



**English Language Arts  
Grade 7  
Fall 2006**

**Writing from Knowledge and Experience  
Released Item #31  
Scoring Guide**



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## WRITING FROM KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

### 31 WRITE ABOUT THE THEME: LEARNING A LESSON

Sometimes people learn valuable lessons from difficult experiences.

Do **ONLY ONE** of the following:

convince readers that they can take a difficult experience  
and turn it into something positive

**OR**

describe a time when you or someone you know had a difficult  
experience but learned a valuable lesson from it

**OR**

tell about a time when someone failed to learn a valuable lesson  
from a difficult experience

**OR**

write about the theme in your own way.

Use the checklist on the next page to help you with your response. The Notes/Planning space may be used for writing down and organizing your ideas.

Your response must be written in the lined spaces starting on page 9 of your **Answer Document**. Only the writing in your **Answer Document** will be scored. No extra sheets may be used.

### **PART 3A: CHECKLIST FOR WRITING FROM KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE**

**DIRECTIONS:**

Use this checklist to help you with your response. Your response must be written in the lined spaces starting on page 9 of your **Answer Document**.

**CHECKLIST:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Do I have a clear central idea that connects to the theme?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do I stay focused on the theme?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do I support my central idea with important details/examples?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do I need to take out details/examples that DO NOT support my central idea?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do I use a variety of words, phrases, and/or sentences?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have I spelled, punctuated, and capitalized my writing to help readers understand it?

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### **NOTES/PLANNING**

**Michigan Educational Assessment Program**  
**Writing from Knowledge and Experience**  
**Grades 3–8**  
**Holistic Score Point Descriptions**

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**Here is an explanation of what scorers think about as they score this writing:**

- 6** The writing is exceptionally clear and focused. Ideas and content are thoroughly developed with relevant details and examples where appropriate. The writer’s control over organization and the connections between ideas moves the reader smoothly and naturally through the text. The writer shows a mature command of language including precise word choice that results in a compelling piece of writing. Tight control over language use and mastery of writing conventions contribute to the effect of the response.
- 5** The writing is clear and focused. Ideas and content are well developed with relevant details and examples where appropriate. The writer’s control over organization and the connections between ideas effectively moves the reader through the text. The writer shows a command of language including precise word choice. The language is well controlled, and occasional lapses in writing conventions are hardly noticeable.
- 4** The writing is generally clear and focused. Ideas and content are developed with relevant details and examples where appropriate, although there may be some unevenness. The response is generally coherent, and its organization is functional. The writer’s command of language, including word choice, supports meaning. Lapses in writing conventions are not distracting.
- 3** The writing is somewhat clear and focused. Ideas and content are developed with limited or partially successful use of examples and details. There may be evidence of an organizational structure, but it may be artificial or ineffective. Incomplete mastery over writing conventions and language use may interfere with meaning some of the time. Vocabulary may be basic.
- 2** The writing is only occasionally clear and focused. Ideas and content are underdeveloped. There may be little evidence of organizational structure. Vocabulary may be limited. Limited control over writing conventions may make the writing difficult to understand.
- 1** The writing is generally unclear and unfocused. Ideas and content are not developed or connected. There may be no noticeable organizational structure. Lack of control over writing conventions may make the writing difficult to understand.

**Condition codes for unratable papers (zeroes):**

A – Off Topic

B – Written in a Language other than English or Illegible

C – Blank or Refusal to Respond

**Anchor Paper 1**

Some times people learn lessons.  
If a person gets in trouble they  
can learn a lesson. If you did  
something wrong and got in trouble  
for it you would have learned  
that lesson the hard way. That  
is a little about learning lessons.

**Anchor Paper 1  
Score Point 1**

The writing is generally unclear and unfocused. Content shows no connection or development (“If you did something wrong and got in trouble for it you would have learned that lesson the hard way.”), and there is no noticeable organizational structure.

**Anchor Paper 2**

I Learn a lesson when pepol. tell me something and they say they going to do something and they dont do it. Like when my mom or dad say something they always do it but when my uncle or ant and my gramama say something they never do it. And i learn my lesson about some one telling you something. Because they always dont mean it sometime. Dont always get happy or believe some body when they say something.

**Anchor Paper 2****Score Point 1**

The writing is generally unclear and unfocused. Ideas are not developed (“I Learn a Lesson when pepol tell me something and they say they going to do something and they don’t do it.”) and there is no noticeable organization of the text. Lack of control over writing conventions makes the writing difficult to understand.

**Anchor Paper 3**

Sometimes you can have a difficult time & still do well on the test/Assignment. When you know that you are doing to do bad don't give up just try again. As you get older the work will be harder. You know that you did something that was horrible/bad & it is going to be hard to tell your mom/dad about it because you don't want to lie.

**Anchor Paper 3  
Score Point 1**

The writing is generally unclear and unfocused. Ideas are not developed. (“Sometimes you can have a difficult time & still do well on the test / Assignment.”) The writing lacks a noticeable organizational structure, and the lack of control over writing conventions makes the writing difficult to understand.

**Anchor Paper 4**

A time whe I leabnd  
a valuble lesson from a, difficult exspiernce  
is when, I got ground for getting a  
bad report card. It was a difficult time  
because I was grounded for a month,  
I couldn't watch TV go on the computer  
or play playstation2 or any other  
video games.

A lesson I leabnd from that is  
if I don't get good grade I  
won't have a good job in life.

**Anchor Paper 4  
Score Point 2**

This response is only occasionally clear and focused. Ideas and content are underdeveloped. (“... if I don't get good grade I won't have a good job in life.”) There is a little evidence of organizational structure and limited linking of ideas. (“A lesson I learned from that is . . .”) Limited control over writing conventions sometimes makes the writing difficult to understand. (“A time whe I learned a valuable lesson from a, difficult exspiernce is when, I got ground . . .”)

**Anchor Paper 5**

Once my brother was riding his bike and I told him to wear his helmet, but he said "no". So he didn't listen and went of riding his bike. He was gone for a while. I gues he was with his friends. He likes to do tricks on his bike. Later when he came home he had cuts and scrapes on his legs and arms, he said he fell of his bike. I told him he was lucky he didn't hit his head on the ground without a helmet. After that he always wore his helmet.

**Anchor Paper 5**  
**Score Point 2**

The writing is occasionally clear and focused. Ideas are underdeveloped as the writer moves quickly through ideas. ("So he didn't listen and went of riding his bike. He was gone for a while. I gues he was with his friends. He likes to do tricks on his bike. Later when he came home . . .") There is little evidence of organizational structure. Control over writing conventions is limited.

**Anchor Paper 6**

I was asked to write about a time when I had a difficult experience and I learned a valuable lesson from it.

My difficult experience was when I was baby-sitting some kids. While I was baby-sitting them we were all outside, and one of the kids got stung by a bee. I wasn't sure what to do because she was allergic to bees if they stung her. So then I took her inside and I wasn't sure to call 911 because I didn't want to scare her mom. So I learned that I could of just called her mom and asked her what to do. Really all I needed to do was just put ice on the spot where she had got stung.

**Anchor Paper 6**  
**Score Point 2**

This response is only occasionally clear and focused. Ideas and content are underdeveloped. ("My difficult experience was when I was baby-sitting some kids.") There is a little evidence of organizational structure in the very brief opening and closing and limited linking of ideas. ("So I learned that I could of just called her mom and asked her what to do.") Control over writing conventions is limited.

**Anchor Paper 7**

Hi, I am R. One day I was walking to the Mall with my friends, M and when we got there we went straight into the Claire's Boutique. I saw a great pair of earrings and I just had to have them! So you know what I did, I took them right out of the store! The alarm went off and I got caught. We (the police and I) went down to the sheriff's station and they called up my parents. When my parents got there I was in so much trouble. So now I am grounded for a month, without a computer, tv, phone, cd player, and friends. I guess that's fair, at least my cousin is here to keep me company. I shure did learn a lesson!

**Anchor Paper 7**  
**Score Point 3**

The response is somewhat clear and focused. Ideas are developed with partially successful use of details. ("The alarm went off and I got caught. We [the police and I] went down to the sheriff's station and they called up my parents.") There is evidence of organizational structure, but it is ineffective. ("One day I was walking to the Mall with my friend . . .") Incomplete mastery over writing conventions and language sometimes interferes with meaning.

**Anchor Paper 8**

I had a difficult experience, but learned a valuable lesson from it. I learned that I should not ride my bike too fast. Riding my bike really fast made me break my tooth!

I was riding my bike on my street about three years ago. When I turned a corner, I lost control of my bike. I hit the ground hard. I felt like a baby who lost its favorite toy. When I got up, my mouth felt different. When I got home, I looked in the mirror. My front tooth was chipped!

After a couple of days, I went to the dentist. They had to put a fake tooth in. When they were putting the tooth in, it hurt really bad. I still have that fake tooth in my mouth.

I learned a valuable lesson. I should not ride my bike too fast. It was a difficult and painful experience. But, it taught a big lesson.

**Anchor Paper 8  
Score Point 3**

The response is somewhat clear and focused. Ideas are developed with partially successful use of details. ("When I turned the corner, I lost control of my bike. I hit the ground hard. I felt like a baby who lost its favorite toy.") There is evidence of organizational structure. ("I was riding my bike on my street about three years ago . . . After a couple of days . . .") Vocabulary is basic.

**Anchor Paper 9**

One time my friend had a popularity moment. She wanted to join the swimming team to be with the popular kids. So she join the swimming team but wasn't very good, so one day she was in the school pool running really fast back and forth in the water. Some popular kids walked by and thought she was actually swimming. The next day she was considered "cool" even though she really couldn't swim. She had tons of fake friends who only liked her because they thought she could swim.

She didn't know what to do. If she tells them then she's not cool anymore and if she doesn't tell them, then they found out, she's not cool. So she went along with it and on the day of the tournament she came in last place and was dumped by all the popular kids and their flunkies.

The lesson is to always be honest and true to yourself no matter what the outcome may be.

**Anchor Paper 9  
Score Point 3**

The response is somewhat clear and focused. ("The lesson is to always be honest and true to yourself no matter what the outcome may be.") Ideas and content are developed with a partially successful use of examples and details. ("So one day she was in the pool running really fast and back and forth in the water. Some popular kids walked by and thought she was actually swimming. The next day she was considered 'cool' . . .") There is evidence of organizational structure, but transitions are few and simple. ("One time my friend . . .") Vocabulary is basic.

**Anchor Paper 10**

Oh no! Someone has just asked you to try a cigarette. Now this is a difficult situation. You may think that there is no way out of this, and that it could never be turned into a positive situation. But you can turn this difficult experience, and turn it into something positive, here is how.

First, you may be being pressured into doing something you don't want to do, but one way you can turn this into a positive situation, is to simply say no. It may be hard, but you have to do it. To make yourself feel even better about saying no, walk away. That may just get the person to give you more respect. But, that is not the only way to say no.

Second, you can tell the person how bad it is to smoke, and how harmful it is to your health. Tell them how it can cause cancer, and other illnesses. Tell them how you can die 10 years earlier, than if you didn't smoke. Hopefully after that, you can get that person too, to not smoke.

Third, you have to stay cool, and try not to get intimidated. It will be easier to say no, if you do not panic. If you start to panic, the person will most likely make fun of you, and get you to smoke.

As you can see, you can get yourself out of difficult situations, as long as you stay cool, and support why you don't want to do it. It may be difficult, but you can do it.

**Anchor Paper 10  
Score Point 4**

The writing is generally clear and focused. (“But you can turn this difficult experience and turn it into something positive, here is how.”) Ideas and content are developed with relevant details where appropriate (“Second, you can tell the person how bad it is to smoke, and how harmful it is to your health. Tell them how it can cause cancer, and other illnesses.”), although there is some unevenness in the development. The response is generally coherent, and its organization is functional (“First . . . Second . . . Third . . . As you can see”). The writer’s command of language, including word choice, supports meaning. Lapses in writing conventions are not distracting.

**Anchor Paper 11**

Many people can take a negative situation & then learn a good lesson from it. I agree with this statement because I myself have done it.

I was about five years old when my babysitter was taking me to pick up her son. Well, while she was inside the school I decided I wanted to draw a picture. As you can guess she didn't have paper in her car. So I grabbed the pen & drew on the dash board. After I realized what I did I tried to cover it up with a Kleenex. Lucky for me she didn't notice it while we were on our way home.

As soon as we got home I thought that I was free. That is until my babysitter called. My mom asked me 3 times if I did it & I lied & told her "no". Finally I told my mom the truth & knew I was in

BI G trouble for lying. I was so right I was grounded for a week. I couldn't draw at all that 5 years old that's a big deal.

The next day I thought about what I did & realized that if I hadn't lied I could have avoided my punishment. All in All, I learned to always tell the truth because you get in less trouble.

-The End-

**Anchor Paper 11**  
**Score Point 4**

This response is generally clear and focused. (“Many people can take a negative situation & then learn a good lesson from it.”) Ideas and content are developed somewhat unevenly with relevant details. (“I decided I wanted to draw a picture. As you can guess she didn't have paper in her car. So I grabbed the pen & drew on the dash board.”) The response is generally coherent, and its organization is functional. (“I was about five years old . . . As soon as we got home . . .”) The writer's command of language and word choice supports meaning. Lapses in writing conventions are not distracting.

**Anchor Paper 12**

Difficult things are very common. Learning from them, is different

C was one of the most unliked in his school. Kids laughed and ridiculed him, and he could never fit in.

When his parents decided to let him go all alone to the store for some candy, he thought, "What could go wrong?" Unfortunately, alot.

When he walked in to the store, he saw J, the meanest bully ever, stuffing tons of merchandise in to his pockets. J turned to see C, and glared at him as he walked closer.

"You won't tell on me C" J said angrily, "instead, you'll take the blame, or you'll get a free 'Round to the ground' coupon! Got it? Oh yeah here take these!" and he shoved the merchandise in C's pockets, and pushed C outside.

C ran home, and never told anyone. Unfortunately, six weeks later, his mom sent him for milk.

C thought for a moment when he got to the milk. He hadn't been caught with the stuff before, so how about steal the milk? He was putting it in his jacket, when he was caught.

C was sent to Juvenile Hall for a week, and learned stealing was wrong. He also told about J who was also reported by other customers, and was freed for that. He now knows that the price for milk is cheaper than the one for stealing.

**Anchor Paper 12**  
**Score Point 4**

The writing is generally clear and focused. (*“Difficult things are very common. Learning from them, is different.”*) Ideas and content are developed with relevant details and examples where appropriate (*“When he walked in to the store, he saw J, the meanest bully ever, stuffing tons of merchandise in to his pockets.”*), but there is unevenness in the development. The response is generally coherent, and its organization is functional. (*“Unfortunately, six weeks later . . .”*) The writer’s command of language, including word choice, supports meaning. (*“instead, you’ll take the blame or you’ll get a free ‘Pound to the ground’ coupon!”*)

**Anchor Paper 13**

I am writing about a time when my family and I were on a family trip. I learned a valuable lesson. I am 13 years old and I still remember every detail.

About 7 years ago my family and I went on a family trip to Mall of America (don't remember where located) for summer shopping. Well, when I was little I loved to go up and down the escalators, and boy were there tons of them at Mall of America! It was like escalator dreamville. We were a few stores away from eating in the food court and since we were in such a big mall, we didn't know how to get to the food court. My mom stopped right beside an escalator to ask a clerk how to get to the food court, by now I was really hungry. Like I said, we were just beside an escalator and well, you know how much I loved escalators, right. So I step on to the moving blocks and there I go, my mom didn't even know. I went down, then up. When I came up

my mom wasn't there! At this point I'm on the verge of crying (I was 6 years old) and went numb. I didn't know what to do. There was an assistant, you know the people that keep buggin' you to try their lotion and stuff. I went over by her. Tapped her on the shoulder and asked, "Wheres my mommy!" The assistant looked at me and took my hand and started walking around the area of the mall I was in, asking me all these questions like, How, why, who, what does she look like. I took a quick glance over by this candle store called wicks, and there she was, my mom standing there, looking around very nervously. I ran, ran as fast as I could over to her. I was so happy that I found her! Then I seen my dad and two brothers running over and we all had a big hug.

I learned never, never go of with out my mom again, no matter how many escalaters ther are, I dont want to go through that again.

**Anchor Paper 13**  
**Score Point 5**

The writing is clear and focused. ("I learned never, never go of without my mom again, no matter how many escalaters there are.") Ideas and content are well developed, with details where appropriate. ("Well, when I was little I loved to go up and down the escalaters, and boy were there tons of them at Mall of America! . . . Like I said, we were just beside an escalator and well, you know how much I loved escatators, right.") Connections between ideas move the reader through the text. The writer shows a command of language, including precise word choice. ("It was like escalater dream ville.")

**Anchor Paper 14**

There has been a consistent problem for me and I've never known what to do about it. Whenever I had birthday parties, I hardly ever liked the gifts that I got. Let me tell you about my "difficult" experience, what I did about it, and the ever so valuable lesson I learned.

To begin, my "difficult" experience, or problem, was that I never liked my birthday presents. I'd always feel bad when someone gave me something I didn't like. But of course, I'd smile, pretend I love it, and thank them. Guilt swept over me often, and I desperately wanted to do something to prevent it.

In order to solve my problem, I needed a plan. One night I talked with my mom about my dilemma. She suggested that I write a letter to everyone asking them to not give me any gifts, but to donate money to the MakeaWish Foundation, a charity that grants the last wish of people who are going to die. I agreed with this foundation because people who are going to die shouldn't be forgotten about, they should get to live life to it's fullest, for it could very well be their last day.

For my next birthday party, I did just that,

and I raised a total of \$375. I felt extremely proud of myself, and received a letter of thanks from MakeAWish, along with a pin, a bookmark, and a sticker. The valuable lesson I learned was that it feels better to give than to get. That lesson will stick by my side for the rest of my life!

**Anchor Paper 14**  
**Score Point 5**

The response is clear and focused. (“Let me tell you about my ‘difficult’ experience, what I did about it, and the ever so valuable lesson I learned.”) Ideas and content are well developed with relevant details. (“She suggested that I write a letter to everyone asking them not to give me any gifts, but to donate money to the MakeAWish Foundation, a charity that grants the last wish of people who are going to die.”) Effective organization moves the reader through the text. (“To begin with . . . For my next birthday party . . .”) The writer shows a command of language including precise word choice. (“Guilt swept over me often”) The language is well controlled, and occasional lapses in writing conventions are hardly noticeable.

## Anchor Paper 15

One morning, a collage professor told his class that there was going to be a quiz the next day. He told them to study hard, and do their best. After class J one of the students went to ask the professor what they had to study exactly. On her way to the classroom, she bumped into their professor. When she got back up, the professor was gone, he vanished. There was an envelope where he disappeared that said in big bold letters QUIZ ANSWERS. When J returned to her dorm, her friend W asked where she was, and J told her exactly what happened. After dinner all of the five friends promised that they wouldn't open the envelope, and that they would return it to the professor tomorrow.

That night W, V, A, and S all had snuck out of their beds and crept into the kitchen, where the envelope was hidden. As they all were back to back, not knowing they were there, the lights switched on. They all jumped, and gave a little scream. J was standing there half asleep, staring at them, and sighed. J took the envelope and got a drink, then went back to bed. The next morning they all went back to class, and saw the other dorm covered in some goopy substance. J returned the quiz answers and said they hadn't opened it. When

they all sat down to take the quiz. W raised her hand and asked when they were going to take the quiz. The professor chuckled and said, "But you have already taken it."

"WHAT!" yelled the class.

"Then what is the quiz answer envelope for," asked A.

"Nothing, but the quiz, and to see if you would open it," he said while opening the envelope. A cloud of glitter came out.

"The test was to see which dorm could go without cheating," he said. "You five girls passed and the others as you can clearly see failed."

The difficult of this was to not open the envelope and be caught cheating. The valuable lesson is to not cheat, even if you know your going to fail.

**Anchor Paper 15**  
**Score Point 5**

The writing is clear and focused. ("The valuable lesson is to not cheat, even if you know your going to fail.") Ideas and content are well developed. ("... One of the students went to ask the professor what they had to study exactly. On her way to the classroom, she bumped into their professor. When she got back up, the professor was gone, he vanished. There was an envelope where he disappeared that said in big bold letters QUIZ ANSWERS.") The organization and connections between ideas are effective in moving the reader through the text. ("One morning . . . After class . . . That night") A command of language and precise word choice are evident in the writing. ("The professor chuckled . . . A cloud of glitter came out.") Lapses in writing conventions are hardly noticeable.

## Anchor Paper 16

"You'll have a great time, here at J high school. Trust me A, you will feel at home in no time." Principal P said as he showed A to her first hour classroom. A had just moved to Florida yesterday and the first thing she had to do was go to school. Her mother thought it would be a good way to make friends. A didn't. She wanted to be at home in Alabama with her friends and at her school.

"A ... A ... A ;"

"Oh, I'm here," A said looking up at Mrs. D, her third hour teacher. Mrs. D dumped a pile of homework on her desk. She said that she needed to catch up with the class because she started a week late. "Could this day get any worse," A thought.

At lunch A sat alone. She ate her peanut butter and jelly sandwich and was nibbling on a carrot when three girls walked up to her and sat down. They talked for a bit asking her questions about where she was from. When the lunch bell rang they asked her if she wanted to help them wash the principal's car after school. She said yes. "Maybe this school wouldn't be so bad after all. My mother was right, I already made friends." A thought as she walked back to her locker.

A and the three girls, C, S, and B meet in the parking lot. As A walked toward them she smelled rotten eggs. When she finally reached where they were standing she saw they were all holding egg cartons.

"What are the eggs for. I thought we were going to wash Mr. P's car?" Anna asked. The girls stared blankly at her then burst out in laughter. "You thought we were really going to wash his car! We just said that in case a teacher was listening. We're really going to egg his car!" B said. The three girls walked up to the blue Chevy and started chucking the eggs at the car.

"Oh, no! I can't back down now, they will think I'm uncool. But it's wrong! But I won't have any friends! But I could get in a lot of trouble. But it wouldn't be all me. They are practically forcing me to do it!" my thoughts were interrupted by S.

"Are you coming A?" Slowly I walked up next to them. I picked up an egg and joined them. Suddenly I went into a rage throwing the eggs violently. It felt good to get my anger out.

"Stop, A!" Principal P yelled from the door of the school building. By then C, S, and B, were long gone running down the street. A was standing there egg in hand in front of Mr. P's car.

A learned a valuable lesson that day. In fact she learned more than one. A learned that not only was it bad to egg Mr. P's car but it was worse to do it when she knew it was wrong. A learned that if she wants true friends she has to see that a true friend wouldn't wait her to do something that would get her in trouble. She also learned that being cool isn't everything and what she did was not cool. She knows now that she can't let peer pressure cause her to do stupid things. She needs to stand up for what's right. And finally A learned that you need to take responsibility for your actions. A will do that by serving her time grounded in detention and scraping egg of Mr. P's car for the rest of the year.

**Anchor Paper 16**  
**Score Point 6**

This compelling response is exceptionally clear and focused. (*"A learned a valuable lesson that day. In fact she learned more than one."*) Ideas and content are appropriately and thoroughly developed. (*"And finally A learned that you need to take responsibility for your actions. A will do that by serving her time grounded in detension and scraping egg of Mr. Ps car for the rest of the year."*) The writer's control over organization moves the reader smoothly and naturally through the text. (*"First thing she had to do was go to school . . . At lunch . . . And finally A learned"*) The writer shows a mature command of language including precise word choice. (*"The three girls walked up to the blue chevy and started chucking the eggs at the car."*) Control over language and mastery of writing conventions contribute to the effect of the response.