

Writing IEP Goals — 3rd – 5th Grade

17 measurable goals written to IDEA standards. Replace [student] and [date]; adjust criteria to the student's baseline.

By 3rd grade, writing goals should separate composing (ideas, organization) from mechanics (spelling, punctuation) — a student can have strong ideas and weak mechanics, or the reverse, and lumping them into one goal hides which one actually needs the intervention.

PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

1. [student] will write a paragraph with a topic sentence, 3 supporting details, and a closing sentence, with 80% of elements present, across 4 of 5 writing samples.
2. [student] will stay on-topic throughout a paragraph, with no more than 1 unrelated sentence, across 4 of 5 samples.
3. [student] will use transition words (first, next, because, however) to connect ideas, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 samples.

WRITTEN EXPRESSION FLUENCY (CBM)

4. Given a 3-minute writing probe on a grade-level prompt, [student] will produce [X] or more correct writing sequences, an increase from a documented baseline of [Y], across 3 consecutive probes.
5. [student] will write a multi-paragraph response (2 or more paragraphs) within [X] minutes, with 80% of required elements present, across 4 of 5 samples.

MECHANICS & EDITING

6. [student] will apply correct end punctuation and capitalization across a full paragraph, with 90% accuracy across 4 of 5 samples.
7. [student] will identify and correct run-on sentences and sentence fragments in their own writing, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 samples.
8. [student] will use a self-editing checklist to review and revise their own writing, completing at least 3 of 4 checklist items independently, across 4 of 5 tasks.

SPELLING & VOCABULARY

9. [student] will spell grade-level words with common patterns (r-controlled vowels, prefixes, suffixes) with 80% accuracy on a dictated probe, across 4 of 5 trials.
10. [student] will use a dictionary, spell-checker, or word wall to correct misspelled words in a draft, with 80% success, across 4 of 5 tasks.

WRITING PROCESS & GENRE

11. [student] will use a graphic organizer to plan a paragraph or essay before drafting, independently, across 4 of 5 writing tasks.
12. [student] will write a narrative with a clear beginning, middle, and end, with 80% of story elements present, across 4 of 5 samples.
13. [student] will write an opinion or informative piece with a stated topic and at least 2 supporting reasons or facts, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 samples.
14. [student] will revise a draft based on specific feedback, making at least 2 targeted changes, across 4 of 5 tasks.

KEYBOARDING & INDEPENDENCE

15. [student] will type a short response using correct home-row finger placement, at a rate of [X] words per minute with 90% accuracy, across 3 consecutive probes.
16. [student] will complete an independent writing task for [X] minutes with no more than 1 redirection, across 3 consecutive observations.
17. [student] will use an assistive writing tool (word prediction, speech-to-text, graphic organizer template) with increasing independence, across 4 of 5 tasks.

Using These Writing Goals at 3rd – 5th Grade

Ideas and mechanics are different goals

A paragraph goal about topic sentences and supporting details measures something different from a mechanics goal about punctuation — write them separately so the data is actually useful.

Transition words are teachable and measurable

Counting whether a student used a transition word is a concrete, countable way to measure “organization” instead of guessing at a vague quality rating.

A self-editing checklist turns editing into a process, not a hope

Give the student the same 3-4 items every time — capital letter, end punctuation, spelling, does it make sense — so the goal measures a repeatable habit.

Start tracking typing now

Even before it's the primary mode, an early keyboarding goal makes the eventual shift away from handwriting far less disruptive.

Every criterion here is a placeholder. Set the real number from this student's own baseline on a CBM-WE probe, not from a chart or a round number.

Tired of rebuilding these forms every year?

IEP Goal Writer also drafts your PLAAFP and progress notes from the same student profile — free to try at iepgoalwriter.pro