

South Dakota Performance Level Descriptors—English

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Knowledge of Language: These students apply basic knowledge of language to make choices for meaning or style. They are able to: ● Determine appropriate word choice when using common vocabulary	Knowledge of Language: These students apply developing knowledge of language to make choices for meaning or style. In addition to demonstrating the skills at Level 1, they are able to: ● Determine precise word choice in a straightforward context ● Delete or revise overtly wordy and redundant phrasing within a sentence ● Recognize language that is obviously too formal or informal for the overall tone of an essay ● Select appropriate conjunctions in a straightforward context	Knowledge of Language: These students apply proficient knowledge of language to make effective choices for meaning or style. In addition to demonstrating the skills at Level 2, they are able to: ● Determine precise word choice in a moderately complex context ● Delete or revise wording that is redundant in the context of a sentence or paragraph ● Revise language to maintain a consistent overall tone in an essay ● Use logic to select precise conjunctions in the context of a sentence or paragraph	Knowledge of Language: These students apply sophisticated knowledge of language to make skillful choices for meaning or style. In addition to demonstrating the skills at Level 3, they are able to: ● Determine precise word choice in a sophisticated context ● Delete or revise content that is subtly wordy or redundant in a sophisticated context ● Align sentences or phrases to maintain a stylistic pattern

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Production of Writing: These students show basic ability to construct and organize texts. They are able to: ● Recognize material that is obviously irrelevant to the content of an essay	Production of Writing: These students show developing ability to construct and organize texts. In addition to demonstrating the skills at Level 1, they are able to: ● Determine the relevance of a straightforward phrase or	Production of Writing: These students show proficient ability to construct and organize texts. In addition to demonstrating the skills at Level 2, they are able to: ● Determine the relevance of a phrase or sentence in the	Production of Writing: These students show sophisticated ability to construct and organize texts. In addition to demonstrating the skills at Level 3, they are able to:

● Use simple transition words and phrases in the context of a straightforward paragraph	sentence in the context of an essay ● Use logical transition words and phrases in the context of a moderately complex paragraph ● Determine the function of a phrase when the function is clear ● Choose phrasing to accomplish a specified purpose that is simple ● Choose effective introductions, transitions, and conclusions in a straightforward essay ● Determine the most logical place to add a sentence to an essay when the best placement is apparent	context of a moderately complex essay ● Use precise transition words and phrases in the context of a sophisticated paragraph ● Determine the function of a phrase or sentence when the function is moderately complex (e.g., when figurative language is involved) ● Choose phrasing that achieves an intended effect that is moderately complex (e.g., to support a claim) ● Choose effective introductions, transitions, and conclusions in a moderately complex essay ● Determine the most logical place to add a sentence to an essay when the best placement is moderately complex ● Determine whether an essay has met a given purpose for its audience when the purpose is clear ● Organize paragraphs by determining logical sentence order and deciding whether to begin a new paragraph	● Determine the relevance of a phrase or sentence in the context of a sophisticated essay ● Determine the function of a phrase or sentence when the function is subtle ● Choose phrasing that demonstrates a subtle effect (e.g., to support a claim using inference) ● Choose effective introductions, transitions, and conclusions in a sophisticated essay ● Determine the most logical location to add a sentence to an essay when the best placement is subtle ● Recognize subtle shifts in content that influence whether an essay achieves a given purpose for its audience
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Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Conventions of Standard English: These students show basic command of Standard English grammar, usage, and punctuation. They are able to: ● Recognize and correct obvious errors in sentence structure (e.g., fused sentences and comma splices in short sentences) ● Ensure subject-verb agreement in simple sentences ● Recognize and correct obviously unnecessary punctuation in sentences or clauses	Conventions of Standard English: These students show developing command of Standard English grammar, usage, and punctuation. In addition to demonstrating the skills at Level 1, they are able to: ● Recognize and correct clear errors in sentence structure (e.g., run-on sentences with long introductory phrases; misplaced modifiers where the intended meaning is obvious; basic sentence fragments; incorrect parallel structure) ● Ensure subject-verb agreement in somewhat difficult sentences (e.g., sentences with compound subjects and/or compound verbs) ● Recognize and correct unnecessary punctuation in moderately complex sentences ● Avoid vague pronouns in a simple context	Conventions of Standard English: These students show proficient command of Standard English grammar, usage, and punctuation. In addition to demonstrating the skills at Level 2, they are able to: ● Recognize and correct moderately complex errors in sentence structure (e.g., misplaced modifiers in introductory phrases and clauses; sentence fragments in long or complex sentences) ● Ensure subject-verb agreement in moderately difficult sentences (e.g., when punctuation and text separate the subject from the verb) ● Recognize and correct unnecessary punctuation in complex sentences ● Recognize and correct unclear and/or ambiguous pronouns in a subtle context ● Identify correct pronoun case (e.g., <i>who</i> vs. <i>whom</i>)	Conventions of Standard English: These students show sophisticated command of Standard English grammar, usage, and punctuation. In addition to demonstrating the skills at Level 3, they are able to: ● Recognize and correct subtle errors in sentence structure (e.g., misplaced modifiers where the meaning is still conveyed; run-on sentences involving semicolons or conjunctive adverbs; improper subordination of clauses; sophisticated parallel structure) ● Ensure subject-verb agreement in challenging sentences (e.g., when a long phrase with several possible antecedents separates the subject from the verb) ● Recognize and correct unnecessary punctuation in sophisticated sentences ● Identify correct pronoun case (e.g., <i>who</i> vs. <i>whom</i>) when the antecedent is

	• Distinguish between contractions and possessive pronouns when a contraction is warranted • Use commas appropriately in basic sentences (e.g., items in a series; when a phrase is obviously nonrestrictive)	when the antecedent is clear • Distinguish between frequently confused words that are somewhat familiar (e.g., <i>peak/peek</i>) • Use commas effectively in moderately complex sentences (e.g., nonrestrictive elements, introductory clauses or phrases) • Use colons, semicolons, and dashes effectively to introduce or combine elements of a sentence	separated from the pronoun • Distinguish between contractions and possessive pronouns when a possessive pronoun is warranted • Distinguish between frequently confused words that are moderately complex (e.g., <i>affect/effect</i>) • Use punctuation—including semicolons, colons, commas, parentheses, and dashes—to create sophisticated sentences • Ensure pronoun-antecedent agreement in sentences where a phrase separates the pronoun from the antecedent • Avoid punctuating restrictive words and phrases • Use possessive apostrophes correctly in a complex sentence
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