



**ISASP** IOWA STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT of  
STUDENT PROGRESS

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

**Grade 8**

## **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 8

### Sample Writing Prompt

Your teacher has the class work on a service project each year. The school has goals that service projects must fulfill.

Read the school goals for the service project. Also read the description of a proposed service project. Consider how well the proposed project fulfills the school goals for a service project. Then, write an essay for the teacher. Explain whether or not the proposed service project fulfills all the service project goals.

You should use details from 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:

- Provide clear main ideas.
- Use reasons, 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 and linking words.
- Use strong words, clear sentences, and language appropriate for your audience.
- Check your work for correct spelling and mistakes.

*This note from the teacher outlines the goals for the class service project.*

### **Our Goals**

As we choose what we will work on this year, we should keep in mind the main goals for the class service project. The service project should:

- Address a critical community issue
- Have both short-term and long-term positive effects on the community
- Allow students to practice skills they learn in school in a way that benefits others
- Help students learn to work with other people toward a shared goal
- Have students interact with diverse groups of people

## **Proposed Project: Create a Pollinator Garden**

Bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds are important parts of our ecosystem. Bees and butterflies serve as food supply for birds, bats, and insectivore animals, and hummingbirds provide valuable pest control by eating undesirable insects. More importantly, bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds are crucial pollinators. These tiny winged creatures are responsible for the pollination that allows plants to reproduce as well as to produce berries, fruits, and seeds. Whether they are crops on a farm or wild plants in the forest, these plants, berries, fruits, and seeds are what humans and animals rely on for food. Bees alone pollinate one-third of the total food humans eat. Yet habitat destruction is threatening the bee, butterfly, and hummingbird populations. To increase the number of pollinators in our geographic area, the class will build a garden to attract and sustain butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds.

The class will first need to consider the physical location of the garden. The garden could be on school grounds or in another public or private place (if permission were obtained). The class should think about what location is optimal for attracting butterflies, birds, and bees. Once a location is chosen, the class should survey the area to identify pollinator-friendly plants. The class garden should complement rather than duplicate plants in nearby gardens.

Next, the class will plan the garden. This will include researching the best plants to include. Butterflies require both nectar plants for food and host plants on which to lay eggs. Hummingbirds are most attracted to red, pink, and purple flowers. There are hundreds of bee species with tongues of different lengths. To ensure that all the types of bees are provided for, a variety of flower shapes will be necessary. Students also need to ensure the garden blooms from spring through fall. This requires careful selection of plant combinations. The arrangement in which flowers will be planted is also important. Clumps of a single variety measuring at least four feet in diameter will attract more bees than will single stems of any flower. In addition, the class will need to determine how to provide a water source. Insects drown easily in deep water. The availability of bee- and birdhouses and caterpillar winter habitats and the amount of sunshine the garden receives are also crucial for insect and bird survival and are therefore important considerations.

Finally, the class will create the garden. The class will produce the garden design, craft a plan for garden maintenance throughout the year, and generate a shopping list of plants and materials. The school will provide supervision and instruction for how to use tools. The students will perform the labor of putting in the garden.

**Grade 8 Informative/Explanatory Rubric**

	<b>Prompt Task</b>	<b>Development of Explanation</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Language Use</b>
<b>5</b>	Provides a context for the explanation. 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, using clear and appropriate paragraphing throughout the response. Consistently uses effective and varied transition words, phrases, and clauses within and between text sections.	Uses precise and varied word choice. Employs topic-specific vocabulary successfully. Effectively varies sentence length and complexity. Establishes and maintains a style appropriate for the designated audience and purpose throughout the explanation.
<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, using appropriate paragraphing. Consistently uses simple and/or repetitive transitions within and between sections of text.	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. Establishes a style appropriate for the designated audience and purpose and maintains it through most of the explanation.

**Grade 8 Informative/Explanatory Rubric**

	<b>Prompt Task</b>	<b>Development of Explanation</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Language Use</b>
<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. Groups related ideas together but the relationship among ideas may at times be unclear or parts of the explanation may seem out of place. Sometimes uses transitions.	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. Demonstrates some understanding of style appropriate for the designated audience and purpose but fails to maintain it throughout explanation.
<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 explanation 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 paragraphing skills. Use of transitions is not controlled and may cause confusion.	Uses simple and/or repetitive word choice. Uses repetitive sentence structure and/or long, uncontrolled sentences. Style is not appropriate for the designated audience and/or purpose and is sometimes distracting.
<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 paragraphing (or response may be too short to assess). Transitions are not used.	Uses awkward, incorrect, and/or confusing word choice and sentence structure. Style is inappropriate for the designated audience and/or purpose and is distracting.

## **ISASP Writing Grade 8**

### **Sample Essay 1**

in the first slid i red that a techer was righting gols for the students in slid 2 it was saying that bees and buterflis are helping us with food but in my apinyon bees are just a nuther bee but some bees are nice



## ISASP Writing Grade 8

### Sample Essay 1 – Scoring Notes

Trait	Score	Scoring Notes
<b>Prompt Task</b>	<b>1</b>	The topic and purpose are not indicated in this response. A very few details from the text present are present ( <i>i red that a techer was righting gols for the students in slid 2 it was saying that bees and buterflis are helping us with food</i> ), but the details are not used to support an explanation.
<b>Development</b>	<b>1</b>	The details provided lack an explanation, with only a few words about each text and then ending with the student’s opinion ( <i>in my apinyon bees are just a nuther bee but some bees are nice</i> ).
<b>Organization</b>	<b>1</b>	There is no introduction or conclusion present. The response is too brief to demonstrate understanding of paragraphing skills. There do not appear to be any transitions used within the response.
<b>Language Use</b>	<b>1</b>	The response contains awkward, confusing, and incorrect word choice ( <i>slid, red, righting, nuther</i> ), and is one long run-on sentence. Style is inappropriate for the purpose and audience.

## **ISASP Writing Grade 8**

### **Sample Essay 2**

This service project will definitely bring kids together to work together and bring wildlife and plantlife. The students will plan to make a garden for plants and small animals, these animals are responsible for reproduction and polination in plant life and wildlife. This service project sets goals for the community by bringinf together students and wokring together to make something everyone can enjoy and use.

## ISASP Writing Grade 8

### Sample Essay 2 – Scoring Notes

Trait	Score	Scoring Notes
<b>Prompt Task</b>	<b>2</b>	While the topic can be understood, the purpose of writing this response remains unclear ( <i>This service project will definitely bring kids together to work together and bring wildlife and plantlife</i> ). A few details from the provided text are used to support the explanation.
<b>Development</b>	<b>2</b>	There is minimal explanation provided for ideas presented in the response in support of the explanation ( <i>This service project sets goals for the community by bringinf together students and wokring together to make something everyone can enjoy and use</i> ).
<b>Organization</b>	<b>1</b>	The response demonstrates minimal evidence of an introduction and a concluding statement. Grouping of related ideas is not demonstrated in this brief response. Transitions are not used.
<b>Language Use</b>	<b>2</b>	Simple and repetitive word choice and sentences appear in this response alongside one run-on sentence ( <i>The students will plan to make a garden for plants and small animals, these animals are responsible for reproduction and polination in plant life and wildlife</i> ).

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### Sample Essay 3

The proposed service project fulfills all the service project goals. They will address a critical community issue that will have short term and long term effects. It will allow students to practice skills, it will help the learn to work with diverse groups of people toward a shared goal.

The community issue is that bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds are losing their habitats. This is a big issue because they pollinate crops that produce berries, fruits, and seeds. The short term effect would them regain their habitats and the long term effects would be the crops would lose the risk of not getting pollinated.

It would allow them to practice skills as well. They would be practicing their reasearching ability while finding what suits the bees, butterflies, and humming birds best. They would also be practicing their ability to work as a team and physical labor.

They would be working with diverse groups of people toward a shared goal too. They would need to research for their garden and they would need to talk to a lot of people to find out what they need. The whole class also has to work together to make sure that the garden comes out the best as possible.

The proposed service project was perfect. They checked off all of the goals. I wonder what the garden will look like.

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### Sample Essay 3 – Scoring Notes

Trait	Score	Scoring Notes
<b>Prompt Task</b>	<b>3</b>	While the name of the proposed service project is not mentioned in the response, the topic and purpose of this response are apparent as a whole ( <i>The proposed service project fulfills all the service project goals. They will address a critical community issue that will have short term and long term effects. It will allow students to practice skills, it will help the learn to work with diverse groups of people toward a shared goal</i> ). The provided text is used in the explanation, but use is limited because it largely focuses on the “Our Goals” text and uses less information and details from the other provided text.
<b>Development</b>	<b>3</b>	A few facts and general details are included in the explanation ( <i>The community issue is that bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds are losing their habitats</i> ). The information provided is explained to a limited extent ( <i>This is a big issue because they pollinate crops that produce berries, fruits, and seeds</i> ).
<b>Organization</b>	<b>2</b>	There is a basic introduction present in this response. The concluding section is minimal ( <i>The proposed service project was perfect. They checked off all of the goals. I wonder what the garden will look like</i> ). A few related ideas are grouped together. Transitions are not used throughout the response.
<b>Language Use</b>	<b>3</b>	General word choice is used in this response. Sentences demonstrate a little variety in structure ( <i>They would be working with diverse groups of people toward a shared goal too. They would need to research for their garden and they would need to talk to a lot of people to find out what they need</i> ). The style is somewhat appropriate for designated audience and purpose.

## ISASP Writing Grade 8

### Sample Essay 4

The proposed service project fulfills the school goals and would be a good choice for the students. This can be supported because since the project is about creating a pollinator garden, students will be outside and able to get a sense of more hands on crafting. Students will also be able to use logical thinking, scientific reasoning, and get teamwork experience throughout.

To start off, students will be taking part in making a pollinator garden which has a short-term and long-term impact on the surrounding communities. Gardens and vegetation will flourish having the effect of more food for the upcoming harvest season. Not only will humans get the benefits of the flourishing vegetation, but other organisms in the ecosystem will receive them as well. Birds will have more canopy cover to nest their young from predators, vegetarians will have plenty of green food to eat, and carnivores will be able to hunt meatier prey. From the tiniest amoeba to the top of the food chain, everyone will be affected short and long term.

To add on, students will have to use logical thinking, scientific reasoning, and do research to be able to locate the prime spot for the garden. Students would have to make sure that the necessary natural elements would work well with the flowers and plants they would be purchasing and planting. Other natural elements such as the organisms in the area would not be negatively affected or have a negative effect on the garden and the pollinators receiving. Only after being sure about the conditions would they be able to make a final decision and proceed with planting the garden.

Finally, students would be able to get hands on experience and work together as a team. While students are outside they will be able to observe the other organisms in their natural environment and how their behavior changes throughout the project. Students can get the joy of planting their own garden in the community and watching how the ecosystem plays out later on. Not only is it fun to get dirty and plant a garden, but they also can learn about different plants and their needed essentials. Students would also have to work together to make decisions and plan out how the garden would look. Having this experience will make the class closer and better at understanding one another and everyone's diversity.

In conclusion, this project meets our goals and would be the smartest choice for students this year. The project would allow short-term and long-term effects to take place for years to come, students can get logical thinking, scientific reasoning, and vegetation knowledge skills along with hands on and teamwork. Finally students can feel good about the work they put into the project and how the outcome turned out.

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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 explanation are clear in this response ( <i>The proposed service project fulfills the school goals and would be a good choice for the students</i> ). Some evidence from the provided text is appropriately used ( <i>To start off, students will be taking part in making a pollinator garden which has a short-term and long-term impact on the surrounding communities. Gardens and vegetation will flourish having the effect of more food for the upcoming harvest season. Not only will humans get the benefits of the flourishing vegetation, but other organisms in the ecosystem will receive them as well</i> ).
<b>Development</b>	<b>4</b>	The topic is adequately explained. Some specific and relevant facts and details from the provided text and the student's own knowledge are included in the explanation ( <i>To add on, students will have to use logical thinking, scientific reasoning, and do research to be able to locate the prime spot for the garden. Students would have to make sure that the necessary natural elements would work well with the flowers and plants they would be purchasing and planting. Other natural elements such as the organisms in the area would not be negatively affected or have a negative effect on the garden and the pollinators receiving</i> ).
<b>Organization</b>	<b>4</b>	There is a somewhat developed introduction ( <i>The proposed service project fulfills the school goals and would be a good choice for the students. This can be supported because since the project is about creating a pollinator garden, students will be outside and able to get a sense of more hands on crafting. Students will also be able to use logical thinking, scientific reasoning, and get teamwork experience throughout</i> ). The concluding section is clear. Appropriate paragraphing is used to organize ideas adequately. Transitions are used to connect ideas throughout the response ( <i>To start off, To add on, Finally, While, Not only, In conclusion</i> ).
<b>Language Use</b>	<b>4</b>	Some specific word choice is used ( <i>logical thinking, scientific reasoning, vegetation, flourish, canopy cover, amoeba</i> ). Sentences are controlled with some variety in structure and length. Topic-specific vocabulary is employed successfully. Style is appropriate for the purpose and designated audience.

## ISASP Writing Grade 8

### Sample Essay 5

Creating a pollinator garden for bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies addresses the goals of the service project in every aspect, addressing a community issue, short-term and long-term positive impacts on the community, allows students to practice skills in school to benefit others, helps students work together with others, and it does have students interact with diverse groups of people. In this way, this service project should be accepted and granted permission, as it fulfills all of these requirements.

First, the pollinator garden will address a critical community issue by allowing pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, to let flowers, berries, fruits, and seeds to grow. These seeds are important for farmers, as they rely on the reproduction of their crop, forests, to improve the amount of trees in them, and people, who rely on berries and fruits for food. In this community, since pollinators are becoming more and more threatened, this is a major issue. Having this garden would solve that problem and allow farmland to be better, forests to be better, and finally humans to be better. Even though this may seem like a small token, this garden could provide enough habitat for pollinators to be able to do the work that helps humans have a better life, improving a critical issue in our community.

In addition, as stated above, the garden will have many positive impacts on the community, improving its status. In the short run, a new garden in the community could brighten the spirits of people who are usually depressed and feel lonely. Just a bit of color in the world could help many people to have some mental benefits. In the long run, pollinators could use this garden to be able to do their job, to pollinate. Pollinating would help the community by allowing many types of flowers, seeds, berries, and fruits to grow which would help not only people in general, but farmers, the forests, and the amount of food humans have. These benefits represent how this service project will help the community in both long-term and short-term ways.

Furthermore, the service project also involves students using what they learned in school to help others. By learning about bees and other pollinators at school and how they benefit humans and ecosystems, students will be able to apply that knowledge into building this pollinator garden that will help pollinators do exactly what they need to do in order to sustain the earth and to help humans. This would benefit the environment, and also other people, by allowing the reproduction of more food in the area. This means that creating this garden will put our knowledge from school into action, which will benefit others and the community.



Finally, the garden will allow students to work together towards a shared goal and also to interact with diverse groups of people. This is true because this garden will not take only one person, everyone will have to be involved to make sure that the right types of plants are planted and the garden is set up the right way. The students will have to probably split up into teams, one of them finds the location, the others find the right plants, the others find the correct spots to plant the plants, etc. In this way, students will have to work together toward a common goal, to build this garden that will help the community. Since all of the students are performing the labor, they are working towards this common goal and will develop better teamwork skills. The students will also have to work with other people including the school, a private organization if they want to use land, and some companies that they will have to buy the garden materials from. This will allow the students to be able to meet with a diverse groups of people in order to get this garden completed, and they may have to work with other students that they do not normally work with, which would increase the amount of diversity of their groups.

In conclusion, this pollinator service project will reflect all of the goals that are provided, and will allow students to work together, help the community, use their knowledge from school, and work together toward a common goal.

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### Sample Essay 5 – Scoring Notes

Trait	Score	Scoring Notes
<b>Prompt Task</b>	<b>5</b>	The topic and purpose are clear from the start ( <i>Creating a pollinator garden for bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies addresses the goals of the service project in every aspect, addressing a community issue, short-term and long-term positive impacts on the community, allows students to practice skills in school to benefit others, helps students work together with others, and it does have students interact with diverse groups of people. In this way, this service project should be accepted and granted permission, as it fulfills all of these requirements</i> ). Ample relevant information from the provided text is used effectively within the explanation.
<b>Development</b>	<b>5</b>	The topic is completely explained with ample specific facts, definitions, and details ( <i>First, the pollinator garden will address a critical community issue by allowing pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, to let flowers, berries, fruits, and seeds to grow. These seeds are important for farmers, as they rely on the reproduction of their crop, forests, to improve the amount of trees in them, and people, who rely on berries and fruits for food. In this community, since pollinators are becoming more and more threatened, this is a major issue. Having this garden would solve that problem and allow farmland to be better, forests to be better, and finally humans to be better</i> ).
<b>Organization</b>	<b>5</b>	The response has a clear introduction and a logical concluding section ( <i>In conclusion, this pollinator service project will reflect all of the goals that are provided, and will allow students to work together, help the community, use their knowledge from school, and work together toward a common goal</i> ). Clear paragraphing is used to group related ideas. Varied transitions are consistently used throughout the response.
<b>Language Use</b>	<b>5</b>	Some precise word choice is used in this response ( <i>granted permission, farmland, small token, brighten, spirits, depressed, sustain</i> ). Word choice is varied. Topic-specific vocabulary is employed successfully. Sentences are controlled with variety in structure. Established style is appropriate for the purpose and the designated audience and is maintained throughout the response.