

Glossary

Working definitions of terms as used in the development of NYSESLAT Writing Performance Level Descriptions (PLDs) and Writing Rubrics.

Complexity	Definition
Predictable sentence	A sentence that is easily learned or memorized; student generally is unable to expand beyond the memorized statement (e.g., I don't like. I'm fine. My name is . . .)
Phrase	A group of words that does not include a subject and a verb, but may express a complete feeling, detail, idea, or thought
Simple sentence	Contains one subject and one verb; expresses a complete thought; may contain other elements such as a personal pronoun or a helping verb
Expanded sentence	Contains a subject and a verb; further developed through the use of a variety of grammatical structures (e.g., prepositional phrase, compound subject or predicate, adjective or adverb phrase, participial or infinitive phrase)
Compound sentence	Contains two independent clauses (each with a subject and a verb) joined by a coordinating conjunction (e.g., and, but, or, so, yet)
Complex sentence	Contains an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses joined by a subordinating conjunction (e.g., because, since, after, although, when) or a relative pronoun (e.g., that, who, or which)
Quality	Definition
Tier 1 words	The most basic words; rarely require direct instruction; words of everyday speech; often sight words/high-frequency words (e.g., book, run, numbers, colors)
Tier 2 words	Words that frequently occur across a variety of domains; used within mature language situations such as adult conversations and literature; may have multiple meanings and/or have multiple synonyms; used across a variety of subjects or environments (e.g., experiment, difference, exaggerate, masterpiece)
Tier 3 words	Used in specific content areas or domains; words that are central to building knowledge and conceptual understanding within the various academic domains and should be integral to instruction of content—examples include terms within the areas of science, mathematics, and literature (e.g., circulatory system, hypotenuse, protagonist)
Coherence	Definition
Basic	Occurring in a way that indicates a fundamental understanding of organizational components in writing (such as the use of an introduction; the development of a topic; the use of transitions; making a conclusion) but an inability to incorporate more than one of these
Limited	Occurring in a way that indicates a fundamental understanding of organizational components in writing (such as the use of an introduction; the development of a topic; the use of transitions; making a conclusion) and an ability to incorporate some of these