

the condition of education 2008



INDICATOR 14

Writing Performance of Students in Grades 8 and 12

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2008*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2008*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008031>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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Academic Outcomes

Writing Performance of Students in Grades 8 and 12

Average writing scores of 8th- and 12th-graders were higher in 2007 than in previous years.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has assessed trends in the writing abilities of students in grades 8 and 12 in both public and private schools since 1998. Reported on a scale of 0 to 300, average writing scores of 8th- and 12th-graders were higher in 2007 than in either 1998 or 2002 (see supplemental table 14-1). Eighth-graders scored 3 points higher in 2007 than in 2002 and 6 points higher than in 1998. The average writing score for 12th-graders was 5 points higher in 2007 than in 2002 and 3 points higher than in 1998.

The percentage of 8th-graders performing at or above the *Basic* achievement level was higher in 2007 than in 1998 (88 vs. 84 percent), as was the percentage performing at or above the *Proficient* achievement level (33 vs. 27 percent).¹ The percentage of students at or above the *Basic* achievement level was also higher in 2007 than in 2002, but no measurable difference was detected in the percentage of students at or above *Proficient* between these two years. The percentage of 12th-graders performing at or above *Basic* increased from 74 percent in 2002 to 82 percent in 2007 and was higher in 2007 than

in 1998. There was no measurable difference in the percentage performing at or above *Proficient* between 2002 and 2007, but there has been a 2 percentage point increase since 1998.

For all assessment years, females at each grade level outscored their male counterparts (see supplemental table 14-2). For example, 12th-grade females scored 18 points higher than their male peers in 2007. White, Black, and Hispanic 8th-graders had higher average scores in 2007 than in 1998 and 2002. Asian/Pacific Islander 8th-grade students scored higher in 2007 than in 2002, but the apparent change was not measurably different from 1998. Overall gains made by 12th-graders in 2007 were not consistent across all racial/ethnic groups. White students scored higher in 2007 than in either previous assessment year. Black and Asian/Pacific Islander students scored higher in 2007 than in 2002, but apparent differences were not measurably different from 1998. Writing scores in 2007 for Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native 12th-graders were not measurably different from those in previous assessments. For all assessment years, White students at each grade level outscored their Black and Hispanic peers.

¹The percentage of students at or above *Proficient* includes students at the *Advanced* achievement level. Similarly, the percentage of students at or above *Basic* includes students at the *Basic*, those at the *Proficient*, and those at the *Advanced* achievement levels.

NOTE: The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessed the writing abilities of students in grades 8 and 12 in public and private schools in 1998, 2002, and 2007. As a result of larger 8th-grade sample sizes beginning in 2002, smaller differences can be found to be statistically significant than would have been detected with the smaller samples sizes used in 1998 or in the 12th-grade samples. NAEP writing scores range from 0 to 300. The achievement levels define what students should know and be able to do: *Basic* indicates partial mastery of fundamental skills; *Proficient* indicates demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter; and *Advanced* indicates superior performance. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. See supplemental note 4 for more information on NAEP.

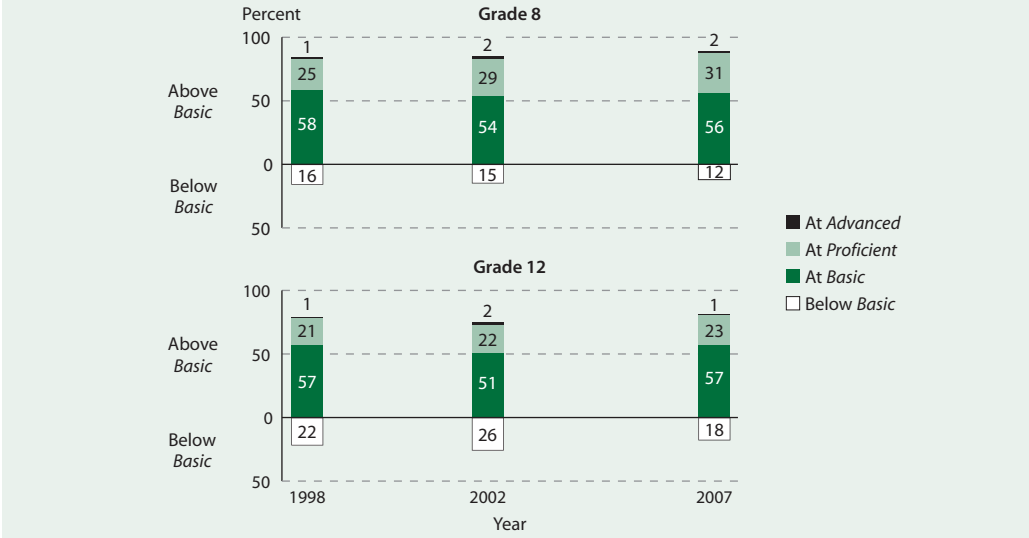
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 Writing Assessments, NAEP Data Explorer.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Notes 1, 4
Supplemental Tables 14-1, 14-2



WRITING PERFORMANCE: Percentage distribution of students across NAEP writing achievement levels, by grade: 1998, 2002, and 2007



Writing Performance of Students in Grades 8 and 12

Table 14-1. Average writing scale scores and percentage of students at each achievement level, by grade: 1998, 2002, and 2007

Grade, scale score, and achievement level	1998	2002	2007
Grade 8			
Average scale score	150	153	156
Percentage at each achievement level			
Below <i>Basic</i>	16	15	12
At or above <i>Basic</i>	84	85	88
At or above <i>Proficient</i>	27	31	33
At <i>Advanced</i>	1	2	2
Grade 12			
Average scale score	150	148	153
Percentage at each achievement level			
Below <i>Basic</i>	22	26	18
At or above <i>Basic</i>	78	74	82
At or above <i>Proficient</i>	22	24	24
At <i>Advanced</i>	1	2	1

NOTE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing scores range from 0 to 300. The achievement levels define what students should know and be able to do: *Basic* indicates partial mastery of fundamental skills; *Proficient* indicates demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter; and *Advanced* indicates superior performance.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 Writing Assessments, NAEP Data Explorer.

Writing Performance of Students in Grades 8 and 12

Table 14-2. Average writing scale scores, by grade and selected student and school characteristics: 1998, 2002, and 2007

School or student characteristic	Grade 8			Grade 12		
	1998	2002	2007	1998	2002	2007
Total	150	153	156	150	148	153
Sex						
Male	140	143	146	140	136	144
Female	160	164	166	159	160	162
Race/ethnicity ¹						
White	157	161	164	155	154	159
Black	131	135	141	134	130	137
Hispanic	131	137	142	136	136	139
Asian/Pacific Islander	154	161	167	150	151	160
American Indian/Alaska Native	130	137	143	129	‡	140
Parents' education						
Did not finish high school	—	136	139	—	129	134
Graduated from high school	—	144	147	—	139	141
Some education after high school	—	156	158	—	149	152
Graduated from college	—	165	166	—	158	163
Locale ²						
City	—	—	151	—	—	152
Suburban	—	—	161	—	—	156
Town	—	—	153	—	—	150
Rural	—	—	155	—	—	151
Free or reduced-price lunch						
Eligible	132	136	141	133	132	138
Not eligible	157	162	164	152	152	157
Information not available	157	161	170	155	156	165

— Not available.

‡ Reporting standards not met.

¹ Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

² Adoption of the new urban-centric locale classification codes does not permit comparison across assessment years.

NOTE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing scores range from 0 to 300. The achievement levels define what students should know and be able to do: *Basic* indicates partial mastery of fundamental skills; *Proficient* indicates demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter; and *Advanced* indicates superior performance.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 Writing Assessments, NAEP Data Explorer.

Writing Performance of Students in Grades 8 and 12

Table S14-1. Standard errors for the average writing scale scores and percentage of students at each achievement level, by grade: 1998, 2002, and 2007

Grade, scale score, and achievement level	1998	2002	2007
Grade 8			
Average scale score	0.6	0.5	0.2
Percentage at each achievement level			
Below <i>Basic</i>	0.5	0.4	0.2
At or above <i>Basic</i>	0.5	0.4	0.2
At or above <i>Proficient</i>	0.7	0.6	0.3
At <i>Advanced</i>	0.1	0.1	0.1
Grade 12			
Average scale score	0.7	0.8	0.6
Percentage at each achievement level			
Below <i>Basic</i>	0.7	0.7	0.5
At or above <i>Basic</i>	0.7	0.7	0.5
At or above <i>Proficient</i>	0.7	0.8	0.6
At <i>Advanced</i>	0.1	0.2	0.1

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 Writing Assessments, NAEP Data Explorer.

Writing Performance of Students in Grades 8 and 12

Table S14-2. Standard errors for the average writing scale scores, by grade and selected student and school characteristics: 1998, 2002, and 2007

Student or school characteristic	Grade 8			Grade 12		
	1998	2002	2007	1998	2002	2007
Total	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.7	0.8	0.6
Sex						
Male	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.8	0.6
Female	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.9	0.7
Race/ethnicity						
White	0.8	0.6	0.2	0.8	0.8	0.6
Black	0.9	0.7	0.4	1.4	1.3	1.0
Hispanic	1.6	0.9	0.6	1.3	1.5	1.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.7	2.0	1.2	4.3	2.4	1.7
American Indian/Alaska Native	5.7	2.9	1.3	4.1	†	3.9
Parents' education						
Did not finish high school	†	0.9	0.6	†	1.7	1.0
Graduated from high school	†	0.6	0.5	†	1.1	0.8
Some education after high school	†	0.6	0.4	†	0.9	0.7
Graduated from college	†	0.6	0.3	†	1.0	0.6
Locale						
City	†	†	0.5	†	†	1.2
Suburban	†	†	0.5	†	†	1.0
Town	†	†	0.6	†	†	1.0
Rural	†	†	0.5	†	†	1.2
Free or reduced-price lunch						
Eligible	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.9	1.4	0.7
Not eligible	0.8	0.7	0.3	0.9	1.0	0.6
Information not available	1.7	1.5	1.2	1.6	1.5	1.5

† Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998, 2002, and 2007 Writing Assessments, NAEP Data Explorer.