

Title: A Qualitative Analysis of Deaf Secondary Writers' Strengths and Needs

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Wolbers, K., Dostal, H., Spurgin, K. & Martinez, E. (2026). A qualitative analysis of deaf secondary writers' strengths and needs. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/jdsade/enag013>

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Acknowledgements: The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R324A170086 to the University of Tennessee. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.

A Qualitative Analysis of Deaf Secondary Writers' Strengths and Needs

Abstract

This qualitative study examines the narrative and argumentative writing of 75 deaf high school students from the United States through thematic analysis. Writing samples were evaluated on six traits: idea development, organization, style, sentence fluency, word choice, and conventions. A representative set of 85 samples was selected to reflect a range of writing quality, including both low- and high-scoring pieces, to capture the diversity of strengths and needs. Findings revealed outcomes ranging from emerging writing skills to genre-specific writing aligned with grade-level expectations. Lower-scoring responses were often brief, loosely organized, and contained unfinished or unidentifiable words with limited sentence variety. In contrast, higher-scoring samples demonstrated clearer purpose and organization, evidence of knowledge-transforming strategies, and stronger control of sentence structure, using varied sentence types to promote fluency of expression. The study underscores the need for adaptable writing instruction that addresses a range of writing needs that present in secondary classrooms.

A Qualitative Analysis of Deaf Secondary Writers' Strengths and Needs Research Context

Analyzing the writing of deaf students is critical for setting learning objectives, developing effective instructional practices, and fostering meaningful academic growth. A student's writing provides a window into how they engage in genre-specific meaning-making. For deaf students, these insights are particularly important and unique, as their writing often reflects the complex linguistic resources that make up their unique idiolects. Writing is conceptualized not as a singular linguistic skill, but as a multimodal semiotic practice shaped by access, identity, and language ecologies. This study is guided by a sociocultural and translanguaging framework (García & Kleifgen, 2020; García & Kleyn, 2016; Holcomb et al., in press; Wolbers, Holcomb, et al., 2023), which functions as an interpretive lens for understanding how deaf students draw on heterogeneous linguistic and modal repertoires for meaning-making, rather than as an analytic method or instructional model. From this perspective, students' multilingual and multimodal practices are positioned as assets, shaping how we interpret their written narratives and arguments and how we connect descriptive findings to pedagogical and curricular implications.

Through years of collaborative research in various deaf education settings, educators and researchers have gained insights into evaluating the writing skills of deaf students (Dostal et al., 2021; Holcomb et al., 2023; Kilpatrick & Wolbers, 2020) and implementing writing instruction in linguistically responsive ways (Dostal et al., 2019; Wolbers, Holcomb et al., 2023). This body of research has also shaped effective professional development to support deaf education teachers in their writing instruction (Wolbers, Dostal, Graham et al., 2023; Wolbers et al., 2016). Consequently, deaf education teachers are now better prepared, and this leads to positive outcomes in their students' writing and language skills at the elementary and middle school

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levels (Wolbers et al., 2015, 2020, 2022). [For a review of sign multilingual intervention studies with deaf students in elementary and middle grade contexts, see Wolbers et al. (2026).] However, much remains unexplored at the secondary level.

We are conducting the second of two analyses that examined the writing samples of 75 deaf students in grades 9-12 in the United States across narrative and argumentative writing tasks. In the first study (Dostal et al., 2025), we quantitatively documented the central tendency and variability of students' writing performance and the influence of expressive language proficiency and early language exposure. This previous study applied an automated scoring system, whereby students' scores across genres for traits such as idea development, organization, style, and conventions were generated. Students' mean score for the argumentative genre with sources task was similar to the mean score for the narrative genre prompt. This outcome differs from previous research studies with younger deaf writers, which have shown narrative skills are stronger (Wolbers et al., 2022, 2024a). Along with writing samples, we collected demographic information on students' expressive language skills and language backgrounds, including age of American Sign Language (ASL) exposure, ASL skills, and spoken English skills. While not statistically significant, writing scores increased with earlier exposure to ASL. Regarding expressive language proficiencies, students who were rated by their teachers as being able to *express most anything* in ASL or spoken English scored statistically significantly higher in their argumentative with source material writing than those who could *express many things* in either ASL or spoken English. The results of this study highlight that a strong foundation in language is needed to address the demands of complex writing tasks. The low range in scores across students in the sample, however, calls attention to the complexities of writing instruction with secondary deaf learners that requires further investigation. The current study, with its focus on qualitatively

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analyzing secondary students' writing to identify their strengths and needs, is a necessary step in developing a responsive and effective curriculum.

Types of Writing

In the literature, high school writing instruction is positioned as a bridge between grade school and the next level of writing in postsecondary education (Fanetti et al., 2010).

Argumentative writing is a genre that receives significant attention in high school due to the need for critical thinking skills such as evaluating the cost or benefit of an argument or counterargument, which prepares individuals for scientific arguments practiced in many disciplines (Nussbaum, 2021). Constructing a strong argument requires students to understand structure, purpose, and rhetoric, which can be linguistically challenging for many students (Ross et al., 2020). Furthermore, the argumentative genre often incorporates features from other genres, such as narrative traits to create engaging warrants or rebuttals (Surrain et al., 2019) or informational writing to support claims (Dixon & Murphy, 2019). While argumentative writing and other hybrid genres are a primary focus for secondary writing instruction, narrative writing remains a priority for teachers of deaf students, particularly when their students' expressive and written language skills are significantly delayed (Wolbers, Dostal, & Holcomb, 2023). For secondary-level students, writing is typically linked to academic tasks and purposes. However, for deaf students, writing serves additional purposes: it allows them to communicate with people in their daily lives and is hypothesized to support their reading development (Dostal & Graham, 2020; Skyer, 2023; Wolbers et al., 2025). While many deaf students write both pragmatic communication and academic discourse, those who have experienced language deprivation often struggle to communicate in writing. For secondary students who are in the early stages of writing, their teachers dedicate focus and time to teaching them personal narrative and functional

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writing skills (Wolbers, Dostal & Holcomb, 2023). Personal narrative writing allows a writer to share experiences with a communication partner that can serve both academic and functional purposes. For example, an anecdote about one's experience with inaccessibility at a local restaurant might provide a compelling example in an argumentative appeal, while a short narrative about a personal experience could help inform a supervisor about an upcoming absence. Storytelling is a natural part of early language development (Miller et al., 1990), and deaf students' composition of personal narratives relies on their language foundation in ASL or spoken English (Dostal et al., 2025). However, deaf children's inconsistent access to language results in widely varied developmental trajectories (Hernandez et al., 2023). Unlike functional writing, personal narratives include formal genre features such as an orientation, events, and concluding remarks, which educators can teach explicitly.

Functional writing, on the other hand, emphasizes practical daily communication over abstract intellectual discussion. For example, a written note when ordering lunch can clarify dietary restrictions, and an email to an employer about an illness can prevent potential misunderstandings. These examples highlight the importance of functional writing in allowing deaf individuals to navigate societal structures and communicate their needs effectively. Existing literature on functional writing typically focuses on high school or college students in other countries learning English as a second or other language (Onchera & Manyasi, 2013). Other research has focused on improving the informal emailing skills of secondary (Benson et al., 2021) and college-aged (Wang et al., 2016) students with cognitive disabilities. Wang and colleagues (2016) found that email modeling and instructional scaffolding had a positive impact on the social writing skills and writing motivation of college-aged students with cognitive

disabilities. To our best knowledge, there is no research on functional writing skills for secondary deaf students in the United States.

Writing Instruction Challenges

In the literature on hearing students in secondary grades, evidence-based practices in writing instruction, such as strategic instruction, interactive instruction, and genre-based pedagogy, have been identified (Graham et al., 2016). However, not enough time is dedicated to writing instruction and not enough opportunities are provided for students to practice writing (Applebee & Langer, 2011). While many secondary teachers set clear writing expectations and guide students in planning and organizing, they do not go far enough in other key areas. Students are rarely engaged in cycles of reflection, revision, and publication (Applebee & Langer, 2011), and they are not sufficiently involved in interactive writing dialogues (Lin et al., 2020). Another challenge that exists is that teachers are not trained in providing functional definitions of grammar, carrying out applications of grammar to meaningful writing experiences, and supporting metalinguistic knowledge development (Myhill & Watson, 2014). Further, because little training and focus are provided on the approaches used to support language and literacy development in multilingual students, many teachers are underprepared to effectively support writing development with this particular population (Olson et al., 2015).

Writing Instruction with Secondary Deaf Students

Writing proficiency becomes increasingly essential for deaf students navigating post-graduation options, whether pursuing vocational training, higher education, or entering the workforce. In a review of writing instruction with deaf students across various age groups, only 16 studies were identified in a 25-year period (Strassman & Schirmer, 2013), with 3 spanning participant ages into the secondary level. From the totality of the studies meeting the review's

inclusion criteria (i.e., empirical intervention study in the last 25 years), explicit instruction on the process approach, the characteristics of quality writing, writing for content learning, and use of feedback were cited as critical elements. In middle school, writing for authentic audiences paired with collaborative writing approaches between teacher and students has led to improvements in students' writing length, complexity, and grammatical accuracy (Appanah & Hoffman, 2014; Dostal & Wolbers, 2014, 2016; Wolbers 2008, 2010) for both low- and high-achieving student groups and regardless of students' initial literacy levels or language backgrounds (Wolbers, et al., 2012). While these are considered promising practices for deaf students in elementary and middle grade contexts (Dostal et al., 2024), their use and impact at the high school level remain largely unexplored. In the absence of a specialized curriculum, teachers of the deaf sometimes turn to professional learning communities (PLCs) to collaboratively adapt evidence-based writing strategies to the needs of their classrooms (Guberman et al., 2025). This collaborative work highlights how teachers often generate context-responsive practices with their students, paying attention to students' many linguistic and semiotic resources. We build on this line of work by adopting a translanguaging perspective as an interpretive framework, emphasizing how students' use of multiple languages and modalities shapes their written expression.

The interdependent nature of language and literacy has long been understood, including that of sign language's influence on English literacy development (Abertini & Schley, 2011). Deaf students appear to draw upon heterogeneous linguistic and semiotic resources in writing, including signed and written forms of language (Wolbers et al., 2013, 2014). Thus, instructional approaches often described as translanguaging pedagogies that validate and expand deaf students' multilingual and multimodal linguistic repertoires appear necessary for students

(Holcomb, 2023; Holcomb et al., in press; Nicolarakis & Mitchell, 2023; Wolbers, Holcomb, et al., 2023). From this perspective, students' written texts are understood as emerging from interaction among available linguistic repertoires and histories of language access. Multimodality is central to this view, as writing is not treated solely as alphabetic production but as part of a broader semiotic system shaped by embodied forms of meaning. These perspectives provide a framework for interpreting patterns in deaf students' writing without positioning differences as deficits.

However, there remains limited research and understanding regarding the writing skill development of deaf high school students from the United States, despite the crucial role secondary education plays in preparing students for adulthood, where literacy may be important for the workplace (Biser et al., 2007), independent living, postsecondary enrollment, and self-determination (Garberoglio et al., 2014). The present study explores this gap through an in-depth qualitative analysis of deaf secondary students' writing. Guided by sociocultural and translanguaging perspectives as interpretive frameworks, the study examines patterns in students' narrative and argumentative writing to better understand the strengths, variability, and instructional implications evident as they transition toward adulthood.

Method

The aim of this study is to explore the current state of writing among deaf high school students in the United States by analyzing their narrative and argumentative writing samples. This research seeks to uncover the strengths and challenges in their writing to better understand how instructional methods and curricula can be tailored to meet their specific needs. Deaf students' writing and pedagogies are underexplored in research, and qualitative analysis allows us to examine writing products directly to capture nuanced strengths, challenges, and language

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strategies that quantitative scores alone may miss. This is the second study of a two-part exploration of deaf high school students' writing samples. The first study quantitatively reported the central tendency and variability of deaf high school students' writing and examined scored data for patterns of performance related to expressive language variables (Dostal et al., 2025). Building on previous findings, the present study endeavored to qualitatively analyze the lowest and highest scoring samples to better understand the full range of writing needs at the secondary level. We address the following research question: What strengths and needs related to writing and language traits are evident in the writing samples of deaf high school students?

Sample Criteria and Recruitment Procedures

Deaf students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 were included. To identify potential participants, the research team conducted a national online search and compiled a list of 2,137 email addresses of deaf education teachers and administrators of programs for deaf students. After removing 619 inactive addresses, 1,518 active addresses remained. These educators received an initial invitation to participate in a survey examining secondary writing instructional practices (see Wolbers, Dostal & Holcomb, 2023). Among the survey respondents, 222 deaf education teachers identified themselves as secondary teachers of writing and were invited to participate in this study. Additional invitations were disseminated through social media platforms and professional organization listservs. Ultimately, 21 deaf education teachers responded to the invitation for this study, and they each contributed an average of 3–4 student participants to the study. A delimitation of the study is its focus on deaf students taught by deaf education teachers rather than those taught by general education teachers. Our interest is in the specific writing strengths and needs of this group of students in order to consider the curriculum and pedagogy needs of deaf education teachers.

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We obtained consent forms from both teachers and their administrators. Participating classes were offered a stipend, with the amount determined by the total number of writing samples submitted. These funds could be used to purchase educational materials to support instruction. To reduce the risk of coercion, we requested that an educator at each school introduce the study to the students of participating teachers in grades 9 through 12. Students were provided with information about the study's purpose through a brief informational video created by the research team in both ASL and English. After viewing the video, students were given the opportunity to decide whether or not to provide their assent. Families or guardians received consent forms through standard school-home communication methods.

Participants

A total of 75 secondary students participated in this study, including 18 ninth graders, 27 tenth graders, 21 eleventh graders, and 9 twelfth graders. The group included 3 gender-diverse students, 37 females, and 35 males. In terms of racial/ethnic backgrounds, 33 students identified as Latine, 17 as Black, 10 as White, 6 as multiethnic, 2 as Asian, and 7 did not disclose their background. Of the participants, 58 identified as deaf, 16 as hard of hearing, and 1 as deafblind. Listening assistive devices included cochlear implants for 20 students and hearing aids for 29, while 26 did not have any devices. Device usage varied, with 32 students using their hearing aids or cochlear implants consistently, 7 using them frequently, 5 using them occasionally, and 3 using them rarely. There were 28 who either did not have listening devices or they never used them. Additionally, 13 students had other disabilities, such as attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (n=3), autism (n=1), Usher syndrome (n=2), intellectual disabilities (n=2), other health impairments (n=2), and developmental disabilities (n=3).

Language

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Teachers evaluated students' expressive language in ASL and spoken English using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated "can express most anything in the language" and 5 indicated "does not express anything in the language." The average proficiency scores were 1.71 (SD = 0.99) for ASL and 2.83 (SD = 1.57) for spoken English, as detailed in Table 1. Sixteen percent of students (n=12) were rated as highly proficient in both ASL and spoken English since they were described as expressing "most anything" in both languages. Another 23% demonstrated strong language skills in one—either expressing "most anything" in ASL (n=13) or spoken English (n=4)—while expressing "many things" in the other. Nine percent (n=7) expressed "many things" in both languages. Additionally, 43% of students were described as having dominance in one language. Among these, 27 students expressed "many things" (n=11) to "most anything" (n=16) in ASL while not using spoken English. Five students expressed "many things" (n=3) to "most anything" (n=2) in spoken English while showing minimal or no expression in ASL. Lastly, 9% (n=7) were rated as having limited expressive abilities in both languages.

<<Table 1 Here>>

A total of 27 students were exposed to ASL prior to the age of 3, while 33 students were introduced to ASL between the ages of 4 and 7. Five students began learning ASL between the ages of 14 and 20, and three students had no exposure to ASL. The age at which ASL exposure occurred is unknown for seven students. Regarding family communication, 48 families primarily used spoken languages, 18 families used a combination of signed and spoken languages, and 9 families used signed language exclusively. The most common languages spoken at home were English (n=50) and Spanish (n=41), followed by Hmong (n=2), Urdu (n=2), Arabic (n=2), French (n=1), Somali (n=1), and Vietnamese (n=1).

Educational Context

Thirty-six students in this study attended deaf schools, 25 were in self-contained classrooms within public schools, and 14 were mainstreamed in public school settings. Most of these programs followed an ASL/English bilingual model, where instruction was delivered in both ASL and visual and/or spoken English. The next most common approach was total communication, with the majority of teachers using spoken English with signed language support. For further details, see Table 2. We do not separate writing outcomes by educational setting or communication philosophy in this study because only a small percentage of students had been in their reported programs since the critical period for language acquisition (0-5 years); the likelihood that students had experienced other settings and/or philosophies was high. There were 16 students who had been enrolled in their current program or district since early childhood, 19 since elementary school, 22 since middle school, and 18 since high school.

<<Table 2 Here>>

Data Collection

We chose three writing prompts, one narrative and two argumentative, from a collection of pre-generated prompts available on the Measurement Incorporated (MI) Write platform. MI Write is a web-based learning tool that includes an automated essay scoring feature. These prompts were given to the participating high school students during the fall semester (September-November) outside of their regular class time.

Writing Prompts

The first prompt was narrative, asking students to write a personal account of an experience. This could include visiting a distinct location or trying a new activity. Students were given 30 minutes to complete this task and asked to provide as many details as possible. The

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second prompt was argumentative, asking students to identify their hero and explain why this person meets the criteria of a hero. Like the narrative prompt, students had 30 minutes to complete this task. The third prompt was for argumentative writing using source material, administered to students with a third grade reading level or above since the source material provided was at a third-grade reading level. They were asked to compose an essay to their state legislators arguing for or against raising the minimum age for drivers, using source material to craft their responses. For this task, teachers determined eligible students based on their school's reading assessment results, and students were given 45 minutes to compose their letters. For both persuasive writing samples, students were asked to provide as many reasons and examples for their arguments as possible.

To accommodate different languages, the prompts were provided in print and spoken English and/or ASL. The source material was read by the students. Students were encouraged to ask questions about the prompts to ensure they understood the tasks. They had the option to either handwrite their responses or type them into the MI Write's online system. Teachers instructed students to choose the method they felt allowed them to document their ideas most fully.

In terms of response collection and scoring, we received 62 narrative samples in total, out of which 8 were handwritten. For the argumentative prompt without source material, we collected 57 samples, including 4 handwritten ones. For the argumentative prompt with source material, we gathered 49 samples, with 13 being handwritten. Handwritten essays were submitted by teachers, transcribed into MI Write by us, and then automatically scored by the platform.

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There were several common challenges that led to some prompts not being completed or responded to by students. These included difficulty understanding the prompt, struggles with writing sentences, time limitations, and having a reading level below third grade (which applied to the prompt with source material).

Data Scoring

Scoring of the writing samples was completed to organize the samples for qualitative analysis. The scoring for the writing samples was automated through MI Write's system and was based on specific traits within the grade bands of 9th/10th and 11th/12th. Through calibration over the past 50 years, MI Write's automated scoring system has been consistently refined (Chen et al., 2022; Shermis et al., 2002; Wilson & Rodrigues, 2020). Each sample was assessed on six traits: idea development, organization, style, sentence fluency, word choice, and conventions. These traits were rated on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high), which were combined to produce a total score (up to 30) reflecting the cumulative assessment of these traits.

Each trait score is accompanied by 3-6 descriptors that define performance at each level. We highlight one writing (i.e., organization) and one language-based trait (i.e., sentence fluency) across three scores to provide further insight into the scoring. For example, a score of 1 for the organization of an argumentative piece indicates severe disorganization. There may be insufficient ideas to organize, or the progression of ideas from beginning to end may be disrupted with gaps, repetition, or off topic ideas. A score of 1 for sentence fluency generally means that sentences are simple, incomplete, or ridden with significant errors that create confusion.

A score of 3 for organization in an argumentative essay signifies "a basic vertical and horizontal structure" (Measurement Incorporated, 2019). Ideas generally progress from the beginning to the end, albeit with some interruptions and artificial transitions that may hinder the

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smooth expression of ideas. A score of 3 on sentence fluency indicates controlled sentence structure and fluency. There may be a variety of sentence lengths and structures. Sentence errors such as run-ons or fragments generally do not hinder the overall message. Further, descriptions for a score of 3 align with high school expectations as published in the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

A score of 5 for organization of an argumentative sample reflects a smooth response, from a purposeful introduction to an effective conclusion. Transitions contribute to the unity and flow of ideas. A sample receiving a 5 for sentence fluency signifies a range of sentences with various structures and of various lengths. Sentences not only enhance the expression and flow of ideas, they additionally have an enjoyable rhythm that make them “a pleasure to read” (Measurement Incorporated, 2019).

Design and Analysis

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach (Creswell, 2012) using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Saldaña, 2021). The goal is to describe a range of students’ writing strengths and needs, with particular attention to the language resources they bring to the task. Translanguaging is not used as an analytic method in this process; rather, it functions as an interpretive framework for understanding how these descriptive patterns reflect students’ heterogeneous linguistic and semiotic repertoires and for connecting findings to pedagogical and curricular implications. It informed analytic interpretation, particularly in how linguistic variation, modality influences, and cross-language features were understood.

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The genres of writing analyzed include narrative, argumentative, and argumentative writing with source material. This design allows for examination of features in student writing across genres and proficiency levels and is well-suited to reveal how students' language experiences influence their writing strategies and challenges. In all, the students' total scores across genres ranged from a low of 6 points to a high of 19.5, with an average of 10.2 to 10.6 points out of 30 points. For this analysis, we selected a representative sample of students based on their performance on the MI Write rubric. Specifically, we included samples with an average score of 1 point on each of the six genre features or a total score of 8.5 or lower (n=18 narrative, n=22 argumentative, n=18 argumentative with source material). Additionally, we included samples with an average score of 3 points on the traits or a total score of 14.7 or higher (n=8 narrative, n=10 argumentative, n=9 argumentative with source material). This approach allowed us to capture the diverse writing abilities and needs present in the lower to upper range of scored samples.

Thematic coding followed an iterative process of identifying and refining patterns within the data (Saldaña, 2021). Initial codes were generated to capture the observed strengths and needs related to writing traits (i.e., development of ideas, organization, style) and language features (i.e., word choice, fluency, conventions). We also coded for additional observations not accounted for in the rubrics, including students' use of ASL linguistic resources during writing, distinctive spelling or orthographic patterns, and use of source material. The third and fourth authors completed the first round of coding independently. The first and second authors then reviewed the coded data for consistency and interpretive alignment. When differences in coding or interpretation were present, the research team discussed the excerpts identified and refined code definitions until consensus was reached. This process occurred iteratively across the dataset

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to support consistency in application of codes. Coding and synthesis occurred across multiple analytic passes. Following the initial coding round, the research team revisited the full dataset to refine categories, collapse overlapping codes, and organize patterns across writing and language features. Data were then synthesized by grouping codes into broader categories (writing, language, identity and lived experience in writing) and examining patterns within and across low- and high-scoring samples. These iterative rounds of review supported the descriptive summaries presented in the findings. Once coding was complete, the data were synthesized and summarized descriptively by category (writing, language, other) and level of writing (low range, high range), providing insight into the students' overall writing skills and needs.

Through iterative coding and analytic discussion, initial codes were refined and consolidated into three overarching thematic domains: (1) writing development, encompassing idea development, organization, and style; (2) identity and lived experience in writing, and (3) language features, including word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. Within each domain, patterns were examined across lower- and higher-scoring samples and across genres to identify recurring strengths and needs. These thematic domains structured the presentation of findings, with representative excerpts used to illustrate how specific coded features manifested in students' narrative and argumentative writing.

Results

Writing Observations

This section presents a comparative analysis of student writing across three genres: narrative, argumentative, and argumentative with source material. We examine key aspects of writing performance (i.e., the development of ideas, organization, style) to understand how students navigate the demands of each genre. Select excerpts from students' writing across the

three genres are integrated throughout the findings to illustrate observed patterns. In addition, we demonstrate the variation in student writing within scoring categories by including four representative writing samples--two narrative texts from the higher-scoring group and two argumentative texts from the lower-scoring group--in Appendix A. Within each group, one sample represents the lower end of that scoring range and the other represents the higher end. Table 3 provides an overview of the thematic domains and representative codes that structured analysis and interpretation of the findings presented below.

Development of Ideas

Patterns in students' responses reflected the thematic domain of writing development, particularly variation in idea development across genres and scoring ranges. The development of ideas for students scoring in the lower range ranged from simple, list-like structures to more developed storytelling with reflective and descriptive elements. A third of the narratives (6/18) lacked alignment with the genre, with some students offering disconnected statements that listed ideas, such as, *I will go camping. I will get cooking class [class]. I love to cooking.* However, half of the students (9/18) demonstrated language and content consistently appropriate for the genre, providing clear orientations and events. For example, one student wrote, *My dad and I went to the hospital,* while another recalled, *I remember that when I was 3 years old I had cochlear surgery in a hospital.* Some presented more developed narratives with sensory detail such as, *we weightlift all way on off season, we got bigger and stronger.* The majority of students (15/18) demonstrated paragraph-length narratives with multiple events, however not all samples maintained focus.

Many of the higher-scoring narrative samples reveal greater complexity, with students using a combination of vivid details (6/8), a balance of storytelling and personal reflection (7/8),

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and a generally coherent structure (5/8) distinguishing them from lower-scoring samples. For example, a student used description effectively to develop both experiences and events (e.g., *...he got excited and ran toward me and picked me up. However, while he was holding me, he accidentally dropped me and I had seizures.*). Another student narrated a personal struggle with mental illness, including experiences with hospitalization and eventual recovery. The writing has a clear chronological progression of events and conveys a strong emotional connection to the experience; yet, it would benefit from further development of events to enhance its depth.

Another student recounted a memorable trip to Las Vegas, incorporating humor and playful dialogue with family members. However, the development of events is uneven, and the focus on the airplane trip, while detailed, may leave the larger context of the trip unclear. A third sample demonstrates a strong narrative arc, detailing personal loss and perseverance through tragedy, including the loss of a father and the impact it had on the student's life (e.g., *I notice every holiday we celebrate ain't the same anymore after i lost my dad.*) While this narrative, like many (6/8) other higher scoring samples, provides an emotionally impactful journey, the inclusion of several stories spanning the student's life detracts from a more focused recount of a single experience. Some students are still developing an understanding of how to structure a personal narrative to focus on a single event (4/8), as opposed to incorporating a variety of disconnected personal experiences.

Argumentative writing samples from the lower scoring range demonstrated a clear development of ideas, with students often articulating a central claim. Students were asked to identify their hero and explain why this person meets the criteria for being a hero. Half of the students (11/22) effectively stated their position, with statements such as, *My hero is my dad.* Students provided multiple reasons to support their claims, with 15 out of 22 students providing

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at least one reason like, *He is a leader. He is the goat [Greatest of All Time (G.O.A.T.)] in football*. However, a few students (4/22) did not clearly articulate their claims, for instance, *Why is the hero. That means like for example you saved people their life...* which lacks direct support. While the majority of students (15/22) provided reasons for their arguments, few were substantiated with examples. For example, this student shared a reason for her mom being a hero: *She worked a lot for me and my family*, but did not provide additional examples to support the claim.

In contrast, higher-scoring samples demonstrated clear and developed arguments. Many students took a stronger position (5/10) and included specific reasons supported by examples (4/10). For instance, one student wrote: *When people think of a hero, they think of someone famous or who did something that the whole world knew. But, personally, when I think of a hero I think of my mother*. This student, like many others who scored in the higher range, clearly stated their opinion, which was followed by strong supporting reasons and examples that were organized effectively. Even so, a few of the samples (2/10) presented unclear claims, blending multiple ideas in a way that weakened their argument; for example, *My hero is my mom, but also Steve Nash*.

In the argumentative genre with source material, students were asked to compose an essay to their state legislators, arguing for or against raising the minimum age for drivers. Across the writing samples in the lower rubric band, the development of ideas was mixed. A few students (4/18) presented a clear claim, such as, *I think the driving age should be 18*. Students also provided reasons to support their claims (6/18), but only a small number incorporated clear examples from sources (2/18). The integration of source material was inconsistent, with some embedding quotes but doing so awkwardly or incorrectly. In one case, the student attempted

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mid-sentence integration of source material: *Because if you are "16 year olds can be not drink, But they can drive and cars can kills other person."* The quoted text was not transferred correctly from the article, reflecting challenges in supporting arguments with sources.

Among the higher-scoring sample, several students effectively introduced their claims and stated their opinions, such as *I believe that the legal driving age should stay at 16*. Samples demonstrated an attempt to integrate source material (3/9), and provided stronger support for their claims with clear reasons and examples (4/9). They incorporated facts and details from the source material to build their position; for example, *According to the essay 'Should 16-years-old Drive?', Ryan Moore, 16, has to drive himself from his football practice to his job as a lifeguard*. Students in this group not only presented clear claims but also acknowledged counterclaims (3/9), adding depth to their arguments. One student offered a compromise, *I don't think we should raise the driving age but make the process more strict*. These higher-scoring samples showed mostly appropriate use of paraphrasing or direct quoting from the sources.

Organization of Ideas

The organization of ideas across the three writing genres varied among students with different levels of coherence and logical flow observed. Overall, while many students showed competence in organizing their ideas within the genres, there were areas for improvement, particularly in maintaining logical connections and avoiding repetition. These patterns align with the thematic domain of writing development, specifically students' engagement with organization and coherence.

In the narrative genre, some of the samples (5/18) in the lower scoring band showed clear and logical sequencing of events, while others (11/18) faced challenges in presenting events in a cohesive order. For example, one student effectively structured their narrative, stating, *On*

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weekend, I woke up in the morning, I went to play a game with my friend Jacob, and Andrew in my room, which provided a smooth flow of connected ideas about a weekend hang-out with friends. However, in some cases, the sequencing of events lacked clarity: *My dad and I went to the hospital. When i was 11 years old i got surgery in my left ear. I don't wear cochlear at school because some of my friends play around.* The order of events in this example disrupted the flow and coherence of the story, suggesting areas for improvement in narrative organization.

For narrative samples in the higher-scoring band, organization was generally more effective. The majority of samples (6/8) demonstrated an appropriate structure for the task, following a chronological event sequence with a logical progression of ideas. These samples maintained chronological order, unfolding in a generally natural way. Some of the samples (3/8) effectively used transitions to contribute to the unity and sequence, such as *two months after*, *when I got in*, and *until one day*. However, two samples included transitions that felt artificial or disrupted the flow of ideas, and three samples needed more explicit transition words like, *first*, *then*, and *finally* to improve cohesion. Some narratives (2/8) lacked specificity to the task which compromised the overall organization, as in one case where a student described their friends with the intent of setting up a story, but the narrative itself never developed. Another student's narrative lacked a central focus, listing various life events (e.g., location of birth, three-year-old birthday party, cancer diagnosis, father's imprisonment) without connecting them meaningfully.

In the argumentative genre, the organization of ideas for the lower-scoring samples was generally stronger than in narratives, with many students (15/22) successfully establishing logical connections between their claims and supporting points. For instance, *My parents are heroes. because my parents was find out im deaf... [lists ways they supported them]*, clearly states a claim and provides reasons to support it. Despite this, seven students demonstrated

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emergent skills with the clarity and coherence of their arguments. In some cases, ideas were presented without clear connections, such as, *My hero is my dad. if Dad not live maybe I wont here*. Additionally, several students' stories about their heroes had characteristics of narratives or informational text rather than providing clear reasons for their opinion.

Higher-scoring argumentative samples demonstrated greater consistency in organization, with most (7/10) flowing smoothly from introduction to conclusion. The majority (8/10) featured relevant openings that effectively framed the argument. For example, two strong openings included, *When people think of a hero, they think of someone famous or who did something that the whole world knew. But, personally, when I think of a hero, I think of my mother*; and, *Some people have a hero from their family and outside of their family. Having a hero can make you feel safe and feel so loved*. However, only two samples included a strong thesis statement that clearly outlined the main ideas for subsequent paragraphs. One example was: *My hero is my mom for many reasons that she is respectful and accepted to me being Deaf, tries to make my life better, and cares for my family*. The student then elaborated on each of these points in the following paragraphs. Additionally, while six samples adhered to a basic introduction-body-conclusion structure, they lacked transitions. In one case, a student abruptly shifted from discussing their mother as their hero to Steve Nash, then to basketball, and finally to deaf identity, without clear connections, making the argument difficult to follow.

For lower-scoring argumentative with source material samples, organization was similar to narrative samples, with 4/9 students effectively connecting their ideas to support their arguments. These students demonstrated a clear progression of ideas, incorporating supporting reasons and explanations to develop their claims. However, five students faced challenges in maintaining coherent connections between their ideas. In some cases, their arguments presented

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ideas repetitively, such as the dangers of young drivers or the importance of maturity, without further elaboration. This repetition reduced the overall strength of their arguments, highlighting the need for more varied development of ideas and incorporation of source material to be able to demonstrate effective organization.

Among the higher-scoring argumentative writing with source material samples, approximately half (4/9) demonstrated a strong progression of ideas from introduction to conclusion--a contrast from the fairly strong organization demonstrated in many of the narrative and argumentative samples. Some samples (3/9) included a strong opening thesis that guided their argument. For example, one student provided this opening information:

The first reason is people are more mature the more time they have lived and the difference in maturity between 16 and 18 is different. Another reason is so if someone were to commit a crime while driving, they can be tried as an adult because they will be 18. One last idea is statistically there at more accident at a teen then as an adult. The best thing to do to help keep our streets safe is by making the age limit 18.

This introduction sets up three main ideas with the subsequent paragraphs elaborating on each idea. Finally, among the full set of high scoring samples, five demonstrated progression from introduction to conclusion yet needed transitions to improve clarity and flow.

Style

Observations related to style further illustrate the thematic domain of writing development, revealing differences in audience awareness and genre alignment. In the narrative genre among the lower-scoring samples, the level of stylistic sophistication varied, with most students (14/18) relying on simple, direct recounting of events, while others demonstrated emerging control over the use of descriptive language (5/18). For instance, one student recounted

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a skiing trip: *I put my gear and went up the ski lift when im about to go down it was really slippery it was tough.* Additionally, a few students (2/18) incorporated dialogue to add depth and realism to their narratives, such as in this exchange: *coach said "unfinished buisness, and weight lift more we will championship."* Some students (5/18) demonstrated an attempt to communicate visually, as seen in this example: *When I make a good reason why I want to snowboard, my parents look at each other—they agree.* The student's description relies on visualization of the event to convey understanding.

In the higher scoring set of narrative samples, the majority (6/8) of students demonstrated a clear awareness of purpose and audience, often attempting to engage the reader through personal reflection and commentary. For example, one student opened their narrative with a metaphor to draw the reader into their experience with mental health challenges: *Everyone has their own inner demons to fight every day.* Another student connected with the audience through conversational language that guided the reader through their experience: *I notice every holiday we celebrate ain't the same anymore after i lost my dad.* Notably, over a third (3/8) of the higher-scoring samples incorporated metaphors or other figurative expressions, enhancing the narratives' overall style and making the samples more engaging. For instance, one student personified depression as an unwelcome visitor: *I was always so positive. Until one day, someone uninvited came to me. They were called depression.* In contrast, two of the higher scoring samples lacked a clear voice, reducing the connection to the audience. These narratives recounted meaningful events without fully developing a reflective or expressive style, such as a student who briefly described a family loss without expressing its impact on them.

In the lower scoring samples in the argumentative genre, slightly more than a third of students (8/22) began their pieces with strong, attention-grabbing openings, for example: *Having*

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a hero is important in our lives. It keeps us doing better. However, many students (14/22) did not maintain a consistent argumentative tone throughout their pieces. One student began their sample with, *She is really good singer. I love how she uses her voice. Some of her songs are very sad and it actually cause me feel sad. My first favorite song is "Friends" Camila Cabello*, which, while providing specific examples, leaned more toward personal reflection than an argument. A few students (3/22) used similes to enhance the emotional impact of their writing. One student wrote, *She always there for my life, we always together like glue*, creating an emotional connection with the reader. While these similes added emotional depth and could be used as effective examples of why they selected a person as their hero, they did not always align with the overall style of the students' argumentative writing.

In the argumentative genre, the majority of higher-scoring samples (8/10) successfully wrote directly to their audience, often using rhetorical devices to engage the reader. One student addressed the reader personally, asking, *Andrea, have you ever tried to walk way from something that didn't go your way with your head down?*, creating an interactive approach. Despite this strength, there was an unevenness in maintaining a formal style appropriate for argumentative writing. Four higher-scoring samples showed inconsistent use of formal language, and another four did not engage a formal style at all. Informal expressions, such as conversational phrasing appeared in most of the samples (8/10), suggesting that while students may have been comfortable with the topic, there were challenges with matching style to genre expectations.

In the argumentative genre with source material, style varied widely among the samples in the lower scoring bands of the rubric. Some students (4/18) employed direct language to engage the reader, such as, *Do not take drive when you are drunk because it'll cause car crash or cop will cagauh [catch] you.* This directness was effective in conveying urgency. However, the

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skill of integrating source material was still developing. For instance, this student made a mostly successful attempt to incorporate a source, but the connection between the quoted material and the argument was unclear: *“Men of all age 77 percent more likely to kill someone while driving than women.” I mean most women did that too, but not a lot.* Such instances revealed challenges in smoothly incorporating external sources into the argument, which impacted the overall style by limiting the clarity and persuasiveness needed to effectively address the task, purpose, and audience.

A little more than half of the higher-scoring argumentative with source material samples (5/9) successfully established and maintained a formal style throughout their writing. These students demonstrated use of academic tone; they balanced their own reasoning with evidence from the provided source material. This is notably different from the tone students used when writing argumentative (without source material) samples. Additionally, three higher-scoring samples used rhetorical questions directed at the audience to support their claims, such as, *They need to know and experience real life like jobs, schools, friendships, and most importantly, driving. How can they do that if the age of the drivers is raised?* These rhetorical strategies helped strengthen their arguments and engage the reader. Two higher-scoring samples showed uneven formality, while two others did not engage a formal style at all, using casual expressions such as, *That’s insane to think about.*

Identity and Lived Experience in Writing

These cross-cutting observations reflect the second thematic domain identified in analysis: the influence of genre demands, source use, and students’ linguistic and lived experiences on their writing. An additional observation we felt compelled to share was the type of content that deaf secondary students included in their writing. We found noteworthy patterns

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in the thematic focus of students' writing that could drive the design of future research. Students' writing across genres and scores reflected recurring themes of personal experiences, challenges, and identity. Many narratives centered on milestones, such as sports achievements or life transitions like moving to a new school. Overcoming or engaging with obstacles, such as physical injuries, social barriers, or personal struggles, was a frequent focus, demonstrating students' abilities to reflect on and share their experiences in writing. Many students reflected on their deaf identity or experiences with family, adding emotional resonance. Additionally, there was a notable presence of content related to mental health, depression, and suicide attempts in narrative samples, suggesting that students used writing as an outlet for expressing complex emotions and personal hardships. Similarly, in argumentative writing, students often connected the concept of a hero to personal experiences, selecting parents, teachers, or public figures as examples. This approach not only demonstrated an understanding of the prompt but also revealed how students drew upon personal connections to support their arguments. Reflections on deaf identity emerged in both narrative and argumentative writing. Some students described their experiences navigating interactions with hearing peers, while others explored the role of ASL in shaping their identities. These insights provided a deeper look into how language, lived experience, and cultural identity influenced students' choices of what to explore, share, or perhaps process through their writing.

Language Observations

The following findings reflect the thematic domain of language features, capturing patterns in word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions across writing samples. Some language traits showed little variation by genre, and in those cases, the description of the findings were condensed by lower and higher scoring samples.

Word Choice

In the narrative writing samples in the lower scoring bands of the rubric, a third used an adequate mix of general and specific words (6/18). Some examples include: *Soccer help my body because it increases aerobic capacity and cardiovascular health. Or, the doctor said that my level of infection is a high risk of dying.* Words may not have enhanced or elaborated the topic, but they did allow for a recounting of the topic. More commonly seen, in two thirds of the samples (12/18), word selection was considered basic, confusing (e.g., *then I do the non-ASL to them*), or repetitive (e.g., several statements using *I will go...* or *I love to...*). In one case, word choice may have been inhibited by encoding or spelling skills (e.g., *I will explain about football champion expe [experience]. I have rich ex [experience] before champion game*). Nearly all of students' word selections were at the basic level in argumentative writing (21/22) and argumentative with sources writing (18/18). The exception was a student writing about a K-Pop group as their hero: *I was depressed and had anxiety. I was very lonely and lived in a dark world . . . it's inspiring and relieved me.*

Among high scoring narrative writing samples, the majority of students (5/8) demonstrated a mix of general and specific word usage. The word selection worked to bring the narratives to life, providing the reader with a mental picture of events or conveying the emotion of characters. Two examples include: (1) *I needed surgery to fix the dislocation. After I was told that I felt a rush of sadness and regret.* (2) *I lied down on my stomach on the cold cement, stretching my arms out to grab her.* Almost half of students (3/8) used basic or confusing words such as: *now I'm a sophomore and still little not over about that experience and trying to be full heal since it has been four years.* Inadequate or limited word choice sometimes disrupted the flow of ideas (e.g., *I got biggest happy, or we rode in my uncle's car to drive an airplane*). In

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argumentative and argumentative with sources writing, fewer students (2/10 and 3/9) demonstrated well chosen words that brought the response to life as in, *My mom ran and immediately twisted the guy's thumb off my chin*, or *It is understandable to question if we should bump the driving age limit to age of 18*. More common (8/10 and 6/9) was the use of adequate words that did not enhance or elaborate ideas. In one case, vocabulary was repetitive which disrupted the flow of ideas, as seen in the example, *My hero is my mom, I explained how my mom is a hero. My mom is a hero.*

Sentence Fluency

In contrast to the low scores on sentence fluency that would indicate disrupted fluency and repetitive and simple structures, we observed that the majority of lower-scoring samples (12/18) demonstrated a variety of sentence lengths and structures. Students wrote a mix of simple sentences combined with compound and complex sentences. While sentences largely contained errors that created awkwardness or obscured precise meaning, they generally did not disrupt the presentation of ideas. For example:

I have a lot going on in my life. First, my 3 month old I have a stomach infection and going to the hospital. the doctor said that my level of infection is a high risk of dying, and I go on a lot of medicine. Luckily I'm alive.

Also we observed minor errors that resulted in run-ons or fragments, as seen in this example lacking a conjunction and punctuation: *It wasn't that hard of a transition because I was only at those schools for a year I hardly remember anyone from my old schools*. A few of the samples (3/18) illustrated beginning sentence fluency with the use of simple or incomplete sentences or by stringing together words with no discernible meaning (e.g., *just about the ab we do so about from were do not think me lose verb never days*). Lastly, some students structured sentences

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resembling ASL such as *My first time go to Washington D.C with my friends and teachers. There places are beautiful. Or, Years later i feel better but I am surprised to hear everything. Why i got surgery for reasons.*

In the high scoring narrative samples, most students' writing (5/8) showed control over sentence structure, with a variety of sentence types that promoted greater fluency of expression such as: *She opened the door and said "What the hell happened?", then started laughing. I was panting so hard.* Complex sentences with different kinds of dependent clauses were present as in the following two examples: (1) *One day, it was about 10 pm at night. I was walking around my house barefooted, checking the doors and window to see if they were locked.* (2) *I disliked the fact that I had to use crutches which put a strain on my shoulder and left leg because the right leg needed to be elevated and it got to the point where I didn't want to go to school because of the stairs that I had to take with only one leg functioning.* Sentence construction often enhanced the meaning even though errors were still present as in this example: *When i got the new i was really really heartbroken i couldn't believe it at all. I cried out of my lungs. i cried for longer it took me a few months to heal myself.* In almost half of the cases (3/8), awkward sentence construction disrupted the presentation flow such as: *I keep asking my mom where are we going. it made me enjoy the watched cloud.* Although these samples were lengthier than those scoring in the lower range, the sentence structure was similar in nature.

Similar patterns to narrative writing could be found in argumentative writing among the majority of lower scoring samples (13/22). They demonstrated sentence fluency at a level higher than the rating they received. Students wrote a variety of sentences in structure and length (e.g., *my hero is Ms AB because she was my best friend when i was a sophomore year , i met her on the first day of school.*), and minor errors, such as run ons, did not create major disruptions to

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their presentation (e.g., *my sister is hero because she save people lives and she is the best person i ever met and she like bestfriend to me*). In some cases (4/22), students' writing demonstrated lesser sentence fluency in that they wrote awkward sentences that provided serious interruptions to their response (e.g., *My mom only cared to keep me don't lose my baby son. She says wants to save and keep her son as cover my life*). Some (5/22) resembled beginning sentence fluency by writing sentences that were simple or contained unintelligible word strings that were difficult for the reader to understand (e.g., *My dad for food eats give go room give.*). Lastly, ASL syntax for expressing possession as well as topic followed by comment were found in a few samples with the underlining indicating the ASL feature: *That means like for example you saved people their life*; or, *My family has brothers has 5, sisters 1*.

Among the high scoring argumentative writing samples, the majority (8/10) demonstrated control over sentence construction. The writings contained a variety of sentences that promoted expression with fluency. Students commonly wrote compound and complex sentences (e.g., *My mom had a job to attend to but she dropped everything to come and stay nights with me on an uncomfortable couch to make sure I was okay.*) and sentences with relative clauses (e.g., *My mom is the one who taught me how to do the things that I never thought I could.*). Some of these sentences contained minor errors; however, these did not severely disrupt the presentation of ideas (e.g., *People like these who break cycles, who come out from drugs and abuse and come out nicer than their parents are are heroes to me.*). In a few of the samples (2/10), sentences contained more severe errors that created awkwardness and interruptions to their flow:

I was too scared and started to cry and my mom saw me and the door and my mom was like oh no and get up and go to close the door while my dad still drove and didn't know that happened.

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In the lower scoring argumentative with source samples, students demonstrated less fluency in sentence structure than the other two genres. This may have been due to them having less ability to personalize the writing content. Awkward sentence structure provided significant interruptions to the presentation of ideas for most (14/18), as can be observed here:

*...parent will protest to california's government but california wont change age bec
california's dmv have requied to take several hours to pass then wait to 6 mount to get
linese or, I think sixteen to eighteen is a little hard for me because I don't have time for
that when I was graduation after.*

Some awkwardness was related to difficulties with integrating source text into the flow of ideas, for example, *researchers thought its would be safe for age 16 not to drive says experts, but age 15 does not agree "i dont think it matters what age you are."*

Most students (7/9) exhibited control over their sentences in the high scoring group on argumentative writing with sources. They had a variety of sentence lengths and structures, although these were higher in error than what was seen in the other two genres. Contrary to the low scoring group, the errors did not severely impact the presentation flow. These qualities can be seen in two different examples:

*(1) Another reason that makes them better drivers is cense their brains are more
expirieneced with the world they will know to be more observeitive [observant] and pay
atanchin [attention] to everything that is going on.*

*(2) This shows how much more often teens are at risk of an accident than any other age
groups to the point that its almost three times more than any 20 and older which is insane
to think about and how much of a difference of risk it is.*

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Slightly greater sentence structure, fluency, and enhanced meaning was observed in a few samples (2/9), which is demonstrated in the following:

Teens might not feel ready to drive and that is completely fine, but this doesn't mean we should take away the option for the teens that are ready. A 16 year old could feel overwhelmed with the idea of driving but another could be excited to finally go out by themselves.

Conventions

A third of the lower scoring narrative samples (6/18) demonstrated a high rate of errors with grammar, spelling, and mechanics which contributed to significant reader confusion. An example is: *we try to figure out basketball and I feel like I'm not try joined the team game because it was a very important team game then all students went outside to get ready for the practice game team.* Half of the students (9/18) continued to demonstrate numerous errors; however, these errors less frequently created disruptions to the reader, and capitalization and punctuation were mostly correct. A few of the samples (3/18) had conventions similar to the high scoring group--showing control over the grammar, spelling, and mechanics. Although some errors were present, they were minor and not frequent enough to disrupt the reader. This can be seen in the following example: *Recently, I had to leave my old school to go to JMS and I unfortunately had to also lose my best friends. However, this is not the first time I have had to change schools but it is very different than the first time I had to change schools.*

In the high scoring narrative samples, none (0/8) contained widespread errors that created confusion for the reader; however, half (4/8) had some errors that required occasional deciphering from the reader, as in the following example: *My family asked me am i ready to have quince i said no cause of my dad.* Nearly half of the samples (3/8) demonstrated good control

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over the grammar, usage, and mechanics. While errors still occurred, they were infrequent and did not cause disruption to the reading, as in the example: *However, when I turned 7 years old, I remember I was on the bed, charging my tablet and fell down and hit my head on the ground.*

One sample (1/8) demonstrated a strong command of the grammar, usage, and mechanics with few, if any, errors. An excerpt from this sample follows: *Now I'm almost 16, I keep on spreading awareness about mental health and helping those who are struggling, especially kids who are my age or younger.*

Conventions for both samples selected from lower and higher automated score bands in argumentative and argumentative with sources samples were less developed than seen in the narrative samples. The majority of samples from lower automated scoring ranges in argumentative writing (15/22) and argumentative with sources samples (14/18) and one high-scoring argumentative sample (1/10) could be characterized as highly errored, confusing texts or described as ones that did not have sufficient writing to evaluate grammar, usage, and mechanics. An example is: *when some place have different age can drive in Nevada only old 16 years old but in Idaho 14 or 15 years old is weird.* Some samples from the lower-scoring band for argumentative writing (7/22) and argumentative with sources (4/18), and the majority of high-scoring argumentative (7/10) and argumentative with sources samples (6/9) demonstrated numerous errors that required occasional deciphering by the reader. In the high-scoring samples, most samples exhibited good use of sentence-end punctuation and capitalization, and errors tended to be grammatical or related to mechanics such as comma usage in complex sentences. An example is:

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If a 16 year old doesn't have a job yet and they only go to school driveing wouldn't be too usefull for them. Unlike an 18 year old who might already be in college with their own dorm they would also probibly have a job pay for food, drinks and other needs.

Two high-scoring argumentative (2/10) and a few argumentative with sources samples (3/9) showed good command over the conventions with periodic errors that did not disrupt the reading.

The range of performance across writing and language skills underscores the complexity of deaf high school students' writing outcomes. In particular, the contrast between lower-scoring responses, which often reflected brief and fragmented texts, and higher-scoring samples, which demonstrated clearer organization and greater fluency, highlights the variability captured in this study. Additionally, the considerable range within the lower- and higher-scoring categories, and sometimes the similarities in the demonstration of skills between groups, points to challenges with precision of automated trait scoring for this population as a method of organizing samples for qualitative analysis. In the following discussion, we consider these results and examine their implications for understanding writing development in secondary settings.

Discussion

Interpreted across the three thematic domains - writing development, identity and lived experience in writing, and language feature - this study provides a qualitative analysis of deaf students' writing to understand the range of writing strengths and needs at the secondary level. Similar to other studies of deaf students' writing (Mayer & Trezek, 2023; Wolbers et al., 2022), there is a considerable spread of writing outcomes, from those with emerging writing skills to those who demonstrate genre-specific writing traits and contextual language that meet grade-level expectations. In addition to the wide range of outcomes, we know that the pace of

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development of deaf students' writing can vary. In prior studies where deaf students continued with the general curriculum and did not receive specialized instruction responsive to their language needs (i.e., business-as-usual groups), they demonstrated little to no writing growth (Wolbers et al., 2018, 2022, 2024a). Different from prior work, however, is this study's focus at the high school level, which, by nature of it being the last few years of the P-12 United States educational system, illustrates the most distinct gap between students who are working on grade-level standards and those who remain at emerging or elementary literacy levels, five to ten years behind their same-aged peers. These differences point to the cumulative effects of language access, schooling experiences, and instructional opportunity across development. Constructs such as writing quality, challenge, and development are not treated here as deficit indicators, but as reflections of students' historically structured language access and exposure, and of how they mobilize available and evolving communication resources.

Responses in the Lower Rubric Bands

The writing of samples that fell within the lower scoring band reflected early developmental patterns that signal constrained access to linguistic and compositional resources. These samples demonstrated a lack of engagement with writing purpose, audience, and genre-specific traits that are central to asserting a position in argumentative writing or providing a situation in narrative writing. Writing either did not have a connected sequence of ideas, or it illustrated knowledge telling (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1987). A knowledge-telling approach is reflected in underdeveloped writing whereby the writer retrieves their knowledge from memory however struggles to attend to writing goals or problem solving during composing. This approach contrasts with knowledge transforming, which involves revising to organize one's writing according to the reader's needs, and in this process, reconstructs one's knowledge.

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Addressing writing goals may have been further constrained by the students' struggle to express their ideas.

Related to language traits, the lower-scored responses often included confusing and repetitive words or basic sentences. Some words were written with the first few letters and left unfinished— a pattern consistent with emerging fingerspelling-based phonological knowledge (Holcomb, 2023) and/or limited orthographic pattern knowledge (Bowers et al., 2014). Students wrote simple or incomplete sentences containing nonstandard features in grammar, spelling, and mechanics, all of which contributed to reader confusion. At times, words were strung together into phrases with no discernible meaning--a finding of prior research involving middle grades deaf writers (Bowers et al., 2018). The finding in this study indicates significant language challenges can persist into the secondary levels. Lastly, some ASL grammatical structures were identified in the writing; however, this was an infrequent occurrence compared to previous studies at the later elementary and middle grades levels (Wolbers 2010; Wolbers et al., 2013, 2014), which may reflect students' widening linguistic repertoires and increasing metalinguistic awareness as they age (cf., Gardenfors, 2022).

Language Deprivation and Disability

Taken together, these linguistic and compositional patterns point beyond individual performance and toward broader language access histories. The writing challenges evident in many of the lower-scoring samples are consistent with the long-term effects of language deprivation—a phenomenon experienced by deaf children who are not exposed to a fully accessible language during the critical period of language development (Hall, 2017; Hall et al., 2017). Without early and consistent exposure, students arrive at school with limited linguistic foundations, a reality that constrains their development of age-appropriate expressive (Glickman

& Hall, 2018) and written language skills (Holcomb et al., 2023). This relationship was demonstrated in the findings of our first study which illustrated that early ASL exposure and proficiency in ASL or spoken English are linked to stronger writing outcomes (Dostal et al., 2025). Conversely, the lowest writing scores were affiliated with those who had difficulty expressing ideas in both ASL or spoken English. The effects of language deprivation can persist throughout the educational years, for example, when the classroom language is not visually comprehensible nor student-centered (Holcomb et al., 2024), shaping students' interactions with text, language, and academic content in enduring ways. When language deprivation remains largely unaddressed within educational systems, it becomes a human rights violation (see Duncan et al., 2023 for a discussion) that impacts virtually all development dependent on open and accessible communication including cognition, social and emotional skills, and learning potential (Glickman & Hall, 2018; Humphries et al., 2012).

Furthermore, in this study approximately 12% of students were reported as having disabilities such as ADHD and developmental disabilities, which are challenging to distinguish from the effects of language deprivation. Disability labels may obscure the root issue—that students have had limited access to language, not that they are inherently unable to learn and thrive. In the literature, the prevalence of deaf students with disabilities is reported as high as 45-51% of the population (Garberoglio et al., 2019; Mitchell, 2004; Nelson & Bruce, 2019), and oftentimes there is not a simultaneous discussion of language deprivation as a potential driving factor in students' learning difficulties. This misrecognition is compounded by how language is judged. From a Crip Linguistics perspective (Henner & Robinson, 2022), what is often perceived as atypical language may instead reflect a form of communication that is functional, valid, and adaptive—language that works for the individual within their lived context, rather than falling

short of an external norm. While the authors of this study recognize the many ways that individuals construct and communicate ideas, the written samples of high school students, particularly those with unintelligible phrasing, incomplete lexical constructions, and underdeveloped ideas, are emblematic of years of inaccessibility. The wide disparities seen in writing outcomes of deaf high school students not only indicate pedagogical challenges (Wolbers, Dostal & Holcomb, 2023); they are indicators of compounding linguistic inequities that social and medical systems failed to address (Hall et al., 2017).

This highlights the urgent need for educators and policymakers to recognize language deprivation as a distinct and addressable issue (Humphries et al., 2016), requiring a rights-based approach to educational services and early language planning (Murray et al, 2019). Within daily educational contexts, educators are called to recognize the influence of language ecologies on one's communication resources and honor the deaf child as a brilliantly linguistic being who has persisted in their communication even from within inaccessible, inequitable environments. Language and literacy pedagogies should aim to include linguistic care work (Henner & Robinson, 2022) and translanguaging (García & Kleifgen, 2020), which would validate students' communication resources and patiently support their meaning making processes while fostering linguistic expansion and metalinguistic awareness.

Responses in the Higher Rubric Bands

In contrast, many of the highly-rated writing samples revealed significant linguistic foundations among students upon which writing skills have accumulated and developed over years of schooling (cf. Scott & Hoffmeister, 2018). These patterns suggest sustained access to language and instruction that enabled students to build and mobilize complex linguistic repertoires. Narrative responses showed evidence of storytelling with descriptive and sensory

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detail, emotional resonance, and logical sequencing of events. Argumentative writing, particularly without source material, included clear positions supported with well-developed reasoning and relevant examples, occasional acknowledgment of counterclaims, and varied sentence structures that enhanced meaning. These responses demonstrated a mix of basic and more specific vocabulary, which contributed to topic development, and showed strong control over sentence construction. While nonstandard features were still present, they were infrequent and did not disrupt comprehension. These features suggest that when students are able to draw on significant linguistic resources, they have tools for exhibiting fluent writing across a variety of purposes and audiences in alignment with what is expected of secondary students (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Importantly, these strengths provide a foundation for next instruction, including the application of analysis, interpretation, and evaluation skills to compositions of greater length (Kiuahara et al., 2009; Sundeen, 2015), functional grammar through genre study (Dean, 2003), and writing fluency through sentence combining and the study of models (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Genre Differences

In comparison to narrative and argumentative writing, writing that requires use of source material proved to be the most challenging for students. Overall, the argumentative with source material samples showed lesser coherence, organization, and effective integration of evidence, while having more frequent errors in grammar and mechanics--all of which may be due to the need for writing with less personalized language. The formal tone many students attempted to use in this genre often led to awkward or interrupted sentence structure, particularly when incorporating quotes or ideas from the text. These disruptions not only affected fluency but also

weakened the strength of the argument. Collectively, these findings reinforce the interdependence of reading, language development, and writing performance. Tasks requiring source use demand comprehension, synthesis, and stance-taking, highlighting the reciprocal development of reading and writing. Differences in students' abilities to integrate evidence therefore reflect not only writing skill but also prior opportunities to engage with complex texts and text-based discussion.

Meaning-based language instruction is an approach that can help students overcome these shortfalls by expanding their linguistic repertoires for English variety and register (Schleppegrell, 2020; Wolbers, Holcomb, et al., 2023). With greater understanding of the linguistic systems relevant to the genre of writing, students will have the language appropriate for supporting their arguments with sources and conveying differing perspectives, which reflects higher writing quality scores (Cho et al., 2021). These findings underscore the need for targeted instruction in genre-specific conventions (Dostal et al., 2021; Granado-Peinado et al., 2019; Landrieu, 2023) and for continued attention to developing sentence complexity and control across all writing tasks (MacArthur et al., 2019; Saddler et al., 2008).

Writing Curricula for Wide Variability

The findings from this study carry important implications for writing instruction, particularly in designing responsive approaches that build on students' existing strengths while addressing persistent challenges. The variation in student performance illustrates a wide range of writing development at the high school level, from beginning writing lacking genre awareness and basic linguistic structures to more advanced compositions that address grade-level expectations. These differences are not interpreted as deficits or as outcomes explained by any single theoretical framework, but as reflections of students' historically shaped and evolving

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linguistic repertoires. Accordingly, instructional design must account for variability in language experience and opportunity, suggesting the need for differentiated languaging pedagogies (Dostal et al., 2019; Wolbers, Holcomb, et al., 2023) that support the functional writing skills of some students (Wolbers et al., 2023), and the grade-level writing expectations of others (Wolbers et al., 2024b).

Functional writing, such as personal reflections and informational summaries can support fluency and written language growth, particularly for students still developing foundational skills (Wang et al., 2016). Foundational skills such as spelling are associated with a drain on working memory if not automatized (Alamargot et al., 2007). Although spoken language phonological approaches have historically had inconsistent results (Mayberry et al., 2011) likely due to not being accessible to all deaf students, fingerspelled phonological knowledge is visually accessible to all and strongly contributes to reading (Stone et al., 2015) and writing skills (Wolbers et al., 2025). Interactive writing pedagogy in the context of authentic daily communication provides an opportunity to bolster foundational skills through cross-modal connections using fingerspelling and chaining (Lee & Secora, 2022). Research on functional writing implemented with second language learners (Onchera & Manyasi, 2013) and students with cognitive disabilities (Benson et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2016) suggests the approach may be useful to use with deaf students who are working to develop functional communication skills to enter various employment fields after school.

At the same time, access to academic writing instruction, including the integration of argumentative and source-based writing, is necessary for preparing students for postsecondary opportunities (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). This underscores that writing development cannot be addressed in

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isolation from reading. Students' writing performance is shaped not only by instruction in composing but by their cumulative experiences with written language, text exposure, and opportunities to engage with disciplinary texts over time. Variability in writing outcomes therefore signals differences in access to and engagement with written language as much as differences in writing instruction itself (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). Instructional planning that pairs opportunities to read, analyze, and discuss texts with structured writing tasks may be especially important for students whose access to written language has been uneven (Graham & Herbert, 2011; Graham et al, 2018).

Furthermore, additional findings from the study suggest that high school students may use writing to make sense of challenging childhood experiences, explore deaf identity, or express hard emotions. It may be an outlet for students who have endured hardship to feel safe exploring one's feelings on paper. While some traumatic events may be the same as the broader hearing population, there are also traumas specific to deaf children being raised in hearing environments such as a lack of connection and communication with one's family (Anderson et al., 2016). In one study of junior high school students facing family challenges, writing therapy contributed to increased emotional regulation, resilience, and self-acceptance (Nasution & Darmayanti, 2025). Narrative writing in particular has been shown to help individuals process their thoughts or emotions related to an adverse life event; however, there may also be negative effects for those who experienced more extreme stressors (Taylor et al., 2016). Future research might explore the therapeutic benefits of narrative writing among high school deaf students using an interdisciplinary approach in consultation with counselors or psychologists who study the impact of trauma in adolescents.

By examining how deaf secondary students engaged with writing tasks, we can develop instructional approaches that address students' strengths and needs. In addition to narrative writing that allows personal exploration and sense making, it is evident that a range of language supports are needed that honor students' current competencies while guiding their next steps. At one end of the continuum is writing for functional purposes with integrated language strategies for expanding expressed sign and translating to meaningfully equivalent written English (Dostal & Wolbers, 2014; Dostal et al., 2021; Wolbers et al., 2024a). At the other end of the continuum is writing extended texts that use source material and genre-specific language and functional grammar (Christie, 1994, 2004; Schleppegrell, 2004). This continuum reflects a developmental model in which movement between functional and academic writing supports growth across contexts. To be responsive to students' varied needs, writing instruction should include intentional flexibility that allows students to move between functional and academic genres, recognizing that growth in one area can bolster development in the other (Schleppegrell, 2005).

Limitations and Future Directions

Higher- and lower-scored samples were identified for analysis in this study based on MI Write's automated total score, which encompasses trait scores for development of ideas, organization, style, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. However, through the robust qualitative analysis of students' writing to describe their strengths and needs, we noted variation in the writing quality of samples receiving similar trait scores. In fact, our descriptions of traits by group often spanned three levels of skills on the MI Write rubric, which created overlap in our descriptions of some of the low- and high-scoring samples. Additionally, we observed individual writing samples that aligned with high rubric ratings on some traits and low ratings on others;

however, the automated scores did not show variation across traits of more than a few tenths of a point.

Although automated scores were not central to this paper's data analyses, our observations raise important considerations for using and interpreting automated writing evaluation systems for this population. The algorithms for automated systems are largely based on native English speakers (Nunes et al., 2022) and large-scale quantitative assessments (Huawei & Aryadoust, 2022), which are unlikely to lead to effectively calibrated systems that capture the writing strengths of students drawing on multimodal, multilingual linguistic processes. Prior literature has demonstrated less alignment between automated- and human-generated scores for non-native language users, likely due to the underrepresentation of the group's samples used in the training models (Hannah et al., 2023). The focus on written products following this analytic method may have limited the capture of deaf students' multilingual and multimodal meaning-making processes through which they develop and express ideas.

Furthermore, while automated analysis tools have evolved to include deep language features (e.g., referential cohesion, lexical diversity, connectives, syntactic pattern density) that increase predictive validity of writing performance overall (Shin & Gierl, 2021), these indices remain heavily linguistically-based. Nuanced assessment of writing traits such as the development and organization of one's ideas are still not handled well by automated systems (Myers & Wilson, 2022). Relatedly, a number of participants in this study reported the use of additional languages at home. Because narrative and storytelling structures can differ across languages, it is possible that students drew on these diverse narrative traditions in their writing responses. While consideration of cross-linguistic narrative transfer was beyond the scope of this

study, future research could more explicitly examine how multilingual narrative styles influence writing outcomes for deaf students.

Given these limitations, we call into question the ability of automated scoring systems (trained largely on native and hearing language users) to generate accurate scores for deaf students and to differentiate beyond a holistic score because the writing and language trait scores are both influenced by linguistic indices. While automated writing evaluation systems utilized for feedback and revision purposes show effectiveness in improving the writing quality of English learners--attributed to corrective feedback on grammar and mechanics (Zhai & Ma, 2023)--we contend that evaluation for the purpose of goal-setting and providing responsive writing instruction should be genre-based (Dostal et al., 2021), based on linguistic analysis of deaf students' language (Kilpatrick & Wolbers, 2020), and include informal assessments (Pizzo & Chilvers, 2019) that can capture how they deploy multilingual, multimodal linguistic resources during writing. Future studies should continue to explore the ways that automated scoring and feedback systems can be beneficial to the teaching and research of deaf writers, and ways in which they need further advancement.

Conclusion

This secondary qualitative study examined deaf high school students' writing to three prompts--one narrative and two argumentative, including a source-based task. Across writing samples, students' language and writing varied considerably in rhetorical choices, linguistic resources, and the ways they took up genre expectations. Using iterative thematic coding for writing and language traits, the analysis highlighted patterned differences in how students developed ideas, organized arguments, and drew on available language resources to meet task demands, underscoring that there was no single pathway to successful performance. While

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automated, trait-based scores were part of the assessment context, the findings primarily emphasize the breadth and complexity of students' composing and the importance of interpreting written products in relation to students' language histories and communicative repertoires.

Collectively, this study contributes evidence that secondary deaf students' writing is heterogeneous and context-dependent, pointing to the need for writing instruction that is responsive to diverse language practices, explicitly supports genre- and audience-based decision-making, and expands opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate writing competence in multiple ways. In this way, students are challenged to develop their writing while ensuring they receive specialized support for participating in education, work, and civic life.

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Tables

Table 1

Ratings of Students' Proficiency in ASL and Spoken English on a Scale of 1-5

	ASL <i>n</i> (%)	Spoken English <i>n</i> (%)
1 - Can express most anything	41 (54.6%)	18 (24%)
2 - Can express many things	22 (29.3%)	23 (30.7%)
3 - Difficulty expressing many things	8 (10.8%)	10 (13.3%)
4 - Difficulty expressing most things	1 (1.3%)	2 (2.7%)
5 - Does not use the language	3 (4%)	22 (29.3%)

Table 2

Language Use Across Programs

Language of Instruction, <i>n</i> (%)	
ASL and visual forms of English	33 (44%)
ASL with spoken English support	10 (13.3%)
Spoken English with sign support	20 (26.7%)
Spoken English with ASL/English interpreter	10 (13.3%)
Spoken English only	2 (2.7%)
Program Communication Philosophy, <i>n</i> (%)	
ASL/English bilingualism	45 (60%)
Total communication	19 (25.3%)
Spoken English with ASL/English interpreter	9 (12%)
Oral/Aural and/or listening-and-spoken-language	2 (2.7%)

Table 3
Overview of Thematic Domains and Representative Codes

Thematic Domain	Description	Representative Codes (examples)
Writing Development	Features related to construction of meaning within genre, including development of ideas, organization, and style	Claim or position stated; use of supporting reasons/examples; narrative event development; organization and sequencing; audience awareness; voice and style; use of dialogue or rhetorical moves
Identity and Lived Experience in Writing	Ways students drew on personal, cultural, linguistic, and experiential knowledge to construct meaning and engage with genre tasks	Personal and family experiences; mental health and trauma narratives; deaf identity and community references; references to schooling and language access; use of ASL-influenced structures or experiences
Language Features	Linguistic resources shaping clarity and expression, including vocabulary, sentence construction, and conventions	Word choice precision; sentence fluency; grammatical control; spelling and punctuation; repetition or limited vocabulary; run-on or fragmented sentences

Appendix A

Sample 1

Genre		Grade		Total Score	
Argumentative		10		6.3, low-scoring	
Trait Scores					
<i>Development of Ideas</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Word Choice</i>	<i>Sentence Fluency</i>	<i>Conventions</i>
1	1	1	1.1	1	1.2

My Hero is my dad. Respect nice.

My dad why for dad nice food eat give go.

My dad why food eats give go room.

My dad for food eats give go room give.

My dad for nice funny fun dad me like dad computer order pizza eat food hut that why.

My dad Give hot chick and dad Pizza Hut order buy go home dad talk people food dinner.

My dad gives me my food from dad hot chick.

My dad family food is fun talk dad me about why that is fun and funny.

My dad family Christmas give and Lego technic but form dad Cincinnati Bengals me dad give it.
me

My dad gives alls like Cincinnati Bengals mass dad fun funny form my family but dad you give
you alls dad.

Sample 2

Genre		Grade		Total Score	
Argumentative		12		8.5, low scoring	
Trait Scores					
<i>Development of Ideas</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Word Choice</i>	<i>Sentence Fluency</i>	<i>Conventions</i>
1.3	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.3

My hero is BTS. BTS is a singer of K-Pop. BTS are superstars. They are from South Korea. I was depressed and had anxiety. I was very lonely and lived in a dark world. BTS wrote songs about expressing their feelings in the songs. I kept listening to their songs it's inspiring and relieved me. BTS message me through Love Yourself: Answer song. They gave me the courage to love myself and be comfortable me when I have a hard time. I felt like BTS understand my

struggles and mental health. I very appreciate them for saving me and pulling me out of the dark world. My hero is BTS. I'll keep supporting them whole their lives.

Sample 3

Genre		Grade		Total Score	
Narrative		10		16, high scoring	
Trait Scores					
<i>Development of Ideas</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Word Choice</i>	<i>Sentence Fluency</i>	<i>Conventions</i>
2.4	2.5	2.5	2.7	3	2.9

Anna and my family went to surprise my aunts 5 years ago. I didn't know my mom already had a planned trip. she told me to pack up I was like why. I decided to ask my mom. she said that would be a surprise, so I packed up and ask my mom " can I bring my iPad". My mom shakes her head. She told my sibling to hurry and pack up. I got ready and stood waiting for my family to get ready. we rode in my uncle's car to drive an airplane. We arrive airplane. I look around the airplane it looks cool. to be honest, I was actually lost. I don't know where my family goes to. I was crying. the stranger tried to talk to me. I was like what I can't hear you. it took me to realize I'm deaf. I ran away from them. I try to find my family, but I was like really? because I saw my brother looking at his phone. I kicked his leg. I said " thanks so much to lost me ". my brother said "my bad.." I roll eyes at him I found my mom and told my mom that he is mean to me. my mom yelled at my brother I showed him my devil smile. we were on an airplane. it is pretty confusing where we would sit. we found where we sat. I keep asking my mom where are we going. it made me enjoy the watched cloud. we arrived in Las Vegas. it is a pretty state. I saw my first aunt live here. I got biggest happy and cried to see my first aunt because we had been talking through my mom's phone. we went to Disneyland. I only have good remember. which makes me proud to write.

Sample 4

Genre		Grade		Total Score	
Narrative		10		17.1, high scoring	
Trait Scores					
Development of Ideas	Organization	Style	Word Choice	Sentence Fluency	Conventions

2.7	2.7	2.7	3	3.1	2.9
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Hi, My name is Lj. I have a funny story to share.

I have two pet cats, Smokey and Mingi. Mingi has blonde hair with white stripes on his body. Smokey is all gray with a few white lines and spots. They both were stray cats from Philadelphia. My family and I adopted them when they were a baby in May 2021. Mingi is a quiet, chill, and big cat that loves to eat and sleep. Smokey loves to cause trouble and knock things down. She loves running around the house.

One day, it was about 10 pm at night. I was walking around my house barefooted, checking the doors and window to see if they were locked. I went to front door and turned the doorknob to see if it was locked. It was open, by the time I was closing the door. Smokey quickly ran out the door. I got so scared. I went outside and closed the door so my other cat doesn't run away. I saw her hiding under the bush, I approached to her slowly, snapping my fingers and calling her name. "Smokey, come here pretty" and when I was about to pick her up. She bolted and ran towards the street. I started chasing her like crazy. my feet were hurting from the rocky pavement. She went under my dads black car. I lied down on my stomach on the cold cement, stretching my arms out to grab her. "Smokey, its literally 10 pm, its too cold and dark for this crap." I said. I thought of a plan. I pretended to charge to her. when I did that, she ran out the car and I quickly got up and chased her. I grabbed her and brought her back the the house. When I tried opening the door, it was locked. I banged on the door and rang the doorbell. I peeked through the window and saw my mother walking down the stairs. She opened the door and said "What the hell happened?", then started laughing. I was panting so hard. I never ran this crazy. I felt like I lost around 5 pounds from that chase.

So yeah, that was a short funny story I wanted to share. Hope you guys liked it!