

2024 MCAS ELA Essay Webinar Elementary Transcript

Slide 1: Welcome to our presentation on the MCAS ELA Essays in grades 3, 4, and 5. My name is Danika Ripley and I am a member of the ELA Test Development Team. This presentation is geared towards elementary classroom teachers and curriculum coordinators and was originally shared as webinar on January 23, 2024, by members of the ELA Test Development Team. In addition to the PowerPoint presentation, you will need to access the participant packet which includes the rubric, anchor papers, and student responses that will be referred to throughout the presentation.

Slide 2: During today's session, we will:

- Provide an overview of the MCAS test development and scoring process.
- Analyze student work samples from a grade 4 essay.
- Individually score student responses
- Review additional resources available on the Department's website.

Slide 3: These are the Department's strategic objectives. In partnership with districts, schools, and programs, DESE has identified 3 strategic objectives. Today we are focused on Deeper Learning. As part of this session, we want to think about engaging all students in grade-level work and relevant to them. We will connect to the MA frameworks and think about ways to support students in thinking critically, asking questions, and making meaning.

Slide 4: Before we look at the grade 4 essay question, it's important that we have some background and understanding of how questions, which we refer to as items, end up on an operational MCAS test. This is the "Life Cycle of an ELA Item".

- From beginning to end, this process takes about two years. Today, we would like to draw your attention to a few places on the chart.
- First, we have two educator committees - the Assessment Development Committee or ADC (purple boxes) and the Bias and Sensitivity Committee or BSC (blue boxes). Both committees are tasked with making sure that the passages and items on the MCAS test are grade appropriate, accurate, and aligned to the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks.
- The first sets of ADC and BSC meetings focus on passages and items. At the passage review meetings, passages are reviewed by educators to make sure that they are grade appropriate, rich enough to support a variety of questions, and provide opportunities to assess the standards in the ELA frameworks. This is also an opportunity for educators to suggest item ideas for each passage.
- At the item review meeting, educators review all items associated with the passages. One of the important tasks at this meeting is to review the essay and constructed-response questions as well as the scoring notes that accompany them. The scoring notes include information and examples that we anticipate students might use to answer the question. It is not an exhaustive list. The scoring notes are important for us to determine if there is enough information in the passage for a student to write a response. The questions are then prepared to be put on the test and are reviewed by content experts and editorial staff.
- After the test is administered (that is in the orange box,) the test is separated into operational items and field test items. The operational items – which are common to all students, are scored and results are sent to districts and families.
- Constructed responses and essays are scored through a process called benchmarking. During the benchmarking process, anchor papers and scoring materials are chosen for each constructed

response and essay. Anchor papers are actual student papers that represent each of the score points based on the language of the rubric.

- The field test items do not count towards the score, but the educator committees are reconvened to review the data and to determine whether the item can go into the operational eligible bank.
- As you can see, our educator teams play an integral role in our process.

Slide 5: Essay questions are scored through a process called benchmarking. When the benchmarking process is complete, the anchor papers and training sets that have been chosen for each essay response become part of the scoring materials available to score the items. In addition to the passage and question, scorers have the scoring guide, anchor papers, and annotations to use when scoring essay questions. We will be using these materials throughout our presentation today.

- The scoring guide is the rubric which we will look at more closely in a few minutes. Many of you are likely familiar with the scoring guide already. Scorers pay attention to the specific descriptions of what is expected at each score point for both idea development and conventions. Included with the scoring guide are the scoring notes that were developed with educators during the item review process.
- A set of anchor papers is put together for each essay during the benchmarking process. These papers are actual student responses that have been selected to represent each score point. The anchor papers have been selected based on the rubric and the scoring notes. The anchor papers are used to illustrate the expectations at each score point.
- Annotations are additional notes added to each of the anchor papers. These notes are a way to articulate, explain, and expand upon the scoring, providing more of an explanation than the rubric alone. While the scoring guide is applied to every Essay item, each essay has its own set of unique anchor papers, and annotations that are specific to the question.

Slide 6: The Essay Scoring Guide or Rubric can be found on page 10 of your participant packet. As a reminder, we are going to be talking about Essays today, but there is a separate rubric for the Constructed Response Items in grades 3 and 4 which is also available on our website. The grades 3-5 Essay Rubric is a 2-trait rubric and is made up of elements for idea development and elements for Standard English Conventions. Idea development assesses the writing standards and Conventions assesses the language standards.

Slide 7: In grades 3-5 students can score up to 4 points for idea development. At the top of the idea development portion of the rubric are the elements that are assessed for the idea development portion of the essay. This is the section noted in blue. Below are specific expectations for each score point.

Slide 8: In grades 3-5 students can score up to 3 points for conventions. At the top of the conventions portion of the rubric are the elements that are assessed for this portion of the essay. This is the section noted in orange. Below are specific expectations for each score point.

Slide 9: This is the general language that is included for Idea Development and Conventions. Idea Development is on the left of the scoring guide and is in the blue box. It aligns to writing standards 1, 2, or 3 and writing standard 4. For idea development, we analyze the essays in terms of

- The quality and development of the central idea - how well does the student state the answer to the question.

- The selection and explanation of evidence and/or details - the type of evidence the student uses to support their answer. You'll notice an asterisk next to central idea and evidence and details. This draws your attention to the box at the bottom of the rubric. For narrative writing, the quality and development of narrative elements will be assessed in place of a central idea. Narrative elements should include, but are not limited to: plot, character, setting, dialogue, action, and/or description. Students should use evidence/details to demonstrate understanding of text.
- We're also looking at organization – how well the student organizes their writing – does it make sense?
- The expression of ideas – how well does the student elaborate in their writing?
- And the awareness of the purpose for writing

The conventions portion of the scoring guide is on the right and we have it in an orange box.

Conventions align to language standards 1, 2 and 3. For conventions, we analyze the essay in terms of

- sentence structure – how well the student writes the sentences and the variety.
- grammar, usage, and mechanics - how well the student adheres to standard English conventions, including use of correct grammar, word usage and mechanics, such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphs.
- For conventions, we are looking at the overall essay. It is important to note that we are looking for control and not perfection. Does the student show control of sentence structure, grammar, usage and mechanics in a way that is expected of the grade level? We're looking to see that the control of conventions is sustained. If a response is too brief, the student misses the opportunity to show that skill. This is why the language of the rubric refers to "length and complexity". A response does not have to be perfect to get a top convention score, we recognize that this is on demand writing. There is no correlation between the number of errors and the score.

For both idea development and conventions, the expectations outlined in the general language portion of the scoring rubric stay the same for all score points. The degree to which these expectations are demonstrated is different for each score point.

Slide 10: Now that we've discussed the language in the rubric, let's talk about the MCAS student essay expectations.

- First, the response must address the question and the writing mode. The question includes information on what should be included in the student's essay such as supporting a central idea or extending a story. There are standardized student directions for each writing mode (e.g., narrative, explanatory, opinion). As with different writing types there are different expectations for the responses, so it is important that students use the question and direction lines to understand what is expected in their response.
- The response must be based on the information or details from the passage. Outside information does not count towards the student score. For explanatory and opinions essays, this can be included in different ways. A student could use a direct quote from the passage and further explain it, they could paraphrase a section, or they could do both. We want students to use the passage to support their central idea. For narratives, we are still looking for students to use the passage to write their story. It should be connected to the passage and show a logical

extension of the passage. For example, the characters introduced in the passage should be present in the narrative. The passage should be used as a springboard for students to build on other elements such as setting or plot to demonstrate understanding of the passage. On both the paper and computer-based tests, there is a limited space for students to write their essay. For the essay responses in grades 3-5 it is 2500 characters or about a page. With this fixed amount of space, we want students to use the passages to support their central idea or write their narrative. And while a student will not lose points for outside information, we want students to focus on answering the question.

- The responses should include multiple paragraphs. We will be looking at scored responses at each score point and you will notice that the higher scores include more writing to support a central idea or create a narrative. As mentioned earlier, during our passage and item review, we discuss the question and review the scoring notes with our educator committees. The scoring notes give us that insight on what we think the students will include so that we can be sure that there is enough for them to write.

Slide 11: Let's talk a bit more about scoring.

- Summaries of passage(s) will receive a 0 for Idea Development and up 3 points for Conventions. This is a case where a student does not answer the question asked such as supporting a central idea or writing a narrative and instead includes a summary. When looking in the rubric, the zero score for idea development states that "the response shows evidence the student has read the text, but does not address the question or incorrectly responds to the question." With an essay that is a summary of the passage, it is evident that the student read the passage so they can receive up to 3 points in conventions.
- Writing in the wrong mode will receive a 0 for Idea Development and up 3 points for Conventions. This is a case where the student did not address the question in the correct mode. Again, the idea development portion of the rubric at the 0 includes that if there is evidence in the response that the student read the passage, the student can receive a score in conventions. For example, if the question asks for a narrative, and the student writes a summary that includes details based on the passage, they could receive a score in conventions.
- Direct copy from the prompt or passage with no original words from the student will result in a ZERO Score. When we say direct copy, we mean copying full amounts of text and no original words. In this case, we cannot tell if the student read the passage or simply copied it, so they receive a 0. It's important to talk to students about how to use the passage in their response. We want students to use quotes to build their central idea or use details about the character in their narrative, but they do need to include their own words too.

Slide 12: The scoring process is thorough and rigorous. The scoring process is the same for both CR and essay responses.

- All MCAS scorers participate and are trained in the responses that they score. What we mean here, is that if a scorer is trained on a grade 5 question, that does not mean they can score all grade 5 questions. They are trained for each question they score.
- Each question has a specific set of training materials, some of which you will see today. Scorers must qualify to score each question – they need to demonstrate that they understand the expectations at each score point.

- Scorers are provided with the passage and question. They review the scoring notes which include possible responses that students might include. They view the scoring guide (the rubric) which articulates expectations at each score point. They look at anchor papers (student responses) at each score point. And finally, they review the Annotations which provide further explanation of the expectations at each score point, using specific language from the scoring guide/rubric. We are going to look at these components more closely later in this presentation. During this training, the scorers are trained/instructed on the grade level question.
- Scoring is continuously monitored using quality control measures like read behinds and embedded responses in order to ensure accuracy in scoring. A read behind is when a member of scoring leadership reads a response after a score has been submitted. This provides the opportunity to make sure that a scorer is adhering to the standard and overall expectations that have been set.

Slide 13: The MCAS writing expectations for essays are communicated to students through the direction lines AND the question.

- The direction lines are standardized for each writing mode and provide guidance to students such as using details and evidence, using correct spelling grammar and punctuation.
- The questions (the essay prompt) also include specific information about what to include in the essay (such as supporting a central idea or write a story) and also include a reminder to use details and information from the passage.

Slide 14: First let's look at explanatory/opinion essays which are aligned to standards 1 (opinion) or 2 (explanatory).

- For these writing modes, some key words that are in the questions could include explain, evidence, details. As we continue to mention, the responses needed to be based on the passage and should not include outside information. Outside information will be disregarded. We must make sure that all students have access to the same content, so we provide the passages for them to use in their response.
- As we have mentioned, the students should include a central idea. Students should use evidence or details from the passage. As a reminder, this can be a direct quote or a paraphrase with an explanation to support their central idea.
- Let's take a look at the direction lines with a question.

Slide 15: Here's an example from the 2023 grade 4 test. First students see the direction lines: For this question, students will write an essay based on the passage(s). Your writing should: present and develop a central idea, include evidence and/or details from the passage, use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Students are directed to

- write an essay
- refer to the passage(s)
- present and develop a central idea
- use evidence and/or details from the passage And
- use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation

Then, students see the question: Based on Komodo Dragons, write an essay that explains what physical characteristics help the Komodo dragon survive. Be sure to use information from the passage to develop your essay. Students are again directed to

- write an essay
- develop their central idea, which is to explain what physical characteristics help the Komodo dragon survive And
- use information
- from the passage

Students are being asked to support the central idea “what physical characteristics help the Komodo Dragon survive”. They are not being asked whether they want to meet a Komodo dragon or if they liked the passage. This goes back to our earlier slide. It is important that students answer the question that is asked.

Slide 16: Narrative writing is aligned to writing standard 3. With the narrative essays, there is a progression in terms of the language that is presented to students. This is particularly important for the elementary grades, as the language in the direction lines changes between grades 4 and 5.

- Starting in grade 5, students are expected to know the term narrative and are prompted to “write a narrative” when they encounter this type of writing prompt. This is different from the language in the direction lines that students see in grades 3 and 4. In grades 3 and 4, students will be prompted to “continue the story”. The shift in language is based on the feedback and recommendations from educator committees when thinking about at what point students should be familiar with the term “narrative”. Despite the differences in the terminology in direction lines (which are written for students in grade appropriate language), it is expected that students include elements of writing standard 3 (narrative writing) in their responses.
- In all grades, the expectation is that students write a narrative. Responses should include the narrative elements we saw on the previous slide and should logically extend the passage. Elements such as characters, dialogue, plot, and setting are all expected.
- Students that write in the incorrect mode will receive an idea development score of a zero. In the case of narrative writing, this could be a response that starts with “I think that” or outlines a prediction or summary. In either instance, the student did not write a narrative and did not include the elements of narrative writing (character, setting, dialogue, plot, etc) that we expect to see in this mode. It is imperative that students are writing in the correct mode. In order to clearly communicate these expectations to students, reminders are embedded in the standardized direction lines and the prompt.

Slide 17: As we saw in the scoring guide, there are different expectations noted for narrative writing. Since the expectations are different, the direction lines differ as well. Let’s take a look at the grade 5 narrative direction lines. Here, the directions specifically ask students to

- “write a narrative”. As I mentioned, beginning in grade 5, students should know the term narrative. The directions then go on to direct students to the passage(s)
- And remind students to use
- characters, settings, events, and other details from the passage and
- to use the correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Today, we will be looking more in depth at a grade 4 essay. We will take a closer look at the grades 3 and 4 narrative direction lines when we look at the grade 4 essay question.

Slide 18: Throughout this presentation, you will need to access the participant packet.

This packet includes passage (pages 1-7), the question (page 8), the rubric (page 10) and student anchor papers (pages 12-17) Today, we will:

- Review the question and direction lines.
- Revisit the scoring guide.
- Read and analyze the anchor papers at each score point.

At this point, you may choose to pause the presentation to read the passage on pages 1-6 so that you are familiar with it prior to looking at student responses. You may also want to review the question on page 7, the rubric on page 8, and the student anchor papers on pages 9-16 before we look at these materials more in depth on the upcoming slides.

Slide 19: Today we will be looking at a grade 4 essay question from 2021. The question goes with the passage: Winning. The question is: Based on “Winning,” write a story that tells what will happen when Tom goes to Ed’s house. Use what you know about the characters, settings, and events to write your story. As we saw with the grade 5 example, the essay expectations and reminders are embedded in the directions.

- Students are reminded that their answer should be based on the passage.
- Students are directed to write a story.
- Students are reminded of the narrative elements that should be included: characters, settings, events, and other details.
- Students are reminded to use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. This speaks to the conventions portion of the rubric.
- The question is stated: write a story that tells what will happen when Tom goes to Ed’s house.
- Students are again reminded to use narrative elements.

Slide 20: Now that we’ve seen the question, let’s remind ourselves of the Essay Scoring Guide or Rubric. This can be found on page 10 of your participant packet. We will be scoring each response for idea development and conventions. The rubric is not a checklist, and each response is considered as a whole and how the response meets the overall expectations for idea development and conventions. Each score point includes specific language about each of the elements and there is a range within each score point. For example, if one of the elements of the rubric is not as strong as the others, it may simply make it a lower 4, 3, 2 or 1 in ID. As we mentioned, we are looking at an abbreviated version of the anchor (student responses) today so that we can show you examples of scores at each score point for both idea development and conventions. The scorers will see more examples at each score point to ensure they understand the overall range within each score point.

Slide 21: This first response is an example of a score point 4 for idea development and 3 for conventions. It is on page 12 in your participant packet. Let’s look at the language of the rubric. A response receiving a 4 in idea development includes:

- A clear and fully developed essay with narrative elements (plot, character, setting, dialogue, action, and/or description)

- Effective evidence/details to demonstrate understanding of text.
- Effective organization
- Clear expression of ideas
- Full awareness of the purpose for writing

Now let's look at the conventions score point 3. The responses shows:

- Consistent control of a variety of sentence structures AND
- Consistent control of grammar, usage and mechanics relative to the complexity and/or length of the essay

The narrative is effectively organized and includes well-chosen details that relate to the characters, setting, and continuation of events. There is a clear, logical sequence of events. Tom's character is developed through details. Tom's feelings of nervousness about making a new friend (a concept that was introduced in the passage) are clearly expressed. There is a full awareness of the purpose of writing throughout the narrative.

The narrative demonstrates consistent control and uses a variety of sentence structures. The dialogue between Tom and Ed is generally punctuated correctly and contributes to the plot. While there are minor errors in grammar and usage, they do not detract from the overall meaning.

I'm going to walk us through a few places in the narrative that contribute to the idea development score of a 4 and the conventions score of a 3. Please keep in mind that there are other examples in the narrative, we're only going to be pulling out and discussing a few of them today.

- In the first sentence, the response makes it clear that this is a continuation of the story. The characters from the passage (Tom and Ed) are included and the setting (Ed's house) is introduced.
- In the first paragraph, the response provides insight about the friendship between Tom and Ed. This is something that was referenced in the passage.
- Throughout the response, specific details are included. Here we see specific details describing Ed's room (rockets, posters, autographs), the rockets (shiny red and blue)
- actions of the characters (tested, compared, launched) contribute to the plot and move the story along.
- The response provides insight into Tom's character by telling how he feels (shy, face turning red, palms sweaty, heart racing). These feelings are consistent with the passage.
- The ongoing conversation between Tom and Ed helps to move the plot along and adds to the character development. The narrative concludes by connecting back to the message of friendship which was evident in the passage.

In terms of conventions, we see consistent control throughout the passage.

- Dialogue is included throughout the passage and is generally punctuated correctly.
- We also see a variety of sentence structures used throughout the narrative.

Slide 22: This is another example of an essay that scored a 4 in idea development and 3 in conventions and it is found on page 13 of your participant pack. This response also scored a 4 in idea development and 3 in conventions. Although there are some differences between this response and the previous example of a score point 4, both responses are examples of clear and fully developed narratives.

This example is a well-developed narrative that tells what will happen when Tom goes to Ed's house. There are effective details relating to characters, setting, and continuation of events. The dialogue between the characters contributes to development and plot. Organization is effective throughout the narrative relying on paragraphing. There is a full awareness of the purpose of writing throughout the narrative.

The narrative demonstrates consistent control of a variety of sentence structures. Punctuation is used effectively in the dialogue between the two characters. Minor errors in grammar do not detract from understanding. Based on its length and complexity, the narrative demonstrates consistent control of Standard English conventions for this grade level.

Again, we're only going to go through a few places in the narrative that contribute to the idea development and conventions scores. Please keep in mind that there are other examples in the narrative. Let's take a look a closer look at this response.

- The first few sentences continue the story and establish the setting of Ed's house.
- We see specific details (black leather couch, baby blue paint, shiny handle) that contribute to the setting and paint a picture of the room. There is a purpose for the inclusion of these details – to support the point made earlier in the paragraph that the house was well decorated.
- The narrative provides insight into Tom's character by showing how he is feeling (jealous, starting to worry)
- The plot moves along using phrases like "a few minutes later" to introduce a new event
- We see internal dialogue (snap out of it, he must have been looking for something) to tell what Tom is thinking
- Strong word choice (such as inspired) is present throughout the narrative.
- Finally, there is a logical conclusion to end the narrative and to hint at future competitions.

In terms of conventions, we see

- consistent control of conventions, including correct punctuation and grammar
- we also see variety in sentence length and structure throughout the response

Slide 23: OK let's look at this essay response that is found on page 14 of your participant pack. This essay scores a 3 in idea development and 3 in conventions. Let's look at the language of the rubric. A response receiving a 3 in idea development includes:

- general and moderately developed plot, character, setting, dialogue, action, and/or description.
- Appropriate evidence/details to demonstrate understanding of text
- Moderate organization
- Adequate expression of ideas
- Sufficient awareness of the purpose for writing

Similar to the other responses we have already looked at the conventions score is still demonstrating

- Consistent control of a variety of sentence structures relative AND
- Consistent control of grammar, usage and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of essay receiving a 3 in conventions

The narrative tells what will happen when Tom goes to Ed's house. Details are appropriate and relate to characters, setting, and a continuation of events. There is some dialogue included. There is a sufficient awareness of the purpose of writing throughout the narrative. The narrative is moderately organized.

The narrative demonstrates consistent control of a variety of sentence structures. Minor errors in grammar do not detract from understanding. Based on its length and complexity, the narrative demonstrates consistent control of Standard English conventions for this grade level.

Similarly to the score point 4s, there are multiple places that contribute to the idea development and conventions scores. We are only going to look at a few of them today.

- The response references the characters and setting.
- We see examples of how Tom helps the other kids at Ed's house. These examples are supported with moderate details (told the girl to make her rocket smoother and told someone else to spend more time working on the rocket). Additional details or dialogue between the characters here would have enhanced the response.
- Here we have details that describe the rocket. There are other places in the response that would have benefited from details like the ones we see here.
- Again, we see a place in the narrative where the details are moderate (Tom helped a few kids about what to do about the weather) and additional specific details would have helped the response.
- At the end of the response, we see a mention of how the character is feeling. This is the only time in the response that there is mention of the feelings of either character. There are other places where the character's feelings could have been incorporated.
- We see different sentence structures used throughout the response. Given its length and complexity, the response demonstrates consistent control of Standard English Conventions. Although there are some errors, they do not interfere with the narrative. We are looking for control of conventions, not perfection.

Slide 24: OK let's look at this essay response that is found on page 15 of your participant pack. This essay scores a 2 in idea development and 2 in conventions. Let's look at the language of the rubric. A response receiving a 2 in idea development includes:

- somewhat developed essay with narrative elements (plot, character, setting, dialogue, action, and/or description)
- Limited evidence/details to demonstrate understanding of text
- Limited organization
- Basic expression of ideas
- Partial awareness of the purpose for writing

The conventions score point 2 shows

- Mostly consistent control of a variety of sentence structures AND
- Mostly consistent control of grammar, usage and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of essay

The narrative is somewhat developed as it tells what will happen when Tom visits Ed's house.

Organization is present, but the expression of ideas is basic, and the pacing of events moves too quickly

because of limited details. Additional details and elaboration throughout the narrative would likely have resulted in an increased score. The narrative reveals a partial awareness of the purpose for writing.

The narrative demonstrates little variety in sentence structure. Relative to its length and complexity, the narrative demonstrates mostly consistent control of Standard English conventions for this grade level. In this response,

- we can see that the passage is being continued and the setting (Ed's house) is established
- Here, we see mention of talking, but there are no specific details about the conversation or what was discussed during the lunch. There is a small bit of dialogue prior to this point but additional dialogue would have been helpful here
- There is some mention of events (they walked up to Ed's room, and they tried to build a rocket but it failed). These events contribute to the plot, but again there are no specific details or elaboration about Ed's room, building the rocket, or the rocket failing.
- Another event (they looked for the microchip for 2 whole hours) is mentioned, but there are no specific details or elaboration to tell what happened during the 2 hour search.
- The narrative ends logically.

In terms of conventions, we see

- sentences with similar structure
- and conventions like we see here, are mostly correct

Slide 25: OK let's look at this essay response that is found on page 16 of your participant pack. This essay score a 1 in idea development and 1 in conventions. Let's look at the language of the rubric. A response receiving a 1 in idea development.

- Does not develop or present an essay with plot, character, setting, dialogue, action, and/or description.
- There are insufficient evidence and details to demonstrate understanding of text.
- There is minimal organization.
- ideas are poorly expressed.
- Minimal awareness of the purpose for writing

The conventions score point 1 shows

- Little control and/or no variety in sentence structure and/or
- Little control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to
- And we see the response is of insufficient length

The response continues the passage and takes place at Ed's house. Details throughout the response are insufficient and poorly expressed. Narrative elements are not developed. There is minimal awareness of the purpose for writing which is to write a story that continues the passage.

The length of the response impacts conventions. There are many errors with grammar, usage, and mechanics. There is little control of conventions throughout the response. Let's take a look a closer look at this response.

- There is an attempt to continue the story using the characters and setting from the passage.
- The dialogue present does little to develop the characters or plot

- Events such as launching a rocket and having a snack are mentioned, but there are no details present to describe or elaborate on either of these
- As a whole, the response is very point by point and ends abruptly without any significant development of plot.

In terms of conventions

- Throughout the response, we see little control of conventions. There are errors with capitalization, grammar, and mechanics.

Slide 26: OK let's look at this essay response found on page 17 in your participant pack. This essay scored a 0 in idea development and 0 in conventions. In looking at the rubric for idea development, we see that a 0 states that

- The response shows evidence the student has read the text, but does not address the question or incorrectly responds to the question.

The conventions score point 0 states that

- Sentences are formed incorrectly with no control of grammar, usage and mechanics and/or insufficient length.

The response is not written in narrative form – it does answer the question correctly. The response is a summary of the passage and does not tell what happens when Tom goes to Ed's house. There is no plot, action, dialogue, or description evident in the response. We see errors in capitalization. Sentences are not formed correctly and include run-ons. Given its length and complexity, the response demonstrates no control of standard English conventions for this grade level.

Slide 27: At this point, we would like you to independently read and score the student responses in your participant packet.

- First revisit the question (page 8 in your packet) and passage (pages 1-7 in your packet). You will want to refer to both as you read the student responses.
- Then, read Response A. Use the anchor papers in your packet on pages 12-17 and rubric on page 10. These resources are essential when scoring responses. Scorers have these readily available and refer to them as they score each response. As you read the response, you will want to determine which anchor it is most similar to based on the expectations at the score point. Choose the score that best represents the response. You will follow this process for each of the response papers.
- Please pause the presentation and score responses A through F in this manner. When you have read and scored each of the papers, please resume the presentation.

Slide 28: Here is response A, which is on page 19 of the participant packet.

Slide 29:

- This paper scored a 2 in idea development and a 2 in conventions.
- It is most similar to : Anchor 2 on page 15

The narrative is somewhat developed. Narrative elements (characters, setting, dialogue) are present but could be further developed. Details are limited and the narrative would benefit from additional details throughout. There is a partial awareness of the purpose for writing.

The response contains mostly simple sentences. There is mostly consistent control of Standard English Conventions for this grade level but does contain some errors. Let's take a closer look at this response.

- The response begins by going to Ed's house, which is a logical starting point based on where the passage ended.
- We see reference to feelings (having fun) and an event (we lost an action figure) however, there are limited details around how/why Tom and Ed are having fun as well as details further explaining the loss of the action figure.
- Again, we see reference to the plot (we looked all over the house), but only minimal details about where they looked are mentioned. This is a place in the story that would have benefited from additional specific details to elaborate on the search for the action figure.

For conventions, we see

- The response contains mostly simple sentences (Ok. I said. So I go to Ed's house. It was Ed's action figure. It was on his bed all along). Throughout the narrative, there are errors in punctuation, grammar and usage. These errors demonstrate mostly consistent control of Standard English Conventions.

Slide 30: Here is response B, which is on page 20 of the participant packet.

Slide 31:

- This paper scored a 4 in idea development and a 3 in conventions.
- It is most similar to: Anchor 4 on page 12, the first example of a 4 that we looked at today.

The narrative is fully developed with effective details about the characters, settings and events that lead Tom to understanding the value of friendship (a lesson that ties in with the references in the passage). Dialogue (both internal and external) are included throughout the response and contribute to the development of the characters and the plot. Details are strong and specific throughout the narrative.

The narrative uses a variety of sentence structures and demonstrates consistent control of conventions. As we did with the anchor papers, we will be looking at only some places in the response that contributed to the overall score.

- The narrative begins with internal dialogue from Tom, contributing to both the character's development and the plot. The first few sentences establish the characters (Ed and Tom) and the setting (Ed's house) and logically pick up where the passage left off.
- Throughout the response, there are specific details. Here, we have details (dried up grass, open space, no bumps on hills) and Tom's inner thoughts (I wish I could come here more often), both of which contribute to the development of the story as a whole.
- Details relating to what Tom sees, hears, tastes, smells and feels all add to the description of where the characters are and what they are doing.

- The narrative ends by stating Tom’s feelings, which relate to the ideas of friendship that were introduced in the passage.

Conventions are

- In this part of the response we see a variety of sentence structures that are controlled and dialogue that is punctuated correctly and helps to develop the characters and plot of the story. This is one example of where the response demonstrates consistent control relative to the length and complexity of the response.

Slide 32: Here is response C, which is on page 21 of the participant packet.

Slide 33:

- This paper scored a 1 in idea development and a 1 in conventions.
- It is most similar to Anchor 1 on page 16.

The two main characters from the passage (Ed and Tom) are present in the narrative but other narrative elements are missing or are not developed. Some events are present but there are no details to elaborate on any of them. Relative to the length and complexity of the response, the narrative demonstrates little control of conventions. Let’s take a look a closer look at this response.

- Here, we have mention of an event (we all help each other with our rockets). There are no details to elaborate on how the kids helped each other with the rockets. There are also no details or dialogue to provide more information about the conversation that occurred during this time. Without effective details, there is a poor expression of ideas.
- Another event, (Ed gets the materials we all start building) is mentioned. Again, there are no details present to elaborate on what the materials are or what happens/what is discussed when the kids start building. The lack of details contributes to only a minimal awareness of the purpose for writing.
- In both instances, narrative elements (plot, character, setting, dialogue, action, and descriptions) are not developed.

Throughout the passage, we see mostly simple sentences.

- There are errors in punctuation. For example, there is no question mark in “Where is your bathroom” and errors with punctation are present. Throughout the response, the narrative demonstrates little control of conventions.

Slide 34: Here is response D, which is on page 22 of the participant packet.

Slide 35:

- This paper scored a 3 in idea development and a 3 in conventions.
- It is most is similar to Anchor 3 on page 14

The narrative is moderately developed and organized with appropriate details. Narrative elements are present (characters, setting, dialogue) and moderately developed. Although details are included throughout the narrative, there are places where additional details would have contributed to the development of the story.

Conventions are consistently controlled throughout the narrative.

- The narrative uses details to describe the setting of Ed's house.
- Here we get a sense of how Tom is feeling (smiles from ear to ear) and the direction of the plot (They all peer inside. It's rocket supplies). The word choice (peer inside) contributes to what is happening in the story. More details about what Tom is seeing, thinking, or feeling would have been beneficial.
- Further details related to the description of the rocket (sparkly pink wings, camo wheels, grey painted on it) are included.
- The story moves forward with the phrase "after a full day" and includes some description (building, tweaking, painting) but additional details about building the rocket would have further developed the plot.
- Overall grammar and punctuation are used correctly. There is strong word choice such as "exclaims Ed" and "proposes an idea" and there is variety in sentence structure throughout the narrative.

Slide 36: Here is response E, which is on page 23 of the participant packet.

Slide 37:

- This paper scored a 0 in idea development and a 0 in conventions.
- It is most similar to Anchor 0 on page 17

While there is some reference to the passage (Tom, Ed, and winning), the response is not written as a narrative. This is a brief summary and there is no continuation of the story. There is no plot, action, dialogue, or description evident in the response. The one sentence response is of insufficient length and complexity and contains errors. The response demonstrates no control of standard English conventions for this grade level.

Slide 38: Here is response F, which is on page 24 of the participant packet.

Slide 39:

- This paper scored a 2 in idea development and a 2 in conventions.
- It is most similar to Anchor 2 on page 15.

The narrative is somewhat developed. Details throughout the response are limited and there is a basic expression of ideas. The limited details and lack of developed narrative elements contribute to a partial awareness for the purpose of writing.

There is mostly consistent control of Standard English Conventions for this grade level but does contain some errors. Let's take a look at this response.

- The narrative begins with mention of the characters (Tom and Ed) and that they are going to Ed's house (the setting that was established in the question). There are some details to describe the setting.

- The first event (Tom opens the door and takes a peek inside) hints at what will happen next. However, details such as what Tom sees or how Tom feels would have contributed to further developing the plot.
- Another event (Tom got to work fixing and showing rockets with Ed) is mentioned, but the expression of ideas is basic due to the lack of details explaining/describing how the rockets were fixed.
- The phrase “two hours later” moves the story forward, however there is room for development of plot, character, and action during this time lapse which would have been beneficial to the narrative as a whole.
- The narrative concludes by naming a feeling (happy) but not developing further details to support it.

Conventions are

- Although some errors are present (as tom arrived, with there) conventions are mostly controlled and include some variety in sentence structure relative to the length and complexity of the narrative.

Slide 40: We wanted to share some ELA web resources with you today that will be useful.

- ELA Rubrics: These were shown today and are included for constructed response and essay questions.
- Student Work Samples and Annotations: These are the materials we looked at today. For each released constructed response (or essay) we include a sample set of score responses (the anchors) along with annotations that outline the expectations at each score point using the rubric. This is an excellent resource to use and look at other response or essays that we have released in the past. We have up to 5 years worth of material.
- Released Questions: These are found in the Resource center and include released passage and questions. They are displayed in the platform that the students use when taking the MCAS tests. This is something we encourage you to share with your students so simulate the testing experience.
- ELA Test Designs: The ELA test design includes the components of the ELA test. The design includes information about the question types, the number of questions and points and the reporting categories.
- And finally we have a slide deck posted that include Information about MCAS ELA Essay Scoring. This slide deck includes information about MCAS ELA essay expectations, especially for narrative writing at the elementary and middle school levels.

Slide 41:

- If you should have any additional policy questions such as test designs or accommodation or general questions, please reach out to the Department by email or phone.
- If you need logistical support, including tech support on the testing platform, please contact the MCAS Service Center.

Slide 42: On behalf of the Department, we thank you for viewing our presentation on MCAS ELA Essays in grades 3, 4, and 5.