

DIRECTIONS AND SCORING PROCEDURES FOR WRITING CBM

Directions for Writing CBM (Adapted from AIMSweb—Powell-Smith and Shinn, 2004)

1. Provide students with a pencil and piece of lined paper or writing notebook.
2. Select an appropriate story starter.
3. Say: **"Today, I want you to write a story. I am going to read a sentence to your first and then I want you to compose a short story about what happens. You will have 1(one) minute to think about what you will write and 5(five—middle school)/7(seven—high school) minutes to write your story. Remember to do your best work. If you do not know how to spell a word, you should guess. Are there any questions? (Pause) Put your pencils down and listen. For the next minute, think about... (insert story starter)."**
4. After reading the story starter, begin your stopwatch and allow **1(one) minute** for the student(s) to think. (Monitor students so they do not begin writing.) After **30 seconds** say: **"You should be thinking about... (insert story starter)."** At the end of 1 minute, restart your stopwatch for **5(five—middle school)/7(seven—high school) minutes** and say: **"Now begin writing."**
5. Monitor students' attention to the task. Encourage the students to work if they are not writing.
6. After **90 seconds** say **"You should be writing about... (insert story starter)."**
7. At the end of **5(five—middle school)/7(seven—high school) minutes** say: **"Thank you. Put your pencils down."**

Scoring Writing CBM

1. Count the total number of words written to obtain the total words written (TWW) score.
2. Count the total number of words spelled correctly to obtain the words spelled correctly (WSC) score.
3. Count the total number of correct writing sequences to obtain the correct writing sequence (CWS) score.

While these are the most common procedures for scoring Writing CBM, there are other procedures that have been used to score student responses. For example, Espin and colleagues (1999) used the number of long words or characters per word. Other potential scoring procedures include the number of different words, number of nouns, number of verbs, number of adjectives, total punctuation marks, correct punctuation marks, correct capital letters, complete sentences, words in complete sentences, sentence fragments, and simple sentences. Additional research is needed to confirm the validity of these measures (Gansle et al., 2002; Tindal & Parker, 1991). Therefore, this chapter will

¹Adapted from AIMSweb (Powell-Smith & Shinn, 2004).

only include scoring procedures for TWW, WSC, and CWS. Figure 6.3 is an example of a scored student passage using these three scoring procedures.

Scoring Total Words Written

- Total words written (TWW) is the number of words written regardless of spelling or context. When scoring TWW, the scorer underlines each word written and records the total number of words written (see Figure 6.3). Words are defined as any letter or group of letters, including misspelled or nonsense words, that have a space before and after them.
 - I read the book. TWW = 4
 - I red the book. TWW = 4
 - I wont to go. TWW = 4
 - I wanna go. TWW = 3
 - Iv grqx zznip. TWW = 3
- Abbreviations: Common abbreviations are counted as words (e.g., Dr., Mrs., TV).
 - Dr. Smith came in. TWW = 4
 - I like TV. TWW = 3
- Hyphenated words: Each morpheme in a hyphenated word separated by a hyphen is counted as an individual word if it can stand alone. Prefixes separated by a hyphen are not counted as words, although the root word is counted.
 - My sister-in-law came to visit. TWW = 7
 - It is cold-blooded. TWW = 4

[^]The [^]best [^]birthda[^]y
[^]I [^]ever [^]had[^]e [^]was [^]when[^]
[^]my [^]friends [^]came [^]over[^]
[^]and [^]one [^](how [^]lived [^]next
[^]to [^]me) [^]had[^]e [^]a [^]sleepover
[^]with [^]me [^]and [^]we [^]had[^]e
[^]lots [^]of [^]fun[^]

TWW = 30

WSC = 23

CWS = 15

FIGURE 6.3. Example of student Writing CBM scored.

- I love to bar-b-que. TWW = 4
- We need to re-evaluate the cost. TWW = 6
- Titles and endings: Story titles and endings are counted as words written.
 - My Bad Day by Sarah TWW = 5
 - The end TWW = 2
- Numerals: Numerals 0-9, with the exception of dates and currency, are not counted as words unless they are written out. Numerals at the beginning of a sentence must be spelled out.
 - I have 3 cats. TWW = 3
 - I have three cats. TWW = 4
 - Today is August 13, 1974. TWW = 5
 - I have \$50. TWW = 3
 - Ten turtles turned over. TWW = 4
 - 10 turtles turned over. TWW = 3
- Unusual characters: Unusual characters are not counted as words even if they are meant to take the place of a word.
 - Mary & I went home. TWW = 4
 - She won a lot of \$. TWW = 5
 - I will give you 50%. TWW = 4

Scoring Words Spelled Correctly

WSC is the number of correctly spelled words, regardless of context. Words are counted in WSC if they can be found in the English language. Incorrectly spelled words should be circled (see Figure 6.3). WSC is calculated by subtracting the total number of circled words from the TWW. As with TWW, additional scoring rules apply to WSC.

- Abbreviations: Abbreviations must be spelled correctly.
 - I live on President Blyd. WSC = 5
 - I live on President Bld. WSC = 4
- Hyphenated words: Each morpheme counted as an individual word must be spelled correctly. If the morpheme cannot stand alone (e.g., prefix) and part of the word is incorrect, the entire word is counted as an incorrect spelling.
 - She is my sister-in-law. WSC = 6
 - She is my (sista)in-law. WSC = 5
 - I need to re-evaluate this. WSC = 5
 - I need to (re-eveluate) this. WSC = 4
- Titles and endings: Words in the title or ending are counted in the words spelled correctly.
 - My Terrible Day WSC = 3
 - My (Terrable) Day WSC = 2
- Capitalization: Proper nouns must be capitalized unless the name is also a common noun. Capitalization of the first word in the sentence is not a requirement for the

word to be spelled correctly. Words are counted as spelled correctly even if they are capitalized incorrectly within the sentence.

- She sat with Bill. WSC = 4
- she sat with Bill. WSC = 4
- She sat with bill. WSC = 4
- She sat with the bill. WSC = 5
- She sat With the bill. WSC = 5
- Reversed letters: Words containing letter reversals are not counted as errors unless the reversal causes the word to be spelled incorrectly. This typically applies with reversals of the following letters: *p, q, g, d, b, n, u*.
 - The pig was at the farm. WSC = 6
 - The qig was at the farm. WSC = 5
 - The big pig ate. WSC = 4
 - The dig pig ate. WSC = 4
- Contractions: In order for a contraction to be counted as correct, it must have the apostrophe in the correct place unless the word can stand alone.
 - Its my turn. WSC = 3
 - It's my turn. WSC = 3
 - She isn't here. WSC = 3
 - She isnt here. WSC = 2

Correct Writing Sequences

A CWS is "two adjacent, correctly spelled words that are acceptable within the context of the [written] phrase to a native speaker of the English language" (Videen et al., 1982, p. 7). It takes into account punctuation, syntax, semantics, spelling, and capitalization. When scoring CWS, a caret (^) is used to mark each correct word sequence. A space is implied at the beginning of a sentence. The following should be taken into consideration when scoring CWS.

- Spelling: Words must be spelled correctly to be counted in CWS. Words that are not counted in WSC or are circled words are *not* counted as correct word sequences.
 - ^ She ^ waited ^ for ^ me ^ at ^ the ^ store ^ . WSC = 8
 - ^ She (waeted) for ^ me ^ at ^ the stor. WSC = 4
- Capitalization: Capitalization at the beginning of the sentence is necessary. Proper nouns must be capitalized unless they can serve as common nouns in the given context. Incorrectly capitalized words are marked as incorrect CWS.
 - ^ She ^ is ^ coming ^ over ^ . WSC = 5
 - she is ^ coming ^ over ^ . WSC = 3
 - ^ She ^ sat ^ with bill. WSC = 3
 - ^ She ^ sat ^ with ^ the ^ bill ^ . WSC = 6
 - ^ He ^ is ^ on ^ my Pillow. WSC = 4

- **Punctuation:** Correct punctuation must be at the end of the sentence. Commas are not typically counted unless they are used in a series. In a series, they must be used correctly to be scored. Other punctuation marks are typically not counted as CWS.
 - ^ Mary ^ asked ^ if ^ I ^ would ^ come ^ over ^ . ^ I ^ said ^ no ^ . CWS = 12
 - ^ Mary ^ asked ^ if ^ I ^ would ^ come ^ over i ^ said ^ no CWS = 9
 - ^ I ^ have ^ a ^ cat , ^ dog ^ and ^ bird ^ . CWS = 8
 - ^ I ^ have ^ a ^ cat dog ^ and ^ bird ^ . CWS = 7
- **Syntax:** Words must be syntactically correct to be counted as CWS. Sentences that begin with a conjunction are considered to be syntactically correct.
 - ^ He ^ had ^ never ^ seen ^ the ^ movie ^ before ^ . CWS = 8
 - ^ He ^ never seen ^ the ^ movie ever ^ . CWS = 5
 - ^ And ^ he ^ wanted ^ to ^ go ^ see ^ it ^ with ^ me ^ . CWS = 10
- **Semantics:** Words must be semantically correct to be counted in CWS.
 - ^ That ^ pig ^ is ^ too ^ fat ^ . CWS = 6
 - ^ That ^ pig ^ is to fat ^ . CWS = 4
- **Story titles and endings:** Story titles and endings are included in the scoring of CWS and must meet scoring criteria for spelling, punctuation, capitalization, syntax, and semantics to be counted in CWS.
 - ^ The ^ Big ^ Fat ^ Wedding ^ by ^ Billy ^ CWS = 7
 - ^ The ^ Big fat Wedding ^ by billy CWS = 3
 - the big fat wedding CWS = 0
 - ^ The ^ End ^ . CWS = 3
 - ^ The end ^ . CWS = 2
- **Run-on sentences are CWS errors—scorer decides where sentence should end and will place a / (forward slash) where the sentence should end.**
 - ^ The ^ dog ^ was ^ sick / it ^ needed ^ to ^ go ^ to ^ the ^ clinic ^ . CWS = 11
- **Fragments are CWS errors and the / (forward slash) where the sentence fragment would best be corrected.**
 - ^ The ^ dog ^ needed ^ to ^ go ^ the ^ clinic . / Since ^ she ^ was ^ so ^ sick ^ . CWS = 12
- **Missing words are CWS errors. Insert a _ to show that a word is missing.**
 - ^ I ^ didn't _ if ^ I ^ would ^ ever ^ see ^ the ^ ocean ^ again ^ . CWS = 10
- **Compound words.** If a word should be a compound word according to the context and it is written as two separate words, count it as a CWS error.
 - ^ He ^ shone ^ the _ flash _ light _ in ^ my ^ eyes ^ . CWS = 6
- **Tense Switch:** If a student switches tense in the middle of the writing CBM, the scorer needs to make a judgment call. For example if the first three sentences are written in present tense, and the remaining 18 sentences are written in past tense, it would be most fair to the student to mark the verbs in the first three sentences incorrect. If the student starts in past tense, then switches to present tense, then switches back to past tense, the present tense verbs would be incorrect.
- **Abbreviations:** These are acceptable spellings for the following abbreviations: PACE, Pace, ISAT's, Isat's, EOC's, EoC's
- **Ordinal numbers need to be consistent.**
 - ^ Anne ^ was ^ in ^ first ^ place ^ and ^ Betty ^ was ^ in ^ 2nd ^ . CWS = 10
 - ^ Anne ^ was ^ in ^ 1st ^ place ^ and ^ Betty ^ was ^ in ^ 2nd ^ . CWS = 11

Special Administration and Scoring Considerations for Writing CBM

1. Although TWW and WSC are easy to score, they tend to yield fluency information only. The extra time needed to score CWS is suggested at all levels for students below grade level in writing. CWS scoring supplies a great deal of useful information about error patterns and missing skills. It is also more sensitive to instruction, so it makes a better tool for progress monitoring.
2. Directions should be read as presented above, and students should not receive additional instructions or corrections during any part of the test administration.
3. Test administrators may find that 3-minute written responses do not yield enough information, particularly for students struggling with writing. Longer samples using 5 and 10 minutes can be used for analysis, but the scores cannot be used in comparison to the norm if the normative sample used 3 minutes. Another option is to note where the student is at the end of 3 minutes to compare to the normative sample but then let him keep writing for an additional 2-7 minutes.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD WRITING CBM BE GIVEN?

In Chapter 3, we provide additional details on how often and when to administer CBM for the different purposes of screening/benchmarking, progress monitoring, and survey-level assessment. Below we provide only an outline for screening/benchmarking and progress monitoring as criteria for survey-level assessment to determine instructional levels have not yet been developed for Writing CBM. We suggest you refer to Chapter 3 for a more in-depth discussion on how often and when to give CBM for these different purposes.

- Screening/benchmarking = all students in a classroom or grade level, once per quarter (three to four times per school year); typically conducted in the fall, winter, and spring.
- Progress monitoring = students in the bottom 25% of the class based on the screening/benchmarking assessment, at least one time per week; preferably two times per week. This includes any student who is considered at risk based on norms.
- Monthly progress monitoring of all students can provide information about the effectiveness of classroom instruction.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE TO ADMINISTER AND SCORE WRITING CBM?

It takes approximately 5 minutes to administer a writing sample to an individual or a whole group. The time needed for scoring Writing CBM depends on the number of measures scored and the grade level of the students (the time needed increases with grade level). Malecki and Jewell (2003) found that it took an average of 30 seconds to score a single fluency measure (TWW or WSC). When two fluency measures (TWW and CWS) were scored, the time increased to a little less than a minute for elementary grades and just over a minute for middle school grades. The time increased to 1½ minutes for early elementary student levels and 2½ minutes for middle school student levels when all three measures (TWW, WSC, and CWS) were scored. If only CWS is scored, an average of 45 seconds to 1½ minutes is needed.

EXPECTED GROWTH RATES AND NORMS FOR WRITING CBM

While most content areas of CBM have established growth rates, benchmarks, or norms, there currently is no research on Writing CBM related to growth rates and benchmarks. There are norms that can be used to compare a student's score to the level of perfor-

mance and rate of progress to others in his grade or instructional level. Table 6.1 provides information on norms for Writing CBM for grades 1 through 8.

HOW TO USE THE INFORMATION TO WRITE WRITING IEP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Using the same format presented in Chapter 3, here are some examples of using Writing CBM data to write goals and objectives. The principles are the same: time, learner, behavior (e.g., writes), level (e.g., grade), content (e.g., writing), material (story starter CBM progress-monitoring material), and criteria (will reflect the norms or benchmarks for that skill including time and accuracy).

EXAMPLE OF GOALS

- Writing goal
 - In 30 weeks, Jose will write from sixth-grade writing story starter CBM progress-monitoring material at 47 CWS in 3 minutes with greater than 95% accuracy.

The same principles apply to writing objectives, but one should use a shorter time frame.

EXAMPLE OF OBJECTIVES

- Writing objective
 - In 10 weeks, Jose will write from sixth-grade writing story starter CBM progress-monitoring material at 30 CWS in 3 minutes with greater than 95% accuracy.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT WRITING CBM

1. *What do you do if a student stops writing before the time is up?* You should say to the student: "Keep writing the best story you can." This prompt can be used as many times as needed.

2. *Does it matter that a student's response does not relate to the story starter?* No. Responses are not scored for content, organization, or detail. You would, however want to note this and make sure that the student understands the story starters or has the background knowledge to be able to write on the topic.

3. *Can I change the directions or how I score the student responses?* No. The directions are already short and provide you with a standard procedure to follow. Even though they may not seem to be using it productively, it is especially important to give the students 1 minute of think time before they begin to write.

Additional Little Rules for Scoring CBM that academic coaches have found helpful when trying to be consistent in scoring CBM's:

1. Only a spelling error if word is misspelled when standing alone:
 - a. Ex: Than vs. Then—not a spelling error, BUT is counted as an error if used incorrectly in CWS
2. Capital letters at beginning of sentences = error in CWS.
3. Capital letters with proper nouns are counted as spelling error AND CWS.
4. Words that are supposed to be capitalized such as "I" are spelling errors.
5. Apostrophe with possessives is spelling error and CWS.
6. Run-on sentences are CWS errors—scorer decides where sentence should end and will place a / (forward slash) where the sentence should end:

The dog was ill so Suzanne's husband took it to the doggie hospital and checked it in so it would receive better care and it did, / the dog will come home on Monday.

7. Fragments are CWS errors and the / goes where the sentence fragment would best be corrected.
8. Comma errors don't count.
9. Missing words use ^ to show that a word is missing.
10. Numbers used correctly are counted as one word: (10:30 P.M.)= 1 CWS
11. Compound words used incorrectly (i.e.= flash light vs. flashlight: flash light is incorrectly used, but not misspelled. Error is CWS.)