential elements. <i>For example, if writing about the pros and cons of a decision, place the strongest reasons last.</i> (ADP C3)	C.1.2.1.11-12.a Employ organizational structures that are provide a focus and support for the purpose of the writing. <i>For example, beginning an analysis of an abstract concept such as tone in a short story with an example of text that exemplifies a strong tone that is returned</i>
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			<i>to at relevant times within the body of the paper might effectively move the discussion of the topic.</i> (ADP C3)
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C.1.2.1.4-5.b Use appropriate words to indicate the organizational pattern (e.g., simple time order and listing ideas as “first,” “second,” “third” etc.). (ADP C3)	C.1.2.1.6-8.b Use appropriate and effective words and phrases to indicate the organizational pattern (e.g., problem-solution, with order of steps necessary indicated in the solution). (ADP C3)	C.1.2.1.9-10.b Use appropriate words and phrases to signal organizational patterns (e.g., cause(s) and effect(s), organizing multiple causes or effects with clear indicators). (ADP C3)	C.1.2.1.9-12.c Use text features (headings, subheadings, formatting) as appropriate to signal important points within the text. (ADP C3)
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C.1.2.1.4-5.c Use text features (headings, subheadings, formatting) as appropriate to support organizational structure. (ADP C3)	C.1.2.1.6-8.c Use text features (headings, subheadings, formatting) as appropriate to signal new information. (ADP C3)	C.1.2.1.9-12.c Use text features (headings, subheadings, formatting) as appropriate to signal important points within the text. (ADP C3)	
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C.1.2.2 using transitions which provide textual coherence and cohesion

C.1.2.2.4-5 Connect relatively uncomplicated ideas using relatively simple transitions. <i>For example, show steps in the order they happen using words like 'first' or 'before' or in simple relationships such as the use of 'and' or 'but.'</i> (ADP C3)	C.1.2.2.6-8 Connect ideas using transition devices that signal simple relationships between ideas. <i>For example, use phrases such as in addition, on the other hand, in spite of, and the use of repetition and referents to connect ideas.</i> (ADP C3)	C.1.2.2.9-10 Maintain coherence through the consistent and effective use of transitions between sentences and paragraphs that signal complex relationships of ideas. <i>For example, use transitions such as nonetheless, therefore, however, as a result, in a similar manner.</i> (ADP C3)	C.1.2.2.11-12 Maintain coherence through the effective use of transitions within and between sentences and paragraphs to connect, contrast and amplify ideas. (ADP C3)
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C.1.3 Language and Technical Facility

C.1.3.1 using effective language

C.1.3.1.4-8.a Use accurate and precise language to convey meaning. <i>For example, substitute a concrete noun for the word "thing."</i> (ADP A6, ADP A7 and ADP C2)	C.1.3.1.9-10.a Use language precisely considering audience and purpose taking advantage of both the connotative and denotative power of language. <i>For example, "It was a night of sleet, gusts and tossing trees" rather than "it was rainy and windy."</i> (ADP A6, ADP A7 and ADP C2)	C.1.3.1.11-12.a Use language with connotations that enhance the topic and suggest multiple interpretations if appropriate, considering audience and purpose. <i>For example, in her poem "The Fish," Elizabeth Bishop begins with the phrase, "I caught a tremendous fish"—a description that denotes the size but also other amazing qualities that support the poem's focus.</i> (ADP A6, ADP A7 and ADP C2)	
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		C.1.3.1.9-10.b Use precise technical language as needed. (ADP A6, ADP A7 and ADP C2)	C.1.3.1.11-12.b Use precise technical language purposefully for audience and purpose. (ADP A6, ADP A7 and ADP C2)
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C.1.3.1.4-5.b Use language to enhance effect, (e.g., strong verbs, effective images). (ADP A6, ADP A7 and ADP C2)	C.1.3.1.6-8.b Use strong verbs and figurative language (e.g., metaphors and similes) for emphasis or creative effect as appropriate to purpose. (ADP A6, ADP A7 and ADP C2)	C.1.3.1.9-10.c Use compelling verbs and a variety of figurative language (e.g., personification, sarcasm, caricature) for effect to meet the needs of audience and purpose. (ADP A6, ADP A7 and ADP C2)	C.1.3.1.11-12.c Use compelling verbs and a variety of figurative language (e.g., irony, wordplay and puns, symbols) for effect to meet the needs of audience, purpose and style as appropriate. (ADP A6, ADP A7 and ADP C2)
C.1.3.2 using complex syntax and varied sentence structures as appropriate for purpose			
C.1.3.2.4-5.a Use correct and complete sentence structures. (ADP A1)	C.1.3.2.6-10.a Use correct sentence structures that are appropriate for audience and purpose. (ADP A1)		C.1.3.2.11-12.a Use complete, clear sentence structures that vary for effect (e.g., combining short sentences, varying sentence beginnings, using a variety of sentence types, including fragments or questions for effect). (ADP A1)
C.1.3.2.4-5.b Use appropriate syntax to present ideas (e.g., using simple introductory clauses and conjunctions for subordination and coordination). (ADP A1)	C.1.3.2.6-8.b Incorporate some variety of syntactic structures for effect when appropriate (e.g., modifying phrases, parenthetical expressions). (ADP A1)	C.1.3.2.9-10.b Vary somewhat complex syntax for effect (e.g., when coordinating equally important ideas and subordinating less important ideas) and incorporate more complicated syntax (e.g., increased use of embedded clauses). (ADP A1)	C.1.3.2.11-12.b Control complex syntax for effect and incorporate more complex syntax (e.g., combine sentences and incorporate parallel structures). (ADP A1)
C.1.3.3 developing an effective and varied style and tone			
C.1.3.3.4-5.a Use formal or informal language appropriate to topic, purpose and audience. (ADP C5)	C.1.3.3.6-8.a Edit to craft a tone that is appropriate for the topic, audience and supports the purpose. (ADP C5)	C.1.3.3.9-10.a Edit to craft a tone that adds interest to the message and is appropriate for the topic, audience and enhances the purpose. (ADP C5)	C.1.3.3.11-12.a Edit to craft a tone that helps to focus the message and the reader's response. (ADP C5)
C.1.3.3.4-5.b Use language that conveys the writer's attitude, as appropriate for purpose and audience. (ADP C5)	C.1.3.3.6-8.b Use language that conveys the writer's point of view. (ADP C5)	C.1.3.3.9-10.b Use language that communicates the writer's stance and attitude toward the topic. (ADP C5)	C.1.3.3.11-12.b Effectively use language that subtly conveys by both connotation and denotation the writer's stance and attitude toward the topic. (ADP C5)
C.1.3.4 demonstrating control of standard English through grammar and mechanics			
C.1.3.4.4-5 Demonstrate control of Standard English through grammar, usage and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization and spelling) to support	C.1.3.4.6-8 Demonstrate control of Standard English through grammar, usage and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization and spelling) to support	C.1.3.4.9-10 Demonstrate control of Standard English through grammar, usage and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization and spelling) to support	C.1.3.4.11-12.a Demonstrate control of Standard English through grammar, usage and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization and spelling) to support

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the clarity of expression in relatively uncomplicated text. <i>For example, write primarily in complete sentences, use coordinating conjunctions appropriately, understand use of comma in a series.</i> (ADP A1)	the clarity of expression in more challenging text. <i>For example, use parallel constructions effectively, use consistent verb tense.</i> (ADP A1)	the clarity of expression in more complicated text. <i>For example, demonstrate increased skill with parallel constructions, show more effective use of modifying phrases.</i> (ADP A1)	the clarity of expression in complex text. <i>For example, show increased variety of sentence structures, show increased variety and effectiveness of organizational patterns.</i> (ADP A1)
			C.1.3.4.11-12.a Demonstrate control of Standard English through grammar, usage and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization and spelling) to support the clarity of expression in complex text. <i>For example, show increased variety of sentence structures, show increased variety and effectiveness of organizational patterns.</i> (ADP A1)

C.1.3.5 citing sources effectively and correctly

<p>C.1.3.5.4-5 When other sources are used or referenced (such as in research, informational essays or literary essays), students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge source material (e.g., from other sources and make them distinct from the student’s own ideas); and, Use correct punctuation when quoting. (ADP C6) 	<p>C.1.3.5.6-8 When other sources are used or referenced (such as in research, informational essays or literary essays), students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge source material (e.g., list sources); Understand the differences between quoting, paraphrasing and summarizing; Quote; paraphrase; or summarize text, ideas or other information taken from print or other electronic sources; Embed quotations from other sources with skill and accuracy; and, Embed graphics with skill and accuracy, when appropriate. (ADP C6) 	<p>C.1.3.5.9-10 When other sources are used or referenced (such as in research, informational essays or literary essays), students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge source material and create a reliable bibliography in a standard format; Cite sources using a standard format (such as MLA or APA) with a high degree of accuracy; Appropriately quote; paraphrase; or summarize text, ideas or other information taken from print or other electronic sources; Correctly incorporate ideas within text; Accurately embed quotations from other sources; and, Accurately embed graphics, when appropriate. (ADP C6) 	<p>C.1.3.5.11-12 When other sources are used or referenced (such as in research, informational essays or literary essays), students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skillfully acknowledge source material (create a reliable bibliography, list of works cited and/or works consulted); Cite sources using a standard format appropriate to the discipline (such as MLA or APA), with a high degree of accuracy; Skillfully and strategically quote; paraphrase; or summarize text, ideas or other information taken from print or other electronic sources; Incorporate ideas and quotations effectively and correctly within text; Accurately and skillfully embed quotations from other sources; and, Accurately and skillfully embed
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C.1.4 Writing Process: Planning, Editing, Revising and Using Technology

C.1.4.1 planning for writing

C.1.4.1.4-5.a Generate notes on text to identify important text elements. (ADP C1)	C.1.4.1.6-8.a Generate notes on text, and identify main and supporting ideas. (ADP C1)	C.1.4.1.9-12.a Generate notes while collecting information for writing, following a logical note-taking system. (ADP C1)
C.1.4.1.4-5.b List ideas to include in writing, and then order the ideas logically (e.g., simple time order or order of importance). (ADP C1)	C.1.4.1.6-8.b Based on research or note-taking, or other method of generating content, generate a plan of ideas following an appropriate organizational pattern. (ADP C1) <i>NOTE: See the ADP benchmarks for Research and the strand for Research Essays for more specifics on planning research.</i>	C.1.4.1.9-12.b Based on research, note-taking or other method of generating content, generate a detailed outline. (ADP C1) <i>NOTE: See the ADP benchmarks for Research and the strand for Research Essays for more specifics on planning research.</i>

C.1.4.2 editing for correctness

C.1.4.2.4-5 Edit relatively uncomplicated writing for errors in mechanics (punctuation, capitalization), spelling and grammar (e.g., complete sentences, subject-verb agreement). (ADP C5)	C.1.4.2.6-8 Edit more challenging writing for mechanics (punctuation, capitalization), spelling, grammar (e.g., consistent verb tense, noun and pronoun agreement). (ADP C5)	C.1.4.2.9-10 Edit increasingly complex writing for mechanics (punctuation, capitalization), spelling, grammar (e.g., pronoun-antecedent relationship, use of modifying phrases), style and tone as appropriate to audience, purpose and context. (ADP C5)	C.1.4.2.11-12 Edit complex writing for mechanics (punctuation, capitalization), spelling, grammar (e.g., pronoun-antecedent relationship, use of modifying phrases), style (e.g., eliminating verbiage) and tone as appropriate to audience, purpose and context. (ADP C5)
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C.1.4.3 revising for effectiveness

C.1.4.3.4-5 Drawing on reader's comments, revise papers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the writing focuses on the topic; Better support ideas; and, Ensure that the paper is organized clearly. (ADP C4) 	C.1.4.3.6-8 Drawing on reader's comments, revise papers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the writing focuses on the topic or thesis; Develop or support ideas more fully; Ensure transitions between ideas and paragraphs; and, Ensure that the paper has a clear beginning and ending. (ADP C4) 	C.1.4.3.9-12 Drawing on reader's comments, revise papers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the thesis or research question is the focus of the paper; Develop or support ideas more fully; Address potential objections; Ensure effective and varied transitions between ideas and paragraphs; Ensure that the paper has an effective, clear beginning and ending; Correct errors in logic; and, Identify areas for further development or questions that remain. (ADP C4)
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C.1.4.4 utilizing different writing technologies			
C.1.4.4.4-5 Use relatively basic software programs (e.g., Word) for uncomplicated written drafts and products. (ADP C7 and ADP C8)	C.1.4.4.6-8 Use relatively basic software programs (e.g., Word, PowerPoint) to write more challenging texts and create graphics to present ideas visually and in writing. (ADP C7 and ADP C8)	C.1.4.4.9-10 Use more specialized software (e.g., Photoshop, Acrobat, Pagemaker) and basic software programs (e.g., Word, PowerPoint and Excel) for written drafts and finished products and to incorporate visual and other graphics into increasingly complex text. (ADP C7 and ADP C8)	C.1.4.4.11-12.a Use more specialized software (e.g., Photoshop, Acrobat, Dreamweaver, Pagemaker) and basic software programs for written drafts and finished products; to incorporate visual and other graphics into basic text; and to create special formatting and effects to communicate ideas and information. (ADP C7 and ADP C8)
			C.1.4.4.11-12.b Determine how, when and whether to employ technology instead of, or in addition to, written communication to most effectively convey complex ideas. (ADP C7 and ADP C8)