



**Write Start! Writing Assessment
Scoring Manual: Photo Caption Task**

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General Rule:

1. **Score highest level:** Children often produce a mixture of more and less sophisticated responses in the same writing event. Score the highest level response observed in each category.

Task 2B (Write Your Name)

1. Score name writing during the *invited* episodes of name writing in Tasks 2.
2. Score **ONLY** the first name, even if child writes last name or some other words/letters.
3. *The following must be scored “live” as the child writes:*
 - a. Record letter order and directionality in the box provided. Use arrows to indicate directionality.
 - b. Directionality: watch directional patterns throughout the task and take notes in the space provided on the score sheet. Circle the correct scoring choice.
 - c. Request Help: The goal here is to understand cases where the child may have been reluctant to complete tasks and repeatedly asked for your assistance. You should record as many requests for help as possible without losing your attentional focus on the child.
4. The remaining items can be scored at the end of the testing session by reviewing the child’s writing product.

Task 2A (Photo Caption)

1. Most of the items for this task must be scored “live” while the child is writing.
2. **Record Child’s Message:** If child recites his/her message aloud during composition, record message verbatim in the box provided. Then, record child’s message in response to your question (“Read it to me.”) in the box provided. **REMEMBER THAT WHAT THE CHILD SAYS BEFORE COMPOSING, WHILE YOU ARE ENCOURAGING HIM or HER TO WRITE WHAT’S IN THE PICTURE, DOES NOT COUNT HERE. ONLY WRITE WHAT THE CHILD SAYS SPONTANEOUSLY DURING COMPOSITION (IF ANYTHING) AND THEN WHAT CHILD SAYS WHEN YOU ASK HIM/HER TO READ IT TO YOU.**
3. **Scoring “Task/Message Match”:** This category reflects the match between the child’s reading of his/her message and the social writing event (photo labeling) that is underway.
 - a. This category reflects the types of messages the child **independently** reads or describes for his/her own marks during composition OR
 - b. What the child reads **in response to adult requests to “read” or “tell” about the marks.**
4. **Scoring “Intentionality”:** The goal is to code what the child is willing to do “independently” to assign meaning to marks. Code whichever is highest:
 - a. How the child **independently reads** his/her marks during production (do not count instances where the child repeats a message that adult has just stated orally)
 - b. **OR** code what the child says in response to an adult question: **“Read it to me.”** “What does that say?”
 - c. Note whether the child physically makes a match using his/her finger or voice between print and speech.



TASK 2B. Name Writing

Record Letter Order	As child writes letters, record them in temporal order in the box provided.
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Directionality

Level	Label	Description	Example	Notes
0	No writing marks made or a single dot, scribble unit, letter unit, or large scribble. Or, if child makes a clearly identifiable picture or drawing.	If picture is drawn, it must be clearly identifiable as a picture (be strict).		Child makes a single mark unit and there are no additional marks to allow determination of directional patterns.
1	Random placement of multiple units, letter-like forms, or letters	Child places writing marks without discernable pattern. Assumes multiple units are present.	Wil-yhum 	
2	Unconventional placement: Linear	Child places writing marks in linear pattern with unconventional directionality: Right to Left Top to Bottom Bottom to Top, Mixed directions within same line, etc. Marks may not be conventional letters	Breontez 	
3	Conventional linear placement	Marks are placed left to right; marks may or may not be conventional letters		A single long line made left to right (across the page) or a left to right line of personal cursive gets credit here.

Requests for Help

Score	Label	Description	Example	Notes
0	No requests	Child does not ask assessor for help		
1	Requests/Low	Child makes 1-2 requests for assessor help	“Can you help me?” “Will you show me how?” “Write my name.” “I don’t know how to do it.”	Count statements in this category when gesture and gaze suggest they are requests for help
2	Requests/High	Child makes 3 or more requests for assessor help	(same as above)	



Form (name writing)

Score	Label	Description	Example	Notes
0	No marks			
1	Picture or drawing only	Child draws picture instead of writing. To score here, the picture needs to be clearly identifiable as something. If picture is not identifiable, treat as writing and score below.		
2	Scribbles	Purposefully makes marks; large mass of undifferentiated and connected scribbles; uses forearm movements to create large scribbles that seem to have little planned organization. Scribbles usually take up a large space on the page and are made by large movements of the arm and wrist (rather than fingers). Scribbles may be created with a particular type of motor movement such as “round and round”, or “back and forth” movements of the arm.		
3	Scribble units	Small patches of scribbles separated from one another with space; Usually created with wrist and hand movements		
4	Individual stroke units	Circle, line, curve strokes, often repeated and of the same type. Use this category in cases where the child uses only basic strokes (small circle, curve, short vertical line with no dot above, short horizontal line, short diagonal lines) and DOES NOT combine strokes to make more complicated letter-like forms, and DOES NOT identify the marks as conventional letters such as L, O.		
5	Personal Manuscript OR Personal Cursive (AKA: invented letters, letter-like forms, unconventional letters)	Letter-like forms; combinations of strokes within the same unit, horizontal runs of loops or zig-zags; not recognizable as conventional letters. If the child produces very simple combinations of strokes (two short lines crossed into a “t”-like form), give credit here unless you have specific evidence that the child is actually writing the letters I, O, T, or C. If evidence that letter-like form is conventional, score below under 6 or 7. Credit is given for LONG horizontal line that runs the distance across the page that would be occupied by a line of print.		

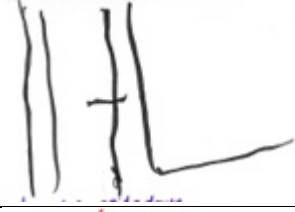




WRITE START! WRITING ASSESSMENT SCORING GUIDE

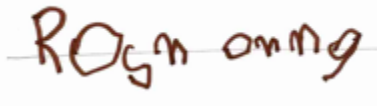
6	Conventional letters plus inventions	<p>Child writes at least one recognizable letter, but it may be upside down or backwards; the remaining marks may be letter-like forms, scribbles, etc.</p> <p>Reversals are OK.</p> <p>Kaylee (at right) is coded in this category. The first letter is an invention. Other letters appear conventional, though some are upside down or backwards. The “E” with four lines would be considered “conventional”.</p>	<p>Kaylee</p>
7	Conventional letters	<p>Give credit for letters that are near enough to be recognized as letters. Give credit for: an E with five horizontal marks; a lower case A where the circle and vertical line are not touching but are in proximity; any letter that is reasonably well formed, but the orientation is incorrect, backwards, upside down, etc. Upper or lower case, may be mixed; reversals are OK; recognizable by others as letters.</p> <p>If the child produces only basic stokes (small circle, curve, short vertical line with no dot above) or very simple combination of strokes (two short lines crossed into a “t”-like form), DO NOT give credit for conventional letters unless you have specific evidence that the child is actually writing the letters, e.g., the “t” at right would only score if the child’s name includes a “t” or if the child clearly indicates that the form is a letter. T”</p>	<p>Meliyah’s name</p> <p>Tania’s name</p>



Completeness (name writing)

Score	Label	Description	Example	Notes
0	No letters present	Marks are not recognizable as conventional letters		If form=0-6, then completeness score is zero.
1	Half or fewer letters present	Child writes half (round “up” for odd numbers of letters) of the letters in name; may also include other letters not in name, or letter-like forms	Latrell 	Must have form score of 7 or 8 to score here.
2	More than half, but not all letters present	Child writes more than half (round “up” for odd numbers of letters) of the letters in name, but does not write them all; may also include other letters not in name, or letter-like forms	Khamari 	Must have a form score of 7 or 8 to score here.
3	All present	Child writes all the letters in first name and they are conventional letters. Reversals and odd directionality are OK; may also include other letters not in name, or letter-like forms.	Breontez 	

Correctness (Name writing)

Score	Label	Description	Example	Notes
0	Name incorrectly spelled	First name is missing letters or letters are out of order; or Additional incorrect letters or marks are added		
1	Correctly spelled	First name has all letters present and in correct order; Reversals are OK; No incorrect letters or marks and no additional letters are included. DO NOT give credit for correctness when the child uses the same mark, without any distinction, for several similar letters in his/her name (for example, h, n, m), and an outside reader would not be able to guess at the child’s actual name because of this.	Roshonna 	Roshonna would not score correct here because the “h” and “n” are indistinguishable.

**2A. Photo Labeling**

Record message during composing	If child says message aloud while writing, record it here:
Record message in response to adult request	Record child's message when prompted by examiner:

If child's two messages are different, select **HIGHEST** scoring message.

Task/Message Match (Composing or Read it to me)

Score	Label	Description	Example	Notes
0	No understandable oral or written message	No message assigned to marks		
1	Message unrelated to photo labeling task	Child reads a message, but it is not related to photo content, or to the writing materials, processes, or functions of the photo labeling task		
2	Message unrelated to photo labeling task/other conventional message	Child reads message not related to photo or task. Only "standard" messages like those in the example would score here; otherwise, score as 1.	"I Love You" "A, B, C,D" Names of family/friends (not pictured)	
3	Global relation to writing materials OR	Child reads message that describes characteristics of writing materials in use; often sounds like oral language directed at assessor rather than a written label.	"It's red." <i>To describe marker.</i>	
	Global relation to writing functions OR	Child reads message that describes social function of writing product ; often sounds like oral language directed at assessor rather than a written label.	"It's for you. I'm gonna take it home."	
	Global relation to writing processes	Child reads message that describes processes used in writing marks; often sounds like oral language directed at assessor rather than a written label.	"I went around and around." <i>To describe use of pen.</i>	
4	Global relation to photo content	Child reads message that is related to items pictured in photo; often sounds like oral language directed at assessor rather than a written label.	"It's about dinosaurs."	
5	Photo label/word	Child reads message as word that serves as a label for items or actions in photo	"Bike" (The child is on the playground riding a bike.)	
6	Photo label/phrase	Child reads message as phrase that serves as a label for items or actions in photo.	"My new shoes" (Photo shows child wearing new shoes.)	
7	Photo label/sentence	Child reads message as sentence that serves as a label for items or actions in photo.	"I am playing with KeMiyah" (Photo shows child playing with KeMiyah)	



Intentionality

Score	Label	Description	Example	Notes
0	No Marks	Child does not make marks		
1	Marks/ No interpretation	Intentionally makes marks, but does not interpret them as a linguistic message.	Refuses to Read (I can't; I don't know what it says" Gestures only (Points to marks, but does not provide oral reading) Mumble Reading (Child provides mumbled oral interpretation that is purposefully too quiet or is unintelligible)	
2	Sign Concept	Writes/draws, hoping to create something, but without any idea of what the message might be.	Writes, then asks assessor, "What did I write?"	
3	Intends Message, No conventional correspondence	Reads message orally, but no correct letters are used; No speech/print match	No visible attempt at letter/sound correspondence. No evidence of matching speech units to marks	
4	Intends Message/ Global Speech/Print match; No letter/sound correspondence	Reads message orally; Must matches voice or finger pointing to specific marks (usually syllables or words) to get credit. No evidence of letter/sound correspondence.	Uses voice pointing or finger pointing to show match between talk and specific marks. May match beginning/end of oral message to beginning /end of printed marks	
5	Intends Message/ Some letter/sound correspondence	Reads message orally; At least one letter indicates attempt at letter/sound correspondence.	There is direct evidence that child has chosen at least one letter with a purposeful attempt to match speech to sound.	Evidence may be "sounding out" during composing or child's verbal statement that a letter is used to spell the sound in the word.



Directionality

Level	Label	Description	Example	Notes
0	No writing marks made or a single dot, scribble unit, letter unit, or large scribble. Or, if child makes a clearly identifiable picture or drawing.	If picture, must be clearly identifiable as a picture (strict). Only a dot counts here; any small mark that is bigger than a dot should be scored below.		
1	Random placement of multiple units, letter-like forms, or letters	Child places writing marks without discernable pattern. Assumes multiple units are present.	Wil-yhum 	
2	Unconventional placement: Linear	Child places writing marks in linear pattern with unconventional directionality: Right to Left Top to Bottom Bottom to Top, Mixed directions within same line, etc. Marks may not be conventional letters	Breontez 	
3	Conventional linear placement, 1 st line; other lines unconventional	Line 1 marks are placed left to right; After line 1 an unconventional directional patterns is used; Marks may not be conventional letters		
4	Conventional linear placement, all lines	All lines are produced left to right; marks may or may not be conventional letters.		A single long line made left to right (across the page) or a left to right line of personal cursive gets credit here.

Requests for Help

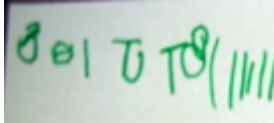
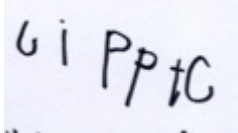

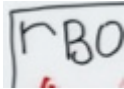

Score	Label	Description	Example	Notes
0	No requests	Child does not ask assessor for help		
1	Requests/Low	Child makes 1-2 requests for assessor help	“Can you help me?” “Will you show me how?” Write my name. “I don’t know how.”	Count statements in this category when gesture and gaze suggest they are requests for help
2	Requests/High	Child makes 3 or more requests for assessor help	(same as above)	



Form

Score	Label	Description	Example	Notes
0	No marks	Child makes no marks		
1	Drawing only	Child draws a picture instead of writing; must be clearly identifiable as a picture (strict).		
2	Scribbles	Purposefully makes marks; large mass of undifferentiated and connected scribbles; uses forearm movements to create large scribbles that seem to have little planned organization. Scribbles usually take up a large space on the page and are made by large movements of the arm (rather than from the wrist or fingers). Scribbles may be created with a particular type of motor movement such as “round and round”, or “back and forth” movements of the arm.		
3	Scribble units	Small patches of scribbles separated from one another with space; usually created with wrist and hand movements		
4	Individual stroke units	Many repeated line, circle, curve strokes, usually of the same type. The second example (right) includes both scribbles and stroke units, and would thus score a “5.”		
5	Personal Manuscript OR Personal Cursive	<p>Letter-like forms; combinations of strokes within the same unit; horizontal runs of loops and zig-zags, not recognizable as conventional letters.</p> <p>Personal cursive and manuscript are generally linear and horizontal.</p> <p>Use this category when children combine basic strokes in letter-like ways, but the result is not entirely recognizable as conventional letters AND you have no direct verbal labeling or other evidence that helps you make a clear interpretation that the child intended a specific letter.</p> <p>Credit is given for a long straight horizontal line when it runs the distance that would usually be occupied by letters.</p>		



6	Conventional letters plus inventions	Child writes at least one recognizable letter, but it may be upside down or backwards; the remaining marks may be letter-like forms, scribbles, etc.		
7	Conventional letters (no letter/sound correspondence)	Upper or lower case, may be mixed; reversals are OK; recognizable by others as letters; no letter/sound correspondence.		
8	Conventional letters, memorized words	Child uses conventional letters and words, but writes something memorized like her name or "I love you."	Child writes name.	
9	Invented spelling: First Letter sound	First letter sound of word or syllable is represented; May not use conventional letter: c for "seal"; May contain other random letters; Must have evidence that child is intentionally generating a spelling with letter/sound correspondence.	I was sliding the slide.  I was sliding the slide.	
10	Invented Spelling: First & last	First and last letter sounds of word or syllables; many sounds left out.	"rainbow" 	
11	Invented Spelling Most Sounds represented	Attempts to sound out most sounds in the syllable or word; Letter choices may not be correct.	 "ship"	
12	Transitional Spelling	Visual, meaning-based, orthographic patterns	BOTE for <i>boat</i> THAY for <i>they</i>	
13	All conventional words (not memorized)	Child writes conventional letters and words that are not memorized.		

Research Reference:

Rowe, D. W., & Wilson, S. (2015). The development of a descriptive measure of early childhood writing: Results from the Write Start! Writing Assessment. *Journal of Literacy Research, 47*(2), 245-292. doi:10.1177/1086296X15619723