

**Preparing Your Child  
for the  
COLORADO STUDENT  
ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Grades 6, 7, and 8  
Reading and Writing**

**A  
BOOKLET  
for  
PARENTS**

**ADAMS TWELVE Five Star Schools  
11285 Highline Drive  
Northglenn, CO 80233**

**October 2001**

## **Introduction**

The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) has been underway since 1997. The purpose of this test is to give parents and teachers information about how well students are achieving the *Colorado Model Content Standards*, better known as the state standards.

Research studies show that parent involvement in their child's education is extremely important in helping students do well in school. One way of being involved is to support your child throughout the school year, as well as at testing time.

The following pages include information on the **reading** and **writing** tests in **sixth, seventh and eighth grade**. Also included are the CSAP test format, sample test items, and ways in which families can help their children to prepare for the CSAP in reading.

We hope the information in this booklet is helpful. We encourage you to communicate often with your child's teachers and principal to continue to support your child's education.

## **The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)**

### **Purpose for CSAP Testing**

The purpose of the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) is to give information to parents and teachers about how well students are achieving the state standards.

**CSAP Administration Schedule  
2001-2002**

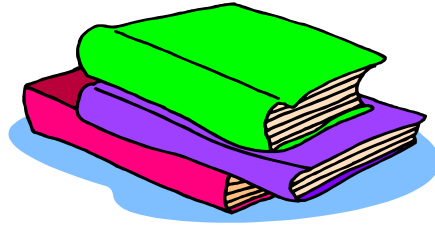
<b>Grade 3</b>	Reading, Writing
<b>Grade 4</b>	Reading, Writing
<b>Grade 5</b>	Reading, Writing, Mathematics
<b>Grade 6</b>	Reading, Writing, Mathematics
<b>Grade 7</b>	Reading, Writing, Mathematics
<b>Grade 8</b>	Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science
<b>Grade 9</b>	Reading, Writing, Mathematics
<b>Grade 10</b>	Reading, Writing, Mathematics
<b>Grade 11</b>	ACT

**Reporting To Parents**

The results of the student's performance on the CSAP are reported to parents with four performance levels in each subject area:

- Advanced
- Proficient
- Partially Proficient
- Unsatisfactory

## Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grade Reading



Students are asked to:

- Read a variety of passages:
  - about a page long, some a little more and some a little less. They are NOT usually paragraphs.
  - Fiction, nonfiction, “how to,” biography, poetry, etc.
- After reading a passage, students may be asked to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- identify the main idea</li><li>- identify a supporting idea</li><li>- identify the author’s purpose</li><li>- identify the feeling and/or point of view of author and/or character</li><li>- identify or explain something about the writing format (purpose of word in italics, bold, picture labels, highlighted main ideas, etc.)</li></ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- differentiate between fact and opinion</li><li>- tell how items in a passage are the same or different</li><li>- correlate a part of a story with an illustration, graph, diagram, etc.</li><li>- apply context clues (story, appositive phrase, etc.) to vocabulary</li></ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- identify what a figure of speech probably means based on context</li><li>- identify synonyms and/or antonyms</li><li>- identify potential additional sources of information</li><li>- identify sequence in a story or nonfiction passage</li></ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- use various types of informational reading (tables, glossary, table of contents, charts, graphs, index, etc.) to answer questions</li><li>- explain their reason for various answers</li></ul>
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**WHAT SKILLS WILL BE ASSESSED ON THE  
SIXTH GRADE CSAP READING TEST?**

**Sixth Grade Assessment Framework**

**Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials**

- 1.a Compare and contrast a variety of texts with similar themes and ideas.
- 1.b Summarize and synthesize fiction and non-fiction (for example, stories, magazine articles, and informational text).
- 1.c Locate and paraphrase the key/main ideas and supporting details in fiction and non-fiction.
- 1.d Infer using information in a variety of texts and genre.
- 1.e Identify sequential order in fiction and non-fiction.
- 1.f Locate and recall information in text with different structures (for example, cause and effect, compare and contrast, and problem/solution).
- 1.g Identify the meaning of unfamiliar words in context using word recognition skills and context clues.

**Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing**

- 4.a Determine author's purpose.
- 4.b Use reading to solve a variety of problems and answer questions.
- 4.c Differentiate fact from opinion in a variety of texts.
- 4.d Make predictions and draw conclusions from text in various genre.
- 4.e Explain the text's main point and use relevant details to support the explanation.

**Standard 5: Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technological sources**

- 5.a Use organizational features of printed text (for example, captions, chapter preview, summaries, prefaces, annotations, changes in print, and appendices) to locate information.
- 5.b Use organizational features of electronic information (for example, keyword searches and icons) to locate information.
- 5.c Summarize and organize information about a topic in a variety of ways (for example, graphic organizer, Venn diagram, outline, and time line) from references, technical sources, and media.
- 5.d Select information to support ideas and justify the selection.
- 5.e Locate others' ideas, images, or information in a bibliography, works cited page, or text features (for example, quotations, italics, parenthesis, and footnotes).
- 5.f Locate meanings and pronunciations of unfamiliar words using dictionaries, glossaries, and other sources.

**Standard 6: Students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience**

- 6.a Read and respond to a variety of literature (for example, novels, poetry, short stories, non-fiction, and plays) that represents perspectives from places, people, and events that are familiar and unfamiliar.
- 6.b Identify characters, setting, problem/conflict, action/plot/events, resolution/solution, theme, and sequence in literature.
- 6.c Use knowledge of literary techniques and literary terminology (for example, dialogue, scene, flashback, and figurative language) to understand the text.
- 6.d Read and respond to literature as a way to explore the similarities and differences among stories and the ways in which those stories reflect the ethnic background of the author and the culture in which they were written.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WHAT SKILLS WILL BE ASSESSED ON THE SEVENTH GRADE CSAP READING TEST?</b></p>
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## **Seventh Grade Assessment Framework**

### **Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.**

- 1.a Compare and contrast texts with similar characters, plots and/or themes.
- 1.b Summarize text read (for example, newspaper and magazine articles, technical writing, stories, and poetry).
- 1.c Determine the main idea or essential message in a text.
- 1.d Make reasonable inferences from information that is implied but not directly stated.
- 1.e Infer by making connections between separated sections of a text.
- 1.f Find support in the text for main ideas.
- 1.g Use word recognition skills (for example, roots, prefixes, and suffixes) to comprehend text.
- 1.h Find the sequence of steps in a technical publication.
- 1.i Use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

### **Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.**

- 4.a Recognize an author's or speaker's point of view and purpose.
- 4.b Use reading to solve problems and answer questions.
- 4.c Distinguish between fact and opinion.
- 4.d Make predictions, draw conclusions, and analyze what they read, hear, and view.

### **Standard 5: Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technology sources.**

- 5.a Use organizational features of printed text (for example, chapter preview and summaries, prefaces, annotations, bold face print, and appendices).
- 5.b Use library and interlibrary catalog databases and organizational features of electronic information (for example, microfiche headings and numbering, Internet, electronic mail, CD-ROM, laser disc).
- 5.c Paraphrase, summarize, organize, and synthesize information.
- 5.d Locate and select relevant information.

### **Standard 6: Students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.**

- 6.a Read, respond to, and discuss a variety of novels, poetry, short stories, non-fiction, and plays.
- 6.b Use literary terminology accurately (for example, setting, character, conflict, plot resolution, dialect, and point of view).
- 6.c Apply knowledge of literary techniques (for example, foreshadowing, metaphor, simile, personification, onomatopoeia, alliteration, and flashback) to understand text.
- 6.d Read, respond to, and discuss literature that represents points of view from places, people, and events that are familiar and unfamiliar.

**WHAT SKILLS WILL BE ASSESSED ON THE  
EIGHTH GRADE CSAP READING TEST?**

**Eighth Grade Assessment Framework**

**Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.**

- 1.a Compare and contrast a variety of texts with similar themes and ideas.
- 1.b Summarize, synthesize, and evaluate information from a variety of text and genre (for example, Internet, technical text, letters, diaries, biographies, email, and lyrics).
- 1.c Analyze main idea and supporting details in a variety of text and genre.
- 1.d Infer using information from a variety of text and genre.
- 1.e Sequence events and procedures.
- 1.f Locate and recall information in different text structures (for example, cause and effect, problem/solution, compare/contrast).
- 1.g Identify the meaning of unfamiliar words in context using word recognition skills and context clues.

**Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.**

- 4.a Recognize an author's point of view and purpose.
- 4.b Use reading and writing skills to identify problems, list possible solutions, and answer questions.
- 4.c Differentiate fact from opinion in a variety of texts.
- 4.d Analyze text to make predictions and draw conclusions.
- 4.e Analyze the text's main idea and use relevant details to support the analysis.

**Standard 5: Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technology sources.**

- 5.a Use organizational features of printed text (for example, annotations, citations, and bibliographic references) to locate relevant information.
- 5.b Use organizational features of electronic information (for example, keyword searches and email addresses) to locate relevant information.
- 5.c Summarize and organize information about a topic in a variety of ways (for example, graphic organizer, Venn diagram, outline, timeline) from a variety of references, technical sources, and media.
- 5.d Evaluate information for specific needs and credibility.
- 5.e Give credit for others' ideas, images, or information in an appropriate form.
- 5.f Locate meanings, pronunciations, and derivations of unfamiliar words using dictionaries, glossaries, and other sources.

**Standard 6: Students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.**

- 6.a Read and respond to a variety of literature (for example, novels, poetry, short stories, non-fiction and plays) that represents perspectives from places, people, and events that are familiar and unfamiliar.
- 6.b Apply literary terminology and knowledge of literary techniques (including, but not limited to, setting, protagonist, antagonist, point of view, foreshadowing, personification, and flashback) to understand text.
- 6.c Read a given text and identify the theme.
- 6.d Understand how figurative language supports meaning in a given context.

*A sample of reading selections and questions can be seen on the following pages.*

# *CSAP Grade 6*

## READING

### *Directions*

Here is a passage about an owl named Wol. Read the passage. Then do Numbers 1 through 9.

### *Owls in the Family*

by Farley Mowat

Our house in Saskatoon stood close to the river, and along the bank of the river was a regular jungle of bushes and poplar trees which made an ideal place for skunks to live. Because they didn't have any enemies in town, the riverbank skunks had become so cocky they would stroll along the sidewalk in front of our place as boldly as if they owned it.

That was before Wol came to live with us.

Cocky as ever, one of the riverbank skunks decided to take a walk down Crescent Avenue one summer evening just after Wol had learned to fly. The skunk came strutting along the sidewalk quite sure nothing in the world would dare to bother him. He ambled along, taking his own time, until he got under the overhanging branches of our poplar trees. . .

Mother and Dad and I were having dinner. The dining room windows were open because it had been such a hot day. All of a sudden there was a great swoooooosh of wings – and there, on the window sill, sat Wol. Before any of us had time to move, he gave a leap and landed on the floor beside my chair. And he hadn't come empty-handed. Clutched in his talons was an enormous skunk. The skunk was dead, but that didn't help matters much because, before he died, he managed to soak himself and Wol with his own special brand of perfume.

"Hoo-hoohoohoo-HOO!" Wol said proudly.

Which probably meant: "Mind if I join you? I've brought my supper with me."

Nobody stopped to answer. We three people were already stampeding through the door of the dining room coughing and choking. Wol had to eat his dinner by himself.

It was two weeks before we could use the dining room again, and when Mother sent the rug and drapes to the cleaners, the man who owned the shop phoned her right back and wanted to know if she was trying to ruin him.

Wol didn't smell so sweet either, but he couldn't understand why he was so unpopular all of a sudden. His feelings must have been hurt by the way everybody kept trying to avoid him. After two or three days, when even I wouldn't go near him, or let him come near me, he became very unhappy. Then an idea must have come into his funny head. He must have decided we were mad at him because he hadn't shared his skunk with us! So one day he went down to the riverbank and caught a second skunk, and brought it home for us.

By this time he was so soaked in skunk oil that you could smell him a block away. Some of our neighbors complained about it, and so finally my father had to give Wol a bath in about a gallon of tomato juice. Tomato juice is the only thing that will wash away the smell of skunk.

Poor Wol! By the time Dad was through with him he looked like a rag mop that had been dipped in ketchup. But he got the idea, and he never again brought his skunks home to us.

Excerpt from *Owls in the Family* by Farley Mowat, copyright © 1961 by Farley Mowat. Used by permission of Little, Brown and Company

<p><b>1</b> When Wol moves in, the skunks have to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input checked="" type="radio"/> be careful on their walks.</li><li><input type="radio"/> find a new place for food.</li><li><input type="radio"/> move away from the river.</li><li><input type="radio"/> learn how to live with owls.</li></ul>	<p><b>3</b> What did the family do right after Wol came home with the first skunk?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> They gave Wol a bath.</li><li><input type="radio"/> They opened the windows.</li><li><input checked="" type="radio"/> They ran out of the room.</li><li><input type="radio"/> They phoned the cleaners.</li></ul>
<p><b>2</b> In this story, what does Wol probably learn?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> Owls should avoid skunks.</li><li><input type="radio"/> People do not like owls.</li><li><input type="radio"/> Owls should avoid people.</li><li><input checked="" type="radio"/> People do not like skunks.</li></ul>	<p><b>4</b> Why was Wol unhappy after he brought the first skunk home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> He had to share his dinner.</li><li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Everyone stayed away from him.</li><li><input type="radio"/> He had to have a bath in tomato juice.</li><li><input type="radio"/> The neighbors complained about him.</li></ul>

<p><b>5</b> The author says that, after his bath, Wol, “looked like a rag mop that had been dipped in ketchup.” This description is an example of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● simile.</li><li>○ alliteration.</li><li>○ foreshadowing.</li><li>○ personification.</li></ul>	<p><b>7</b> According to the information in the passage, which of these statements is true?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ A skunk’s smell lasts three days.</li><li>○ Owls and skunks are popular pets.</li><li>○ Skunk oil is used to make special perfume.</li><li>● Owls and skunks are enemies.</li></ul>
<p><b>6</b> What will Wol probably do the next time he catches a skunk?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ take it to a neighbor’s house</li><li>○ bring it to the family</li><li>● eat it by himself</li><li>○ soak it in tomato juice</li></ul>	

- 8 There are several clues in the passage about how Wol felt about the events that happened. Look at the chart below that shows, in order, several events from the passage. Complete the chart with how Wol feels or thinks about each of these events and add a detail from the passage that supports your description of how Wol feels or thinks about the event.

Event	How Wol Feels or Thinks	Detail From Passage
Wol brings the skunk to the house		
Family runs out coughing		
Wol catches another skunk		
Wol is bathed in tomato juice		

- 9 Each time Wol brought a skunk home, he caused a problem for the family. Complete the chart by identifying **one** problem and telling what the family members did to solve it.

Problem	Solution

## Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grade Writing

There are three sections in the writing test.

### Part I: The Extended Response

- Students are given a prompt for writing.
  - Imagine situation X and write about it.
  - What would you do if...?
- Students use the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, and editing) during two different sessions to write a complete piece.
- A writer's checklist, similar to one we use in District 12, is also provided.
- Dictionaries may not be used.
- Students should:
  - be familiar with the writing process.
  - be able to understand and follow directions.
  - write to a specific prompt.
  - organize their thinking.
  - revise and edit work independently.
  - work in a timed situation.

### Part II: Short Response

- Students respond to a picture and/or written prompt(s)
- Students write three different paragraph length short responses, typically:
  - one that **tells**,
  - one that **describes**,
  - one that **explains**, and/or
  - one that **summarizes**.
- Students should:
  - be able to understand and follow directions.
  - focus and work in a timed situation.
  - write to a specific prompt.
  - understand the difference between various purposes and types of writing (see above).
  - organize a well-structured paragraph.
  - revise own work independently.

### Part III: Selected Response (generally multiple choice)

#### WRITING CONVENTIONS:

- Make a correction where one is needed to selected words and phrases:
  - One of the Greatest things about my uncle Warren was his sense of humor. He tolled funny stories about everything? One of his favorite's was about a boy he had nown a long time ago.
- Identify correct use of conventions:
  - Which underlined section is correct?  
Dear Grandma, im enjoying my trip, to Nevada with aunt Sally?
  - Which closing to a friendly letter is correct?  
Your Friend    Your Friend,    your friend    Your friend,
- Determine correct punctuation and capitalization in quotations:
  - My brother yelled "Wow! This is the best party I ever had?"

#### GRAMMAR:

- Choose correct word or term for sentence context:
  - The old man snored (loud/loudly).
- Identify correct subject-verb agreement in sentence:
  - Which sentence is correct?  
I noticing I was the last one there.  
Mr. Blackstone take a drive every Saturday.  
Who are riding in the car with us?  
Sally likes to dance.

#### VOCABULARY:

- Select synonyms for words and passages:
  - When Peggy's little brother broke her favorite doll she was very \_\_\_\_\_.  
Which word shows that Peggy was very mad?
    - anxious
    - critical
    - aggravated
    - worried

**WHAT DO SIXTH GRADERS NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO  
TO SCORE AT THE PROFICIENT LEVEL IN WRITING?**

**Sixth Grade Writing Benchmarks**

**Standard 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.**

*In order to meet this standard, students will...*

- 2.a Write in a variety of modes such as narrative, expository, descriptive, or persuasive for various audiences and purposes (for example: to entertain, to inform, or to persuade).
- 2.b Organize writing using a logical arrangement of ideas.
- 2.c Use language which supports and enriches the idea.
- 2.d Plan, draft, revise, and edit for a final copy.
- 2.e Use transitions to link ideas.
- 2.f Use a variety of sentence structures.
- 2.g Develop ideas and content with relevant details, examples, and/or reasons.

**Standard 3: Students write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.**

*In order to meet this standard, students will...*

- 3.a Identify subject, verb, pronouns and adjectives.
- 3.b Use subject/verb agreement, nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, homonyms, and homophones.
- 3.c Write in complete sentences.
- 3.d Use conventions correctly (for example: apostrophes in contractions and singular possessives; quotations marks; end-marks; abbreviations; and commas used with conjunctions, in a series, and introductory phrases).
- 3.e Identify and use conventional spelling.

**WHAT DO SEVENTH GRADERS NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO  
TO SCORE AT THE PROFICIENT LEVEL IN WRITING?**

**Seventh Grade Writing Benchmarks**

**Standard 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.**

*In order to meet this standard, students will...*

- 2.a Write in a variety of genres such as personal narratives, informational brochures, essays, stories, and letters for specific purposes such as to entertain, to persuade, and to inform;
- 2.b Develop ideas and content with significant details, examples, and/or reasons;
- 2.c Organize ideas so that there is an inviting introduction, logical arrangement of ideas, and a satisfying conclusion;
- 2.d Use transitions to link ideas;
- 2.e Plan, draft, revise, and edit for a legible final copy;
- 2.f Use a variety of sentence structures with varied length;
- 2.g Write with a voice appropriate to purpose and audience;
- 2.h Choose a range of words that are precise and vivid.

**Standard 3: Students write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.**

*In order to meet this standard, students will...*

- 3.a Identify parts of speech such as nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives;
- 3.b Use Standard English usage in writing, including subject/verb agreement, pronoun referents, modifiers, homonyms, and homophones;
- 3.c Write in complete sentences as appropriate;
- 3.d Use capitals correctly, such as in titles, direct quotations, and proper nouns;
- 3.e Punctuate correctly, including apostrophes; commas in dialogue, compound sentences, complex sentences, and direct address; and semi-colons;
- 3.f Use paragraphs correctly so that each paragraph is differentiated by indenting or blocking and includes one major but focused idea;
- 3.g Use conventional spelling in published work;
- 3.h Use writing resources such as dictionaries to monitor spelling accuracy. (This particular benchmark applies to classroom practice. Dictionaries will not be permitted during CSAP.... 7/98)

**Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.**

*In order to meet this standard, students will...*

- 4.a Recognize an author's or speaker's point of view and purpose;
- 4.b Use reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing to solve problems and answer questions;
- 4.c Distinguish between fact and opinion;
- 4.d Make predictions, draw conclusions, and analyze what they read, hear, and view.

**Standard 5: Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technology sources.**

*In order to meet this standard, students will...*

- 5.a Use organizational features of printed text such as chapter preview and summaries, prefaces, annotations, bold face print, and appendices;
- 5.b Use library and interlibrary catalog databases and organizational features of electronic information (for example, microfiche headings and numbering, Internet, electronic mail, CD-ROM, laser disc);
- 5.c Locate and select relevant information;
- 5.d Paraphrase, summarize, organize, and synthesize information;
- 5.e Use available media resources, including technology, to research and produce a document

**WHAT DO EIGHTH GRADERS NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO  
TO SCORE AT THE PROFICIENT LEVEL IN WRITING?**

**Eighth Grade Writing Benchmarks**

**Standard 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.**

*In order to meet this standard, students will...*

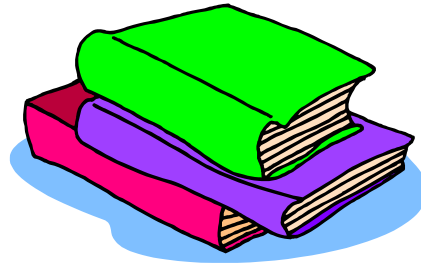
- 2.a Write in a variety of genres such as editorials, personal narratives, essays, stories, and letters for specific purposes (for example: to analyze, to evaluate, to entertain, to persuade, to inform, or to explain).
- 2.b Organize writing so that it has an inviting introduction, a logical progression of ideas, and a purposeful conclusion.
- 2.c Use vivid and precise language appropriate to audience and purpose.
- 2.d Plan, draft, revise, and edit for a legible final copy.
- 2.e Write in format (for example: lab reports, summaries, formal letters, and memos) and voice appropriate to purpose and audience.
- 2.f Vary sentence structure and length to enhance meaning and fluency.
- 2.g. Develop ideas and content with significant details, examples, and/or reasons to address a prompt.

**Standard 3: Students write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.**

*In order to meet this standard, students will...*

- 3.a Identify parts of speech correctly, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections.
- 3.b Use standard English in writing including pronoun/antecedent agreement, subject/verb agreement, regular/irregular verbs, and modifiers.
- 3.c Write in complete sentences.
- 3.d Use conventions correctly (for example: all capitalization; apostrophes in contractions; quotation marks; underlining/italics; commas in a series, dates, addresses, direct address, letters, introductory words/phrases, in dialogue, and in complex and compound sentences).
- 3.e Use conventional spelling.
- 3.f Use paragraphing correctly so that each paragraph is differentiated by indenting or blocking and includes one major, focused idea.

**SPECIFIC WAYS YOU CAN HELP  
YOUR CHILD TO PREPARE  
FOR THE  
COLORADO STUDENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM  
(CSAP)  
SIXTH, SEVENTH and EIGHTH GRADE READING**



**The following suggestions relate specifically to what is required of students on the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grade CSAP in Reading.**

- ⇒ Encourage your child to read at least 15 - 30 minutes every day.
- ⇒ Help build your child's vocabulary by talking with him/her about your daily activities, current events, movies, etc. and by reading to him/her books that may be too hard for him/her to read. Talk about words and/or figures of speech he/she may not understand and then try to use them in daily conversation.
- ⇒ Help build vocabulary by doing crossword puzzles together.
- ⇒ Encourage your child to read a variety of literature: fiction, non-fiction, biographies, poetry, etc. (Ask your child's teacher for titles of books that would be appropriate for your child to read.)
- ⇒ After your child reads a piece independently, talk with him/her about what he/she has read. **It is important to ask questions that will encourage your child to THINK about what he/she is reading.** Some questions you might ask are:
  - ◆ Tell me about what you just read.
  - ◆ What was the main idea of the story/poem/article?
  - ◆ How do you know that was the main idea? (Listen for supporting details.)
  - ◆ Were there any parts you didn't understand?
  - ◆ Were there any words that confused you?
  - ◆ What other words in the story could help you figure out the words you didn't know?
  - ◆ Why do you think the author wrote this?

- ◆ What is the author's point of view in this piece?
  - ◆ What was the problem in the story?
  - ◆ Does this book/story/poem remind you of any others you have read?
  - ◆ Was the ending what you expected, or did it surprise you?
  - ◆ What happened next in the story? What followed?
  - ◆ When \_\_\_\_\_ happened, what else happened? (cause and effect)
- (See below for **Questions That Support Thinking**)

- ⇒ Make it a routine to discuss your child's reading with him/her. Once in awhile ask your child to **write** a summary of the article/story/poem. This is important, because it is what is expected on the CSAP. Make sure your child writes in complete sentences and provides factual support.
- ⇒ Give your child opportunities to use a dictionary, atlas, and encyclopedia. Discuss with him/her the various uses of each of these resources.
- ⇒ Read the newspaper with your child. Point out graphs and charts and ask your child to use them to find specific information.
- ⇒ Have your child read and follow simple recipes.

## Questions That Support Thinking

### 1. Questions which draw upon knowledge (Remembering)

Who?                      What?                      When?                      Where?

### 2. Questions which support comprehension (Understanding)

What is meant by...?                      Can you describe...?  
 What is the difference...?                      What is the main idea...?

### 3. Questions that require application (Solving)

Who would you choose...?                      What would happen if...?  
 How would you...?                      Do you know someone like...?

### 4. Questions which encourage analysis (Reasoning)

Why?                      What if...?                      What was the purpose of...?

### 5. Questions that invite synthesis (Creating)

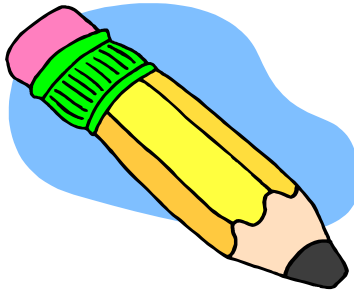
How could we/you...?                      What if...?  
 Do you suppose that...?                      I wonder how...?

### 6. Questions which promote evaluation (Judging)

Which is better...?  
 Would you agree that...?  
 Would it be better if...?

**SPECIFIC WAYS YOU CAN HELP  
YOUR CHILD TO PREPARE  
FOR THE  
COLORADO STUDENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM  
(CSAP)**

**SIXTH, SEVENTH and EIGHTH GRADE WRITING**



One way you can help your child with writing at home is to encourage him/her to write as much and as often as possible. There are many children (and adults) who dislike writing because they find it difficult and meaningless. If this is the case in your home some ways to help your child are to:

- ⇒ show that writing has a real purpose
- ⇒ start with a little writing at a time, for example, a daily journal
- ⇒ give sincere praise
- ⇒ let him/her see you write

On the first part of the writing section of the CSAP, students are given a topic and asked to write a long narrative/story for which they must plan, draft, revise, write a final copy, and use a Writer's Checklist to proofread their work. Students are given 50 minutes to write their rough draft and another 50 minutes to write the final draft.

You can help at home by occasionally giving your child a topic on which to write. Some examples of topics are:

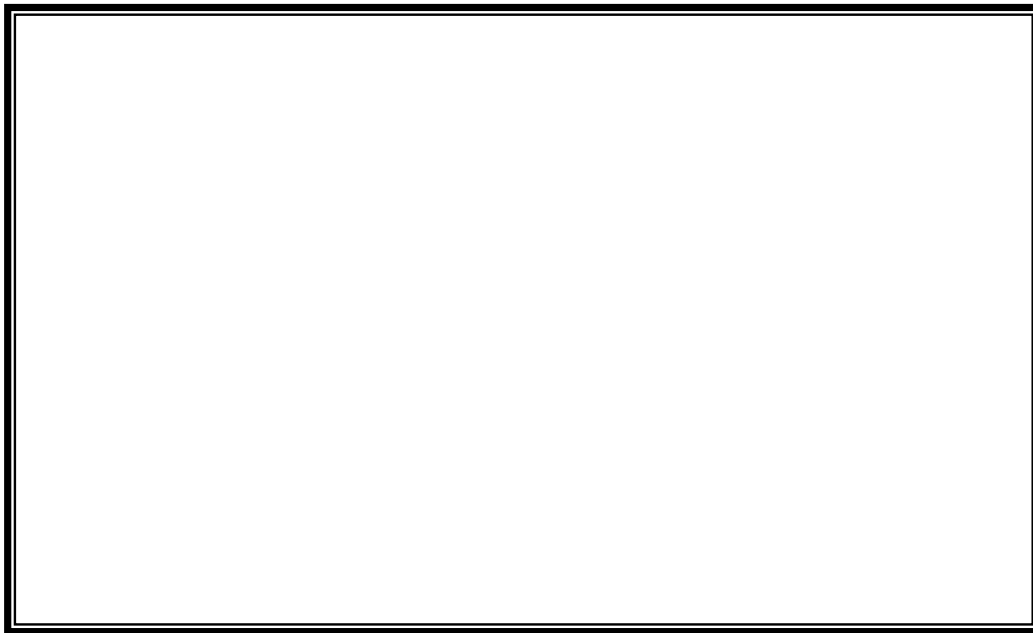
- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| My best day               | My worst moment             |
| My biggest accomplishment | The first time I .....      |
| My favorite vacation      | What if I had three wishes? |

When you ask your child to write, have him/her actually go through the writing process of:

planning,  
drafting,  
revising, and  
writing a final copy.

(He/she should be learning this process in school.)

During revision, have your child use the Revising Checklist (see next page) which he/she is allowed to use for the test.



After he/she writes the final copy, ask him/her to use the Writer's Checklist (see below) to proofread his/her work. This is what is expected on the CSAP.

### **WRITER'S CHECKLIST**

#### **Does your story have all of the following?**

- ⇒ words that are capitalized correctly
- ⇒ words that make your story interesting and fun to read
- ⇒ words that are spelled correctly
- ⇒ punctuation marks that are used correctly
- ⇒ subjects and verbs that agree
- ⇒ modifiers that are used correctly
- ⇒ paragraphs that are indented

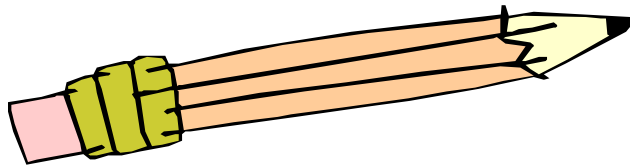
In the second part of the writing section of the CSAP, the students are given a topic and may be asked to write a narrative/story, an explanation paper, and/or a descriptive paragraph.

Some ways you can help at home are to occasionally have your child:

Write a description of a relative, a teacher, a favorite place to go, a poster, a pet, or a dream, etc.

Write a “how to” paragraph - how to make a taco, earn extra money, be a friend, plant a garden, run a race, etc.

**Always encourage your child to proofread his/her work!!**



In the third part of the writing section of the CSAP, students are asked to edit sentences or paragraphs for correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.

Ways you can help at home are:

- ◆ Model and expect correct grammar when you’re talking with your child so that it will automatically “sound right” to him/her.
- ◆ Help your child learn to use the “right words” whenever he/she writes, e.g. a, an; accept, except; chose, choose; you’re, your; to, too, two; their, there. (Ask your child’s teacher for a more complete list of words. They can be found in the *Write Source 2000* Books which are part of the District 12 Language Arts Curriculum)
- ◆ When your child writes, insist that he/she proofread for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization. Help your child learn to correct his/her own mistakes in the writing until he/she starts seeing the mistakes on his/her own.
- ◆ If your child is given a weekly list of spelling words to study, you may wish to practice with him/her once or twice during the week to see how well he/she is learning the words. Talk about the meanings of the words to build vocabulary. Ask your child to identify synonyms or antonyms for the words.
- ◆ On the following page is a list of the 100 most misspelled words. Encourage your child to use the words in his/her writing. Encourage him/her to use the list when he/she is proofreading for spelling errors.

## THE 100 MOST COMMON MISSPELLED WORDS

again	dropped	looked	their
all right	every	many	then
always	February	money	there
an	first	morning	they
and	for	mother	they're
animals	friend	name	things
another	friends	named	thought
around	frightened	off	threw
asked	from	once	through
babies	getting	our	to
beautiful	going	people	together
because	happening	pretty	too
before	hear	received	tried
believe	heard	running	two
bought	here	said	until
came	him	school	very
caught	interesting	some	wanted
children	its	something	went
clothes	it's	sometimes	were
coming	jumped	started	when
course	knew	stopped	where
cousin	know	surprised	with
decided	let's	swimming	woman
didn't	like	than	would
different	little	that's	you're