

Writing IEP Goals — Middle School

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

Text-based writing — citing evidence, explaining how it supports a claim — is where a lot of IEP writing goals stop being about handwriting and start being about analysis. Write the goal for the actual skill gap, not a generic “improve writing” target.

MULTI-PARAGRAPH ESSAY STRUCTURE

1. [student] will write a 5-paragraph essay with an introduction, 3 body paragraphs, and a conclusion, with 80% of structural elements present, across 4 of 5 writing samples.
2. [student] will write a clear thesis statement that previews the essay's main points, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 samples.
3. [student] will organize body paragraphs so each supports one main idea with evidence, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 samples.

EVIDENCE & TEXT-BASED WRITING

4. [student] will cite evidence from a text, quoted or paraphrased, using a correct citation format, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 samples.
5. [student] will explain how cited evidence supports their claim in at least [X] sentences of commentary per piece of evidence, across 4 of 5 samples.
6. [student] will respond to a text-based prompt within [X] minutes, addressing all parts of the prompt, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 samples.

MECHANICS, VOICE & WORD CHOICE

7. [student] will vary sentence structure (simple, compound, complex) within a piece of writing, using at least [X] sentence types, across 4 of 5 samples.
8. [student] will identify and correct their own grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors using a self-editing checklist, achieving 80% accuracy, across 4 of 5 tasks.
9. [student] will replace generic word choices with more precise or descriptive vocabulary when revising, in at least [X] instances per draft, across 4 of 5 tasks.

WRITING PROCESS & INDEPENDENCE

10. [student] will independently move through the writing process (plan, draft, revise, edit) for a given assignment, completing each stage, across 4 of 5 assignments.
11. [student] will incorporate feedback from a teacher or peer conference into a revised draft, making at least [X] targeted changes, across 4 of 5 tasks.
12. [student] will complete a written assignment within the given class period without significant off-task behavior, across 4 of 5 observed periods.

WRITTEN EXPRESSION FLUENCY & FUNCTIONAL WRITING

13. Given a 5-minute writing probe, [student] will produce [X] correct writing sequences, increasing from a baseline of [Y], across 3 consecutive probes.
14. [student] will type an assignment at a rate of [X] words per minute with 90% accuracy, across 3 consecutive typing probes.
15. [student] will write a functional piece (an email to a teacher, a short response to an application) using appropriate tone and format, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 samples.

NOTE-TAKING & SUMMARIZING

16. [student] will take notes on a lecture or reading using a taught format (outline, Cornell notes, graphic organizer), capturing at least [X]% of key points, across 4 of 5 tasks.
17. [student] will summarize a text or lecture in [X] sentences, including only the main ideas, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 tasks.

Using These Writing Goals at 6th – 8th Grade

Evidence and commentary are two different skills

A student can find a good quote and still not explain why it matters — measure the explanation separately from the citation.

Sentence variety is countable

Instead of “improve writing style,” count the sentence types actually used — it turns a vague goal into a checkable one.

The writing process only works if each stage is checked

A goal that just says “will write an essay” skips over whether the student actually planned, drafted, and revised — usually where the real support need is.

Include one functional writing sample

An email to a teacher requesting help is a real writing task worth its own goal line, not just a warm-up for the essay.

Citation formats and note-taking systems vary by class and subject — confirm which one this student's teachers actually use before writing it into a goal.

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