

RUTHERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WRITING PROGRAM FOR NJASK, HSPA and SAT PREPARATION

Grades 3 - 12

JANUARY 2010

Philosophy:

Writing is one of the most essential skills needed to succeed in school and the workplace. Without a strong core of writing skills, and the ability to transfer those skills to the writing process, students will not be able to actualize their potential.

In order to ensure that each student is provided with a strong writing background, the following writing program is integrated into each level's Language Arts (and/or reading) curriculum from **Grades 3 through 12:**

Weekly Writing:

Each student in grades 3-12 is required to complete one writing assignment per week during the school year. This assignment may be an essay, open-ended question(s), literary question(s), journal entries, or research related. Teachers will use a rubric to grade these writing assignments.

NJASK3/ NJASK4:

Students in grades 3 and 4 are required to complete one holistically graded essay per month for eight out of ten months, and one open-ended question for each month.

1. The first six writing assignments will alternate between speculative and poetry response. The final two will be persuasive prompts. All essays will be written in class and graded with the New Jersey State rubric (1-5). Teachers from each grade level (and school) will use their Writing Prompts for NJASK booklets for consistency in prompts.
2. Open-ended questions will be teacher generated based on literature read and scored with the New Jersey rubric (0-4 for language arts or 0-3 for math and science).

NJASK5-8/ HSPA:

Each student in grades 5-10 is required to complete two monthly NJASK or HSPA styled writing assignments from September through May:

1. An essay that will be holistically scored and will be patterned after the NJASK or HSPA essays (alternate persuasive, speculative and explanatory). The essay will be written in class and scored with the New Jersey State rubric (1 to 6). Teachers from each grade level (and school) will use their Writing Prompts for NJASK booklets for consistency in prompts.
2. An open-ended question that will be holistically scored and will be patterned after the NJASK or HSPA open-ended questions. It will be written in class and scored with the New Jersey State rubric for open-ended questions (0-4).

HSPA/SAT: **Students in grade 11 will do the same as above from September to March. They then will be required to complete two teacher-generated essays for April and May, one of which will reflect the SAT essay prompts.**

Students in grade 12 will be required to complete two teacher generated essays per month from September through May. While these essays may reflect the literary works being studied, they may also be reproductions of SAT essay prompts.

Focus areas:

When grading essays, teachers will focus on two or three specific skills most recently taught. This will reinforce learning and will hold the students accountable for skills taught. Sequential writing skills are taught in Grades 3-12. At each grade level the skills are infused into the curriculum. Refer to each levels' curriculum for the specific skills.

Holistic Writing Portfolios:

Only the monthly holistic essays are to be kept in individual student portfolios that are to be locked in a file cabinet or closet. (Grade 12 may use the folder for all work.) Additional essays or writing assignments may be kept by the teacher or in additional folders, and returned to the student at the teacher's discretion. Grade 3 folders will be sent to the 4th grade teachers at the corresponding middle schools in June. Each September the portfolio is passed on to the student's new teacher. Students in Grade 12 may take their portfolios in June.