



**ISASP** IOWA STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT of  
STUDENT PROGRESS

**ISASP Writing**  
Released Writing Prompt,  
Sample Student Essays, and  
Scoring Notes

**Grade 4**

## **ISASP Writing**

### Released Writing Prompt, Sample Student Essays, and Scoring Notes

This document contains the following information:

- 1) A released ISASP Writing prompt that was previously administered to students in the relevant grade as part of the ISASP Language/Writing test.
- 2) A copy of the scoring rubric that was used to guide scoring.
- 3) Five samples of actual student responses to the prompt that illustrate a range of scores.
- 4) For each writing sample, a set of scoring notes created at the time of scoring that provide articulations around score point decisions.

Released responses can be examined to better understand how well students are demonstrating writing skills with respect to the four traits that are evaluated as part of the ISASP Writing test. Responses can also be used to gain a better understanding of how ISASP is scored and the application of the rubric to the individual response.

## ISASP Writing Grade 4

### Sample Writing Prompt

A friend shared information about her favorite game with you. She thinks understanding the game will make people want to watch her team play. Read the information about basketball. Then, write an essay for your school's website. In your article, explain to readers both the ways that basketball today is different and the ways it is the same compared to when it was first played.

You should use the information you are given when you write your explanation. Remember to use your own words. Do not copy. You may also add your own ideas. The Writing Checklist will help you remember important parts of a piece of writing.

#### Writing Checklist

As you write, remember to:

- Have clear main ideas.
- Use details and examples from the information you are given to develop your writing. You may also add your own ideas.
- Organize your writing. Provide an opening and closing. Use paragraphs. Use linking words.
- Use strong words and clear sentences.
- Check your work for spelling and mistakes.

## **The Beginning of Basketball**

Dr. James Naismith, a teacher in Massachusetts, invented the game of basketball over 100 years ago. He needed a game his students could play inside during snowy winters.

Naismith started by hanging peach baskets off the balcony of the gym. They were ten feet off the floor. Teams would throw the ball into the other team's basket to earn a single point. After each point, players had to climb up and pull the ball out of the basket.

To put the ball back in play after a point, players jumped for it in the center of the court. This could be dangerous. People were sometimes hurt by players trying to gain control of the ball.

Naismith used soccer balls in his game. To move the ball down the floor, players on a team passed the ball to one another by throwing it. Players were not allowed to bounce the ball. They could not kick, slap, or punch the ball either.

The gym walls were used as boundaries. If a ball bounced off a wall, it was out of bounds. Sometimes players would run up the walls next to the basket so they could toss the ball in more easily. This was allowed as long as the ball did not touch the wall.

Naismith did not limit the number of players per team. His class often played with nine on each side. This was because there were eighteen students in the class. When the game first became popular to the public, some games were played with as many as fifty players on each team.

Naismith's original game was made up of two halves. Each half lasted fifteen minutes. The game ended in a tie if the teams had the same score at the end of the game.

## Current Basketball Rules

- Two teams compete. Each team has five players on the court.
- Players jump for the ball in the center of the court to start the game.
- Teams score by throwing a basketball through a hoop hanging ten feet above the ground. A ball thrown from closer to the hoop earns two points. A ball thrown from farther away earns three points.
- After one team scores, the ball is given to the other team.
- Players move the ball down the court by passing it or by bouncing it while they run (called *dribbling*).
- Games are divided into two halves or four quarters. Youth, high school, college, and professional games have different lengths.
- If the score is tied at the end of the game, the teams play overtime periods. This continues until one team has a higher score when a period is over.

**Grade 4 Informative/Explanatory Rubric**

	<b>Prompt Task</b>	<b>Development of Explanation</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Language Use</b>
<b>5</b>	Topic(s) and purpose of explanation are clear from the start. Successfully uses ample relevant evidence from provided texts to support the explanation.	Explains topic(s) completely. Effectively uses ample specific and relevant facts, definitions, details, examples, and/or other appropriate information in the explanation.	Has a clear, well-developed introduction. Provides a logical concluding statement or section. Organizes ideas effectively, clearly grouping related ideas together throughout the response. Consistently uses varied linking words and phrases to connect ideas.	Uses precise and varied word choice. Employs topic-specific vocabulary successfully. Uses well-controlled sentences that are varied in length and complexity.
<b>4</b>	Topic(s) and purpose of explanation are clear. Appropriately uses some evidence from provided texts to support the explanation.	Explains topic(s) adequately. Explanation includes some specific and relevant facts, definitions, details, examples, and/or other appropriate information.	Has a clear, somewhat developed introduction. Provides a clear concluding statement or section. Organizes ideas adequately, grouping related ideas together throughout the response. Consistently uses simple and/or repetitive linking words and phrases to connect ideas.	Uses mostly specific and somewhat varied word choice. Occasionally employs topic-specific vocabulary successfully. Demonstrates adequate control of sentences with some variety in length and structure.
<b>3</b>	Topic(s) and purpose of explanation are apparent within the response as a whole. Evidence from provided texts is used but is limited, overused, or misrepresented.	Explains topic(s) to a limited extent or the explanation is developed unevenly. Explanation includes few or only general facts, details, and examples. Some information may be repetitious or may not be clearly relevant.	Provides a basic introduction and basic concluding statement or section. Generally groups related ideas together, though parts of the response may be out of place. Sometimes uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas.	Uses general word choice. Attempts to employ topic-specific vocabulary may be unsuccessful. Demonstrates a little variety in sentence structure, although there may be a few long, uncontrolled sentences.

**Grade 4 Informative/Explanatory Rubric**

	<b>Prompt Task</b>	<b>Development of Explanation</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Language Use</b>
<b>2</b>	Topic(s) and purpose of explanation are unclear or otherwise confusing. Attempts to use evidence from provided texts are unsuccessful (text sections are lifted exactly, misunderstood, or not relevant to the ideas they are used in support of).	Explains topic(s) by providing some information but explanation is minimal and/or superficial, and parts may be repetitious or not relevant.	Has minimal evidence of an introduction and/or a concluding statement or section. Groups a few related ideas together within the response but overall demonstrates weak organization skills. Use of linking words and/or phrases to connect ideas lacks control and may cause confusion.	Uses simple and/or repetitive word choice. Uses repetitive sentence structure and/or long, uncontrolled sentences.
<b>1</b>	Topic(s) and purpose of explanation are never indicated. No attempt is made to use evidence from provided texts to support the explanation.	Development of topic(s) lacks explanation of ideas, only repeats ideas, or most ideas are not relevant. May demonstrate a lack of understanding of the purpose of explanatory writing.	Lacks an introduction and a concluding statement or section. Demonstrates no understanding of organization (or response may be too short to assess). Does not use linking words and/or phrases to connect ideas.	Uses awkward, incorrect, and/or confusing word choice and sentence structure.

## **ISASP Writing Grade 4**

### **Sample Essay 1**

over 100 years ago basketball was played with baskets tied to a balcony with 9 players on each team Dr. James Naismith needed a game for his students to play in the cold winter they played with soccer balls

## ISASP Writing Grade 4

### Sample Essay 1 – Scoring Notes

Trait	Score	Scoring Notes
<b>Prompt Task</b>	<b>1</b>	Although a few text references from the first passage are provided, the purpose of the explanation is not indicated.
<b>Development</b>	<b>1</b>	The response repeats several text ideas from the first passage ( <i>baskets tied to a balcony with 9 players on each team, they played with soccer balls</i> ), but no comparison or explanation is provided for them to be relevant.
<b>Organization</b>	<b>1</b>	An introduction and concluding statement are lacking. This very brief response demonstrates no understanding of organization as three statements are made without apparent connection to each other.
<b>Language Use</b>	<b>1</b>	The language has incorrect and confusing sentence structure since no indication of sentence integrity is given—no capitalization at the beginning of any sentence and no end punctuation at the end of any sentence. This response does not demonstrate any sentence control.

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### Sample Essay 2

These are the similarities and differences of Basketball and how it changed

Here are the following similarities...

They would try to get it in the basket. They threw the ball to get it inbounds. People still play the game.

Differences...

They used a soccer ball instead of basketball, the score is a lot higher than in the olden days, in the olden days you could not dribble the ball now you have to dribble the ball. They have better technology in the game now.

As you can see basketball has changed a lot over the years

THE END

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### Sample Essay 2 – Scoring Notes

Trait	Score	Scoring Notes
<b>Prompt Task</b>	<b>2</b>	While the purpose of the explanation is clear, some information from the provided texts is misunderstood ( <i>that in both games they tried to get it in the basket, that they threw the ball to get it inbounds</i> ). As a result, attempts to use evidence from the texts do not successfully support the explanation.
<b>Development</b>	<b>2</b>	This response identifies similarities and differences both from the texts and from the writer’s own knowledge ( <i>the score is a lot higher than in the olden days [and] They have beter technology in the game now</i> ). However, the ideas are merely listed and not developed. Overall, the explanation is minimal.
<b>Organization</b>	<b>2</b>	A brief introduction and conclusion frame the response, and ideas are grouped by similarities and differences; within each group, however, ideas are in no specific order ( <i>They used a soccer ball instead of basketball, the score is a lot higher than in the olden days, in the olden days you could not dribble</i> ). The use of linking words and phrases lacks control, as they simply introduce new details ( <i>Here are the following simmalarities, Differences</i> ).
<b>Language Use</b>	<b>2</b>	Word choices are simple ( <i>They threw the ball</i> ) and often repetitive ( <i>These are, Here are, They would, They used, They have</i> ). Sentence structures are repetitive ( <i>They would try to get it in the basket. They threw the ball to get it inbounds People still play the game</i> ).

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### Sample Essay 3

Dr. James Naismith invented the game of basketball. Although there were changes through the years he started basketball. It started with only 15 minutes in each half. Now there are 20 minutes in each half in collage basketball and 15 minutes in each quater in NBA basketball. At first one basket was only one point. Now if you make a basket inside of the 3 point line it is worth 2 points. If you make a basket outside of the 3 point line it is worth 3 points. There are also free throws that count as one point. They had ties back then but now they have over time. They had to play with a soccer ball back then but now they use an actual basketball. They could not bounce the ball but now you have to bounce the ball because if you take more then 2 steps with ou bouncing the ball you will be charged with a travel and the ball will go to the other team.

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### Sample Essay 3 – Scoring Notes

Trait	Score	Scoring Notes
<b>Prompt Task</b>	<b>3</b>	The topic and purpose of the explanation are apparent within the response as a whole. Evidence is used from the provided texts but is limited to support the explanation ( <i>They had ties back then but now they have overtime, They had to play with a soccer ball back then but now they use an actual basketball</i> ).
<b>Development</b>	<b>4</b>	The response identifies and adequately explains differences between games. The explanation includes relevant facts and some specific details and examples ( <i>At first one basket was only one point. Now if you make a basket inside of the 3 point line it is worth 2 points. If you make a basket outside of the 3 point line it is worth 3 points. There are also free throws that count as one point</i> ).
<b>Organization</b>	<b>3</b>	The response begins with a basic introduction ( <i>Dr. James Naismith invented the game of basketball, Although there were changes through the years he started basketball</i> ) that provides the framework for the discussion of differences. Ideas are grouped by how basketball was in the past and by how it is currently. A few linking words ( <i>Although, Now, At first, but</i> ) help to connect ideas; however, they are sometimes repetitive ( <i>Now, but now</i> ). The clear grouping of ideas, use of linking words, and an appropriate introductory statement results in a response meriting a score of 3, despite the lack of a concluding statement.
<b>Language Use</b>	<b>4</b>	Word choice is mostly specific and somewhat varied ( <i>They could not bounce the ball but now you have to bounce the ball because if you take more then 2 steps with ou bouncing the ball you will be charged with a travel and the ball will go to the other team</i> ). Sentence control is adequate with some variety in length and structure ( <i>If you make a basket outside of the 3 point line it is worth 3 points. There are also free throws that count as one point. They had ties back then but now they have overtime</i> ). Overall, the ideas are conveyed effectively through appropriate word choices and adequately controlled sentence structures.

## ISASP Writing Grade 4

### Sample Essay 4

#### BasketBall Before and Now

Basketball has changed over the years. It used to be just throwing a soccer ball into a peach basket. Now its way different! Now lets go back over 100 years to when Dr. James Naismith made a fun game for his students in Massachusetts. He never new it would be a very popular game in the 2000s. He had nine players per team and two teams. To start the game the students jumped for the ball and they sometimes got hurt. Once they got the ball they could not bounce it ,but they could pass the ball to a team member. The hoop(was really peach baskets) was ten feet high and once you score you had to climb up to get it. There was two halves for 15 minutes each. It is one point per basket. If it is tied you just keep it tied.

That was way back over a 100 years ago but we are in the present. Basketball is way different. There is two teams each have five players each. It is the same for how you start the game the jump for the ball. They can dribble(it is like bouncing the ball) and they play with a basketball. Two halves or four quarts. It depends on the age for how long the game is. It is two points per basket if you are close to the hoop and three for if you are far away. The hoop is still ten feet off the ground. If you are tied at the end you play another two minute. I hope you learned a lot about basketball before and how you play the game now.

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### Sample Essay 4 – Scoring Notes

Trait	Score	Scoring Notes
<b>Prompt Task</b>	<b>4</b>	The topic and purpose of this response are clear. Details and facts about the early rules of the game are presented in the first paragraph and details and facts about how the game is played now are presented in the second paragraph. The comparison is evident across the paragraphs, with some evidence from the text for similarities ( <i>The hoop . . . was ten feet high [and] The hoop is still ten feet off the ground</i> ) and differences ( <i>He had nine players per team and two teams [and] There is two teams each have five players</i> ). Overall, the explanation is clear and evidence from the text is used appropriately as support.
<b>Development</b>	<b>4</b>	Ideas about differences and similarities are adequately explained with some specific and relevant facts, details, and definitions ( <i>They can dribble (it is like bouncing the ball) and they play with a basketball. Two halves or four quarts. It depends on the age for how long the game is</i> ).
<b>Organization</b>	<b>4</b>	The response begins with a clear, somewhat developed introduction ( <i>Basketball has changed over the years. It used to be just throwing a soccer ball in a peach basket. Now its way different!</i> ) and ends with a less-developed but still clear conclusion ( <i>I hope you learned a lot about basketball before and how you play the game now</i> ). Ideas are grouped by how basketball was in the past and by how it is currently. Linking words are used within ( <i>Once they got the ball</i> ) and between paragraphs ( <i>. . . now we are in the present</i> ).
<b>Language Use</b>	<b>4</b>	Word choice is mostly topic-specific and somewhat varied ( <i>It is two points per basket if you are close to the hoop and three for if you are far away</i> ). Sentence control is adequate with some variety in length and structure ( <i>Now lets go back over 100 years to when Dr. James Naismith made a fun game for his students in Massachusetts. He never new it would be a very popular game in the 2000s. He had nine players per team and two teams</i> ).

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### Sample Essay 5

Many people play basketball. There have been many changes in basketball since it was first invented about 100 years ago; but there are also similarities between basketball then and now. One difference was that when basketball was first invented, there were as many as 50 people on some teams.

Dr. James Naismith who worked as a gym teacher, invented basketball as a game for his students to play when it was cold and snowy. Some of the rules Dr. Naismith used are still the same, such as that you try to get the ball in the other team's basket. One of the updated rules is that each team can only have 5 players per team playing at each time. Dr. Naismith usually had 9 players on each team. Once basketball had gained popularity, there were up to 50 people on some teams!

There have also been added safety precautions since it was first played. Originally, you ran to the center and tried to grab the ball after someone scored, in order to put it back in play. Some people got hurt using this method. Now, when a point is scored, the ball is given to the other team. Changing rules made it so less people got hurt.

The ball and basket have evolved through the years as well. Originally basketball was played with a soccer ball for the ball and peach baskets as the baskets. Now we use a basketball ball, and nets for the baskets.

Many basketball rules have changed, but some are still the same. Basketball games are usually played in two halves, just like they were when Dr. Naismith first invented it.

Basketball has been changed in many ways. Some rules are to enforce safety, where as others are just to make the game better. I for one am glad that some rules were changed...

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**Sample Essay 5 – Scoring Notes**

Trait	Score	Scoring Notes
<b>Prompt Task</b>	<b>5</b>	The topic and purpose of the explanation are clear from the start of the response ( <i>Many people play basketball. There have been many changes in basketball since it was first invnted about 100 years ago; but there are also similarities</i> ). Evidence from the text shows how basketball has evolved over the years and shows the connections between information in the two sources. As a result, evidence is ample and relevant and is used successfully to support the explanation about similarities and differences in how basketball was played and is now played.
<b>Development</b>	<b>5</b>	Similarities and differences in past and modern basketball are explained completely, with the effective use of ample specific facts, details, and examples ( <i>Some of the rules Dr. Naismith used are still the same, such as that you try to get the ball in the other team’s basket. One of the updated rules is that each team can only have 5 players per team</i> ). Ideas and information are all relevant to the explanation.
<b>Organization</b>	<b>5</b>	The introduction is clear and well developed, as is the logical conclusion. Ideas are grouped effectively by topic (e.g. rules, safety precautions), and varied linking words and phrases ( <i>There have also been added safety precautions, The ball and basket have evolved through the years as well</i> ) are used within and between sections to help sequence ideas throughout the response.
<b>Language Use</b>	<b>5</b>	Word choice is varied and precise ( <i>Dr. James Naismith who worked as a gym teacher, invented basketball as a game for his students to play when it was cold and snowy; Originally, you ran to the center and tried to grab the ball after someone scored, in order to put it back in play</i> ). Sentences are well-controlled and varied in length and complexity throughout the response.