



CUNY Assessment Test in Writing (CATW)

Passing Score Standard

Scorers generally group responses in three ranges. Scores in the lower, 1 & 2 point range represent weak responses to the assignment; scores in the mid-level, 3 & 4 point range represent mid-point responses, while scores in the upper, 5 & 6 point range represent responses that are very good and/or superior.

A total score is calculated for each student paper by adding the two rater scores in each domain and then adding across the domains. Although there are two language domains (Sentence and Word Choice, and Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics), they are counted as a composite single domain for the calculation of a student's total score. This total score is referred to as the student's total weighted score. In this way, we can provide detailed feedback to students and instructors for placement and instructional purposes, while at the same time aligning the CATW with the 4-domain grading of the CPE, and avoiding penalizing ESL students by having their writing double-weighted for language skills.

For example, with the first three domains being content domains and the last two being language domains, a student receiving a 4 in each domain by both raters would have a total weighted score of: $2(4+4) + 2(4+4) + 2(4+4) + (4+4) + (4+4) = 64$. You should notice that doubling the scores in the first three domains and adding the language domains without doubling is the mathematical equivalent of taking the average of the two language domain scores and adding it to the non-doubled scores of the first three domains.

The following table shows the correspondence between a rater score, a score interpretation, and a weighted total score based on the same performance level across all five domains (e.g., all 4's straight across).

Rater Score	Score Interpretation	Weighted Total
6	Superior performance with insight, creativeness	88-96
5	Effective performance with mastery and control	72-87
4	Consistent demonstration of competence, errors do not interfere with coherence	56-71
3	Uneven performance, a basic ability, but significant errors are apparent	40-55
2	Weak attempt, lapses into incoherency	24-39
1	Little or no competency	16-23

A passing score on the CATW is 56, which can be obtained by getting a combination of 3's and 4's in each of the scoring categories: $2(3+4) + 2(3+4) + 2(3+4) + (3+4) + (3+4) = 56$. Of course, there are other combinations of scores that will add up to a 56, but overall this cut score represents a performance where a student has at least one rater giving a four and the other rater giving no less than a three. This cut score has been validated in the field testing data both by independent faculty judgment and by actual course placements of the students participating in the field tests.

Here are some additional samples of student scores on the new writing test:

Passing scores:

$$2(4+4) + 2(4+4) + 2(4+4) + (4+4) + (4+4) = 64$$

$$2(4+4) + 2(4+4) + 2(4+4) + (3+3) + (3+3) = 60$$

$$2(4+4) + 2(4+3) + 2(4+3) + (3+3) + (3+3) = 56$$

$$2(3+3) + 2(3+3) + 2(4+4) + (4+4) + (4+4) = 56$$

Failing scores:

$$2(3+3) + 2(3+3) + 2(3+3) + (3+3) + (3+3) = 48$$

$$2(2+2) + 2(2+2) + 2(3+3) + (3+3) + (3+3) = 40$$

Although it is up to each college to set the standards for placement of failing students into high versus low developmental courses it is a reasonable assumption that this standard would be at the low end of the "3-point" range of 40-55, i.e., 40. This standard, of course, might be modified depending on the college's experience and accumulation of data from actual use of the test. As with the former writing assessment, colleges are encouraged to take into consideration a student's reading score when making these placement decisions.