

Narrative Maturity Rating Using Story Grammar Levels

<p>Level 1. Isolated Description. Ask: Is this story limited to an isolated description of people, places, and events?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• May have setting• No sequence of events• A less mature isolated description might just involve heaps of unrelated information• A more mature isolated description might provide considerable information around a central topic <p style="text-align: center;">Example</p> <p>I like birds. My favorite kind of bird is a parrot. They are a problem because they copy a lot of people. But I like their pretty feathers. They have red, blue, orange, purple, green, brown, and black.</p>
<p>Level 2. Temporal Sequence. Ask: Is this story limited to a temporally-related sequence of events or actions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Series of actions that are temporally linked in a “what next” strategy• Ideas often linked by <i>and</i>, <i>so</i>, and <i>then</i> <p style="text-align: center;">Example</p> <p>I went to a football game and I had a good time. I saw someone get hurt. I ate good. And then we won the game two times.</p>
<p>Level 3. Causal Sequence. Ask: Is this story limited to a causally-related sequence of events?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Series of actions that are causally linked, but without planning• Causal relationships can be implied, but must characterize most of story <p style="text-align: center;">Example</p> <p>Me and Anna and Kasey got in an argument. We got so mad at each other that we weren’t friends any more. The next day we were not upset anymore, so we were friends again.</p>
<p>Level 4. Abbreviated Episode. Ask: Does this story imply goal direction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problem is stated• Characters’ aims or intentions are implied or stated in word choices such as <i>decided</i> and <i>wanted to</i> <p style="text-align: center;">Example</p> <p>One day I went to Full Blast. I was only five. I was going on a slide. And they said you need a parent. So I wanted to go find my parent. And I looked and I went to the wrong place. I went up. And they said you can go. I was drowning. I got saved by a lifeguard.</p>
<p>Level 5. Complete Episode. Ask: Is planning to achieve a goal clear?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes characters’ stated plan to reach a goal• Ending brings clear closure <p style="text-align: center;">Example</p> <p>One day I was walking through the woods and I had my bow and arrow because my name is Robin Hood. And I have a side kick named John. And suddenly some men was riding on a horse and started chasing us. We had something they wanted. We had gold. The started shooting their bow and arrows at us. Me and John knew we had to put the gold up somewhere so we put it in our hideout. So the next day, I woke up early so I could think. I thought that we should split the gold. I told John that. I said then they won’t be chasing us . That would be a good idea. So the next day we went to the camp where they live and knocked on the door and we said we can split the money. And you know what they said? That would be a good idea. So we will both be rich and we went home and had a happy ending.</p>
<p>Level 6. Complex/Multiple Episodes. Ask: Is there an obstacle in the goal path? Is there at least one complete episode, accompanied by additional abbreviated or complete episodes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete episode elaborated with multiple plans, attempts, or consequences• Obstacle in path of reaching goal• Series of complete plus abbreviated episodes, or embedded episodes <p style="text-align: center;">Example</p> <p>On a summer day about 3 years ago a top secret submarine was stolen from Navy headquarters. The police looked for clues but did not have any, so the Sheriff said “Sorry we can’t help you with no clues it’s just up to you.” After that the leader of a Navy seal gang got the gang to go out looking for the submarine. Bill one of the seals found a piece of the submarine exterior. That wasn’t any help to the seals so they kept swimming and saw the submarine on the surface of the water. Bill tried to get into the submarine but it was locked shut and only the thief had the key. Bill and Mike tried to open the submarine by kicking the latch and throwing stuff at the lock. Finally Bill said “Skip it” and pulled out his 45 magnum and shot open the lock and climbed in. When the gang got back to headquarters they all got medals and certificates. After that brake in the navy decided to keep their top secret stuff in a top secret place. The end.</p>
<p>Level 7. Interactive Episodes. Ask: Are there two major characters with separate goals, whose actions each influence the actions of the other?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete episode• Clear planning and perceptive taking of at least two characters who are working at cross purposes.

Note: Based on Glenn & Stein, 1980; adapted from Hedberg & Stoel-Gammon, 1986; Hedberg & Westby (1993); Hughes, McGillivray, & Schmidek (1997). By school-age, it is possible to see narratives at any level. Although early elementary students produce stories at the lower end of the maturity scale, even second graders can produce a level 6 story with complex or multiple episodes.

Methods for Analyzing T-Units

T-Unit Definition

One main clause and any other clauses embedded in it or subordinated to it is a “minimal terminal unit” (Hunt, 1965, p. 141). Each independent clause (subject + verb phrase, conjoined with *and*, *but or*, *so*) is a separate T-unit.

Dividing T-units

1. For dividing T-units, ignore students’ punctuation (or lack thereof) and pay attention to the grammatical structure. Writing conventions, including punctuation, are analyzed separately.
2. Place a slash at the end of each independent clause and any related dependent clauses.
 - My name is Ami/[1 T-unit]
 - I like God because he helps me/ [1 T-unit]
 - Art is fun because we paint/ but when we come back to our classroom we do our work/ [2 T-units]
 - I am 8 years old/ and I am in the third grade/ [2-T-units]
 - The boy who is my friend started working after I was done/ [1 T-unit]

Computing Mean Length of T-Unit (MLTU)

1. Count the total number of words in the discourse.
2. Count the number of T-units marked off by slashes.
3. Divide total words/total T-units to yield MLTU.

Potential Sources of Bias

1. Although examiners could count bound morphemes separately, most researchers use word counts during the school-age years to compute MLTU. Word counts therefore are more easily compared to available normative data. They also are easier to compute and are less subject to dialectal bias.
2. It may be advisable to leave intentional grammatical fragments out of MLTU counts so as not to bias the sample, but to include agrammatic fragments attributable to grammatical formulation deficits.
3. Adjustments may be made for other unusual situations that might inflate the MLTU, such as the production of lists, e.g., *I got up, made my bed, took a shower, and brushed my teeth.*

Table 15.7 Mean Word per T-unit Levels from Previous Studies

Grade Level	Spoken	Written
3	7.62 ^a 8.73 ^b 9.5 ⁱ (narr) 10.5 ⁱ (exp)	7.60 ^a 7.67 ^b 7.45 ^g 9.3 ⁱ (narr) 9.9 ⁱ (exp)
4	9.00 ^a 8.52 ^d	8.02 ^a 8.60 ^c 5.21 ^f
5	8.82 ^a 8.90 ^b	8.76 ^a 9.34 ^b 8.81 ^g 10.7 ^h (male) 11.4 ^h (fem)
6	9.82 ^a 9.03 ^c 8.10 ^d 10.03 ⁱ (narr) 11.4 ⁱ (exp) LLD 9.1 ⁱ (narr) 9.7 ⁱ (exp)	9.04 ^a 7.32 ^f 8.53 ^g 10.4 ⁱ (narr) 12.1 ⁱ (exp) LLD 8.9 ⁱ (narr) 8.9 ⁱ (exp)
7	9.72 ^a 9.80 ^b	8.98 ^a 9.99 ^b
8	10.71 ^a	10.37 ^a 11.50 ^c 10.34 ^f 11.68 ^g
9	10.96 ^a	10.05 ^a
10	10.68 ^a 10.15 ^c	11.79 ^a 10.46 ^f
11	11.17 ^a	10.67 ^a
12	11.70 ^a	13.27 ^a 14.40 ^c 11.45 ^f

Note: This table was adapted from Scott (1988a) and includes new additions. The scores listed above represent the mean scores for mean length of T-unit measures for spoken and written discourse from a variety of studies with differing sampling conditions. The studies labeled “d, f, g,” and “i” reported data for age only. The data from these studies were entered in the table using the formula: grade = age (rounded) - 6years.

- a. Loban (1976). N = 35 at each grade. Data were also provided for high and low ability groups. Spoken: adult-child informal interview; Written: school compositions.
- b. O’Donnell, et al. (1967). N = 30 at each grade. Spoken and written retelling/rewriting of silent fable (narrative).
- c. Klecan-Acker & Hedrick (1985). N = 24 at each grade. Retelling of a favorite film (narrative).
- d. Scott (1984). N = 25 10-year-olds, N=29 12-year-olds. Retelling of a favorite book, TV episode, film (narrative)
- e. Hunt (1965). N = 18 at each grade. School compositions.
- f. Hunt (1970). N = 50 at each grade. Sentence combining exercise.
- g. Morris & Crump (1982). N = 18 at each age (9.6, 11.25, 12.54, 14.08 years). Rewriting of silent film (narrative).
- h. Richardson, et al. (1976). N = 257 11-year-old boys; N=264 11-year-old girls. School compositions.
- i. Scott & Windsor (2000). N = 20 students in each of 3 matched groups; 20 students with LLDs (mean age 11;5), 20 CA matched peers (mean age 11;6 years), and 20 LA matched peers (mean age 8;11).

Later Developing Complex Sentence Structures

Structure	Examples
Complex noun phrases	<p>One day there was a girl named Jeannie / and there was a boy named Nathan. [cc]</p> <p>The owner kicked the little girl out and told her she could not come back no [d] more. [ci]</p> <p>Everyone believed that if you own [v] a dragon, it will [v] make you healthy and have good luck. [ci]</p> <p>All of a sudden she saw a white dragon and a man wrestling and playing with each other [coh]. [ci]</p> <p>Then it stopped storming. [cc]</p> <p>Each morning they could find words written on the web. [cc]</p>
Appositives	<p>Ping, the man, could talk in Dragon. [sc]</p>
Relative Clauses	<p>The boy heard a voice under the bed that said I am coming to get you. [cc]</p> <p>A long time ago there was a bull named Cool Dude, who always mind [v] [d] his own business. [ci]</p>
Adverbials	<p>By the time the police came, the woman and child was [v] [d] dead. [ci]</p> <p>When they were about to enter, they found an abandoned convertible and keys. [cc]</p> <p>Back in the cave where the man was, he started to think who she was [coh]. [ci]</p> <p>So when she heard what he said, she started screaming at him. [cc]</p> <p>Her father let Fern have the pig until it got big. [cc]</p>
Coordinated noun or verb phrases	<p>So the ambulance came and took the people. [cc]</p>
Cleft constructions	<p>It was 30 minutes later that she woke up wondering where she was. [cc]</p>

Note: Sources include Hughes, et al. (1997); Roth and Spekman (1989); Scott (1988b); Scott and Stokes (1995). Examples are from narratives produced by third through fifth graders in our research.

Developmental Spelling Progression

Stage of Spelling Development	Description At this stage students:
Scribble	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce letter-like sequences to convey meaning
Prephonetic stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • String unrelated letters together to convey meaning, e.g., <i>takyskp</i> for <i>my brother hit me</i>. • Understand that letters convey meaning, but not sound-symbol relationships, <i>i.i.tnp num.</i> for <i>I like to play with some new friends</i>.
Semi-phonetic stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • String letters together to form words with only a few sounds represented, most often the first and last, e.g., <i>fid</i> for friend, <i>pwo</i> for play, <i>buud</i> for brother, and <i>propm</i> for policeman. • Write single letters to represent syllables or words, e.g. <i>ne</i> for any, <i>b</i> for be, <i>R</i> for are, and <i>u</i> for you.
Phonetic stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use sound-symbol relationships to "sound out" words, e.g., <i>akros</i> for across, <i>bekoz</i> for because, <i>heer</i> for here, and <i>lafin</i> for laughing. • Attempt to correctly order sounds in a word, e.g., <i>deteshin</i> for detention, <i>uankt</i> for yanked, <i>frandshap</i> for friendship, <i>parelizd</i> for paralyzed, and <i>jrownding</i> for drowning.
Transitional stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show awareness of morphologic endings, e.g., <i>-ing</i>, <i>-ed</i>, <i>-able</i>, and <i>-tion</i>. • Recall visual orthographic patterns, alternatively called "sight" words, word "families," and word "chunks."
Conventional spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ multiple strategies to spell • Learn context dependent spelling, e.g., homophones (<i>their, there; to, two, too</i>)

Note: Based on Gentry, 1982; Rhodes & Dudley-Marling, 1988; Mather & Roberts, 1995

Figure 15.2 WRITING PROCESS AND PRODUCT WORKSHEET Completed for Arreyona's Story

Student Name A Teacher Mrs. W School WE Grade 3rd Birthdate _____ Age 8:3
 Date of Sample January 4 Sampling Activity Midyear Narrative Probe 2 Observer AVM

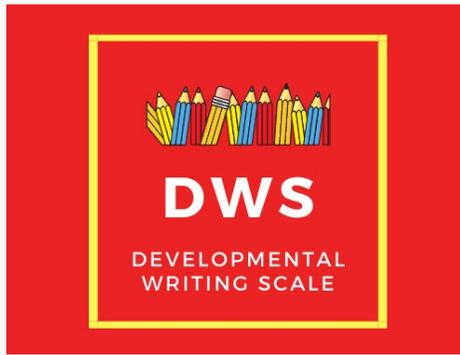
ASSESSING WRITING PROCESSES			
<p align="center"><u>Planning and Organizing</u></p> <p>~ Approaches writing tasks willingly + Arrives at topic independently + Picture—<i>after drafting</i> - Graphic organizer Type _____ ___ Notes ___ Dictates</p>	<p align="center"><u>Drafting</u></p> <p>___ Refers to planning + Proceeds quickly from start to finish + Pauses periodically + Revises along the way—<i>changes spelling and word choice</i> ___ Dependent on others for spelling</p>	<p align="center"><u>Revising and Editing</u></p> <p>+ Rereads work ___ Corrects grammar + Adds information* ~ Corrects spelling ___ Rewords ideas ___ Corrects punctuation ___ Clarifies references ___ # edits ___ Reorganizes content *<i>extended story with more intro.</i></p>	
ASSESSING WRITTEN PRODUCTS			
<p align="center"><u>Discourse Level</u></p> <p>Fluency 102 Total # words + # words/t-unit</p> <p>Structural Organization + True to genre: <u>narrative</u> Maturity level: <i>Abbreviated episode</i></p> <p>Cohesion + Clarity within sentences ~ Clarity across text—<i>repeats idea</i> + Pronoun reference cohesion ~ Verb tense cohesion</p> <p>Sense of Audience - Title ~ End + Creative and original + Relevant information ~ Adequate information - Dialogue/ Other literary devices</p>	<p align="center"><u>Sentence Level</u></p> <p>T-units 14 Total # T-units 7.3 # words/T-unit ___ range of T-unit length</p> <p>Types of Sentences ___ # Simple incorrect 7 # Simple correct 2 # Complex incorrect 3 # Complex correct ___ # run-on clauses (after 2 coord.)</p> <p>Variability ~ Varied sentence types + Over-reliance on a particular construction <i>Attempting complex forms</i> <i>Some difficulty with verb tense</i> <i>Some dialectal forms</i></p>	<p align="center"><u>Word Level</u></p> <p>Word Choice ___ Mature and interesting choices ___ Over-reliance on particular words ___ Usage errors <i>simple approp. choices</i></p> <p>Spelling Accuracy ___ % incorrect</p> <p>Spelling developmental Stage ___ Pre-phonetic ___ Semi-phonetic ___ Phonetic x Transitional <i>always</i> ___ Conventional <i>acks/asks</i> <i>laft/laughed</i> <i>becase/because</i> <i>evrybody/everybody</i> <i>tiye/tie</i> <i>toeth/tooth</i> <i>loes/loose</i></p>	<p align="center"><u>Conventions</u></p> <p>Capitalization + Initial letter of sentence ___ Titles ___ Proper nouns</p> <p>End punctuation ~ Periods ___ Question marks <i>1st portion, challenges marked, then less consistent</i></p> <p>Commas ___ Divide series ___ Divide clauses</p> <p>Apostrophes ___ Contractions ___ Possessives</p> <p>Quotation marks ___ Direct quotes</p> <p>Formatting - Paragraphs ___ Poetry/other _____</p>
ASSESSING SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN WRITING PROCESS CONTEXTS			
<p align="center"><u>Listening and Comprehension</u></p> <p>+ Makes eye contact with speaker ~ Listens without interrupting ~ Seeks clarification when needed + Follows directions</p>	<p align="center"><u>Manner</u></p> <p>+ Articulates clearly + Speaks fluently + Uses natural prosody + Appropriate eye gaze + Appropriate loudness</p>	<p align="center"><u>Topic Maintenance</u></p> <p>___ Situationally appropriate + Provides adequate information + Asks relevant questions + Shares opinions ~ Reflects on own work and others' + Engages in conversational turn-taking</p>	<p align="center"><u>Linguistic Skill</u></p> <p>~ Organizes ideas adequately + Completes utterances + Uses specific vocabulary</p>

Key: + = clearly evident; independent ~ = partially evident; still needs scaffolding - = not yet emerging

Figure 15.3 WRITING ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES completed for Arreyona

Student Arreyona Grade 3 Teacher Ms. W.
 Assessment sample midyear probe Genre narrative Date Jan. 4

OBSERVATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS	GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Writing Processes</u></p> <p>Planning and organizing <i>No overt planning. Initially had difficulty generating an idea.</i></p> <p>Drafting</p> <p>Revising and editing <i>Corrected spelling and word choice while drafting. Extended story at end.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>*Drew illustration at end.</i></p>	<p><i>Brainstorm list of story ideas.</i></p> <p><i>Use graphic organizer to plan and organize story prior to writing.</i></p> <p><i>Reread work when done with drafting to revise for amount and ordering of information.</i></p> <p><i>Use editing symbols to add, move and delete information.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Written Products</u></p> <p>Discourse level <i>Wrote abbrev. episode. Ordering problems.</i></p> <p>Sentence level <i>Complex sentences present</i> <i>Inconsistent verb agreement</i></p> <p>Word level <i>Simple appropriate vocabulary present. No use of descriptors or colorful words.</i> <i>Phonetic to transitional stage of spelling.</i></p> <p>Conventions <i>Inconsistent use of end punctuation and initial letter capitalization. No paragraph formatting.</i></p>	<p><i>Write full episode by adding character planning and attempts to solve problem. Order ideas logically with minimal scaffolding.</i></p> <p><i>Increase the number of complex sentence constructions with subject verb agreement across sentence.</i></p> <p><i>Include three descriptive words in story.</i></p> <p><i>Use –ed morpheme consistently. Learn and apply rule for double letters.</i> <i>Independently use a spelling dictionary to support spelling.</i></p> <p><i>Identify and mark sentence boundaries independently.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Oral Language</u></p> <p>Writing process oral contexts <i>Inconsistent attention to speakers in author chair and peer conferencing.</i></p> <p>Genre specific</p>	<p><i>Ask one question or make one relevant comment pertaining to peer work in author chair or peer conferencing activities.</i></p>



PURPOSE - The DWS is a writing quality measure (identifying linguistic and communicative change) for beginning writers of any age.

DIRECTIONS - Review the writing sample and use the leveled criteria and descriptions below to assign a writing level. If debating between two

LEVELS	DESCRIPTION
1 – Drawing	Lines and curves that appear to represent objects
2 – Scribbling	Continuous vertical, circular, or wavy lines arranged linearly across the page which may include letter-like forms but with the majority of shapes not recognizable as letters.
3 – Letter Strings (no groups)	Handwritten or typed strings of letters but not grouped into words.
4 – Letter Strings grouped in words	Strings of letters grouped into “words” (i.e., with spaces between at least two groups of letters) but with no intelligible words.
5 – One Intelligible Word	Strings of letters grouped into “words,” with only one possible real word (i.e., two or more letters in length) set apart, written repeatedly (e.g., dog, dog, dog), or embedded in a string of letters.
6 – Two to three intelligible words	Two or three different intelligible words embedded in strings, separated by spaces, or in a list format. Single letter words such as “I” and “a” must be separated by spaces to count as an intelligible word.
7 – Three or more different intelligible words in a list	Three or more related words.
8 – Partial sentence of more than 3 words	More than three different intelligible words, with at least two of them in a partially formed sentence (i.e., grammatically related parts of a phrase, clause or sentence).
9 – One to two complete sentences	Sentences have a subject phrase and a verb phrase. End punctuation is not necessary.
10 – Three or more unrelated sentences	Sentences have no coherent topic (i.e., sentences are not related)
11 – Three or more related sentences	Organized writing with three or more sentences on a coherent topic but with limited cohesion between sentences (i.e., sentences can be reordered without changing meaning).
12 – Three or more related sentences that cannot be reordered	Organized writing with a coherent topic (i.e., on a consistent theme) and use of cohesive devices (e.g., pronoun or synonym replacement, logical connectors, subordinating conjunctions, conclusions that refer to prior content) across three or more sentences, so that sentences cannot be reordered without changing meaning
13 – Two or more related paragraphs of at least three sentences each	Organized writing with a coherent main topic and 2 cohesive subsections (sub-topics or story parts) with at least two sentences elaborating the meaning of each
14 – Three or more related paragraphs of at least three sentences each	Organized writing with a coherent main topic and at least 3 cohesive subsections (sub-topics or story parts) with at least two sentences elaborating the meaning of each