

# Scoring Key: Grade 4

## Informational Performance Task

### Focus Standards

Grade 4: W.4.2a, c, e; W.4.4; W.4.5

## 4-Point Informational Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3–5)

SCORE	4 POINTS	3 POINTS	2 POINTS	1 POINT	NS
ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSE	<p>The response has a clear and effective organizational structure, creating a sense of unity and completeness. The organization is sustained between and within paragraphs. The response is consistently and purposefully focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>controlling/main idea of a topic is clearly communicated, and the focus is strongly maintained for the purpose and audience</li> <li>consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>effective introduction and conclusion</li> <li>logical progression of ideas from beginning to end; strong connections between and among ideas with some syntactic variety</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness. Though there may be minor flaws, they do not interfere with the overall coherence. The organization is adequately sustained between and within paragraphs. The response is generally focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>controlling/main idea of a topic is clear, and the focus is mostly maintained for the purpose and audience</li> <li>adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>adequate introduction and conclusion</li> <li>adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end; adequate connections between and among ideas</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an inconsistent organizational structure. Some flaws are evident, and some ideas may be loosely connected. The organization is somewhat sustained between and within paragraphs. The response may have a minor drift in focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>controlling/main idea of a topic may be somewhat unclear, or the focus may be insufficiently sustained for the purpose and/or audience</li> <li>inconsistent use of transitional strategies and/or little variety</li> <li>introduction or conclusion, if present, may be weak</li> <li>uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end; and/or formulaic; inconsistent or unclear connections between and among ideas</li> </ul>	<p>The response has little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may be related to the topic but may provide little or no focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>controlling/main idea may be confusing or ambiguous; response may be too brief or the focus may drift from the purpose and/or audience</li> <li>few or no transitional strategies are evident</li> <li>introduction and/or conclusion may be missing</li> <li>frequent extraneous ideas may be evident; ideas may be randomly ordered or have an unclear progression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient (includes copied text)</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Off-purpose</li> </ul>

SAMPLE NUMBER	SCORE	SCORE JUSTIFICATION
<b>Sample Grade 4 O/P A</b>	<b>3</b>	<p>The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness, though there may be minor flaws, and some ideas are loosely connected. The response is adequately sustained and generally focused.</p> <p>The controlling or main idea is mostly sustained throughout the piece (“Some animals have survived and lived in their own habitat for a long time.”; “depending on how they have adapted to the climate and terrain”; “The wombat has adapted by digging huge tunnels that can be 100 feet long.” “The owl has adapted by making nests in a cactus so it can have water.”) The use of adequate transitional strategies helps to connect ideas (“for example,” “Forinstance,” “Also”). The writer includes a brief introduction and an adequate conclusion (“In conclusion, animals are wonderful, magnificent creatures that have been able to adjust and adapt to their own unique environment”). The progression of ideas is adequate from beginning to end, and there are adequate connections between ideas (“The wombat has adapted by digging huge tunnels that can be 100 feet long.”; “The owl has adapted by making nests in a cactus so that it can have water”); however, the repetition of the ideas in the quotations limits the progression of ideas throughout the essay.</p>

SAMPLE NUMBER	SCORE	SCORE JUSTIFICATION
<b>Sample Grade 4 O/P B</b>	<b>2</b>	<p>The controlling or main idea of the topic is clear, and the focus is mostly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task (“There are a variety of habitats that animals live in, and all of them are interesting”). Transitions are inconsistently used, and there is little variety (“Luckily,” “Often,” “All in all”), and the student does not use any paragraph breaks to support relationships between ideas. Although an introduction is evident, the conclusion is weak (“All in all animals can build and live anywhere, if they can adapt”).</p> <p>The progression of ideas is uneven, with the student often repeating the same information articulated by the quotes (“the icefish has special substance in its blood to keep it from freezing.”) In addition, the topic sentence is that habitats vary a lot. To support this, the student chooses the icefish and the wombat. There is no reference back to the topic sentence, and the transition between the icefish and the wombat is weak, making ideas unclear and inconsistent (“I got information from source #1 paragraph 3. . .”).</p> <p>The inconsistent organizational structure of this response earn a score of 2 for Organization and Purpose.</p>

SAMPLE NUMBER	SCORE	SCORE JUSTIFICATION
<b>Sample Grade 4 O/P C</b>	<b>1</b>	<p>This response scored a 1 for Organization and Purpose because it has little or no discernible organizational structure and is only somewhat related to the topic, providing little or no focus.</p> <p>The controlling/main idea is ambiguous (“Each animal has a different environment, but some wont.”). The response is too brief and does not address the audience or task completely. There is a lack of transitions that connect ideas and concepts. Although there is an introduction and conclusion, they are weak (“Animals live in all types environments.”; “Animals and where they live is very intresting”). Ideas are randomly ordered, and there is an unclear progression. For example, the writer begins with discussion of an animal’s environment and goes on to discuss its prey.</p>
<b>Sample Grade 4 O/P D</b>	<b>4</b>	<p>The response has clear and effective organizational structure, creating a sense of unity and completeness. The response is fully sustained and consistently and purposefully focused.</p> <p>The controlling/main idea is clearly communicated (“In the sources . . . I learned how animals live in their environments.”), and the focus is strongly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task (“ . . . I found for my science project . . .”). There is consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies that clarify relationships between and among ideas, both within and between paragraphs (“To begin,” “as well,” “Furthermore,” “To sum up”). The introduction, with a paragraph identifying the purpose, the sources, and the controlling idea, is adequate, as are the topic sentences that summarize the main ideas of each paragraph (“ . . . animals build all kinds of structures to protect themselves . . .”; “Climates affect animals and where they live . . .”; “ . . . plants provide places for animals to live, too”). There is a logical progression of ideas from beginning to end, and there are strong connections between ideas (“ . . . beavers build lodges . . .” and “Lodges keep beavers safe.”; “Ice fish live in extremely cold environments. In order to survive, ice fish keep ice crystals from forming . . .” “ . . . the oak tree provides a home . . .” and “plants and animals work together in an ecosystem to survive”).</p>

SAMPLE NUMBER	SCORE	SCORE JUSTIFICATION
<b>Sample Grade 4 O/P E</b>	<b>2</b>	<p>The overall controlling idea, that “[a]nimals survive in different places,” is insufficiently sustained throughout the essay. The first two paragraphs do have a connection to the controlling idea by demonstrating two ways that animals can survive in different habitats (adaptations and building homes); however, the third paragraph drifts from the controlling idea and focuses on the role of an animal in an ecosystem. Focus within paragraphs is maintained. There is very little variety with the use of transitions (“For example”). The introduction is weak, but does introduce the controlling idea; however, there is no conclusion. The progression of ideas is uneven, as different topics and ideas are presented in each paragraph. Connections between the paragraphs are somewhat unclear, particularly in the third paragraph.</p> <p>The response has an inconsistent organizational structure, and flaws are evident. The response is somewhat sustained and has a minor drift in focus, and earns a score of 2 for Organization and Purpose.</p>
<b>Sample Grade 4 O/P F</b>	<b>3</b>	<p>This response is on the lower end of a 3 for Organization and Purpose.</p> <p>The controlling or main idea is clear (“Animals live in many interesting places and make different varieties of homes that help them survive . . .”), and this idea is mostly maintained for the purpose and audience (“Animals can build homes underground . . .”; “One place where animals can build a home to be safe is the water.”; “Termites make an interesting home . . .”) The response uses some transitional strategies to clarify relationships between ideas (“For example . . .,” “Other than . . .,” “In conclusion . . .”), but there is limited variety. The transition to paragraph three (“Other than underground and in the water. . .”) helps clarify the relationship between this paragraph and the preceding paragraphs. The introduction and conclusion clarify and summarize the focus of the paper. The progression of ideas is also adequate from beginning to end. In each paragraph, the writer discusses where animals live and supports claims about where animals live with evidence from sources; however, the connections between ideas can be formulaic in parts.</p>

SAMPLE NUMBER	SCORE	SCORE JUSTIFICATION
Sample Grade 4 O/P G	3	<p>The controlling idea is very broad, outlining the various topics in all of the sources rather than choosing a particular focus, making it hard for the student to maintain a strong focus (“... climate, habitat, relationships with plants, and the ecosystems ...”). The use of transitions is adequate and varied, and the transitions clarify relationships among ideas, but their use is often somewhat formulaic (“First,” “Next,” “In addition,” “For example,” “Another example,” “In conclusion”). In some cases, the lack of transitions between ideas limits the clarity of relationships between ideas within a paragraph (“Owls build nests in cacti so they have access to water. Water near the South Pole is ice cold.”).</p> <p>The introduction and conclusion are adequate, although the conclusion restates most of the introduction (“Animals interact with their surroundings in many interesting and unique ways.” and “... animals interact with their surroundings in many ways ...”). The progression of ideas is adequate, but the ideas sometimes jump between topics within paragraphs (“Owls build nests in cacti ... Ice fish have a special substance in their blood ...”). This response is a good example of a 3 on the Organization and Purpose dimension of the Informational Writing Rubric.</p> <p>Note that while this response includes copied text, the sources are cited, and there is sufficient original thought and writing that this is not scored as an NS on the rubric.</p>

SAMPLE NUMBER	SCORE	SCORE JUSTIFICATION
Sample Grade 4 O/P H	2	<p>The response has an inconsistent organizational structure, and flaws are evident. The response is somewhat sustained and has a minor drift in focus.</p> <p>The controlling/main idea is uneven and is not sufficiently sustained for the purpose, audience, and task. For example, in the third paragraph, the writer begins to discuss how the desert affects how animals live, but jumps to plant adaptation (“plants have roots that expand to get water underground”). This demonstrates a minor shift in focus. The response uses transitional strategies adequately, clarifying relationships between some of the ideas (“First”; “Due to the”; “On the optimistic side”). Although the introduction and conclusion are present, they are weak. (“Living creatures survive in all types of environments such as the sea, the forest and more.”; “Clearly living creatures survive in different environment.”). There is a progression of ideas related to the topic; however, the ideas are limited and it is sometimes unclear how they are connected; for example, “Did you know termites build 20 feet mounds of dirt and saliva.” is never connected to the idea that animals adapt to environments.</p>