



Formative Single-Point Rubric

Argument Writing
1st Grade ELA

December 18, 2025

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Introduction

To better support elementary teachers with assessing writing at the classroom level, the Office of Assessment and Standards, along with ELA content experts, teachers, and literacy leaders from across the state, has created grade-level writing rubrics for each mode of writing in the *2024 SC CCR ELA Standards*. These rubrics will provide teachers with common writing goals for their students and a common tool to evaluate student writing.

Overarching Expectation 6 (ELA.OE.6) in the 2024 ELA Standards notes that students should “create quality work by adhering to an accepted format.” Using rubrics to assess writing provides students with expectations and an accepted format for various types of writing assignments. While rubrics communicate learning goals to students, they also support teachers by providing a tool for quick, targeted feedback and promoting collaboration and conversations between teachers.

The rubrics created for South Carolina elementary teachers are single-point rubrics. These rubrics list the criteria for proficiency in the different modes of writing at each grade level and allow teachers to identify where students approach proficiency and exceed proficiency.

Single-point rubrics are formative and instructional because they allow teachers to provide students with feedback for improvement. This differs from the holistic Text-Dependent Writing (TDW) scoring rubrics, which are summative and do not allow explicit feedback for improvement. Another advantage of the single-point rubric for classroom use is that teachers can use only the parts of the rubric they want to focus on at that time. This allows for more targeted feedback and remediation. This also allows for more variety in the format of student writing.

We would like to thank all the ELA content experts, teachers, and literacy leaders who assisted us in the creation of the ELA Argumentative Rubrics.

How to Use a Single-Point Rubric

Single-point rubrics allow teachers to focus on one or two areas of weakness instead of focusing on all elements in a student’s written work. Using single-point rubrics also provides teachers with the ability to provide targeted feedback and instruction to each student based on his or her individual needs.

Example: Transitional Words and Phrases

Suggestions	Criteria	Strengths
	Transitional Words and Phrases: The student uses a variety of transitional strategies to link and structure ideas. The transitions support the organization of the written work.	

In the table above, the criterion to be targeted through feedback and revision is “*transitional words and phrases*.” The criterion is outlined in the middle section of the table. The left-hand side of the table provides space for a teacher to provide suggestions for improvement on the targeted criterion—transitional words and phrases. The box on the right-hand side of the table provides space for a teacher to note any strengths in the student’s use of transitional words and phrases. Teachers may choose to leave feedback in both categories or in one category.

Student Sample: Figure 1

I do not like naps. Naps are not fun. Schools should not require naps during the school day.

A nap at school could make our day longer. We might lose recess.

Figure 1 contains an excerpt of student writing that does not use transitional words and phrases to link ideas.

Example: Providing Suggestions and Noting Strengths

Suggestions	Criteria	Strengths
In the first sentence, you say you do not like naps. In the second sentence, you say why you don't like naps. Is there a word or phrase you can put between these two sentences to show how the two ideas connect?	Transitional Words and Phrases: The student uses a variety of transitional strategies to link and structure ideas. The transitions support the organization of the written work.	

In the sample, the student does not use transitions to connect ideas. In the “suggestions” column of the rubric, the teacher’s feedback focuses only on the first two sentences and asks the student to choose a word or phrase that shows the relationship between the two ideas.

Steps for Using a Single-Point Rubric

This is a suggested list of steps, not a prescribed list.

1. The argumentative writing criteria for “meeting expectations” are provided within the rubric. These criteria are aligned to the grade-level indicators for ELA.C.1.1, ELA.C.4.1, and ELA.C.5.1. The criteria presented in the single-point rubric are clear, specific, and measurable.
2. Familiarize yourself with the rubric and then introduce it to your students. Ensure that students understand the criteria and that you may choose to focus on one criterion or multiple when assessing their writing.
3. As you assess student writing, check the criteria outlined in the rubric. You may also wish to refer to the additional support provided for each criterion.
4. Provide suggestions for improvement and revision in the left-handed column of the rubric. Use the right-hand column to highlight any areas where the student exceeds expectations.
5. Once you have identified an area(s) of weakness for the student, determine appropriate instructional support to help the student improve his or her writing and meet the expectations of that criterion. The document provides suggestions for each criterion in the rubric.
6. After additional instructional support or remediation, allow the student to revise the written work. Some students may have to revise the work several times, focusing on different criteria with each revision.

Argumentative Elements for 1st Grade

The following definitions are based on the definitions provided in the *2024 SC CCR ELA Standards* Glossary of Terms. The Glossary applies to K-12 instruction. The language of the following definitions has been adapted to suit 1st- grade ELA instruction.

Texts

Before a student can write an opinion piece or argument, the student must have a text(s) that provides information on a topic. Students will use this text(s) to learn about the topic before writing and will use the text(s) to provide details and facts.

Topic

The *topic* is what the written response will be about. The student writer should stay on topic from the beginning to the end of the written response. To help the student writer better understand the topic, the teacher should allow him or her time to discuss the texts and topic with other students before the writing process begins.

Opinion

In grades K-4, the student writer will provide an *opinion* about the topic. The purpose of the opinion is to allow the student an opportunity to reveal his or her thoughts on a topic.

Reason(s)

A *reason* is a statement or explanation showing why the student thinks what they state in their opinion. Using reasons allows the student writer to support his or her opinion.

Details

A student uses *details* to support his or her reason(s) and opinion. *Details* provide additional information to support the reason(s). While the concept of details is not officially introduced in the argumentative writing indicators until 2nd grade, students in first grade can still provide additional details in their writing to support their opinions on a topic.

Transitions

Transitions enter the language of the indicator in the 1st grade. Transitions help the writer organize the written response and connect the reason(s) to the opinion statement. Using transitions also helps the student writer learn how to sequence and organize information.

Concluding Statement or Idea: In 1st-grade opinion writing, the student should restate his or her opinion in the concluding section of the written response.

Language and Vocabulary

In opinion writing, the student writer's choice of words impacts the effectiveness of the opinion piece and holds the reader's attention. The student should use vocabulary that is relevant to the topic. For example, if a student is writing about cats, he or she would refer to a cat's paw instead of a cat's foot.

Grammar, Capitalization, Punctuation, and Sentence Structure

For specific information about the grade-level expectations, teachers should refer to ELA.C.4.1.

1st-Grade Opinion Single-Point Rubric

Each targeted criterion of 1st- grade argumentative writing can be addressed singularly or in groups, depending on the instructional focus and the individual student’s strengths and weaknesses.

Suggestions	Criteria	Strengths
	Topic: The student states a topic and stays on topic throughout the response.	
	Opinion: The student states a clear opinion on the topic.	
	Reasons: The student provides a reason(s) that explains why he or she thinks a certain way about the topic.	
	Transitions: The student uses transitions to connect ideas.	
	Concluding Statement or Idea: The student restates his or her opinion.	
	Language and Vocabulary: The student chooses vocabulary that supports the topic.	
	Sentence Structure: The student uses a variety of grammatically correct sentences.	
	Punctuation: The student correctly uses punctuation.	
	Capitalization: The student correctly uses capitalization.	

Element: Topic

Criterion: The student states a topic and stays on topic throughout the response.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for topic.

A student who is on target will

- introduce the topic at the beginning of the response.
- stay on topic throughout the written work.
- make it clear to the reader that the student understands the topic.

A student who needs support may

- mention the topic and then move to another topic. Sometimes the student may return to the original topic at the end of the written response.
- not share enough about the topic for the reader to understand.
- not understand the topic.

Student 1

The teacher read the students a passage on the best type of pet, cats or dogs. Students were then asked to read the passage again on their own. Then, the students were asked to decide which pet would be better. Students were give space to draw a picture (not included).

Dogs are the best pets. My dog is Sandy. Dogs are the best because they bark.

The samples used in this document are excerpts of student writing that have been adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary**Element: Topic or Issue****Student 1**

Student 1 presents the topic in the first sentence of the response. In the second sentence, the student strays from the topic to discuss their personal pet. The student returns to the topic in the last sentence. This student needs support staying on topic.

Suggestions for Student 1

The following suggestions are targeted at the writer of this student sample. These suggestions were written to support this student writer and may not apply to all students.

- Ensure the student understands the topic and task. This may be as simple as having the student explain what he or she is expected to write. It could also mean asking the student to restate the task in his or her own words. This student appears to understand the topic and task, but struggles with staying on the topic.
- Writing an outline or using a graphic organizer may help this student better understand how to stay on topic throughout a response. This will also help with the organization of the written response. If multiple students need support staying on topic, consider modeling an outline or organizer for the class and having them write what you write as you progress. A sample graphic organizer is provided.
- Consider using sentence stems to support the student as he or she drafts the response. “I think...” and “I feel...” are sentence stems that ensure that the student leads with the topic.

Example of a Graphic Organizer

Topic: Which pet is better, dogs or cats?

My Opinion:

I think cats are better pets than dogs.

Reason1:

I think this because cats can take care of themselves.

Reason 2:

Also, cats are fuzzy.

Conclusion:

This is why I think cats are better pets.

Additional reasons may be included.

Element: Opinion

Criterion: The student states a clear opinion on the topic.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for opinion.

A student who is on target will

- state an opinion that makes clear to the reader how the student thinks or feels about the topic.
- carry his or her opinion through the written response.

A student who needs support may

- not make it clear to the reader how the student thinks or feels about the topic.
- state a fact instead of an opinion.
- explore the topic in a different structure, such as compare and contrast.

Student Sample 1

The class read a book about a farm. The students were asked, “Do you like farms?” The students had to provide at least one reason to support their opinion. Students were also given space to draw a picture (not included).

I like farms because. Farms have lots of animals.

The samples used in this document are excerpts of student writing that have been adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Student Sample 2

The class read a book about a farm. The students were asked, “Do you like farms?” The students had to provide at least one reason to support their opinion. Students were also given space to draw a picture (not included).

Chickens and cows live on farms. There are horses to.

The samples used in this document are excerpts of student writing that have been adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Criterion: Opinion Statement

Student 1

This student tells the reader that he or she likes farms (opinion) and gives one reason.

Student 2

This student makes a statement of fact: “chickens and cows live on farms.” The student does not provide an opinion about farms, which leaves the reader unsure of how the student feels.

Suggestions for Student 2

The following suggestions are targeted at the writer of the second student sample. These suggestions were written to support this student writer and may not apply to all students.

- To ensure the student understands the difference between fact and opinion, revisit the definitions with the student and talk through examples of each. Then, provide the student with a set of cards, each containing a fact or an opinion. Ask the student to sort the cards into a fact pile and an opinion pile. If the student incorrectly identifies some of the facts and opinions, complete the activity again with the student. Ask the student to explain why each fact is a fact and why each opinion is an opinion.
- Provide the student with sentence stems, such as “I like...” or “I think...”. Present a topic to the student and ask them to complete each of the sentence stems for that topic.
- Allow the student to verbally respond to the question before asking the student to write his or her opinion statement.

Element: Reasons

Criterion: The student provides a reason(s) that explains why he or she thinks a certain way about the topic.

Below are examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for reasons.

A student who is on target will

- provide at least one reason.
- use the reason to provide a “why” for his or her opinion.

A student who needs support may

- not provide a reason.
- include a reason, but it does not support his or her opinion.

Student Sample 1

The class read a book about a farm. The students were asked, “Do you like farms?” The students had to provide at least one reason to support their opinion. Students were also given space to draw a picture (not included).

I like farms cause there are pigs. Pigs are funny. They get in the mud.

The samples used in this document are excerpts of student writing that have been adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Student Sample 1

The class read a book about a farm. The students were asked, “Do you like farms?” The students had to provide at least one reason to support their opinion. Students were also given space to draw a picture (not included).

I like farms because I just do.

The samples used in this document are excerpts of student writing that have been adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Element: Reasons

Student 1

Student 1 provides the opinion that he or she likes farms. The student goes on to provide a reason that answers “why”. The student then provides an additional detail about why he or she likes the pigs on the farm.

Student 2

Student 2 provides the opinion that he or she likes farms, but does not tell the reader why. “Because I just do” does not help the reader understand why the student likes farms.

Suggestions for Student 2

The following suggestions are targeted at the writer of the student sample. These suggestions were written to support this student writer and may not apply to all students.

- The student can practice providing reasons to support his or her opinion through conversation. Have the student state his or her opinion to a partner. Then, have the student add “because” to their opinion statement, followed by a reason. Students can take turns with their conversation partner, stating their opinions and providing a because statement to reinforce the use of a reason.
- Provide the student with sentence frames to develop his or her skill in writing an opinion and providing a reason. One example of a stem is, “I like _____ because_____.”
- Provide the student with 2-3 different opinion statements and 1-2 reasons for each opinion. Ask the student to match the opinion statement with the correct reason(s). Once the student correctly matches the opinions and reasons, provide the student with sentence stems to write each opinion and its supporting reason(s).

Element: Transitions

Criterion: The student uses transitions to connect ideas.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for transitions.

A student who is on target will

- use one or more transitional words.
- use a transitional word to connect the reason to the opinion.

A student who needs support may

- use the same transitional word multiple times.
- use a transition that doesn't fit the writing.
- not use transitions.

Student Sample 1

The class read a book about a farm. The students were asked, "Do you like farms?" The students had to provide at least one reason to support their opinion. Students were also given space to draw a picture (not included).

I like farms because there are cows. And cows have pretty eyes.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Student Sample 2

The class read a book about a farm. The students were asked, "Do you like farms?" The students had to provide at least one reason to support their opinion. Students were also given space to draw a picture (not included).

I like farms. There are goats.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Elements: Transitions

Student 1

Student 1 states an opinion and then uses the word “and” to connect the opinion “I like cows” to the reason, “cows have pretty eyes.”

Student 2

Student 2 does not connect his or her opinion about farms to the goats on the farm. Using a transitional word would make this connection.

Suggestions for Student 2

The following suggestions are targeted at the writer of the second student sample.

These suggestions were written to support this student writer and may not apply to all students.

- To support Student 2 with connecting opinions to reasons using transitional words, encourage students to practice modeling the language in partners. Students will state their opinion and use the transitional word *because* to connect to their reason. As students develop confidence in using the transitional word *because* to connect their opinions and reasons, students can begin to use alternate transitional words, such as *also*.
- Use transitions and statement cards to match transitional words to statements. Have the student practice matching the transitions to the statements to connect opinions and reasons. See the example below for more details.

Transition	Statements
and	Cats make great pets _____ they like to play.
because	I like dogs _____ they are furry.
also	Dogs can _____ be used to help people.

Element: Concluding Statement or Idea

Criterion: The student restates his or her opinion.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate the writing for a concluding statement or idea. Students in this grade should restate or rephrase their opinion in the concluding section of the written response.

A student who is on target will

- restate the opinion in the concluding section of the response.
- may rephrase the opinion in the concluding section without changing the meaning.

A student who needs support may

- state a different opinion in the concluding section of the response.
- neglect to include a concluding statement.

Student 1

The teacher read the students a passage on the best type of pet, cats or dogs. Students were then asked to read the passage again on their own. Then, the students were asked to decide which pet would be better. Students were given space to draw a picture (not included).

I think dogs are better pets than cats. Dogs are fun. And dogs can keep you safe. If there is a bad person the dog will bark and scare them off.

Dogs are better pets.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Student 2

The teacher read the students a passage on the best type of pet, cats or dogs. Students were then asked to read the passage again on their own. Then, the students were asked to decide which pet would be better. Students were given space to draw a picture (not included).

Cats are better than dogs. because cats don't drool. Cats like to play with string. My dog stinks.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary**Element: Concluding Statement or Idea****Student 1**

Student 1 restates his or her opinion that dogs are better pets than cats.

Student 2

Student 2 does not restate his or her opinion that cats are better than dogs.

Suggestions for Student 2

The following suggestions are targeted at the writer of the second student sample.

These suggestions were written to support this student writer and may not apply to all students.

- Student 2 may need support in understanding why he or she must include a concluding statement. The teacher may need to re-teach this student that a concluding statement tells the reader that the writing is finished, and it provides an opportunity for the writer to leave a lasting impression on the reader. The teacher can use mentor texts to help students first find the concluding statement, then connect it to the writer's opinion, and lastly discuss how the opinion statement and the concluding statement are the same.
- Provide the student with a card containing an opinion statement and 2-3 reasons that support the opinion. Then, provide the student with 2 or more cards that each contain a concluding statement. Have the student select the correct concluding statement for the paragraph. Ask the student to explain his or her answer. This can also be done with several different paragraphs and several different concluding statements. The student can match each of the concluding statements to the correct paragraph.

Element: Language and Vocabulary

Criterion: The student chooses vocabulary that supports the topic.

Below are some examples of what you may see in student writing as you evaluate for *language and vocabulary*. The K-3 student should use vocabulary that is related to the topic. A student’s use of language contributes to his or her style and voice.

A student who is on target will

- use words specific to the topic and purpose.
- use words to aid the reader’s understanding.

A student who needs support may

- use vague words, leaving the reader to determine what it “could mean”.
- use words that are unrelated to the topic and detract from the reader’s understanding.

Student Sample 1

The class read a book about a farm. The students were asked, “Do you like farms?” The students had to provide at least one reason to support their opinion. Students were also given space to draw a picture (not included).

I do not like farms. I am scared of cows. Cows are big. They look at me.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Student Sample 2

The class read a book about a farm. The students were asked, “Do you like farms?” The students had to provide at least one reason to support their opinion. Students were also given space to draw a picture (not included).

I like farms. There are goats. Goats make noises. Paw Paw said goats eat up everything.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Element: Language and Vocabulary

Student 1

Student 1 uses words specific to the topic: cows and farms.

Student 2

Student 2 writes that “goats make noises.” The student could make this more specific by stating or describing the type of noise a goat makes. In the last sentence, the student states that “goats eat up everything.” To make this more specific to the topic, the student could replace the word “everything” with the name of something specific that a goat might eat.

Suggestions for Student 2

The following suggestions are targeted at the writer of the second student sample. These suggestions were written to support this student writer and may not apply to all students.

- Reading and writing are connected. Reading helps a student develop his or her vocabulary.
- Before writing the opinion piece, the student should have exposure to the topic. This will help build background knowledge of the topic and will allow the student to learn specific vocabulary related to the topic.
- The use of a graphic organizer, such as the Frayer model, will help develop vocabulary.
- Allow the student the opportunity to write individual sentences with topic-specific vocabulary. This can also be done as a whole class or in small groups.
- Provide the student with the opportunity to have academic conversations to practice using the words orally.

Element: Sentence Structure

Criterion: The student uses a variety of grammatically correct sentences.

By the end of first grade, students are expected to master the discrete skills outlined in ELA.1.C.4.1. Additionally, students are still implementing the skills from K-1. Teachers are advised to refer to the grammatical elements in the Kindergarten document.

As appropriate to the written work, a student who is on target will correctly

- write one or more grammatically correct simple sentences.
 - declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory
- use end punctuation marks
 - periods, exclamation points, and question marks
- use a collective noun(s).
- use a proper noun(s).
- use an irregular noun(s).
- use a personal pronoun(s).
- use a verb(s) in the correct tense.
 - past, present, future
- use a descriptive adjective(s).
- use a common conjunction(s).
- use and place an adverb(s).
- use subject-verb agreement.

A student who needs support may

- write one or more incomplete sentences.
- incorrectly use or not use end punctuation.
- incorrectly use a collective noun(s).
- incorrectly use a proper noun(s).
- incorrectly use an irregular noun(s).
- incorrectly use a personal pronoun(s).
- use the incorrect verb tense.
- incorrectly use or place a descriptive adjective(s).
- incorrectly use or place a common conjunction(s).
- use a singular noun with a plural verb or a plural noun with a singular verb.

Students should be expected to use an element only when appropriate for the written work. For example, not every piece of writing requires an irregular noun.

Student Sample 1

The wind was blowing. A apple fell from the tree.

Student Sample 2

The dog with the big ears. Jumped on me. Dogs jumps on people.

Commentary

Element: Sentence Structure

Student 1

The first sentence includes an article (the), followed by a noun (wind), followed by a helping verb (was), and a main verb (blowing). The second sentence includes an article (a), followed by a noun (apple), followed by a verb (fell), followed by a prepositional phrase (from the tree). Although the student uses the incorrect article in the second sentence, the sequence of the words and structure of the sentences is correct.

Student 2

The first sentence is a sentence fragment because it does not express a complete thought. Although first-grade students have not yet been introduced to sentence fragments, the student does not include a verb in the sentence, which is part of first-grade instruction. The second sentence is also a fragment because it is missing a noun. Another concern with these two sentences is the misplacement of the period between “ears” and “jumped”. In the third sentence, the subject is plural (dogs), but the verb (jumps) is singular.

Suggestions for Student 2

The following suggestions are targeted at the writer of the second student sample.

These suggestions were written to support this student writer and may not apply to all students.

- Review the parts of a simple sentence with students. Use model sentences to explain the parts (subject, verb, and object). Then, provide the student with 3-4 simple sentences and ask the student to label the subject, verb, and object in each sentence. To help the student retain this pattern in his or her long-term memory, provide the student with many opportunities to label simple sentences before asking the student to write their own simple sentences and label the subject, verb, and object.
- Use anchor charts to provide a visual representation of the parts of a simple sentence. Allow the student to refer to this as needed.
- Provide the student with three stacks of cards. One stack will contain subjects, one stack will contain verbs, and the third stack will contain objects. Ask the student to construct as many sentences as possible using each part.

- Reteach the patterns of singular verbs and nouns and plural verbs and nouns. Provide model sentences for students and discuss the subject-verb agreement in each sentence.
- Use fill-in-the-blank sentences that allow the student to provide the correct verb for each sentence.

Element: Punctuation

Criterion: The student correctly uses punctuation.

By the end of first grade, students are expected to master the discrete skills outlined in ELA.1.C.4.1. Additionally, students are still implementing the skills from Kindergarten. Teachers are advised to refer to the grammatical elements in the Kindergarten document.

As appropriate to the written work, a student who is on target will correctly

- use end punctuation marks.
 - periods, exclamation points, question marks
- use a comma to separate single words in a series.
- use a comma after the day and before the year in a date.
- use a colon between the hour and minutes in time.

A student who needs support may

- not use correct end punctuation.
 - periods, exclamation points, question marks
- not correctly place one or more commas to separate single words in a series.
- not correctly place a comma after the day and before the year in a date.
- not correctly place a colon between the hour and minutes in time.

Students should be expected to use an element only when appropriate for the written work. For example, not every written work includes a date.

Student Sample 1

The students were read a passage on the best type of pet, comparing cats and dogs. Then, the students were asked to decide which pet would be better. Students were also given space to draw a picture (not included).

Dogs are the best pets my dog is Sandy. Dogs are the best because they eat bones.

Commentary

Element: Punctuation

Student 1

Student 1 does not use an end punctuation mark after “pets” and before “my”. In this case, the student could use either a period after “pets” or an exclamation point.

Suggestions for Student 1

- Use mentor sentences and paragraphs to show students how a writer uses end punctuation. If the teacher decides to use this as an opportunity to teach students to use exclamation marks, the mentor text should provide examples of properly placed exclamation marks. Point out the punctuation to the student and discuss the use of the punctuation and its placement.

- Provide the student with several sentences with missing punctuation marks. Ask the student to identify and explain where each mark should go.

Element: Capitalization

Criterion: The student correctly uses capitalization.

By the end of first grade, students are expected to master the discrete skills outlined in ELA.1.C.4.1. Additionally, students are still implementing the skills from Kindergarten. Teachers are advised to refer to the grammatical elements in the Kindergarten document.

As appropriate to the written work, a student who is on target will correctly

- capitalize the names of people, months, and days of the week.
- capitalize the first letter of the first word in a sentence.
- capitalize the pronoun I.

A student who needs support may

- not capitalize the first word in a sentence.
- not capitalize the pronoun I.
- not capitalize the names of people, months, and days of the week.

Students should be expected to use an element only when appropriate for the written work. For example, not every written work will include the pronoun I.

Student Sample 1

The students were read a passage on the best type of pet, comparing cats and dogs. Then, the students were asked to decide which pet would be better. Students were also given space to draw a picture (not included).

cats are the best pets. cats like to play with yarn.

These are excerpts of student work samples adapted for use in this document. Sections of the responses have been selected based on the criterion that is being highlighted. Spelling errors have been corrected.

Commentary

Element: Capitalization

Student 1

Student 1 writes without capitalizing the first word in a sentence.

Suggestions for Student 1

- Students must have frequent opportunities to practice capitalization skills. Frequent retrieval of and practice with capitalization will allow the student to store the rules of capitalization in his or her long-term memory, decreasing the cognitive load of writing.
- Present the student with a short text. Highlight the capital letters. Discuss with the student which letters are capitalized and why. Then, provide the student with a copy of a different short text where everything is in lowercase letters. Ask the student to correct the capitalization errors.
- Use a variety of mentor texts to show real-life examples. Provide the student opportunities to explain why an author capitalizes certain words.
- Create anchor charts with capitalization rules with examples. Provide paper handouts for the student to use as a reference.
- During read-alouds, ask students to identify capitalized words and explain why they are capitalized.
- Frequently provide sentences and paragraphs with capitalization for students to edit.
- Incorporate capitalization into daily lessons and assignments.
- Provide students with checklists to use when editing.