Writing Strands Placement Guidelines

The approximate scope and sequence for Writing Strands is:

- **Beginning 1** in 5th grade
- **Beginning 2** in 6th grade
- **Intermediate 1** in 7th grade
- **Intermediate 2** in 8th grade
- **Advanced 1** in 9th grade
- **Advanced 2** in 10th grade

However, the curriculum is skills-based, so students should be placed in the level that most closely matches their writing skills.

Please use the following placement evaluation to determine which level is best for your students.

**Part 1**

Students should be able to complete all the tasks listed for that level before starting the level. If they cannot complete all the tasks, they need to be in a lower level. Students who cannot complete all the tasks for **Beginning 1** are not ready to start the curriculum.

Students starting **Beginning 1** should:
- Understand basic sentence conventions (beginning capitalization, ending punctuation, complete sentences)
- Know basic parts of speech—noun, verb, adjective, etc.
- Be able to comfortably write 2-3 sentences at a time
- Have basic reading comprehension skills
- Be able to perform basic analysis of characters in a reading passage

Students starting **Beginning 2** should:
- Understand basic sentence conventions (beginning capitalization, ending punctuation, complete sentences)
- Know basic parts of speech—noun, verb, adjective, etc.
- Be able to comfortably write 4-5 sentences at a time
- Have basic reading comprehension
- Be able to perform basic analysis of setting in a reading passage

Students starting **Intermediate 1** should:
- Understand basic sentence conventions (beginning capitalization, ending punctuation, complete sentences)
- Use sentence variety in writing (not all sentences start or are structured the same way)
- Be able to write a paragraph comfortably
- Understand how to organize paragraphs with a topic sentence
- Have basic reading comprehension skills
- Be able to perform basic analysis of plot in a reading passage
- Be able to work with abstract concepts like narrative voice

Students starting **Intermediate 2** should:
- Understand basic sentence conventions (beginning capitalization, ending punctuation, complete sentences)
- Use sentence variety in writing (not all sentences start or are structured the same way)
- Be able to write a couple of paragraphs comfortably
- Understand how to organize paragraphs with a topic sentence and effective transitions
- Have basic reading comprehension skills
- Be able to analyze a reading passage
- Be able to work with abstract concepts like narrative voice, theme, mood, and tone

Students starting **Advanced 1** should:
- Understand basic sentence conventions (beginning capitalization, ending punctuation, complete sentences)
- Use sentence variety in writing (not all sentences start or are structured the same way)
- Be able to write multiple paragraphs comfortably
- Be able to organize paragraphs well (with topic sentences and transitions)
- Be able to construct a written argument
- Be able to analyze a reading passage comfortably
- Be able to work with abstract concepts like narrative voice, figurative language, and rhetorical devices
- Be able to write a 1-page paper without research

Students starting **Advanced 2** should:
- Understand basic sentence conventions (beginning capitalization, ending punctuation, complete sentences)
- Use sentence variety in writing (not all sentences start or are structured the same way)
- Be able to write multiple paragraphs comfortably
- Be able to organize paragraphs well (with topic sentences and transitions)
- Be able to construct a written argument
- Be able to analyze a reading passage comfortably
- Be able to research
- Be comfortable working with abstract concepts
- Be able to write a 1–2 page paper with research
Part 2

If you are still unsure which level to place a student in, please have the student respond to the following writing prompt. (Or, alternately, you can use a recent sample of the student’s writing and evaluate it according to the guidelines below.)

Prompt: What do you think is the best quality for a person to have? What do you think is the worst quality for a person to have? Why did you select these qualities?

Students can take up to 20 minutes to complete the task.
Determining Placement:
Students are ready for **Beginning 1** if they can write at least 2–3 sentences in response and all their sentences are complete, with proper beginning capitalization and ending punctuation.

Students are ready for **Beginning 2** if they meet the requirements for **Beginning 1** but write 4–5 sentences.

Students are ready for **Intermediate 1** if they meet the requirements for **Beginning 2** but also wrote a paragraph (at least 4–6 sentences) with a topic sentence and used sentence variety (not all their sentences started the same way or were structured the same way.)

Students are ready for **Intermediate 2** if they meet the requirements for **Intermediate 1** but also used effective transitions.

Students are ready for either **Advanced 1** or **Advanced 2** if they meet the requirements for **Intermediate 2** but also used specific examples and clear reasoning to explain their answer. For these students, those who are comfortable with completing research assignments should be placed in **Advanced 2**, but all others should start with **Advanced 1**.