Introduction

This project was created to authentically assess first grade students on writing. I combined the Illinois State Early Elementary Writing Standards with the Valley View School District First Grade Writing Benchmarks to create what I believe to be the most important standards for first grade writers to meet. I then developed meaningful tasks to allow students multiple opportunities to demonstrate whether they have met each standard. I included a spread sheet to show which tasks directly align with each standard. The task descriptions provided in this resource are intended to be read aloud to students to explain each task when first introducing it. Within each task description I therefore provided the essential information students would need to know in order to successfully complete each task. I also included the list of criteria that will be assessed so students clearly understand the expectations for each task. Based upon these criteria I developed a rubric to more objectively assess student performance. This rubric, which more thoroughly explains each level of performance within each criterion, should be shared with students before beginning each task.
Standards

Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

Construct sentences with appropriate capitalization
Construct sentences with appropriate punctuation
Construct sentences with correct spelling of high frequency words
Construct sentences with appropriate grammar (complete sentences with subject, verb agreement)

Compose well-organized and coherent writing

Use prewriting strategies to generate ideas
Use prewriting strategies to organize ideas

Edit and revise writing for word choice
Edit and revise writing for organization

Communicate ideas in writing for a variety of purposes
Distinguish between fiction and nonfiction writing
Write fiction (e.g., stories)
Write nonfiction (e.g., narrative, descriptive, & expository)
Include a beginning, middle, and ending in written work
Task Descriptions

**Mystery Fiction**
It’s time to create a mystery. Make up a story with pretend characters who find themselves in the middle of a mystery. Use a “1, 2, 3” graphic organizer to plan the beginning, middle, and end of your story. Make sure your story has a mystery and includes details about what the characters do to try to solve the mystery. You get to decide if it gets solved in the end! Your story needs at least 5 sentences and should have a beginning, middle, and an end. I’m going to be looking at mechanics, content, and planning when I collect them.

**On My Way to School Fiction**
Pretend you had a crazy adventure on your way to school. What silly things did you see? Use a “1, 2, 3” graphic organizer to plan your beginning, middle, and end. Your story should have at least 5 sentences. I should be able to tell what your story is about just by reading your opening sentence and I should know by your ending sentence that the story is over. I’m going to be looking at mechanics, content, and planning when I collect them.

**Storybook Fiction**
Think of your favorite storybook character. Make up a story with that character and make sure your story has a problem and a solution. As you plan your story, you need to make several decisions and then include them as details to make your story complete. Will you be in the story with your favorite character? What is your setting? What is the problem and how do the characters in your story solve it? Use the “1, 2, 3” graphic organizer to plan the beginning, middle, and end of your story. You will be assessed on mechanics, content, and planning.

**Assembly Journal**
You are going to write in your journal about the “Go Green” Earth Week assembly. Use a web to plan your details. What did you learn? What did you like? What did you wish you could change? Make sure you have an introduction, details, and a conclusion as you tell about the assembly. You should write at least 5 sentences. I will be looking at mechanics, content, and planning when I collect it.

**My Faves Journal**
Write in your journal about one of your favorite things. Do you have a favorite toy or game? Is there a favorite season you really enjoy? Do you have a favorite place to go with your family or is there a holiday you absolutely love? Describe it and explain what you like about it. Make sure I can tell what your topic is just by reading your opening sentence. In your closing sentence tell me how this favorite thing makes you feel. You will be assessed on content.

**Weekend Journal**
You are going to write in your journal all about your weekend. Use a web to plan your details about places you went, games you played, and people you were with. What did you like about the weekend? What was the best part? What do you wish you could have
changed? As you plan your writing think of ways to make it more interesting by thinking of other words to use instead of “good” and “fun.” When you are done planning details, think of a specific opening to your writing that tells me something about the details you are going to write. You will be assessed on mechanics, content, and planning.

**Animal Report**
You are going to write a report about an animal you saw at the zoo. Use a web to plan your details. Write about any observations you made about what the animal was doing when you saw it. Describe how it looks and what it eats. Also include details about its habitat. When you are done planning your details, think of how to make sure your opening sentence gives me a clue about what your details will be about. Make sure you have a beginning, at least 3 details, and an ending. When I collect your writing I will be looking at mechanics, content, and planning.

**Butterfly Report**
You are going to write a report about the life cycle of a butterfly. Using a “1, 2, 3, 4” graphic organizer, write facts describing each of the 4 phases in a butterfly’s life cycle. Do not just list the sequence of phases from egg to butterfly, but describe what happens in each of the four phases. Then think of an opening sentence that gives me a preview of the four phases. I should know what your details will be about just by reading your opening sentence. Make sure you have a beginning, at least 1 detail about each of the 4 phases, and an ending. When I collect them I will be assessing mechanics, content, and planning.

**School Scrapbook**
Create a scrapbook of the school. Select 6-8 photographs taken around the school to use in your book. Include captions, written in complete sentences, to describe what is in each of the photographs. Make up a title for the cover of your book. Inside the front cover include an “about the author” section with several details about yourself. I will be looking at mechanics.

**How to Grow a Flower**
Teach me how to grow a flower. What materials do I need? What steps do I take to get my flower to grow? Using a “1, 2, 3, 4” graphic organizer, do not just list the steps, but describe what I need to do. Describe what the plant will look like at first and how it will change using our science word wall words. Make sure you have a beginning that tells me what you are going to write about, at least 4 details, and an ending. This is nonfiction teaching me how to grow a flower. This is not a story about a flower. I will be assessing your writing on mechanics, content, and planning. (**Note - the following words are on the science word wall during this assignment - stem, root, bulb, bud, leaf, flower**)  

**How to Make a Snack (Recipe)**
Teach me how to make your favorite healthy snack. What ingredients do I need? What steps do I take to make the snack? Use a “1, 2, 3, 4” graphic organizer to plan your steps. Do not just list the steps, but describe what I need to do in each step along the way. This is nonfiction teaching me how to prepare a snack. This is not a story about a time you
made the snack. Make sure before you start writing the steps on your final paper you have a beginning that tells me what snack you are writing about. After your introduction then write at least 3 details in sequence, and an ending. I will be assessing your writing on mechanics, content, and planning.

**Letter to Author**
Write a letter to your favorite author. You can write to one from our “Authors We Love” board if you’d like. In your beginning, tell why you are writing to him or her. Then tell which books or characters of his are special to you and explain why you feel that way. Make sure you write at least 4 sentences. I will be looking at mechanics when I collect your writing. (*Our “Authors We Love” board includes a list of all of the authors we study throughout year*)

**Letter to Henny Penny**
Write a letter to Henny Penny. In your beginning, tell her how you feel about her. Is she a good friend or not? Was it her fault her friends were eaten? Tell her what you think about her and her situation. Explain your feelings using evidence from your favorite of the many versions we compared. Make sure you write at least 4 sentences. I will be looking at mechanics when I assess your writing.

**Card for Classmate**
Make a card for one of your classmates. Using either the “I’m Proud” or “Thank You” stationary write a personalized note telling your classmate why you wanted to make the card for him/her. Write at least 3 sentences. You will be able to give the card to your friend later, but first I am going to collect it and look at your mechanics.

**Card for Relative**
Make a card for one of your family members. Using either the “I’m Proud” or “Thank You” stationary write a personalized note telling your relative why you wanted to make the card for him/her. Write at least 3 sentences. You will be able to give the card to your relative later, but first I am going to collect it and look at your mechanics.

**Community Helpers Critique**
Edit my essay on community helpers. I will be assessing you on your revisions.
1) Rearrange my sentences to put them in sequence (beg, mid, end).
2) Change my beginning and ending sentences to make my writing more interesting with better word choice.

**Long Ago Critique**
Edit my essay on schools from long ago. I will be assessing you on your revisions.
1) Rearrange my sentences to put them in sequence (beg, mid, end).
2) Change my beginning and ending sentences to make my writing more interesting with better word choice.
Solar System Critique
Edit my essay on the solar system. I will be assessing you on your revisions.
   1) Rearrange my sentences to put them in sequence (beg, mid, end).
   2) Change my beginning and ending sentences to make my writing more interesting with better word choice.

Portfolio Revision 1 (Fiction)
Rewrite a fiction piece from your growth portfolio (from last quarter). I am going to assess you on your revisions so you will need to turn in your first paper and your “new and improved” copy. Remember what we discussed about revisions.
   1) Rearrange your sentences if needed to put them in sequence (beg, mid, end).
   2) Change your beginning and ending sentences to make your writing more interesting with better word choice (think of Fancy Nancy!).

Portfolio Revision 2 (Nonfiction)
Rewrite a nonfiction piece from your growth portfolio (from last quarter). I am going to assess you on your revisions so you will need to turn in your first paper and your “new and improved” copy. Remember what we discussed about revisions.
   1) Rearrange your sentences if needed to put them in sequence (beg, mid, end).
   2) Change your beginning and ending sentences to make your writing more interesting with better word choice (think of Fancy Nancy!).
Criteria
Mechanics
Appropriate use of capitals
Appropriate use of punctuation
Appropriate grammar
Correct spelling of high frequency words

Content
Follows assigned genre (fiction/nonfiction)
Stays on topic
Includes beginning (introduction)
Includes middle (details)
Includes ending (conclusion)

Planning & Organizing
Uses prewriting strategies to generate ideas
Uses prewriting strategies to organize ideas

Revision
Revises for word choice
Revises for organization (logical sequence)
# Rubric

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanics</th>
<th>Mostly or Always (1)</th>
<th>Some but Inconsistent (½)</th>
<th>Rarely or Not Yet (0)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate use of capitals</td>
<td>Capsitals are used appropriately at least 75% of the time.</td>
<td>Capsitals are used appropriately at least 50% but less than 75% of the time.</td>
<td>Capsitals are used appropriately less than 50% of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate use of punctuation</td>
<td>Ending punctuation is used appropriately at least 75% of the time.</td>
<td>Ending punctuation is used appropriately at least 50% but less than 75% of the time.</td>
<td>Ending punctuation is used appropriately less than 50% of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate grammar</td>
<td>Subject/verb/tense agreement is used appropriately at least 75% of the time.</td>
<td>S/V/T agreement is used appropriately at least 50% but less than 75% of the time.</td>
<td>Subject/verb/tense agreement is used appropriately less than 50% of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct spelling of high frequency words</td>
<td>High frequency words are spelled correctly at least 75% of the time.</td>
<td>High frequency words are spelled correctly at least 50% but less than 75% of the time.</td>
<td>High frequency words are spelled correctly less than 50% of the time.</td>
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### Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes (1)</th>
<th>No (0)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follows assigned genre</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stays on topic ✗ 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes beginning (introduction)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes middle (details) ✗ 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Includes ending (conclusion)</td>
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### Planning

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fully (1)</th>
<th>Somewhat (½)</th>
<th>Not Yet (0)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses prewriting strategies to generate ideas</td>
<td>Focuses on one topic AND plans several details.</td>
<td>Focuses on one topic OR plans several details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses prewriting strategies to organize ideas</td>
<td>Plans a beginning, middle, AND an end</td>
<td>Plans 2 of the following: beginning, middle, end</td>
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### Revision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes (1)</th>
<th>No (0)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revises for word choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revises for organization (logical sequence)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>