



**MICHIGAN
LANGUAGE
ASSESSMENT**

ECCE

Study at Home

Writing Resource Pack

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How to Use this Guide

This resource pack is provided for both students preparing independently to take the ECCE and for teachers designing lessons to help their students improve their writing skills for ECCE. This document includes exercises and study questions to accompany a set of sample writing responses and commentary as well as a set of additional ECCE writing prompts. Both of those resources are included in the appendix at the end of the document.

Table of Contents

Tips and Suggestions for Students	2
Tips for Teachers	3
Description of ECCE Writing Task and Assessment Criteria	4
Writing Lesson Plan Template	5-6
Specific Exercises and Practice Activities.....	7-13
Sample Lesson Plan for Use with New Prompts.....	14-15
Appendix 1: Writing Samples with Commentary.....	16-20
Appendix 2: New Practice Writing Prompts	21-22

For STUDENTS

Here are some specific suggestions about how you can use this guide to help you improve your writing skills as you prepare for the ECCE.

- See general tips for independent practice (below).
- Become familiar with the task description and rating criteria on p. 4.
- Read the sample essays, pp.18-21, and work through accompanying exercises on pp. 7-16.
- Work through the lesson/study plan to accompany practice prompts, pp. 7-13.
- Find a classmate or a friend to study with and share your writing samples. Giving and receiving feedback will help you improve your writing skills.

General Tips for Independent Practice

- The most important way to learn to write is by writing! It takes time and practice to become a good writer; there are no easy shortcuts.
- Use this resource pack to break down your writing practice into manageable steps.
- Clear and effective writing implies clear and logical thinking about your topic. Make sure you do not skip over the essential steps of pre-writing, including brainstorming, studying vocabulary, outlining, and organizing your thoughts.
- The editing and revision process is the key to improving your writing. Once you have a first draft, leave it for a day or more, and then come back to it with fresh eyes. Look for errors, repetition, grammar and vocabulary mistakes, and a clear, logical flow of ideas with each paragraph.
- Pay special attention to memorized phrases or idioms. Correct use of idioms can make your writing stronger, but avoid using ‘clichés’ (idioms that are over-used) or the wrong idiom.
- In order to improve your writing, it is most helpful if you have someone who can read your essays and provide feedback. This could be a teacher, tutor, classmate, or other peer. The more detailed feedback you receive, the better, but any feedback is helpful. Go back to the essay with fresh eyes after any feedback, and remember that your reader’s reaction is important. If something is not clear to a reader, it can usually be re-written for clarity.

For TEACHERS

- See general tips for teaching online (below).
- Review task description and rating criteria on p. 4.
- Review lesson plan template (pp. 5-6) and adapt as needed.
- Refer to specific example exercises for use with sample responses (pp. 7-16).
- Refer to suggested lesson plan for use with new prompts (pp.14-15); adapt as needed for your time and available resources.

General Tips for Teaching Writing Online

Engage with the learners: give all students a chance to participate in some way (chat, audio, etc.), and invite students who haven't spoken to participate.

Create a supportive atmosphere. Be patient with the use of technology.

Use screen-sharing to share documents with the entire class. For example, use screen-sharing to analyze sample responses or workshop student draft paragraphs.

Use low-tech equipment (e.g., whiteboards) for variety.

Provide feedback—both in real time, and after students submit work—via email or other messaging platform.

Match students in small groups/pairs and encourage peer editing via email or video chat outside of designated class time.

Establish clear deadlines and communicate the agenda and expectations for each session ahead of time.

ECCE Writing Section

The ECCE Writing Section offers a choice of two options—an email/letter or an essay—for test takers to write a response presenting and supporting their opinion. For the email/letter, a situation and a formal purpose for writing are briefly described, followed by instructions on what to write. For the essay, a proposal or statement is provided, followed by instructions on what to write. The test taker has 30 minutes to write the email/letter or essay. There is no word limit, but test takers are advised to write a page. In the 2021 revision of this task, there is no longer an article included with the prompt, and the writing section of the test now comes first. The [ECCE Writing Scale](#) is available on our website.

According to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), B2 level writers are able to:

- produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects;
- explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options;
- express themselves clearly and without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say;
- employ a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments, using some complex sentence forms to do so.

Writing Assessment Criteria

Content and Development

- Length and development
- Relevance
- Supporting details
- Reliance on prompt content

Organization and Connection of Ideas

- Smooth flow of ideas
- Cohesion and coherence
- Connection of ideas across paragraphs
- Paragraphing conventions

Linguistic Range and Control

- Accuracy
- Severity of errors
- Use of prompt-specific vocabulary
- Repetition of vocabulary

Communicative Effect

- Address the prompt
- Establish context
- Genre requirements
- Appropriate register

Writing Lesson Plan Template

This template is provided to help teachers structure a set of lessons to teach writing for the ECCE.

The timing of each step in the lesson sequence will depend on many factors, but it is suggested to spread these steps out across at least 3 to 4 separate lessons.

Stage 1: Read and Analyze

Students need to read examples of appropriate model essays and analyze them to help familiarize themselves with good writing. In addition to reading examples of good or model responses, students can also benefit from reading sample responses that still need improvement.

Specific Elements to Analyze:

- Structure and characteristics of the relevant genre
- Vocabulary, idioms, and effective phraseology
- Sentence structure and paragraph structure
- Details of the argument or claims, and why it is (or isn't) convincing
- Effective use of examples, rhetorical devices, and descriptive language

Stage 2: Pre-Writing

In the pre-writing stage, students consider a topic, organize their thoughts, activate their background knowledge, and take notes on relevant vocabulary.

Specific Steps:

- Brainstorm all ideas, concepts, examples, and words related to the topic.
- Form an opinion or decide on a perspective.
- Consider relevant personal experience, background information, or specific knowledge.
- Cluster ideas using a graphic representation (e.g., outline format, word web, spider map, 2- or 3-column chart/table).
- Evaluate reasoning. Is it logical? Is it convincing? Do the details support the claim? Are the examples memorable? Are the implications of the examples clear? Do you anticipate counter arguments?

Stage 3: Composing the First Draft

Specific Steps:

- Write an introduction.
- Use the outline, word web, etc., to order paragraphs.
- Draft each paragraph, making sure the examples and details support the main idea of each paragraph and making sure each paragraph has only one main idea. Refer to vocabulary notes.
- Write a concluding sentence or paragraph.

Stage 4: Editing and Revising

- Re-read at the time of drafting and after a break, coming back with fresh eyes.
- Edit for grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and paragraph structure.
- Ask: is the point clear? Could the argument be stronger? Are there additional details that could be added?
- Encourage peer editing in early drafting stages.
- Formal feedback should be focused and always followed by opportunities to rewrite.

SPECIFIC EXERCISES and PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

STAGE 1 Practice: Read and Analyze Model Essays

A. General Questions to Accompany Sample Essays (see Appendix 1)

1. Find the thesis statement or re-state the main argument.
2. Write the supporting details/arguments.
3. Write down 3-4 transition phrases or signposting devices the writer uses. (Signposting devices: words and phrases that guide the reader through the essay, structure it, and help make transitions.)
4. List adjectives and other descriptive language the author uses to support their argument and convince the reader.
5. Write down the specific details or examples used.
6. Vocabulary and phraseology:
 - a. List any vocabulary words that are new to you.
 - b. List any words that you could think of a synonym for.
 - c. What key phrases do you notice? Are these effective, or do they sound memorized?
 - d. Is there any repetition that could be avoided?
7. Find any errors, inconsistencies, or examples of sentences that could be improved.
8. Finally, study the commentary provided and refer back to the essays.

B: Specific Study Questions and Template for Each Essay

Writing Sample 1

Complete the missing information or answer the questions in the chart. Use the provided prompts.

	Examples/Notes
Main argument	The author disagrees with _____
Supporting arguments	Every student will be _____ We can learn from _____
Transition phrases or signposting devices	Did the writer use any transition words or phrases? _____
Descriptive language	Find 4 adjectives or adverbs: _____, _____, _____, _____
Specific details, examples	Did the writer use any specific examples? _____
Vocabulary, phrases	in the other _____ (Correct/explain)
Errors	Find and correct 5 spelling mistakes (write the correct words here) _____, _____, _____, _____, _____ Correct: that am disagree with _____ with cheating nowone learn's nothing _____

Additional Questions for Writing Sample #1

1. There is almost no punctuation in this response. Add periods and commas to help separate the ideas.
2. The writer uses ‘because’ several times. Fill in the following table with either the argument or idea on the left or the reason given on the right.

Argument	Reason
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>because every student will be watching the themes or the answer</p>
<p>That’s not good</p>	<p>because _____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>We can learn from that</p>	<p>because _____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>because we will know what should be answered [re-stated: because we will know the correct answers.]</p>

1. Do you think the author makes a reasonable connection between cheating and textbooks on the internet? Is there a way to make the connection stronger? If not, present a counter-argument to explain why you think the writer is wrong.

Writing Sample 2

Complete the missing information or answer the questions in the chart. Use the provided prompts.

	Examples/Notes
Main argument	The author believes _____
Supporting arguments	List the reasons given: _____ _____ _____
Transition phrases or signposting devices	List the transition words or phrases: _____, _____, _____
Descriptive language	What descriptive phrase is used in the 2nd paragraph and repeated in the last sentence? _____
Specific details, examples	Did the writer use any specific examples? _____
Vocabulary, phrases	Does the writer use a range of appropriate vocabulary? _____
Errors	Can you find any grammar or vocabulary errors? _____

Additional Questions for Writing Sample #2

1. Rewrite the first sentence to make it clearer and more formal. Who is the audience you could be addressing for this type of essay?
2. This writer gives three reasons to support the main idea. What specific details could you add to make these reasons stronger or more memorable? Can you think of any examples from your own experience?
3. Revise or rewrite the second sentence in the second paragraph. Is this best expressed as one idea, or two separate ideas?

This will also help _____

Revise or rewrite the third sentence in the third paragraph to correct errors (beginning with Also).

Writing Sample 3.

Complete the missing information or answer the questions in the chart. Use the provided prompts.

	Examples/Notes
Main idea	_____
Supporting arguments	Write a short phrase for each of the ideas proposed. _____ _____ _____
Transition phrases or signposting devices	List the transition words or phrases. _____, _____, _____, _____, _____
Descriptive language	List each adjective and how many times each one is used. _____
Specific details, examples	Did the writer use any specific examples? _____
Vocabulary, phrases	Does the writer use a range of appropriate vocabulary? _____
Errors	Can you find any grammar or vocabulary errors? _____

Additional Questions for Writing Sample #3

1. Can you think of any additional suggestions to strengthen the proposal? Or, can you think of specific examples to illustrate the three different ideas the writer proposes?
2. A wider range of vocabulary would strengthen the response. Find each of the following phrases used in the response and rewrite the sentence using a stronger, more descriptive or more accurate word or phrase.

...from their program _____

...will change their ideas and knowledge... _____

...it will be a very good result _____

Writing Sample 4

Complete the missing information or answer the questions in the chart using the prompts provided.

	Examples/Notes
Main idea	_____
Supporting ideas	_____ _____ _____
Transition phrases or signposting devices	List the transition words or phrases. _____, _____, _____, _____, _____
Descriptive language	List each adjective and how many times each one is used. _____ _____
Specific details, examples	Did the writer use any specific examples? _____
Vocabulary, phrases	Does the writer use a range of appropriate vocabulary? _____
Errors	Can you find any grammar or vocabulary errors? _____

Additional Questions for Writing Sample #4

1. Do you agree with the writer's suggestion? Explain why or why not.

2. The writer uses a variety of descriptive words to paint a picture of the proposal, including verbs, nouns, and adjectives. Write as many of these here as you can.

3. What additional, related vocabulary words or phrases can you add to this list?

Stages 2 and 3: Pre-Writing and Drafting

Lesson Plan and Exercises for Use with New Prompts (see Appendix 2)

General Suggestions:

1. Decide how many essay prompts you/your students will have time to practice. We suggest aiming for four: two emails and two essays.
2. Half of the prompts (first two) should be used without a timer. Give yourself/ students as much time as you/they need, and allow use of dictionaries. Focus on producing clear, organized, and grammatically correct writing.
3. Get feedback from a teacher, tutor, or peer editor, and revise accordingly.
4. Focus on the feedback when writing the next essay, so you/the students remember to pay attention to specific weaknesses or areas to improve.
5. When you have done the untimed essays, switch to timed essays without the use of dictionaries or other reference aids, so you can practice under test conditions. After each essay, get someone (teacher/ tutor/peer editor) to read and comment if possible. Even practice test essays can be edited or revised afterward for additional practice.
6. Teachers: You may want to separate each of the new prompts onto separate pages and choose the topics/prompts for the students, especially after they have completed the untimed writing and are ready for timed practice.

Specific Steps: Summary

1. Pre-writing/brainstorming
2. Organizing main ideas
3. Adding details
4. Drafting/putting paragraphs together
5. Editing

Details:

1. Brainstorming/Pre-Writing
 - What is your true opinion about the topic? It will be easier to write about a topic if you are writing about what you believe. Alternatively, you can practice writing two essays for each topic, taking both sides of the issue.
 - What vocabulary will you use for this topic? Brainstorm your active vocabulary (avoid using a dictionary or other resource when you are practicing under test conditions), and create a graphically organized list of key content words you think you will need: verbs, nouns, and adjectives/ adverbs. Your vocabulary may be represented in an outline format, word web, 2- or 3-column chart (e.g., showing word, definition, example, synonyms), or any other format you find useful.

2. Organize your main ideas
 - Start from the big picture: state your opinion.
 - Identify the main reason you hold this opinion.
 - Other reasons—first, list them in any order. Then when all main ideas are listed, put them in a logical order.
3. Add details
 - Add some specific examples or details that make your point.
4. Compose paragraphs
 - Group your ideas into coherent paragraphs with clear topics, and draft the paragraphs of your essay, with a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Stage 4: Edit and Revise

- Check for organization and logical flow of your ideas.
- Eliminate repetition and clichés (overused and unoriginal phrases).
- Make sure you have not forgotten any of your main ideas or details from steps 1 and 2.

Appendix 1

ECCE Writing Samples with Commentary

Four sample ECCE responses are presented here based on different prompts, along with detailed comments and an approximate score range for each. The following prompts are represented in these samples:

Prompt 1: Essay

Textbooks required for classes should be available to students for free through libraries or the Internet.

- Write an **essay** on whether you agree or disagree with the statement above.
- Include specific reasons and details to support your opinion.

Prompt 2: Essay

Teenagers should be required to have an after-school job to get real working experience before they graduate.

- Write an **essay** on whether you agree or disagree with the statement above.
- Include specific reasons and details to support your opinion.

Prompt 3: Email

A group of teachers at your school has noticed that students seem bored in class, so they want to try to make their classes more fun and interesting. They want to know what ideas students have about how to do this.

- Write an email to the teachers to explain your opinion. Give reasons to support your ideas.
- Start your email, “Dear Teachers.”

Prompt 4: Email

A local high school is planning an end of the year trip. The school is trying to decide on the best location for the students to visit. The principal of the school would like members of the community to give their opinion.

- Write an email to the principal to explain your opinion. Give reasons to support your ideas.
- Start your email, “Dear Ms. Johnson.”

Prompt 1—Essay

I want to say that am disagree withe the testbooks on internet because every student will be watching the themes or the anwsers and thats not good because they will can't learn english or other tounge basicly thats called cheating, with cheating nowone learn's nothing anyone cheets for a good end but the only thing that they pick is bad for us and we didn't understand this in the other hand we can learn from that because we can learn from our mistakes and we can see the questions and then we can learn becuse we will know what should be awnsered and we will be better

Thats all to tell you the truth cheating is a bad way to a test if u don't know how to use it, Thats all

Commentary

- Much of the content in this response is not directly related to the idea of students having access to textbooks for free online. The writer begins by stating an argument that he disagrees with “the testbooks on internet,” but he spends the rest of the response arguing that cheating is bad, and people won’t learn if they cheat.
- The ideas are minimally organized within this response. An argument is stated in the first part of the essay, and it ends with “Thats all,” which signals the conclusion. However, the connection of ideas within the response is not apparent.
- The writer attempts to use a range of grammatical structures, but the response contains many errors (e.g., “they will can’t learn”). Vocabulary errors are also present. Grammar and word choice errors combined lead to confusion for the reader (e.g., “cheating is a bad way to a test if u don’t know how to use it”).
- The writer has misunderstood the prompt, and this misunderstanding contributes to the reader having trouble understanding the text. It’s unclear whether the writer understands who the audience is supposed to be and what his purpose for writing is.
- **This test taker is not prepared and should work on developing his writing skills before taking the ECCE Writing Section.**

Prompt 2—Essay

Hi, I'm a junior high school student and now I'm going to say my opinion about after-school job for teenagers before they graduate and if it's worth it to do something like that.

I believe that after-school job is a very nice idea, especially for students that are going to graduate, because they'll have to choose what job they will concentrate on. This will also help them on how to behave in a real work and won't have problems in the future.

Secondly, it can help them on how it is to work with people you don't know and you get to know them. By that you will be able to make new friends and groups of friends and you can be more sociable in your life. Also, by doing after-school working you will learn how to work as a team with the people that you are with, in that job and share things together.

In conclusion, I think that after-school job is a very nice idea because it can help teenagers to get to know how real working is and also help them with the job that they will choose to do in the future.

Commentary

- The writer presents her argument in the second paragraph, stating that she believes “that after-school job is a very nice idea” and providing three reasons to support her opinion: it will help students choose a job, get to work with and know new people, and learn how to work as a team. She provides a few supporting details for those points.
- Ideas are organized into a typical essay format: an introduction, body, and conclusion. The writer uses standard connectors, such as “Secondly,” “Also,” and “In conclusion.”
- The writer demonstrates an appropriate range of grammar and vocabulary. While some vocabulary mistakes are present (e.g., “what job they will concentrate on”), the reader is able to understand the point the writer is trying to convey.
- The first paragraph indicates that the writer has misinterpreted her audience. She starts out by writing “Hi” and introducing herself, which is a style that is more typical of the email or letter task and not the essay task.
- **This test taker is on track but should continue to prepare for the ECCE Writing Section.**

Prompt 3—Email

Dear Teachers,

I've heard that you want to make your classes more fun and interesting, so I would like to tell you my opinion about this.

I think, a good idea is to have music during the breaks, as it will make children relax from their program. Also, a good change is to have more than one teacher in each class, so that children can ask them further more questions and explain them things that they haven't understand. Furthermore, one other idea is to have lesson all the grades together for once a week, so that children will change their ideas and knowledge with each other. This will help them to communicate with other people and learn new things from kids that they are almost in the same age

So, I think that if you will change some things about the way you are having a lesson, it will be a very good result and both children and teachers will have a great time at school.

Sincerely,

Jane

Commentary

- The writer presents three ideas on how to make classes more fun and interesting: “music during the breaks,” “more than one teacher in each class,” and to bring all the grades together for one lesson per week. Additional supporting details are provided (e.g., “This will help them to communicate with other people and learn new things”).
- The ideas within this email are organized adequately. The writer uses a variety of connectors to illustrate the relationship between ideas within the response (e.g., “Also,” “Furthermore,” “This will help”).
- The writer’s use of language is sufficient in this response. She uses compound and complex sentences. Some sentences contain grammatical errors (e.g., “explain them things”). Vocabulary within the response is generally accurate, despite some mistakes (e.g., “change their ideas” rather than exchange). Despite some mistakes, the reader does not have any trouble understanding the writer’s response.
- The writer seems to have an adequate understanding of who the audience is. She sets the context for the email in the first paragraph, and in the final paragraph, she restates her opinion that changing a few things would be a good idea. Her tone is appropriate for correspondence with teachers.
- **This test taker is adequately prepared to take the ECCE Writing Section.**

Prompt 4—Email

Dear Ms Johnson,

As you know, the local high school is planning an end of the year trip and we are looking for the best place to visit.

I believe that a good option would be a big place where we can feel free. Because, you know, we pass all the year in a room and to stay around four walls generates stress in the students. Furthermore is good idea to do extreme sports, scientist suggest to do extreme sports to get out stress of your body. However, doing extreme sports would be a little dangerous but we need to take the risk if we want to enjoy the moment and if we want to have experiences to share in the future.

It's important to clarify that, it's an end of the year trip and it is a trip as a group where we can enforce our relations as a team and also like a family, so we can go to a forest far from the city where we can enjoy a lunch together, maybe a part of us, who wants to take the risk, can practice rock climbing. After that we can prepare a dinner with wild ingredients and then eat that under the stars, and finally sleep after all the hard but funny day.

To conclude that I believe, going to the forest would be a good idea to follow, and I guess that there is a place like my description, near to here. Would be great if you consider my idea.

Thank you,

Leonardo

Commentary

- The writer develops his response well, providing clear imagery to the reader (e.g., “prepare a dinner with wild ingredients and then eat that under the stars”). He develops his argument with original ideas, supporting them with details to elaborate further.
- The ideas within the email are adequately organized. The writer uses standard connectors (e.g., “Furthermore,” “However,” “To conclude”).
- The email demonstrates an appropriate range of grammar and vocabulary. Vocabulary is generally used well (e.g., “take the risk,” “enjoy the moment”). While some errors are present (e.g., “hard but funny day,” “near to here”), the reader is able to easily understand the response.
- The writer seems to understand his audience, and he uses an appropriate tone for addressing a principal. He provides context for his email in the first paragraph and a brief recap of his ideas in the final paragraph. Both of these work to help the reader follow the text.
- **This test taker is well prepared to take the ECCE Writing Section.**

Appendix 2

New Practice Prompts

Email

City officials and citizens are worried about the amount of garbage in city parks. A group of citizens has proposed holding clean-up days 3 times a year, and the mayor would like to hear what residents think of this idea.

- Write an email to the mayor to explain your opinion about this proposal. Give reasons to support your ideas.
- Start your email, “Dear Mayor Taylor.”

Cell Phones Not Allowed in Schools

The principal of a local high school is considering a new rule that students may not bring their cell phones to class. The principal would like to know how students feel about the proposed rule.

- Write an email to the principal explaining what you think of this new rule banning cell phones in class. Give reasons to support your ideas.
- Start your email, “Dear Principal Carter.”

Changes to the School Day

The principal of the local high school has decided to change school start time from 7:00 am to 10:00 am, with the school day ending at 5:00 pm. The principal would like to know how students and parents feel about the proposed schedule change.

- Write an email to the principal explaining what you think of this new schedule. Give reasons to support your ideas.
- Start your email, “Dear Principal Freeman.”

New Practice Prompts, continued

Essay

City governments should provide free or low-cost exercise classes and activities to encourage better exercise habits and improve the health of their citizens.

- Write an essay on whether you agree or disagree with the statement above.
- Include specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Requiring higher prices for unhealthy food like potato chips and soda is a good policy to help people make healthier food choices and improve their health.

- Write an essay giving your opinion about the statement above.
- Include specific reasons and details to support your opinion.

Because not enough people are choosing careers in farming, governments should offer benefits to young people who choose to live and work in the countryside.

- Write an essay giving your opinion about the statement above.
- Include specific reasons and details to support your opinion