SMART

Year 7 writing exemplars

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

Introduction

These exemplars and the accompanying feedback are written using the year-level prompt for assessment window 1. Each exemplar illustrates the level of writing quality for this year-level that would achieve the assigned scores; all scores were produced by SMART's Vantage scoring system.

There are six writing exemplars in this set, with total scores ranging from the highest scoring at 29/30 to the lowest scoring at 5/30. Across the exemplars, most individual scores from 1 to 6 for each criterion in the rubric are covered. The rubric is available here: Writing to Persuade Rubric

The writing samples are intended to show a range of student achievement and at this stage they are not equated with curriculum expectations. This is a process that will take place after assessment window 1 closes, and at that point raw scores and exemplars at each year-level will be linked to progress descriptors.

For ease of use we have provided the writing progress marker from the Reporting to Parents Guidelines on this page. Use the writing progress marker information as your guide to curriculum expectations for this year-level; it outlines what students who are **proficient** in writing are expected to be able to do by the end of the year.

These exemplars, scores, and accompanying feedback can be used to support teachers to:

- mark any pieces of writing that SMART cannot (e.g. pieces that are too short). Find the exemplars that most closely match the student's piece of writing to inform your scoring decisions
- confirm or change the AI-scoring for students' pieces of writing. Find the exemplars that most closely match the AI-assisted scoring for a student's piece of writing to determine whether the scores can be confirmed or need adjustments.

Note that the writing samples and the accompanying feedback have been produced with the assistance of AI. They will be updated later in the year, to incorporate information from the standard setting, scaling and equating processes, which will make explicit how the exemplars align with curriculum expectations.

Year 7 — Dangerous Sport Should Be Banned

Year 7 writing progress marker

By the end of Year 7, students who are **proficient** in writing, can:

- use keyboarding efficiently, with fluency and accuracy
- spell most words correctly, including topic-specific vocabulary, and deliberately craft sentences using a range of punctuation accurately
- write multi-paragraph texts for specific purposes, organising information and ideas using structures that best suit the purpose and audience
- when writing to entertain, structure paragraphs to create a clear sequence of events and provide a resolution or sense of closure that follows logically from the rest of the text
- when writing to inform, clearly introduce the topic, organise ideas and information logically into paragraphs, and incorporate headings and visual features such as illustrations, charts, and tables
- when writing to persuade, introduce a preferred position, support it with clear reasons and relevant evidence, and conclude by restating their position.

Year 7 writing prompt

Most people enjoy playing sports from time to time, but while some sports are safe, others can be very risky.

Think about a sport or activity that some people believe is too dangerous and should be banned. Decide whether you think the sport should be banned or allowed to continue.

Write a persuasive article for a school website. Persuade the reader **either** that the sport should be banned **OR** that the sport should be allowed to continue.

Remember to include reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Score 5 and 6 Exemplar, Year 7: total score 29/30

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Feedback for Score 5 and 6 Exemplar, Year 7

Audience and Purpose [6/6]

The response is thorough and insightful. The article has an appropriate and consistent register. The position — ban motocross — is established in the opening paragraph and sustained through five paragraphs. The response addresses the costs to families and communities waiting at home, and asks readers to consider whether they should encourage people they care about to take part. The argument covers danger from crashes, danger from mechanical failure under competitive pressure, pit-stop safety failures, and a counterargument paragraph.

Content Development/Elaboration [6/6]

Four elaborated danger arguments are outlined in the response: crash danger (concentration, competitive pressure, physical consequence); mechanical failure (hypothetical scenario, rhetorical questions, family cost argument); pit-stop failures under competitive pressure (safety compromised by win-focus); and counterargument paragraph (acknowledges riders are impressive athletes, addresses the 'they wear gear' objection, addresses the 'they are professionals' objection).

Why motocross should be banned

Most people believe that a lot of things happen for a reason. Every week, New Zealanders get hurt in sporting accidents, and even though most are genuine accidents, some are injuries that are almost certain to happen when you are involved in an extreme risk activity. People who are involved in motocross go out to race every weekend knowing that something might happen that very day. Motocross can be dangerous in many ways, including crashes at high speed, fires when fuel ignites, and the fact that mechanical failures can happen even when bikes have been carefully checked before a race. This sport is one where you know that one day you will pay a price. Whether it is a serious injury or even death, motocross is dangerous in a lot of different ways, and it should be banned.

Even though we do not like to hear it, crashes in motocross are not rare. It is not always possible to maintain full concentration on a rough track while also pushing yourself to win. Motocross riders face this pressure every single race. When you can feel another rider right behind you and you know they want to take your position, it is almost impossible not to react. Then, in a split second, the front wheel slides on a rut or the bike lands at the wrong angle, and you end up losing control. Other riders, marshals, and spectators rush over hoping you are okay. While you are lying on the track unable to move, you do not always know what has happened or how badly you are hurt. And even though you might not admit it to anyone, part of your mind is already wondering how the race ended.

As bad as crashes may be, I would personally say that a mechanical failure during a race is even more frightening. Imagine a bike breaking down on a jump approach at full speed, with no warning. Doesn't that seem like a situation where serious injury or death becomes almost unavoidable? Mechanical failures are one of the most common causes of motocross accidents. As unfair as it seems, it is not always the rider's fault. Is there really any way to prevent it completely? The honest answer is that you would have to stop racing. It is understandable that you love this sport and want to take that risk, but it is in some ways unfair to the people at home who are waiting for you to come back safely. There are many other exciting sports in New Zealand, and choosing a safer one gives you more time to enjoy them without putting yourself or others at risk.

Finally, during a race, bikes must sometimes be quickly serviced while the clock is running. When this happens, mechanics work as fast as possible to fix whatever has gone wrong. Even if they know they should take their time for safety reasons, winning is the priority. This means bikes are sometimes sent back on the track before everything is properly checked. This causes riders to either race with an unresolved problem, or to rejoin the race at dangerous speed and risk colliding with other riders. Safety must come first, and the structure of motocross competition makes that almost impossible to guarantee. Before you or anyone you care about gets involved in a sport, you need to understand the dangers and ask honestly whether they can be prevented. Motocross is not one of those sports where they can.

People love motocross for all sorts of reasons, and the riders are genuinely impressive athletes. Everyone knows the sport is dangerous, but they continue to do it. Is it really possible to race week after week knowing you are putting your life on the line? I believe that if motocross were banned, fewer accidents would happen and more people would live full, healthy lives. You may have reasons to disagree with everything I have said here. You might say that riders are skilled professionals who wear protective gear. But gear will not fully protect you from the forces involved in a high-speed crash, and skill will not prevent a mechanical failure. If people took the risks of this sport more seriously, they would understand why banning motocross is the right thing to do.

Structure [5/6]

The response includes an engaging opening that establishes the position, four body paragraphs each with a distinct danger argument, and a counterargument paragraph that is dedicated and substantive. The concluding paragraph ends with a conditional call to action.

Language Use, Choice, and Style [6/6]

Rhetorical questions are used purposefully in two consecutive paragraphs ('Doesn't that seem like… Is there really any way to prevent it completely?'). Direct reader address is sustained throughout ('you,' 'you would have to stop racing'). Short emphatic sentences are used for impact. Voice is consistent and persuasive. NZ contextualisation is natural (ACC implied, local clubs).

Writing Conventions, Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling [6/6]

Near-perfect accuracy throughout a sustained piece. Grammar is correct throughout. The apostrophe in 'Doesn't' and possessives are correct. All words spelled correctly. No errors interfere with communication.

Score 3, 4 and 5 Exemplar, Year 7: total score 21/30

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Feedback for Score 3, 4 and 5 Exemplar, Year 7

Audience and Purpose [5/6]

The article is written with an appropriate register. The position is precise and sustained across six paragraphs. The response addresses systemic costs (family impact, ACC, hospital bed days) and engages with pro-motocross arguments with genuine specificity.

Content Development/Elaboration [4/6]

Three distinct danger dimensions are elaborated on in the response: rider injuries (specific types, long-term consequences); bystander and marshal risk (NZ club context); and family and public health system costs. The counterargument accepts three arguments (consent, equipment, freedom) before rebutting each specifically.

Why motocross must be banned

Imagine watching someone you care about fly off a motocross bike at sixty kilometres an hour, land at the wrong angle, and not get up. This is not a rare worst-case scenario in motocross. It is a routine occurrence. Motocross is a sport in which riders race modified motorcycles at high speed over outdoor tracks packed with jumps, sharp corners, and unpredictable terrain. It is visually spectacular. It is also catastrophically dangerous, and New Zealand should ban it.

The dangers that riders face are not merely serious. They are catastrophic and often permanent. Head injuries, even in helmeted riders, are the leading cause of death in the sport. This is because a helmet is designed to reduce impact force, not to absorb the full energy of a human body thrown against the ground from a height of six or more metres at racing speed. Beyond head injuries, broken collarbones, fractured vertebrae, and shattered wrists are so common in motocross that experienced riders treat them not as possibilities but as inevitabilities. Many competitors who race throughout their teenage years carry the physical consequences into adulthood: chronic back problems, restricted mobility, and the accumulated neurological effects of repeated concussions.

The danger does not stop with the rider. Spectators, marshals, and officials at motocross events have been seriously injured when bikes leave the track during crashes. At many New Zealand club-level events, marshals are volunteers with minimal training and almost no time to react when a crash occurs. A sport whose danger extends beyond its own willing participants cannot be defended on the grounds of individual freedom alone.

The human cost of motocross extends further still, into families and into the public health system. Behind every serious motocross injury there is a family affected by it: parents who have sat in surgical waiting rooms, partners who have become full-time carers, children who have grown up with a parent in chronic pain. These costs never appear in the sport's promotional materials. They appear in ACC claims, in hospital bed days, and in the long aftermath of decisions made at speed.

Supporters of the sport will argue that riders freely choose to accept the risks, that protective equipment has improved dramatically, and that banning the sport would infringe on personal freedom. These arguments deserve genuine engagement. Yes, riders consent. But consent does not neutralise the risk to bystanders and officials who did not consent. Equipment has improved, but the forces generated in a motocross crash still exceed what any current gear can fully absorb. And personal freedom has never been unlimited: we already prohibit activities that create unreasonable risk of serious injury or death to participants and bystanders alike.

Motocross produces extraordinary riders and genuinely exciting competition. That is not in dispute. But the extraordinary ability of those riders does not change the extraordinary danger of the sport or the predictable, serious, and often permanent harm it causes. New Zealand has a responsibility to protect its people. It is time to ban motocross.

Structure [4/6]

The response consists of a vivid scenario hook, three danger body paragraphs, family cost paragraph, counterargument paragraph, and a strong conclusion. Transitional language is varied and purposeful.

Language Use, Choice, and Style [5/6]

Precise and rhetorically sophisticated. Vivid scenario opener, emphatic contrast sentences, specific physical detail, controlled emotional appeal around family impact. NZ context embedded naturally (ACC, club events, volunteer marshals).

Writing Conventions, Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling [3/6]

Grammar, punctuation and spelling all correct.

Score 3 and 4 Exemplar, Year 7: total score 19/30

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Feedback for Score 3 and 4 Exemplar, Year 7

Audience and Purpose [4/6]

The article establishes a strong persuasive purpose from the beginning and maintains it throughout. The writer clearly understands that the audience is readers on a school website and shapes the argument accordingly. The position is direct, sustained, and well defended. The piece also strengthens its purpose by acknowledging the opposing view.

Content Development/Elaboration [4/6]

The content is strongly developed and tightly connected to the task. The writer explains not just that base jumping is dangerous, but why it is different from ordinary sporting risk. The ideas about lack of room for error, parachute failure, and unpredictable environments are all specific and persuasive. The contrast between injury in other sports and death in base jumping is especially strong.

Why base jumping should be banned

Many sports involve risk, but most of them still allow room for training, recovery, and mistakes. Base jumping is different. It is not just a challenging activity. It is a sport where one small error can become a fatal one within seconds. For that reason, I believe base jumping should be banned.

The main problem with base jumping is that there is almost no margin for error. People jump from cliffs, towers, or buildings and depend completely on a parachute opening at the right moment. If it opens too late, twists, or fails, there may be no time to fix the situation. In many sports, a mistake might lead to injury. In base jumping, it can lead directly to death. That makes the activity far more dangerous than most sports people normally compare it with.

Another reason it should be banned is that the danger does not come only from the jumper. The environment itself is unpredictable. Wind can change quickly, visibility can drop, and landing areas are not always safe. Even an experienced person can be caught by conditions they cannot control. That means the risk is built into the activity itself, not just caused by carelessness.

Some people argue that adults should be free to choose dangerous activities. I understand that point, because people often believe personal choice should matter most. However, personal choice does not automatically make something reasonable as a sport. A sport should test skill, courage, and control, but it should not rely so heavily on surviving extreme danger. Base jumping is simply too risky, and that is why I think it should be banned.

Structure [3/6]

The structure is deliberate and cohesive. The article begins by framing the wider issue of risky sports, then narrows to the claim about base jumping. It develops two clear lines of reasoning, then addresses a counterargument before closing with a firm conclusion. Each paragraph has a clear persuasive role, and the progression feels controlled rather than list-like.

Language Use, Choice, and Style [4/6]

The language is precise, purposeful, and suitably mature for Year 7. Words and phrases such as “fatal,” and “unpredictable,” strengthen the article. The tone is serious and credible. The voice sounds thoughtful and well-judged rather than exaggerated.

Writing Conventions, Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling [4/6]

Sentence boundaries are secure, punctuation is appropriate, and spelling supports smooth reading. Paragraphing is clear and reinforces the structure of the argument.

Score 3 and 4 Exemplar, Year 7: total score 16/30

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Feedback for Score 3 and 4 Exemplar, Year 7

Audience and Purpose [3/6]

The writer clearly understands that the article is meant to persuade readers on a school website. The position is stated early and stays consistent throughout the article. The response stays focused on the argument instead of slipping into retelling or irrelevant detail. The ending returns clearly to the main claim, which helps the article feel complete. Most sentences are correctly structured and support clear reading.

Content Development/Elaboration [3/6]

The writer gives several strong and relevant reasons, including the lack of recovery time, parachute failure, difficult locations, and changing conditions. These points are clearly explained and help show why base jumping is unusually dangerous. The response also includes a counterargument and answers it appropriately. The development is effective, although less layered and nuanced than needed for a higher score. Sentences provide enough detail to make the argument convincing.

Base jumping is too dangerous to be a sport

Base jumping might look exciting, but I think it is too dangerous to be treated like a normal sport. It involves jumping from a great height and trusting that everything will go exactly right. If something goes wrong, the result can be extremely serious.

One reason base jumping should be banned is that there is very little time to recover from a mistake. A parachute could open badly or not open properly at all. If that happens, the jumper may not have enough time to fix the problem before landing. That makes the sport far more dangerous than many others.

Another problem is that base jumping often happens in difficult places. Wind, weather, and landing conditions can all make the jump even more risky. Even experienced people can be caught out by changing conditions. This means the danger is not only about the jumper's skill.

Some people would say that people should be allowed to choose this kind of activity. I can understand that idea, but I still think base jumping is too dangerous. A sport should be challenging, but it should not be built around such a high chance of disaster. That is why I believe base jumping should be banned.

Structure [3/6]

The structure is secure and easy to follow. The article begins with the position, moves into two main reasons, then addresses the opposing view before ending with a restated claim. This creates a clear persuasive shape. The heading supports the article form well. The paragraphing is purposeful, and the reader can follow the reasoning without difficulty. The structure is mostly unified.

Language Use, Choice, and Style [3/6]

The language is appropriate, controlled, and persuasive. Words such as “recover,” “conditions,” “challenging,” and “disaster” help sharpen the article’s message. The tone is serious and audience-aware and the writer sounds confident and clear. Sentences show good control with some natural variety, though they are less precise and expressive than would be needed for a higher score.

Writing Conventions, Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling [4/6]

The response shows effective control of conventions. Grammar and punctuation are mostly secure, and spelling does not interfere with the message. Paragraphing helps organise the ideas clearly. Sentence boundaries are well handled, including in longer sentences. Any minor weakness don’t significantly interfere with meaning.

Score 2 Exemplar, Year 7: total score 10/30

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Feedback for Score 2 Exemplar, Year 7

Audience and Purpose [2/6]

The response does establish a position and clearly tries to persuade readers that base jumping should be banned. The task is recognisably understood, and the title helps signal the purpose. However, the control of persuasion is still basic, and much of the article sounds like forceful opinion rather than a carefully built argument for the reader. The ending gives the piece a sense of completion, but the purpose is still weakly controlled. The frequent errors interfere with clear communication.

Content Development/Elaboration [2/6]

There are relevant ideas here: high places, parachute failure, lack of time to fix problems, and changing weather conditions. These points do connect clearly to the task and stop the response from feeling empty. However, the development is uneven and harder to follow because spelling, wording, and sentence control interfere with clarity. Some ideas are repeated rather than extended. The support is partial rather than strong, and the reader has to work to understand the reasoning.

Ban base jumping

Base jumping shud be banned because it is dangerus and people can die doing it and they jump from high places and trust the parachute and that is a big risk for anyone. If the parachute dosent work right then there may not be enough time and that is why I think it is to dangerous for people to call it a sport because it goes rong to fast and then you cant fix it.

Another reason is that wind and wether can change things and make the jump worse and I think that matters alot. It looks exciting but that dosent make it safe and there are safer sports pepol can do instead and thats why I think base jumping shud not be allowed for sport and things like that.

Structure [2/6]

This response shows an attempt at paragraphing, which fits Score Point 2. The first paragraph gives the main position and danger-based reasoning, and the second adds another reason. However, the organisation is still weak because the internal flow of each paragraph is loose and hard to track. Several ideas run together without clean shaping. The overall structure remains basic and only partly effective.

Language Use, Choice, and Style [2/6]

The language shows a basic attempt to persuade, but the word choice and sentence control are limited. There are noticeable spelling mistakes such as “shud,” “dangerus,” “dosent,” “to dangerous,” “rong,” “wether,” “alot,” and “pepol,” and these problems interfere with smooth communication. The tone remains school-appropriate, but the voice is weak and not carefully shaped for the audience. The article sounds rough rather than deliberate.

Writing Conventions, Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling [2/6]

Errors are frequent enough to interfere with clear communication, but not so severe that the message becomes impossible to follow. Sentence boundaries are weak, punctuation is limited, spelling mistakes are noticeable throughout, and grammar is inconsistent. The reader can still work out the main point, but not easily or smoothly.

Score 1 Exemplar, Year 7: total score 5/30

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Feedback for Score 1 Exemplar, Year 7

Audience and Purpose [1/6]

The response only partly addresses the task. It does suggest that base jumping is bad and should not be allowed, but the position is not clearly shaped or strongly maintained as a persuasive article for readers. The writing feels more like a stream of thoughts than a controlled article. There is no real ending, and the sense of audience is weak. Communication of purpose is limited and incomplete.

Content Development/Elaboration [1/6]

A few relevant ideas appear, such as high places, parachute failure, wind, cliffs, and the sport being too risky. However, these ideas are only touched on briefly and are not properly developed. Some parts are vague or repetitive, and the writing circles around the same point instead of building reasons clearly. The content feels scattered and reaction-based rather than like a built argument. The reader can see bits of relevance, but the writing does not shape them into a clear case.

base jumping is bad because pepol jump of high stuff and then the parachute has to work and if it dont then its really bad and thats why i think it shouldnt be there because it is to dangerus and not good and it can go wrong real fast and there is wind and cliffs and all that and i seen videos of extreme things and they look crazy and thats why i think this one is to much and not safe for sports and school kids should know its bad because if somthing goes rong then thats it and i dont think things like that should be around like a normal sport because its just to risky and thats what im saying about it for this writing

Structure [1/6]

This response does not use paragraphing. It reads as one long stream of writing, and the ideas blur together without clear organisation. There is no real shaping into introduction, body, and conclusion. The lack of structure significantly weakens clarity and makes the article hard to follow.

Language Use, Choice, and Style [1/6]

The language is simple, repetitive, and weakly controlled. There are noticeable spelling and word choice issues such as “pepol,” “of,” “dont,” “to dangerus,” “somthing,” and “rong,” and there are also places where repetition weakens the writing. The tone is inconsistent and does not sound carefully shaped for readers. The run-on style makes the voice feel unstructured and underdeveloped. Overall, the language control is very limited.

Writing Conventions, Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling [1/6]

Errors significantly interfere with communication, not just slightly. There are major sentence-boundary problems, very limited punctuation, inconsistent capitalisation, spelling problems, and weak grammar throughout. The reader can still work out parts of the meaning, but it takes effort, and some parts remain unclear.