Writing FAQ

Can students use scratch paper? Can they use the same paper if they come back a second day?

> Yes. Students should be provided with blank paper and pencil to aid in planning and other steps of the writing process. These scratch papers are secure materials. At the end of each test session they should be collected by the test proctor. If students are to return to continue writing, students should write their names on the papers, and the proctor must store them in a secure location until the next test session resumes. When students have finished SAGE Writing and submitted their essays, test proctors must secure-destroy the scratch paper.

Can I give my students a graphic organizer/outline/other writing support?

> No. SAGE is a measure of the skills and knowledge students have internalized over the course of the school year. Teachers and proctors are not allowed to supply students with outside instructional resources such as graphic organizers, outlines, and word lists. This includes all materials that would unfairly influence a student's score. These scaffolding materials are meant to be used during the guided practice and independent practice phases of instruction; instructional scaffolds such as graphic organizers should be gradually withdrawn as students internalize the text structures they represent. Students are free to sketch their own graphic organizers on scratch paper during the testing session; however, proctors should not prompt them to do so.

If a student pauses the test, is his or her work saved?

> Yes. When a student pauses SAGE Writing, his or her work is automatically saved. When the student resumes the test, no matter the length of the pause, he or she can continue to write and revise.

> Note: This is different than all other SAGE tests, where students cannot return to previous test items after a pause of more than 20 minutes.

What does the PAUSE button do?

> The PAUSE button stops that student's test indefinitely without submitting the student's response for scoring. The PAUSE button should be used if the student leaves the testing area (e.g. a restroom break) or at the end of a testing session that will be continued later. Upon returning, the student will log in, the proctor will validate the student's identity through the

administrator interface, and the student can then continue writing. (See the *SAGE Test Administrator Manual*.)

What does the SAVE button do?

The SAVE button stores the student's work on the system's online servers. Students do not have to use the SAVE button, as all student work is auto-saved every five seconds, and it is also saved when the student hits either PAUSE or SUBMIT; the SAVE button is provided for students who are overly concerned about data being lost.

If a student submits an essay, can he or she continue to work on it?

This is allowed only in extreme circumstances. When a student hits the SUBMIT button the essay is sent to be scored and, under ordinary circumstances, the student can no longer add to or revise the essay. However, under extraordinary circumstances, the test proctor can enable an individual student who has submitted the essay for scoring to return to work on the essay. (See the *SAGE Test Administrator Manual* for directions.)

How are the essays scored?

In the 2014 SAGE operational field test, all student essays will be scored by a panel of trained writing evaluators.

Beginning with the 2015 SAGE test, all student essays will be scored by a writing analysis algorithm. Additionally, about 10% of student essays will also be scored by an evaluation panel.

Where can I find the rubrics?

Scoring rubrics can be found on the SAGE Portal:

http://sageportal.org/

Separate rubrics are used for the argument/opinion and informative/explanatory essays. Students will be able to see and use the rubrics while writing by hitting the RUBRIC button.

Is highlighting or annotation available?

Highlighting is available. There is an online notepad where students can take notes. Students will also be able to have a blank scratch paper and pen/pencil as well.

How long are the text sets?

All text sets will contain at least two passages, but most will be multiple passages. The overall length is determined by word count. There is a minimum and maximum word count for all text sets, which is based on grade level words read per minute (wpm) targets. The training test is an accurate example of the length of the text sets for the opinion/argumentative prompt.

How do students cite the textual information/evidence they incorporate in their essays?

3rd – 5th Grades: Students do not need to use formal citation rules such as APA or MLA. It will be sufficient for students to paraphrase information from the text set in their essay.

6th – 11th Grades: When referring to evidence and information from passages, students should use paraphrasing and short quotations. To credit sources, students should use informal, in-text citations (e.g., MLA author or title tags).

Do students need to create a works cited section for their essays?

No. Students do not need to create a work cited section for their essay.

In what order are the essays presented? Can teachers change that order?

The opinion/argumentative prompt appears first. Students must complete the first essay before they will have access to the second, informative/explanatory prompt. The order of the prompts cannot be changed.

How much time should I schedule for SAGE Writing?

SAGE is an untimed test, so students should be given as much time as needed to complete the assessment. However, guidelines are provided to assist with scheduling. The writing portion of SAGE should take approximately 90 minutes for secondary and up to 90 minutes for elementary.

How much do students need to write?

There is not an exact required length given for student responses, but guidance is provided as part of the prompt. For third grade the prompt states that students should construct at least one well-structured paragraph for both essays. For fourth grade it is suggested that students construct at least two well-structured paragraphs for the explanatory/informative essay, and at least three well-structured paragraphs for the opinion essay. For grades fifth and up it states for both prompts that students should construct a multiparagraph essay.

Can students work on the essays in any place other than the testing area?

No. There are two reasons for this. First, it compromises test security. Second, because students need to reference information and evidence from text sets that are provided with the prompt on the testing computer, this will make it harder for students to produce a well-written essay.