

BELDEN RUSSONELLO & STEWART

RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATIONS

Writing, a National Pastime, Takes New Forms

A Survey for the National Writing Project

February 2009

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I. Introduction

The 2009 National Writing Project/Belden Russonello & Stewart survey looks at public opinion on the importance of writing for work and personal life and how well we are preparing young Americans to write. This project tracks public opinion from two prior NWP/BRS surveys, conducted in 2005 and 2007; asks new questions regarding the writing Americans do in their lives; and explores how well they believe the country's public education is preparing students to succeed in the world.

The survey results show that Americans are writing a great deal, including in new ways with new technology, and see good writing skills as more necessary than in the past. Yet many express dissatisfaction with their own writing ability and with the job high schools are doing to train students to write clearly. A broad majority wants public education to place more emphasis on teaching students to write well.

The public opinion research reported here comes from a national telephone survey conducted by BRS from January 2 to 11, 2009. The survey was carried out among a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adults residing in the U.S. The questionnaire for the survey was written by BRS and approved by the National Writing Project. The demographic characteristics of the sample were matched to the most recent Census estimates and the data have been weighted statistically in order to bring age and education into their proper proportions. The margin of sampling error (or sampling tolerance) for the survey is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points at the .95 confidence level. A detailed methodology is appended to the report.

II. Executive Summary

Writing as a part of American life

Most Americans write regularly in one form or another, either at work or in their personal lives, such as writing correspondence to loved ones. Many are also writing using new media such as websites and blogs, and writing in ways that incorporate tools such as hyperlinks, images, audio and video.

- **Most of us do at least some writing of a personal nature.** The great majority of Americans (88%) reports writing letters or e-mails to friends or family at least sometimes – including a third (34%) who writes to others every day. Four in ten write in a personal journal or diary (43%) and almost the same number write e-mails or letters to elected officials or to a newspaper or magazine (39%).
- **Nearly six in ten (58%) write work-related e-mails**, including a third (33%) who do so every day.
- **One in three Americans communicates using new media**, including writing content for a website or blog (30%) or commenting on others' blog postings (33%). Many are also using technology to make their writing include more than text alone. Nearly six in ten say they incorporate images, audio, or video into documents (58%), and half include links to websites in what they write (50%).

Generational and educational differences in writing habits

Americans' prolific writing is not equally divided among all groups of people. Instead, generational and educational divides mark their writing habits.

- **Younger Americans write more and use new technology more often.** They are more likely than their older counterparts to write for websites or blogs and use technology such as images and hyperlinks in their writing. For example, while 69% of those under 45 use images, audio, or video in their writing, only 31% of those over 65 do so. Younger Americans are also more

likely than their elders to communicate with friends and family in writing and to write in personal journals.

- **Americans with higher levels of education write more and are more tech-savvy writers.** Those with college and post-graduate degrees are more likely to write for websites and blogs, use technology such as links and images in their writing, communicate in writing with friends and family, and write to elected officials. While 75% of those with post-graduate educations create links to websites in their writing, only 35% of those with high school degrees or less do so.

Writing viewed as increasing in importance

Americans believe that knowing how to write well is more important today than it was in the past. They see it as essential to success in college and white collar careers, and as important to success in blue collar jobs. They link learning to write with a host of other learning and intellectual skills.

- Eight in ten (80%) say there is **a greater need than there was twenty years ago for a person to be able to write well** in order to succeed.
- As we have found in our 2005 and 2007 surveys, **majorities see learning to write well as essential to succeeding** in college (67%) and in white collar and professional careers (65%). Three in ten see writing as essential to success in blue collar jobs (30%), and another 53% see it as important.
- Majorities also see writing as **essential to learning other skills**, including learning to read (59%), improving a person's grammar (59%), learning how to communicate effectively (59%), gaining a large vocabulary (57%), and learning to analyze and bring details together (54%). More than four in ten see learning to write as essential to improving critical thinking (46%), becoming more creative (44%), and gaining organizational skills (42%).

Concerns about writing skills and preparation

There is room to grow in ensuring that Americans have the writing skills they need for the new economy, according to the 2009 survey. Many are unsatisfied with their own ability to communicate in writing, and most believe that half or fewer of high school graduates have the writing skills they need to succeed at college or at work.

- **Four in ten Americans are less than totally satisfied with their written communication skills.** When asked to evaluate themselves on how well they

can communicate their thoughts in writing, thirty-five percent say they are satisfied only part of the time and six percent rarely satisfied. Six in ten (59%) are almost always satisfied. A majority gives the quality of writing instruction they received in school a grade of B (36%), C (22%), or below (6%) while only a third give their writing education a grade of A (35%).

- **Only 17% believe that when students graduate high school in the U.S., most have the writing skills they need for college**, and only 27% believe that most high school graduates who start work instead of going to college can write well enough to do their jobs effectively.
- **Confidence in college-level preparation is higher**, as six in ten (62%) believe that when students graduate college and start work, most can write well enough to do their jobs effectively.

Desire for improved writing education

The widespread belief that high school graduates lack the writing skills they need may lead a majority of Americans to support more emphasis on writing in public schools. Evidently the public does not believe it is acceptable to wait for college to teach students to write well.

- Three quarters (75%) say that our **public education system from kindergarten through high school should put more emphasis on teaching students to write well**, while only two in ten (22%) believe it puts enough emphasis on writing already and just two percent believe there should be less emphasis on writing in public education.

How to improve the teaching of writing

What would it look like for America's schools to do better at teaching their students to write well? According to the public, it would mean helping teachers more rather than testing more, teaching reading and writing at the same time, beginning to teach students to compose sentences and paragraphs relatively early, and using computers to help students learn. Attitudes on these questions have changed little since we first asked them in 2007.

- By a margin of two to one, the public sees more benefit in putting resources into **helping teachers teach writing** (66%) than in putting those resources into testing students to see how well they are learning to write (33%).
- By a margin of three to one, Americans believe that **writing and reading go hand in hand so students should learn them both at the same time** (74%),

rather than believing that children need to learn to read in order to learn to write (25%).

- **Begin to teach writing by second grade:** A large majority of Americans believes that second grade (20%), first grade (29%) or even earlier (18%) is the right time to start teaching students to write.
- **The public is still ambivalent about the role of new technology in learning to write.** Fifty-six percent say that computers and other new technologies are helpful in teaching students to write well, while 39% say they are harmful. At the same time, 51% agree that using computers to write makes students careless writers because they write so fast they do not think enough about what they are writing, compared to 47% who believe that computers enable students to become better writers because they write, revise, and edit more.

III. Detailed Findings

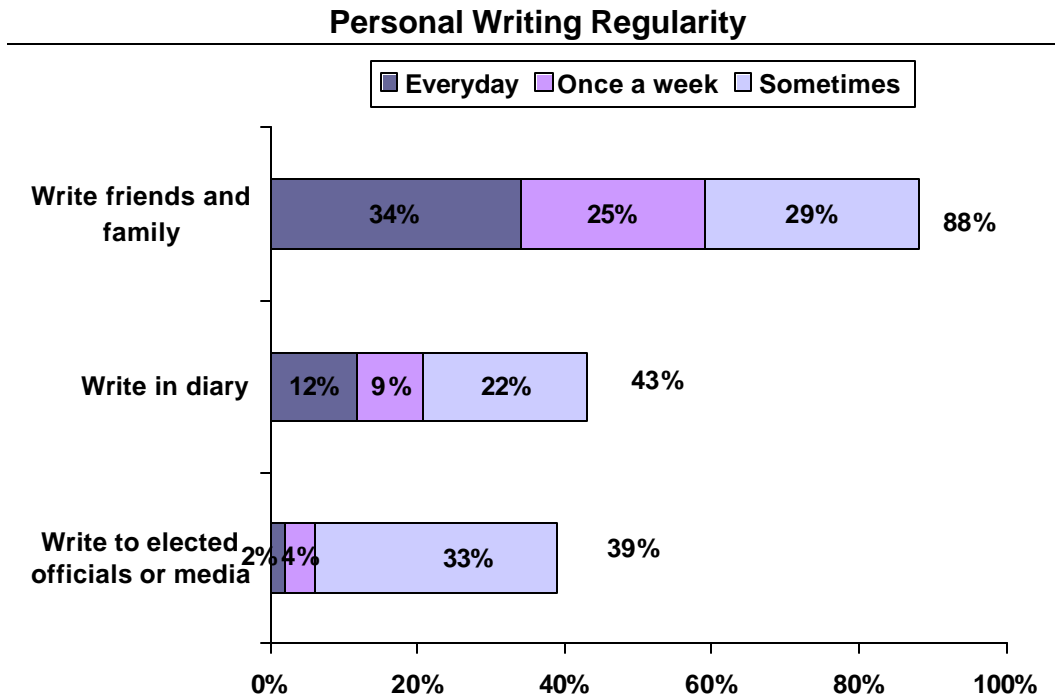
A. The value of writing

Most Americans practice one form or another of writing for personal purposes. In addition, as we have found in prior years, Americans see knowing how to write well as important for success in college or at work, and believe it is important for a host of other skills and abilities from building a large vocabulary to developing critical thinking skills.

Personal writing

Most Americans do at least some writing in their personal life. A majority writes letters or e-mails to family and friends, and significant minorities write in a personal journal or at least occasionally write to public officials or to the editor of a newspaper.

- Nearly nine in ten Americans (88%) “write letters or e-mails to friends or family” every day (34%), at least once a week (25%), or sometimes (29%). Those most likely to do so include younger people, especially women (95% of women under 55 do so at least sometimes); college graduates (98%), and post-graduates (97%); and those with household incomes over \$50,000 a year (95%).
- Four in ten (39%) “write e-mails or letters to elected officials or to a newspaper or magazine about [their] feelings on current issues.” Most of send this correspondence only sometimes (33%) while fewer do so once a week (4%) or every day (2%). The groups most likely to write to elected officials or publications include those with some college education (46% at least sometimes), a college degree (50%) or more (58%); and those with household incomes over \$50,000 a year (46%).
- Four in ten (43%) also “write in a personal journal or diary” every day (12%), once a week (9%) or sometimes (22%). Women (55% at least sometimes), especially younger women (60%), are more likely to write in a journal, as are African-Americans (53%).



Please tell me if you do each of the following every day, at least once a week, sometimes, or never:
 Q35. Write letters or e-mails to friends or family.
 Q36. Write in a personal journal or diary.
 Q37. Write e-mails or letters to elected officials or to a newspaper or magazine about your feelings on current issues.

Experience and confidence in their own writing in one context breeds writing in other contexts. For example, individuals who write the most at work are more likely to say that they engage in personal forms of writing, as are those who write for the web or use technology such as images or links in their writing. Also, confident writers – those satisfied with their writing ability – are more likely to correspond with friends, family and officials and to write diaries.

Writing in education

Americans view learning to write well as a primary part of education, with nearly nine in ten believing that it should be a requirement for high school graduation, and two-thirds seeing it as essential to college success. Americans also link learning to write to the development of a host of other important skills and abilities.

High school education: Americans rate writing well just below reading and basic mathematics in terms of the skills they want high school graduates to be able to demonstrate.

- More than eight in ten (84%) say knowing “how to write well” should be a graduation requirement.
- Virtually all Americans (96%) say that to “be able to do addition, subtraction, multiplication and division” should be required.
- The same number (95%) says the same of knowing “how to read well.”

These “Three Rs” are followed by several other subjects that a majority of Americans believes should be high school graduation requirements:

- Know American history and government (77%);
- Know how to use a computer (74%); and
- Have learned algebra (59%).

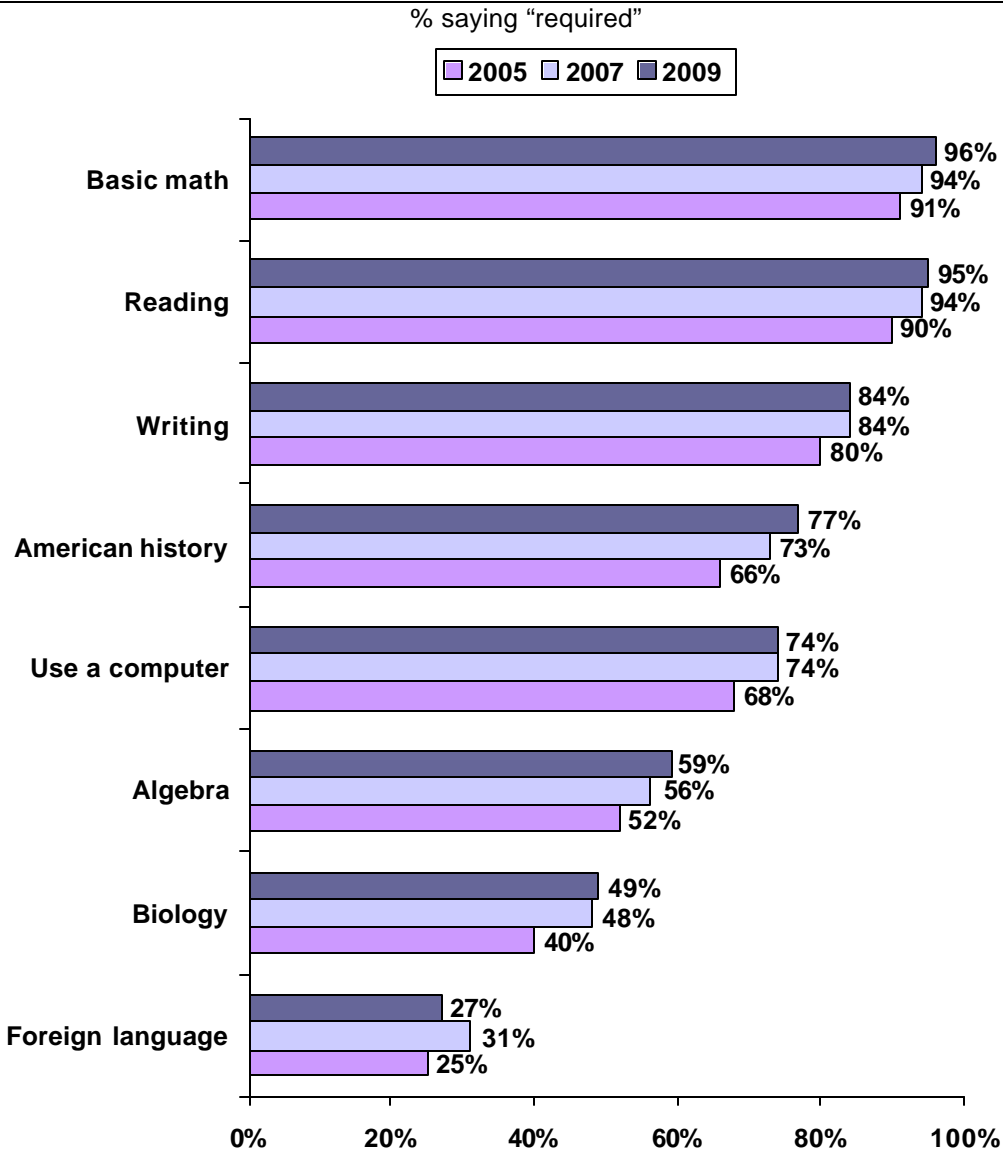
Fewer believe that having learned biology (49%) or knowing a foreign language (27%) should be graduation requirements.

There is no change from 2007 or 2005 in the order of priority Americans place on different aspects of a high school education, with math, reading and writing remaining at the top and foreign language skills remaining at the bottom. However, with the exception of foreign languages, support for requiring a full array of subject areas may be expanding. The following chart illustrates the incremental increases in Americans who say a variety of subjects should be required from 2005 until today.

Support for requiring writing is especially high among these groups:

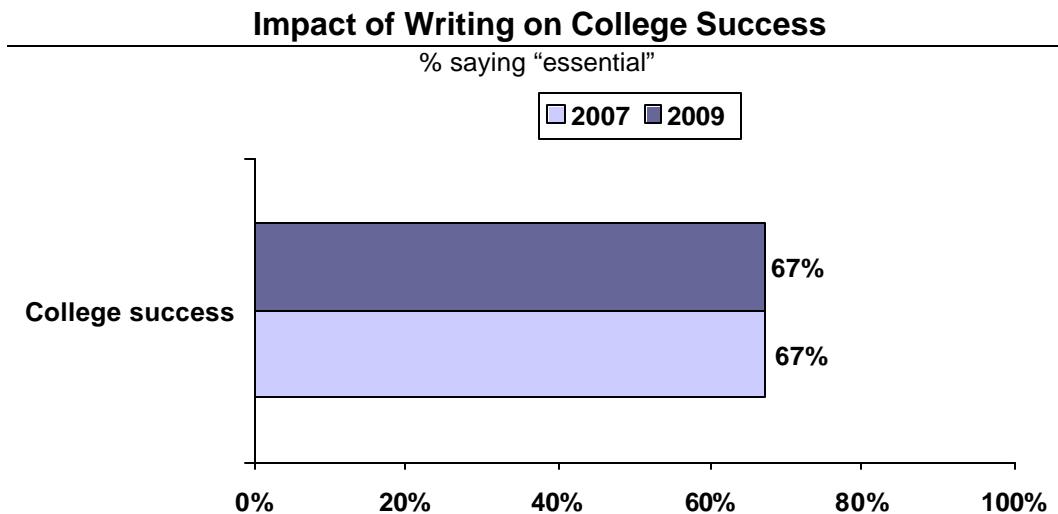
- Those with some college education (89%), college graduates (90%), and those with post-graduate education (88%);
- Northeasterners (91%); and
- Those who write between two and four (89%) or more than five pages a day (90%).

Views about Requirements for High School Graduation



Thinking about what students learn in high school, please tell me if you think each of the following skills should be required for high school graduation, is important but should not be a graduation requirement, is only somewhat important, or is not very important. Here's the first one, the student should: [READ ITEM] Should this be required for high school graduation, is important but should not be a graduation requirement, is only somewhat important, or is not very important?
 Q6. Be able to do addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Q5. Know how to read well.
 Q7. Know how to write well. Q10. Know American history and government. Q8. Know how to use a computer. Q3. Have learned algebra. Q9. Have learned biology. Q4. Know a foreign language.

College success: Two-thirds of Americans (67%) say that learning to write well is essential to succeeding in college, and nearly all the rest (31%) say that it is important. This enthusiasm has not changed since 2007.



Now, I'm going to ask you about the impact of learning to write well on several things.
 [RANDOMIZE Q23-Q33] [READ FULL QUESTION FOR EACH ITEM] How important is learning to write well to [READ ITEM], is it essential, important, not very important or not at all important?
 [IF RESPONDENT SAYS "VERY IMPORTANT" ASK: Is that essential or important?]
 Q31. Succeeding in college.

A belief in the essential need for good writing for college success is strongest among women (71%), especially mothers (76%), and individuals who write five pages a day or more (80%).

Relationship to other skills: Beyond formal education, Americans say that learning how to write well is important to the development of a wide range of other skills and abilities. A majority sees learning it as essential to the following characteristics, most of which are components of language and communication:

- Improving a person's grammar (59% essential, 38% important);
- Learning how to communicate effectively (59% essential, 37% important);
- Learning to read (59% essential, 36% important);
- Gaining a large vocabulary (57% essential, 38% important); and
- Learning to analyze and bring details together (54% essential, 42% important).

More than four in ten see learning to write well as essential to another set of characteristics that relate to how people can function and think about the world:

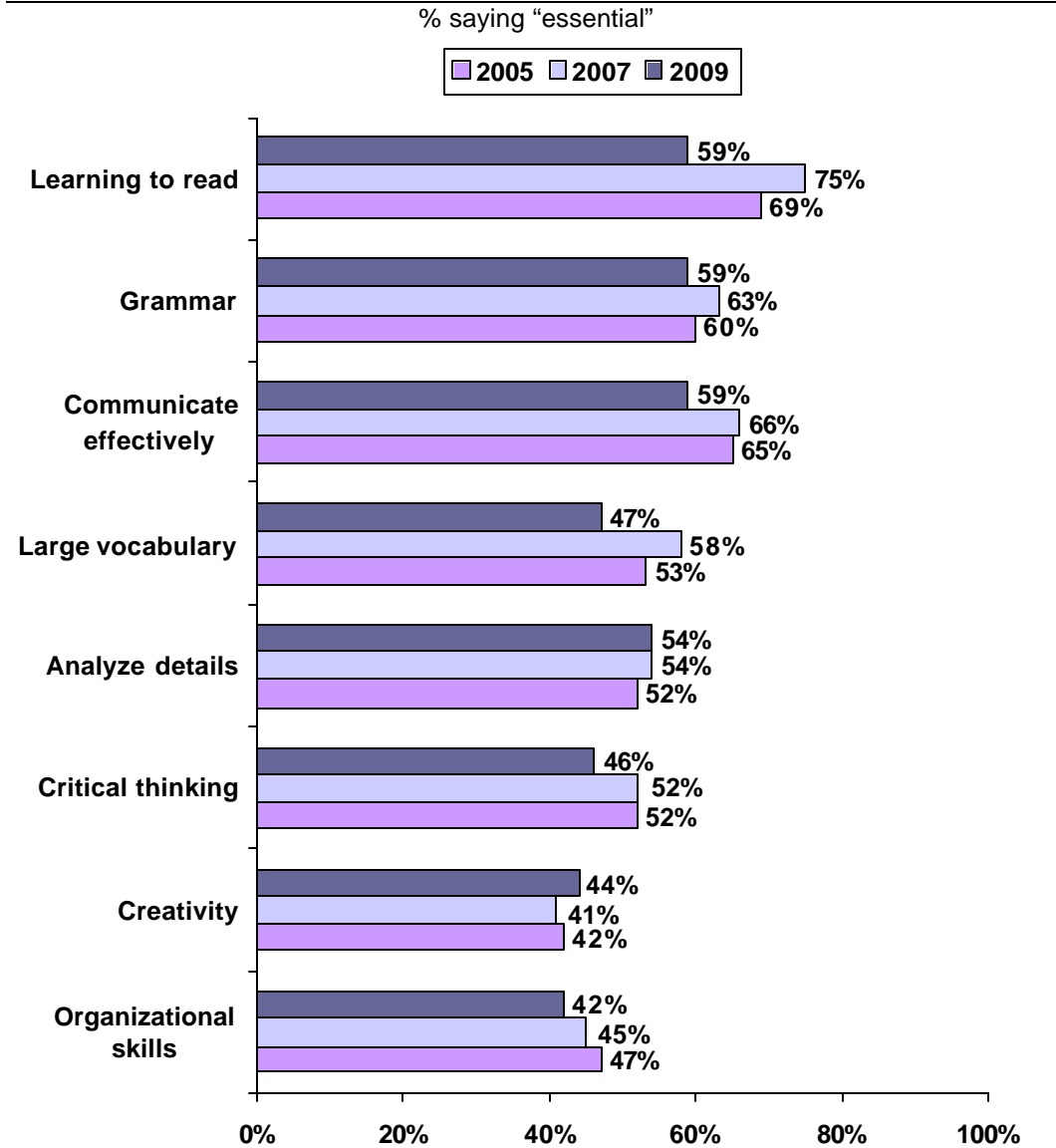
- Improving a person's critical thinking (46% essential, 48% important);
- Becoming more creative (44% essential, 44% important); and
- Gaining organizational skills (42% essential, 48% important).

There are several demographic differences in how Americans perceive the importance of writing to other skills.

- *Women* are more likely than men to see writing as essential to improving critical thinking (50% women, 41% men) and gaining organizational skills (46% women, 39% men).
- *College graduates and post-graduates* are more likely than those with less education to see writing as essential to communication skills (college 67%, post-graduate 69%), improving grammar (college 68%, post-graduate 66%), and improving critical thinking (college 52%, post-graduate 55%). In addition, those with a *post-graduate education* are more likely to see writing as essential to gaining a large vocabulary (66%).
- *Individuals who write five pages or more a day* are more likely to see writing as essential to all the skills tested except for creativity. Those who write two or more pages a day are more also more likely to see writing skills as essential to communication (66%), grammar (65%), and vocabulary (62%).
- *Those who are fully satisfied with their own writing skills* are also more likely to see writing as important to grammar (63%), vocabulary (62%), and analyzing and bringing details together (60%).

Since 2007, the percentages seeing writing as essential to learning to read and to building a large vocabulary appear to have dropped. The percentage of Americans saying it is essential to reading has dropped 16 percentage points from 75% to 59%, and the percentage seeing it as essential to vocabulary has dropped 11 percentage points from 58% to 47%. (These are findings that should be monitored in future research, to see if this is a trend or not.) Views of the importance of writing to the other abilities have remained unchanged.

Impact of Writing on Other Skills

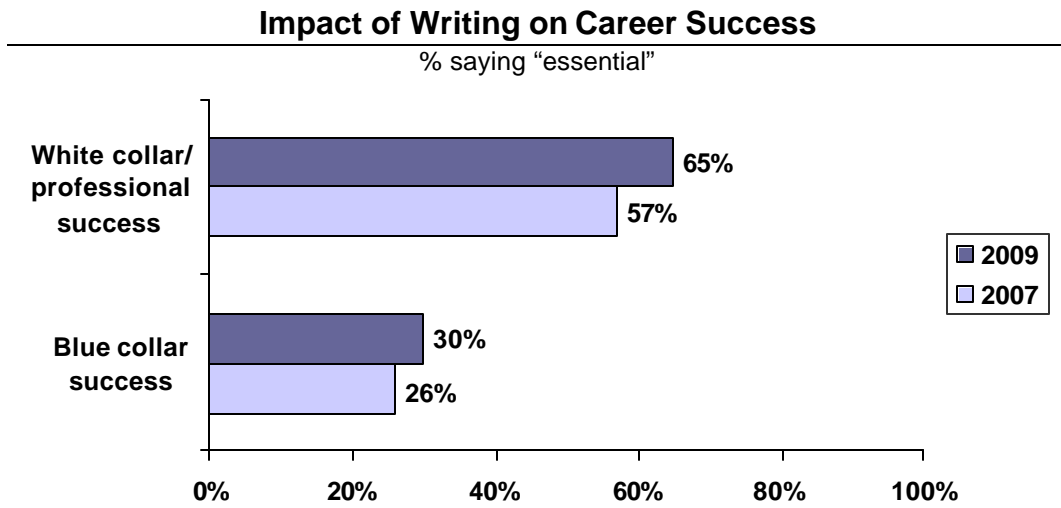


Now, I'm going to ask you about the impact of learning to write well on several things. [RANDOMIZE Q23-Q33] [READ FULL QUESTION FOR EACH ITEM] How important is learning to write well to [READ ITEM], is it essential, important, not very important or not at all important? [IF RESPONDENT SAYS "VERY IMPORTANT" ASK: Is that essential or important?] Q24. Learning how to communicate effectively. Q26. Improving a person's grammar. Q28. Learning to read. Q29. Gaining a large vocabulary. Q30. Learning to analyze and bring details together. Q23. Improving a person's critical thinking. Q25. Becoming more creative. Q27. Gaining organizational skills.

Writing at work

Relationship to career success generally: The American public sees writing ability as important to career success in all types of jobs. Most view being able to write as essential to success in white collar or professional jobs. Fewer say writing ability is essential to blue collar success, but do see it as important.

- Americans say the importance of writing to success at work has grown over the past decades. Eighty percent agree that “there is a greater need than there was twenty years ago for a person to be able to write well in order to succeed,” while only 18% believe there is less need now.
- Two-thirds of Americans (65%) say that learning to write well is essential to “succeeding in white collar and professional careers,” and another 32% say it is important. The number describing writing as essential to white collar success has grown eight percentage points from 57% since we first asked this question in 2007.
- Three in ten (30%) say that learning to write well is essential to “succeeding in blue collar jobs,” and 53% say it is important. This is little changed from 2007 (26% essential, 54% important).



Now, I'm going to ask you about the impact of learning to write well on several things.
 [RANDOMIZE Q23-Q33] [READ FULL QUESTION FOR EACH ITEM] How important is learning to write well to [READ ITEM], is it essential, important, not very important or not at all important?
 [IF RESPONDENT SAYS "VERY IMPORTANT" ASK: Is that essential or important?]
 Q32. Succeeding in white collar and professional careers.
 Q33. Succeeding in blue collar jobs.

The Americans who are especially likely to see writing skills as essential to success in *white collar and professional fields* include these demographic groups:

- People between the ages of 35 and 44 (73%);
- People with post-graduate education (75%);
- Mothers of children in school (74%); and
- People who write between two and four pages (72%) or five or more pages a day (80%).

Those more likely than others to see writing skills as essential in *blue collar fields* include the following:

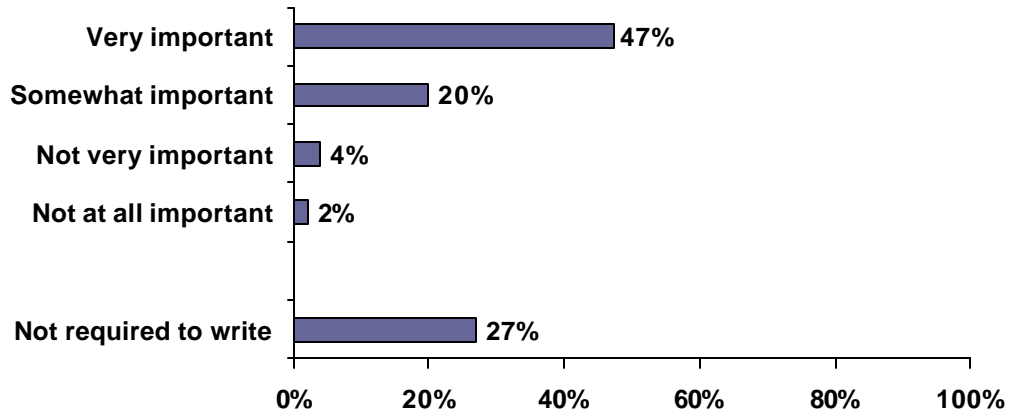
- Women over 55 (37%) and all people over 65 (36%);
- Hispanics (44%);
- Those with a high school education or less (37%);
- Those with household incomes under \$50,000 a year (36%); and
- Those who do not write at work (35%).

Writing in one's own job: In addition to being important to work and career in a general way, many Americans tell us that writing is a key part of their own job duties.

- Employed Americans say that writing is an important part of what they do at work. Forty-seven percent of those who are currently working say that strong writing skills are very important in performing their own particular job, and another 20% say writing skills are somewhat important. Those most likely to say that writing is very important in their jobs include women (52% of employed women); college graduates (69%) and those with post-graduate educations (83%); and those with household incomes of more than \$50,000 a year (55%).
- Nearly six in ten Americans “write work related e-mails” every day (33%), at least once a week (nine percent), or sometimes (16%).

Importance of Writing at One's Job

Among employed Americans



44. In your paid job or as a volunteer, do you sometimes have to write reports, correspondence, e-mail, or other text? Q46. IF YES IN Q44 AND EMPLOYED, N=737 In performing your own particular job, would you say that strong writing skills are very important, somewhat, not very or not at all important?

B. The teaching of writing: preparation for the workforce and adult life

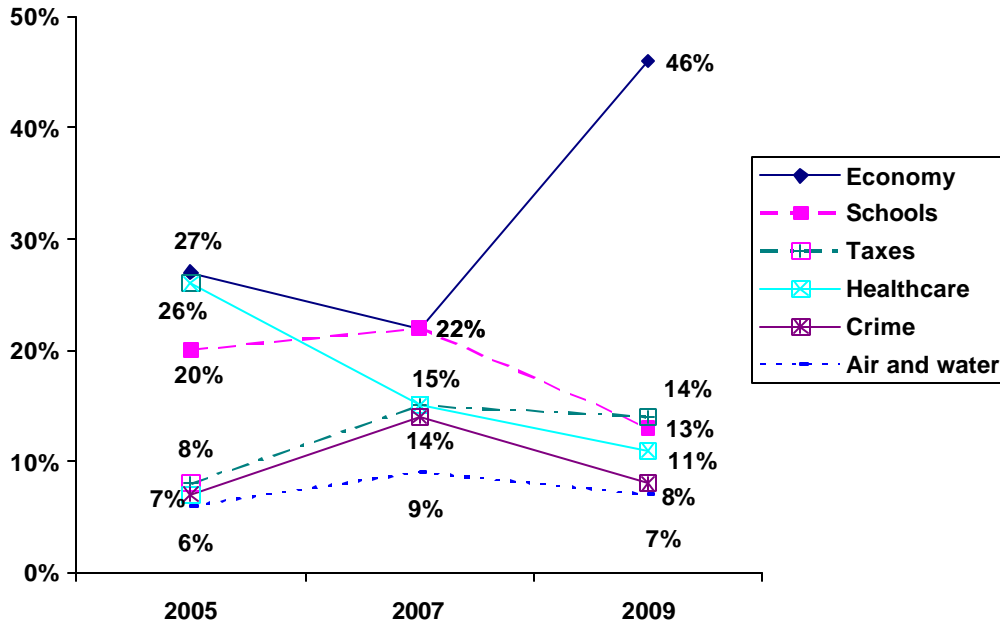
Even while most Americans give fairly high grades to their local school systems, they are skeptical that high school graduates in general are prepared to succeed in work or higher education, and want K-12 education in the U.S. to put more emphasis on the teaching of writing. While most regard their own writing training and abilities as satisfactory, four in ten do not. The Americans with the least education are the least satisfied in this regard.

How schools are doing

Education as a priority: Given the current economic climate, it is unsurprising that the economy is a greater concern for Americans than it was in 2007 and that concern about other issues, including the public schools, has dropped in comparison. When asked to choose “the biggest need facing the community you live in,” among several choices, a plurality select “improving the economy and jobs” (46%), compared to much smaller numbers who choose “lower taxes” (14%), “improving public schools” (13%), “improving health care” (11%), “reducing crime” (eight percent) or “keeping air and water clean and healthy” (seven percent).

Issue Priorities in Local Community

% saying each is biggest need



Q1. First, which of these do you think is the biggest need facing the community you live in? Is it [RANDOMIZE: improving the economy and jobs, improving public schools, keeping air and water clean and healthy, reducing crime, improving health care, or lowering taxes?]

Quality of schools: Although they put lower priority on schools compared to the economy than in prior years, Americans have not substantially changed their views of how their local schools are performing. As was true in 2007 and 2005, they offer positive but not excellent ratings for the quality of the schools in their communities. More than four in ten Americans (42%) give a grade of B to the schools in their community overall, while fewer give them grades of A (19%) or C (25%). Few Americans say that the schools in their local communities deserve a grade of D (five percent) or F (four percent).

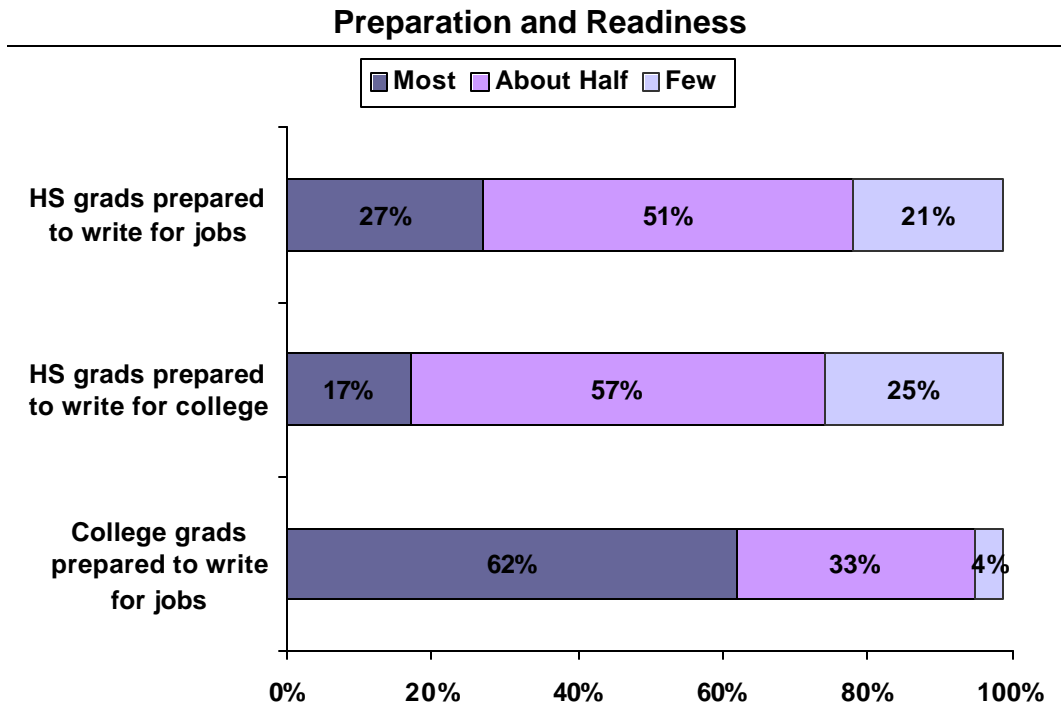
Preparedness of U.S. students: When the conversation turns to schools in the United States overall, rather than in their local communities, Americans express little confidence that the country’s high schools are turning out graduates who can write well enough to succeed in the next stages of their lives. Large majorities believe that half or fewer of American high school graduates have the writing skills they need for college or the workforce.

- Only 17% of Americans believe that most high school graduates “have the writing skills they need for college.” Eight in ten say that when students graduate high school in the U.S., about half of graduates (57%) or few of them (25%) have the necessary writing skills.

- Only a quarter (27%) believes that most high school graduates write well enough to succeed if they go straight to work. Seven in ten say that when students graduate high school and start work instead of going to college, about half (51%) or few of them (21%) “can write well enough to do their jobs effectively.”

In contrast to their assumptions about high school graduates, most Americans think that college graduates are generally prepared to write well enough to succeed at work.

- Six in ten Americans (62%) believe that when students graduate college in the U.S. and start work most “can write well enough to do their jobs effectively.” A third (33%) believes that about half of college graduates write well enough to succeed at work and only four percent believe that few are prepared to do the writing required of them.



Q15. When students graduate *college* in the U.S. and start work, how many of them do you think can write well enough to do their jobs effectively: most of them, about half, or few of them?

Q14. When students graduate high school and start work instead of going to college, how many of them do you think can write well enough to do their jobs effectively: most of them, about half, or few of them?

Q13. When students graduate high school in the U.S., how many of them do you think have the writing skills they need for college: most of them, about half, or few of them?

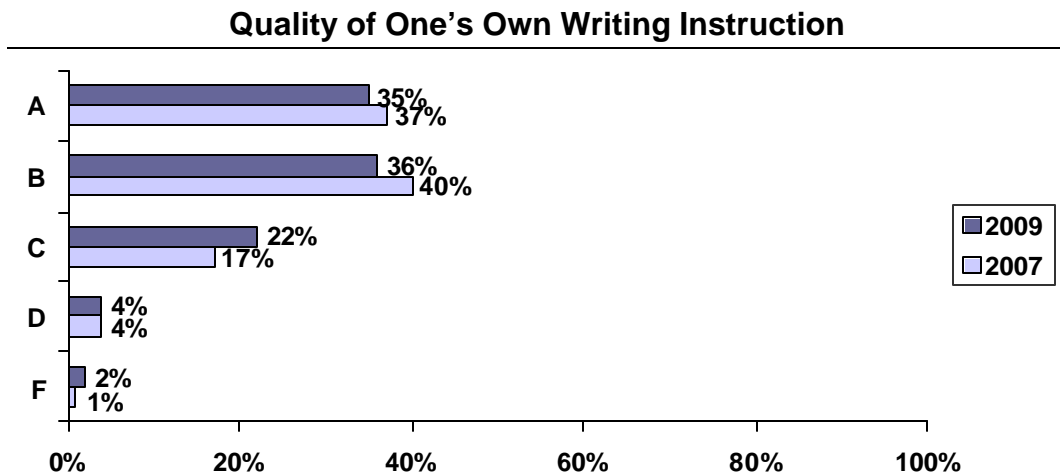
Majorities of nearly all demographic groups, with the exception of older men, and those with post-graduate educations, say that most *college graduates* are prepared for work.

Older men, people with college degrees or post-graduate education, and those who write two pages or more a day at their jobs are most pessimistic about the preparation of *high school graduates*, whether for work or for college.

Evaluating one’s own writing training and ability

Seven in ten Americans offer positive ratings of their own education in writing, and a majority of them are satisfied with their own ability to communicate well in writing. At the same time, a significant minority express less than total satisfaction with their writing skills. Both evaluations are shaded by socioeconomic status: those with higher levels of education are more likely to rate their own writing well and the instruction they received highly, while those with less education are more likely to express hesitations about their writing skills.

Writing instruction: Americans largely offer positive ratings of their own experience being taught to write. Seven in ten grade “the quality of writing instruction [they] received in school – that is in grades K through 12” as an A (35%) or B (36%). Another two in ten give their writing instruction a grade of C (22%) and few offer grades of D (four percent) or F (two percent). This has changed very little since 2007.



Q11. How would you grade the quality of writing instruction YOU received in school – that is in grades K through 12. A, B, C, D or F

Those most likely to give their own writing instruction a grade of A include these groups:

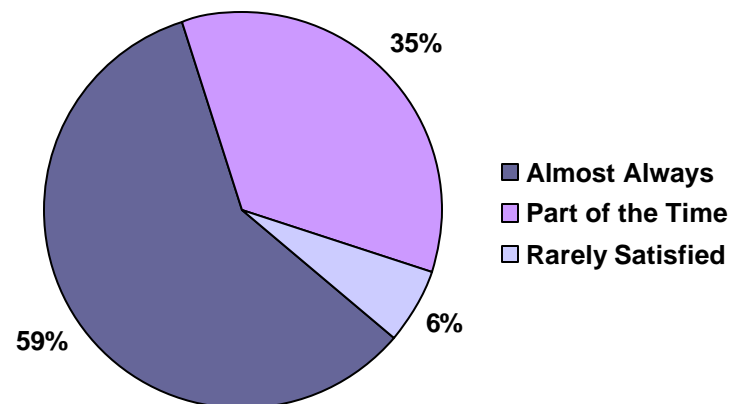
- Women over 55 (50%);
- Those with some college (39%), college degrees (42%), or post graduate (51%) education;

- Those who write between two and four pages (45%) or more than five pages a day (53%); and
- Residents of the Northeast (42%).

Satisfaction with writing skills: A significant minority of four in ten Americans acknowledges some dissatisfaction with their own ability to communicate in writing, while six in ten profess satisfaction with their abilities:

- Six in ten Americans (59%) say they are almost always satisfied that they can “communicate their thoughts and ideas in writing;”
- Thirty-five percent say they are satisfied part of the time; and
- Only six percent say they are rarely satisfied with their writing skills.

Satisfaction with Ability to Communicate in Writing



Q34. When it comes to your own writing skills, how satisfied are you that you can communicate your thoughts and ideas clearly in writing: almost always satisfied, satisfied part of the time, or rarely satisfied with your writing skills?

Those most likely to express *dissatisfaction* with their writing ability include:

- Men, especially those over 55 (47% partly or rarely satisfied);
- African-Americans (49%);
- People with a high school education or less (51%);
- Those with household incomes lower than \$50,000 a year (49%);
- People who do not write for work (52%); and
- Those who live in the Midwest (45%) or Deep South (46%).

Those most likely to say they are *satisfied* with their writing skills are:

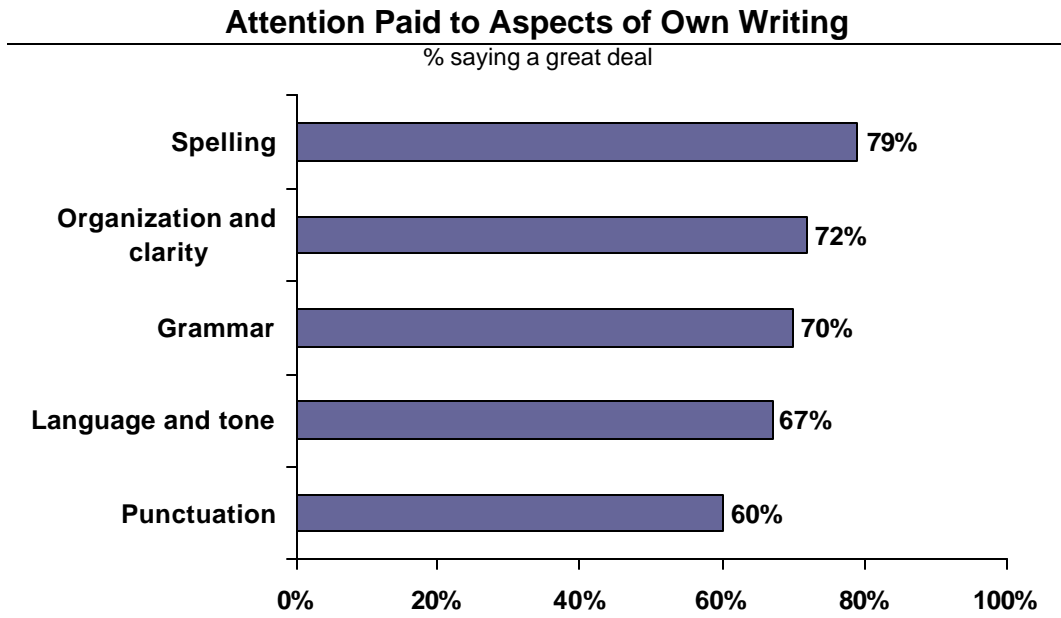
- Women, especially those over 55 (65% almost always);

- Those with college (71%) or post-graduate educations (80%);
- Individuals with higher household incomes (64%); and
- Those who write two to four (72%) or five or more pages a day (80%).

How Americans think about the quality of their writing: A majority of Americans say that they pay a great deal of attention to the mechanics of writing as well as the tone and language.

Majorities of Americans say they pay a great deal of attention to each of the following qualities:

- Spelling (79% pay a great deal of attention);
- How well organized and clear their thoughts are (72%);
- Grammar (70%);
- How well the language and tone match the purpose (67%); and
- Punctuation (60%).



Thinking about the kinds of things you write in your personal or work life, please tell me how much attention you pay to each of the following: a great deal, some, not very much, or none at all. Q48. Your spelling Q50. How well-organized and clear your thoughts are. Q47. Your grammar. Q51. How well the language and tone match the purpose. Q49. Your punctuation.

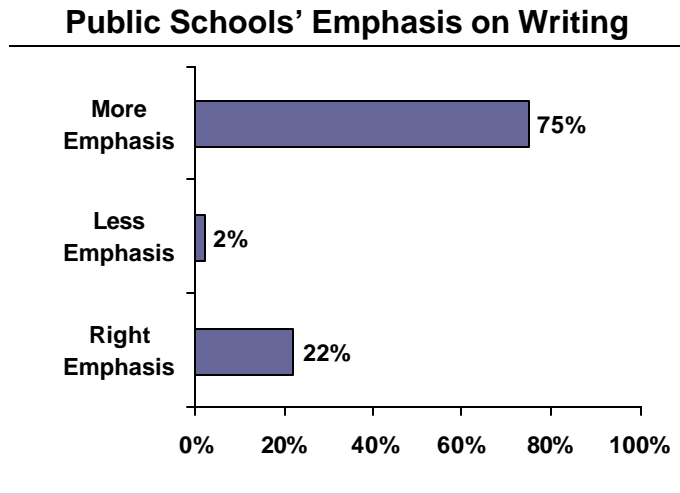
Most demographic groups pay most attention to spelling and least to punctuation, with organization and clarity, grammar, and language and tone grouped in the middle. There are two exceptions, as follows:

- Individuals with post-graduate educations pay equally high attention to organization and clarity (91%), grammar (91%), language and tone (90%), and spelling (90%); and
- Those who write five pages a day or more place equal priority on language and tone (95%), clarity and organization (94%), and spelling (93%).

What schools should be doing

Americans believe our education system would do better at producing high school graduates with the requisite skills if K-12 schools put greater emphasis on the teaching of writing – including teaching it early and along with reading, and if they helped teachers improve their teaching of writing.

More emphasis on writing in K-12: There is broad agreement that more emphasis should be placed on writing in public education. Three-quarters of Americans “think our public education system from kindergarten through high school should put more emphasis on teaching students to write well” (75%), while only two percent say it should put less emphasis on writing, and 22% say it puts the right emphasis on writing already.

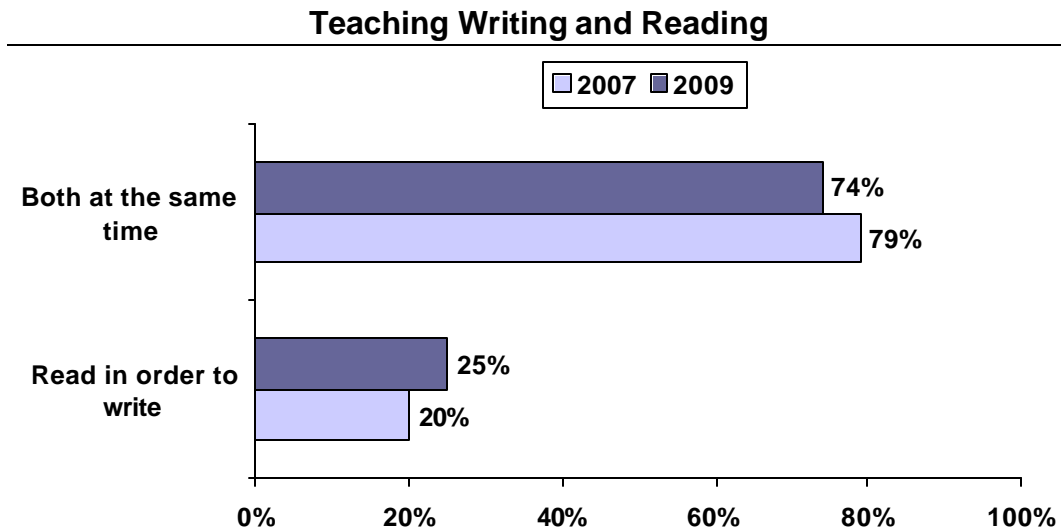


Q12. Do you think our public education system from kindergarten through high school should put more emphasis on teaching students to write well, less emphasis on writing, or does it put the right emphasis on writing already?

The demographic groups most likely to say that writing deserves more emphasis in K-12 schools are the following:

- College graduates (82%) and post-graduates (82%); and
- Those who write two to four (82%) or five or more pages daily (80%).

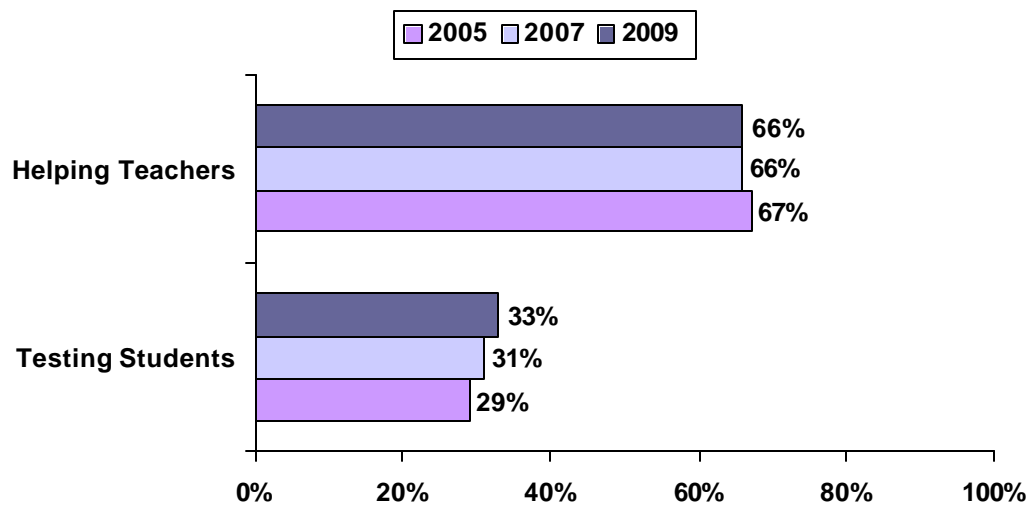
Teach writing along with reading: A large majority says writing and reading should be taught together, rather than waiting to teach writing. Three-quarters argue that “writing and reading go hand-in-hand, so students should learn them both at the same time,” (74%) rather than “that children need to learn to read in order to learn to write.” This is little changed from 2007, and there is little demographic variation in Americans’ attitudes towards this question.



Q18. Please tell me which of the following views you agree with more: [ROTATE STATEMENTS]: That children need to learn to read in order to learn to write, OR, That writing and reading go hand-in-hand, so students should learn them both at the same time.

Spend resources on helping teachers rather than on increased testing: Most Americans believe that helping teachers improve their teaching will be a more effective way to help students learn to write than putting more resources into testing students to measure their progress. Two-thirds (66%) say “if schools put more resources into helping teachers teach writing to their students” it is more likely to help students become better writers than “if schools put more resources into testing students at various grade levels to see how well they are learning to write” (33%). This is essentially unchanged since 2007 or 2005.

Teaching Students to Write: Helping Teachers or Testing Students



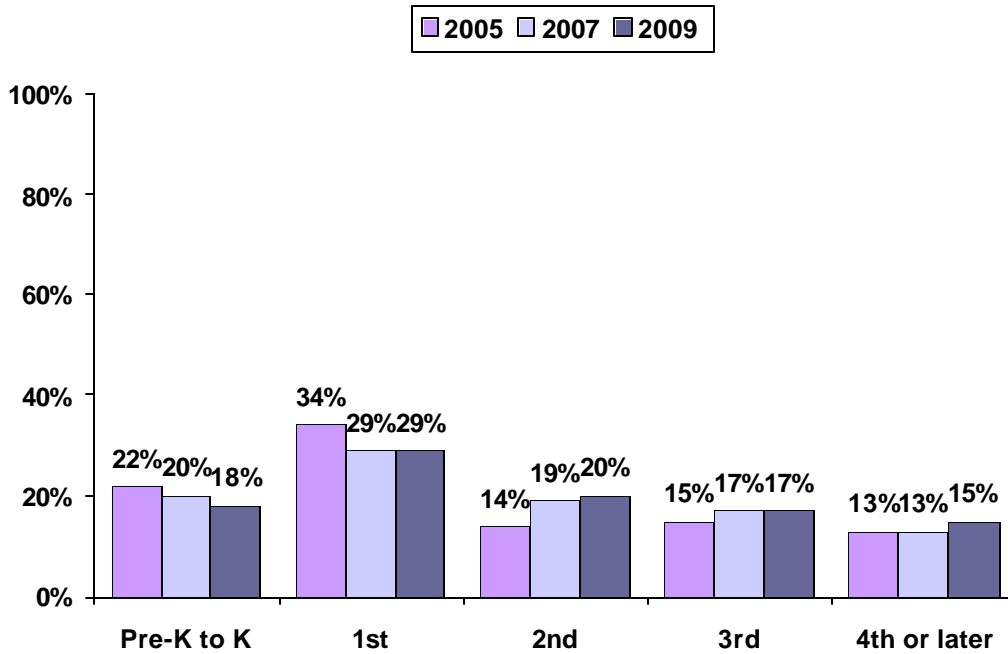
Q16. Which of these two options do you think would help students become better writers:
 [ROTATE]: If schools put more resources into testing students at various grade levels to see how well they are learning to write; OR If schools put more resources into helping teachers teach writing to their students?

The following groups are especially likely to see helping teachers as the more effective approach:

- Individuals with some college education (71%), college degrees (71%), or post-graduate education (79%); and
- Those who write between two and four (71%) or more than five pages a day (72%).

Start by second grade: A significant majority of Americans believes that second grade or earlier is the right time to begin teaching students how to put together sentences and longer pieces in writing. Almost half of Americans (47%) say that “teaching children to write, meaning composing sentences, paragraphs, and longer pieces, not penmanship or how one shapes letters” should begin in first grade (29%), kindergarten (13%), or earlier (five percent). Most of the rest believe writing instruction should start in second (20%) or third grade (17%). This has changed very little since 2007.

Grade in Which Writing Instruction Should Begin



Q17. What grade in school do you think is the right grade to start teaching children to write, meaning composing sentences, paragraphs, and longer pieces, NOT penmanship or how one shapes letters? Is that pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, or after fifth grade? [IF AFTER FIFTH: Which grade is that?]

Majorities of the following demographic groups believe writing education should begin in first grade or sooner:

- Women under 55 (54%);
- College graduates (58%); and
- Those who write five or more pages a day (63%).

C. Technology and writing

Large numbers of Americans are writing using technology and hyperlinks, and writing for new media such as websites and blogs. A majority sees computers as helpful in teaching students to write, even though half also express the concern that computers may make students careless writers. Most adults believe that children should be taught to use computers early in their educational experience.

Use of technology and new media

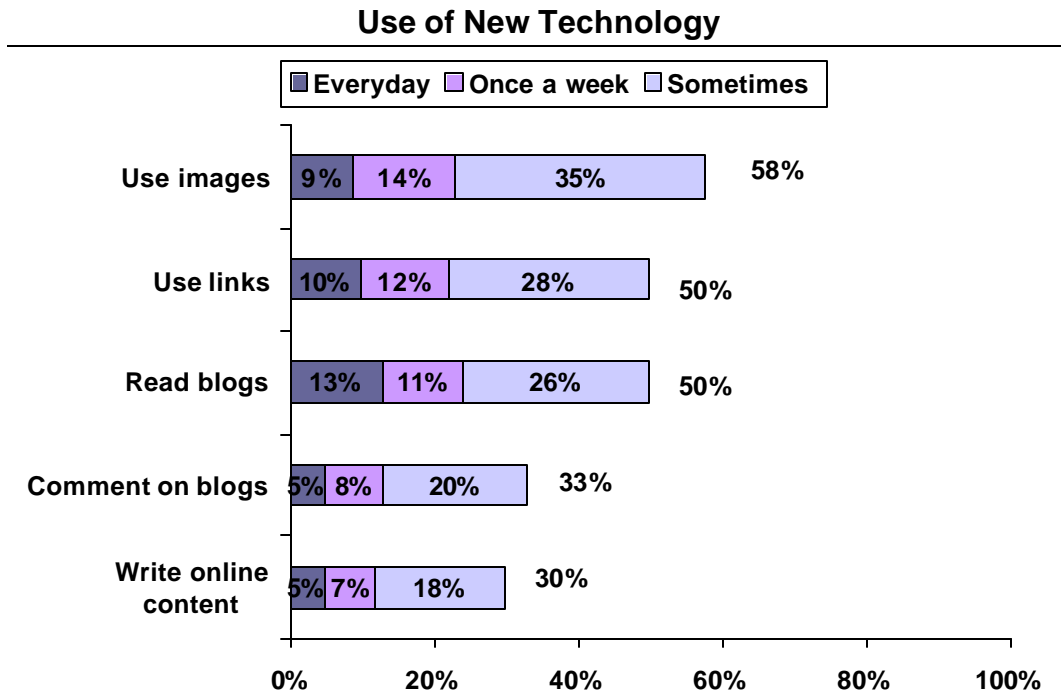
The widespread availability of computers and the Internet has allowed Americans to employ their writing skills in new forms of media. The survey shows that large numbers are using new media tools such as hyperlinks, or images and audio in what they write, and that about a third of Americans write for an online audience at least occasionally.

Using technology to make their writing more than simply text is quite common among the public:

- Six in ten Americans (58%) “incorporate images, audio, or video into documents or other content” they write every day (nine percent), at least once a week (14%) or sometimes (35%).
- Half (50%) include links to websites in what they write every day (10%), at least once a week (12%) or sometimes (28%).

Half of Americans read blogs at least sometimes (50%), but fewer are actively engaged in blogs or producing other web content.

- A third (33%) write comments on others’ blog postings every day (five percent), at least once a week (eight percent), or sometimes (20%).
- Three in ten (30%) write content for a website or a blog every day (five percent), at least once a week (seven percent), or sometimes (18%).



Please tell me if you do each of the following every day, at least once a week, sometimes, or never:

Q40. Read blogs.

Q43. Include links to websites in what you write.

Q42. Incorporate images, audio, or video into documents or other content you write.

Q39. Write content for a website or blog.

Q41. Write comments on others' blog postings.

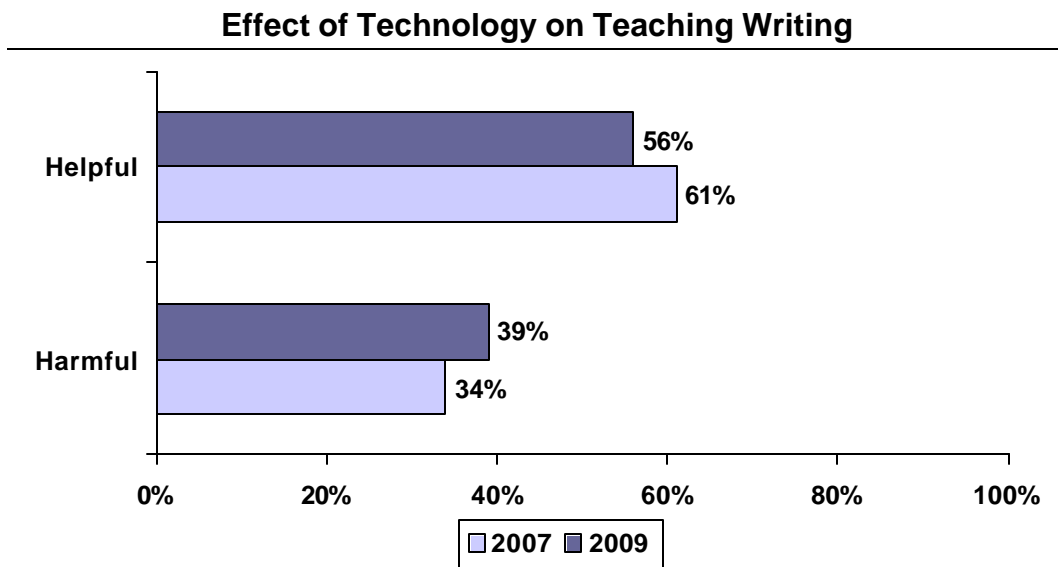
The same groups of Americans are more likely to engage in many of these new technologically-dependent writing forms. These include:

- Younger people;
- Those with more education;
- Those with higher household incomes;
- Parents of children under 25;
- Those who write more at work;
- Those who write in their personal life; and
- Those who are satisfied with their own writing ability.

Computers and learning to write

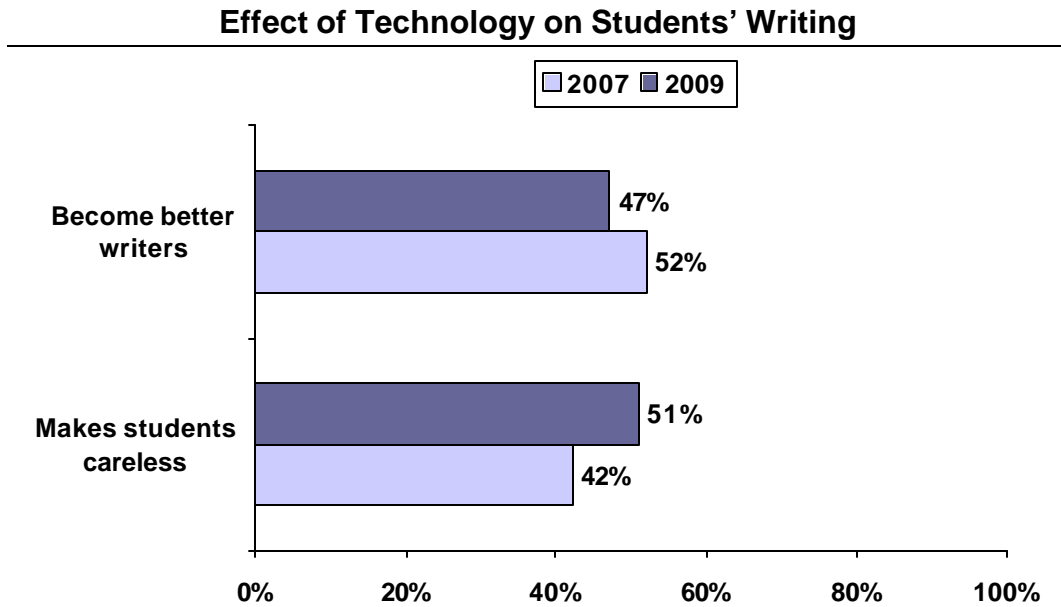
Are computers helpful or harmful? A majority of Americans believes that computers are a helpful tool in teaching children how to write. At the same time, however, half say that the increase in technology has allowed students to become careless in their writing.

Over half (56%) of Americans say that “computers and other new technologies are helpful in teaching students how to write well,” while just under four in ten (39%) say that these technologies are harmful to students’ writing. Opinions on this question are similar to the 2007 results.



Q19. Do you think, in general, that computers and other new technologies are helpful or harmful in teaching students to write well? Is that strongly or somewhat?

Even though most Americans believe that computers help students learn how to write well, half (51%) also say that using computers makes students careless writers, “because they write so fast that they do not think enough about what they are writing.” Those holding this view have increased by nine percentage points, from 42%, since the question was asked in 2007. The other half of Americans (47%) says that using computers to write “enables students to become better writers because they write, revise, and edit more.”

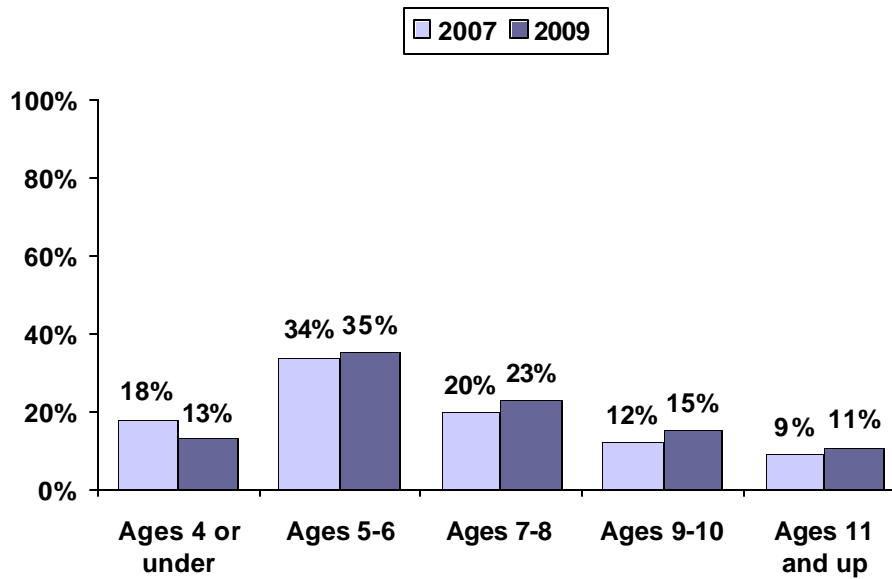


Q20. Which of the following statements do you agree with more? Do you agree [ROTATE STATEMENTS]: more that using computers to write makes students careless writers because they write so fast they do not think enough about what they are writing, OR, more that computers enable students to become better writers because they write, revise and edit more?

Age to teach computers: Americans see using a computer as a skill that should be taught fairly early. Half (48%) suggest children should be taught computer use at age six or before, and another quarter (23%) says children should be taught at seven or eight. Only a quarter (26%) says children should be taught at age nine or older.

Those with more education and those who write more daily are more likely to believe children should be taught to use computers at an early age.

At What Age Should Children Learn to Use Computers



Q21. At what age should children be taught to use computers?

Appendix A: Questionnaire with Response Totals

BELDEN RUSSONELLO & STEWART

RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATIONS

National Writing Project Benchmark

Interviewing conducted January 2 – 11, 2009

N = 1200 adults

Margin of sampling error is ± 2.8 percentage points

The data have been weighted by age and gender to match the adult population of the U.S.

2007: N = 1501 adults, January 3 to 16, 2007

2005: N = 1000 adults, February 10 to 27, 2005

Percents may add to 99% or 101% due to rounding.

* indicates less than 1%; -- indicates zero.

Hello, my name is _____, and I am an interviewer with BRS, an opinion research company. We are conducting a public opinion survey and your telephone number was selected at random. We are not selling anything and we will not ask you for a contribution. May I please speak to the person 18 years old or older in your household who had a birthday most recently? (IF NECESSARY ARRANGE FOR A CALL BACK AND RECORD DATE AND TIME. REPEAT INTRODUCTION AS NECESSARY)

Q1. First, which of these do you think is the biggest need facing the community you live in? Is it [RANDOMIZE: improving the economy and jobs, improving public schools, keeping air and water clean and healthy, reducing crime, improving health care, or lowering taxes?]		2009	2007	2005
ECONOMY AND JOBS		46%	22%	27%
PUBLIC SCHOOLS		13	22	20
AIR AND WATER		7	9	6
CRIME		8	14	7
HEALTHCARE		11	15	26
LOWERING TAXES		14	15	8
DK/REF		2	3	6

Q2. How would you grade the schools in your community overall – A, B, C, D, or F?		2009	2007	2005
A		19%	19%	18%
B		42	38	34
C		25	25	28
D		5	6	8
F		4	4	4
DK/REF		4	7	9

Thinking about what students learn in high school, please tell me if you think each of the following skills should be required for high school graduation, is important but should not be a graduation requirement, is only somewhat important, or is not very important. Here's the first one, the student should: [READ ITEM] Should this be required for high school graduation, is important but should not be a graduation requirement, is only somewhat important, or is not very important? [RANDOMIZE Q3-Q10]

		Req.	Imp but not req	Smwht imp	Not very imp	DK/ REF
Q3. Have learned algebra.	2009	59%	25	10	5	--
	2007	56%	28	11	4	1
	2005	52%	25	15	7	1
Q4. Know a foreign language	2009	27%	46	14	13	*
	2007	31%	40	18	11	*
	2005	25%	36	23	15	1
Q5. Know how to read well.	2009	95%	4	1	*	*
	2007	94%	4	1	*	*
	2005	90%	9	1	*	*
Q6. Be able to do addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.	2009	96%	3	1	*	--
	2007	94%	5	1	*	*
	2005	91%	7	1	*	*
Q7. Know how to write well.	2009	84%	12	3	1	--
	2007	84%	13	3	*	*
	2005	80%	16	3	1	*
Q8. Know how to use a computer.	2009	74%	20	4	2	*
	2007	74%	21	4	1	*
	2005	68%	23	6	3	*
Q9. Have learned biology.	2009	49%	30	15	6	*
	2007	48%	32	15	4	1
	2005	40%	30	21	9	1
Q10. Know American history and government.	2009	77%	16	6	2	--
	2007	73%	19	6	2	*
	2005	66%	22	9	2	*

Now I have some questions about writing. We are using the term "writing" to mean composing sentences, paragraphs, and longer pieces. We are NOT referring to penmanship or how one shapes letters.

		2009	2007
Q11. How would you grade the quality of writing instruction YOU received in school – that is in grades K through 12? A, B, C, D or F	A	35%	37%
	B	36	40
	C	22	17
	D	4	4
	F	2	1
	DK/REF	1	1
Q12. Do you think our public education system from kindergarten through high school should put more emphasis on teaching students to write well, less emphasis on writing, or does it put the right emphasis on writing already?	MORE EMPHASIS ON WRITING		75%
	LESS EMPHASIS ON WRITING		2
	RIGHT EMPHASIS ALREADY		22
	DK/REF		2
Q13. When students graduate high school in the U.S., how many of them do you think have the writing skills they need for college: most of them, about half, or few of them?	MOST OF THEM		17%
	ABOUT HALF		57
	FEW OF THEM		25
	DK/REF		2
Q14. When students graduate high school and start work instead of going to college, how many of them do you think can write well enough to do their jobs effectively: most of them, about half, or few of them?	MOST OF THEM		27%
	ABOUT HALF		51
	FEW OF THEM		21
	DK/REF		1
Q15. When students graduate <i>college</i> in the U.S. and start work, how many of them do you think can write well enough to do their jobs effectively: most of them, about half, or few of them?	MOST OF THEM		62%
	ABOUT HALF		33
	FEW OF THEM		4
	DK/REF		*

	2009	2007	2005	
Q16. Which of these two options do you think would help students become better writers: [ROTATE]: If schools put more resources into testing students at various grade levels to see how well they are learning to write; OR If schools put more resources into helping teachers teach writing to their students?	TESTING STUDENTS	33%	31%	29%
	HELPING TEACHERS	66%	66	67
	DK/REF	1	3	3

	2009	2007	2005	
Q17. What grade in school do you think is the right grade to start teaching children to write, meaning composing sentences, paragraphs, and longer pieces, NOT penmanship or how one shapes letters? Is that pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, or after fifth grade? [IF AFTER FIFTH: Which grade is that?]	PRE-KINDERGARTEN	5%	5%	6%
	KINDERGARTEN	13	15	16
	1 ST	29	29	34
	2 ND	20	19	14
	3 RD	17	17	15
	4 TH	8	8	6
	5 TH	4	3	3
	6 TH	2	2	2
	7 TH	*	1	1
	8 TH	*	*	*
	9 TH	--	*	--
	10 TH	--	*	*
	11 TH	--	--	--
12 TH	--	*	--	
DK/REF	1	2	2	

	2009	2007	
Q18. Please tell me which of the following views you agree with more: [ROTATE STATEMENTS]: That children need to learn to read in order to learn to write, OR, That writing and reading go hand-in-hand, so students should learn them both at the same time.	READ IN ORDER TO WRITE	25%	20%
	BOTH AT THE SAME TIME	74	79
	DK/REF	*	1

	2009	2007	
Q19. Do you think in general that computers and other new technologies are helpful or harmful in teaching students to write well? Is that strongly or somewhat [help/harm]?	STRONGLY HELPFUL	28%	30%
	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL	28	31
	SOMEWHAT HARMFUL	25	24
	STRONGLY HARMFUL	14	10
	DK/REF	4	5

		2009	2007
Q20. Which of the following statements do you agree with more? Do you agree [ROTATE STATEMENTS: more that using computers to write makes students careless writers because they write so fast they do not think enough about what they are writing, OR, more that computers enable students to become better writers because they write, revise and edit more]?	MAKES STUDENTS CARELESS	51%	42%
	BECOME BETTER WRITERS	47	52
	DK/REF	3	6

		2009	2007
Q21. At what age should children be taught to use computers?	1	*	*%
	2	1	2
	3	4	7
	4	8	9
	5	19	20
	6	16	14
	7	10	11
	8	13	9
	9	4	3
	10	11	9
	11	2	2
	12	5	4
	13	2	2
	14	1	*
	15	1	*
	16	*	1
	17	*	--
	18	*	*
	SHOULD NOT BE TAUGHT	--	*
DK/REF	1	5	

		2009	2007
Q22. Do you think in today's world there is a greater need or less of a need than there was twenty years ago for a person to be able to write well in order to succeed?	GREATER NEED	80%	74%
	LESS OF A NEED	18	14
	NO DIFFERENCE (vol 2007)		10
	DK/REF	2	1

Now, I'm going to ask you about the impact of learning to write well on several things. [RANDOMIZE Q23-Q33] [READ FULL QUESTION FOR EACH ITEM] How important is learning to write well to [READ ITEM], is it essential, important, not very important or not at all important? [IF RESPONDENT SAYS "VERY IMPORTANT" ASK: Is that "essential" or "important"?]

		Essential	Imp.	Not very imp.	Not at all imp.	DK REF
Q23. Improving a person's critical thinking.	2009	46%	48	5	1	*
	2007	52%	43	4	1	*
	2005	52%	42	4	1	2
Q24. Learning how to communicate effectively.	2009	59%	37	4	1	--
	2007	66%	32	2	*	*
	2005	65%	34	1	*	*
Q25. Becoming more creative.	2009	44%	44	10	1	*
	2007	41%	50	7	1	*
	2005	42%	49	7	1	1
Q26. Improving a person's grammar.	2009	59%	38	3	*	*
	2007	63%	35	2	*	--
	2005	60%	37	2	1	*
Q27. Gaining organizational skills.	2009	42%	48	8	1	*
	2007	45%	49	5	1	*
	2005	47%	47	5	1	1
Q28. Learning to read.	2009	59%	36	4	1	*
	2007	75%	22	1	*	*
	2005	69%	28	2	*	*
Q29. Gaining a large vocabulary.	2009	57%	38	4	*	*
	2007	58%	36	5	1	*
	2005	53%	41	5	*	*
Q30. Learning to analyze and bring details together.	2009	54%	42	3	*	*
	2007	54%	42	3	*	*
	2005	52%	43	3	1	1
Q31. Succeeding in college.	2009	67%	31	1	*	*
	2007	67%	30	2	*	1
Q32. Succeeding in white collar and professional careers. (2007, N=744)	2009	65%	32	2	*	*
	2007	57%	36	5	1	1
Q33. Succeeding in blue collar jobs. (2007, N=744)	2009	30%	53	15	1	1
	2007	26%	54	17	3	1

Q34. When it comes to your own writing skills, how satisfied are you that you can communicate your thoughts and ideas clearly in writing: almost always satisfied, satisfied part of the time, or rarely satisfied with your writing skills?	ALMOST ALWAYS SATISFIED	59%
	SATISFIED PART OF THE TIME	35
	RARELY SATISFIED	6
	DK/REF	--

Please tell me if you do each of the following every day, at least once a week, sometimes, or never

	Every day	Once a week	Sometimes	Never	DK/REF
Q35. Write letters or e-mails to friends or family	34%	25	29	13	*
Q36. Write in a personal journal or diary	12%	9	22	57	--
Q37. Write e-mails or letters to elected officials or to a newspaper or magazine about your feelings on current issues	2%	4	33	60	--
Q38. Write work-related e-mails	33%	9	16	43	*
Q39. Write content for a website or blog	5%	7	18	70	*
Q40. Read blogs	13%	11	26	50	*
Q41. Write comments on others' blog postings	5%	8	20	67	*
Q42. Incorporate images, audio, or video into documents or other content you write	9%	14	35	42	*
Q43. Include links to websites in what you write	10%	12	28	50	*

		2009	2007	2005
Q44 – Q45 COMBINED. Q44. In your paid job or as a volunteer, do you sometimes have to write reports, correspondence, email or other text? Q45. Thinking about all the things you write, would you say that on an average day you write less than a page, about a page or more than one page? [IF MORE THAN ONE] Is that more than five or less than five pages?	YES	62%	68%	68%
	LESS THAN A PAGE	17	19	16
	ABOUT A PAGE	19	15	19
	BETWEEN ONE AND FIVE	19	26	21
	MORE THAN FIVE	7	8	12
	NO	38	31	32
DK/REF	*	1	*	

Q46. [IF YES IN Q44, N=765] In performing your own particular job, would you say that strong writing skills are very important, somewhat, not very, or not at all important?	VERY		66%
	SOMEWHAT		26
	NOT VERY		6
	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT		2
	DK/REF		*

Thinking about the kinds of things you write in your personal or work life, please tell me how much attention you pay to each of the following: a great deal, some, not very much, or none at all.

	A great deal	Some	Not very much	None at all	DK/REF
Q47. Your grammar.	70%	23	5	3	*
Q48. Your spelling	79%	15	3	2	*
Q49. Your punctuation	60%	29	6	5	--
Q50. How well-organized and clear your thoughts are.	72%	22	5	1	*
Q51. How well the language and tone match the purpose.	67%	25	5	2	1

Here are a few final questions to help us classify this interview.

D1. Do you have any children under the age of 25?	YES	48%
	NO	52
	DK/REF	*

D2. (IF YES IN D1, N=523) If any of your children are currently in school, are they in elementary school, middle or junior high school, high school, college, or graduate school? [ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES; IF RESPONDENT CANNOT CHOOSE AN ANSWER CATEGORY, RECORD EXACT RESPONSE]	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	40%
	MIDDLE OR JUNIOR HIGH	23
	HIGH SCHOOL	26
	COLLEGE	17
	GRAD. SCHOOL	3
	NOT IN SCHOOL	24
	DK/REF	2

D3. What was the last grade of school you yourself completed [READ LIST IF NECESSARY]?	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL	11%
	HIGH SCHOOL GRAD/GED	35
	SOME COLLEGE/TECHNICAL/2-YR	27
	COLLEGE GRAD /BA OR BS/4-YR	18
	POST GRAD DEGREE/WORK	9
	DK/REF	*

D4. What is your occupation? (IF RETIRED/UNEMPLOYED/DISABLED: What was your occupation?) [DO NOT READ CODES; RECORD EXACT RESPONSE]	PROFESSIONAL WHITE-COLLAR	16%
	MANAGERIAL WHITE-COLLAR	33
	TEACHER	6
	BLUE-COLLAR	33
	DISABLED	*
	HOMEMAKER	7
	STUDENT	4
	NEVER EMPLOYED	*
	DK/REF	1

D5. In terms of your political outlook, do you usually think of yourself as: [READ LIST, REVERSE ORDER] very conservative, somewhat conservative, middle of the road, somewhat liberal, very liberal?	VERY CONSERVATIVE	16%
	SOMEWHAT CONSERVATIVE	25
	MIDDLE OF THE ROAD	31
	SOMEWHAT LIBERAL	16
	VERY LIBERAL	8
	DK/REF	3

D6. In what year were you born? Are you between...	18 and 34	30%
	35 and 44	19
	45 and 54	20
	55 and 64	14
	65 or older	16
	DK/REF	*

D7. Do you consider yourself to be of Hispanic or Latin(o/a) descent? Would you say you are white, black or African American, Asian or Pacific Islander, Native American, or something else?	CAUCASIAN	69%
	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	12
	HISPANIC/LATINO	13
	ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER	3
	OTHER	1
	DK/REF	2

D8. Stop me when I come to the category in which your total <u>household</u> income fell before taxes in the last year. Your best estimate is fine.	Less than \$25,000	19%
	\$25,000-\$49,000	28
	\$50,000-\$74,000	17
	\$75,000-\$99,000	10
	More than \$100,000	14
	DK/REF	11

D9. GENDER	MALE	48%
	FEMALE	52

REGION	NORTHEAST	18%
	MIDWEST	24
	DEEP SOUTH	17
	ATLANTIC SOUTH	18
	WEST	23

Appendix B: Crosstab Tables

Chapter A Tables

Personal Writing

Please tell me if you do each of the following every day, at least once a week, sometimes, or never:
 Q35. Write letters or e-mails to friends or family, Q36. Write in a personal journal or diary, Q37.
 Write e-mails or letters to elected officials or to a newspaper or magazine about your feelings on
 current issues.

*% saying "sometimes" or
 more*

	Write letters or e-mails	Write in a journal	Write to elected officials
Total 2009	88%	43%	39%
Men	84%	30%	37%
Women	91%	55%	41%
18-34	92%	47%	35%
35-44	93%	45%	44%
45-54	87%	43%	41%
55-64	85%	38%	44%
65+	74%	38%	36%
Men <55	87%	30%	36%
Men 55+	75%	28%	41%
Women <55	95%	60%	42%
Women 55+	81%	46%	38%
White	87%	40%	42%
Black	82%	53%	29%
Hispanic	85%	48%	37%
<HS/HS	78%	43%	27%
Some college	91%	47%	46%
College graduate	98%	39%	50%
Post-graduate	97%	42%	58%
<\$50,000/year	81%	43%	34%
\$50,000 +	95%	42%	46%
Parent	91%	46%	42%
Non-parent	83%	41%	37%
Fathers	89%	31%	40%
Mothers	93%	58%	44%
Write per day			
None	76%	39%	28%
1 page or less	91%	43%	39%
2-4 pages	97%	48%	52%
5 or more pages	98%	51%	69%
Web writers	96%	54%	56%
Tech-savvy writers	95%	49%	50%
Confident writers	92%	48%	47%
Less confident writers	81%	36%	29%
Northeast	89%	43%	44%
Midwest	82%	38%	36%
Deep South	87%	49%	44%
South Atlantic	86%	44%	40%
West	91%	43%	36%

Importance of Writing to a High School Education

Should the following be required for high school graduation, important but should not be a graduation requirement, only somewhat important, or not very important: Q7. Knowing how to write well.

	Required	Imp. but not req.	Smewhat imp.	Not very imp.
Total 2009	84%	12	3	1
Total 2007	84%	13	3	*
Total 2005	80%	16	3	1
Men	83%	12	4	1
Women	85%	12	3	*
18-34	87%	11	2	1
35-44	81%	13	5	1
45-54	85%	11	3	*
55-64	84%	13	2	1
65+	80%	13	6	--
Men <55	83%	12	5	1
Men 55+	84%	14	2	--
Women <55	87%	12	1	*
Women 55+	81%	13	6	1
White	85%	12	2	*
Black	76%	16	8	--
Hispanic	82%	11	4	3
<HS/HS	78%	17	4	1
Some college	89%	8	3	*
College graduate	90%	8	2	--
Post-graduate	88%	11	1	--
<\$50,000/year	81%	13	5	1
\$50,000 +	88%	10	1	*
Parent	86%	10	2	1
Non-parent	82%	14	4	*
Fathers	84%	11	4	1
Mothers	89%	10	1	*
Write per day				
None	79%	14	5	1
1 page or less	85%	12	3	*
2-4 pages	89%	9	1	1
5 or more pages	90%	9	1	--
Web writers	86%	12	2	*
Tech-savvy writers	85%	12	2	*
Personal writers	87%	10	3	--
Confident writers	85%	12	3	1
Less confident writers	82%	13	4	*
Northeast	91%	7	2	--
Midwest	81%	16	3	*
Deep South	84%	11	4	1
South Atlantic	86%	11	3	--
West	80%	14	5	1

Impact of Learning to Write Well on Success in College

How important is learning to write well to Q31. Succeeding in college?

	Essential	Important	Not very Important	Not at all Important
Total 2009	67%	31	1	*
Total 2007	67%	30	2	*
Men	64%	34	2	*
Women	71%	28	1	*
18-34	70%	29	1	--
35-44	68%	30	1	--
45-54	63%	33	3	1
55-64	70%	28	1	--
65+	64%	35	1	--
Men <55	63%	34	2	*
Men 55+	65%	32	1	--
Women <55	72%	27	1	*
Women 55+	68%	31	1	--
White	69%	28	2	*
Black	59%	41	--	--
Hispanic	70%	29	--	1
<HS/HS	62%	35	2	*
Some college	72%	28	1	--
College graduate	74%	24	2	--
Post-graduate	70%	29	*	*
<\$50,000/year	67%	32	1	--
\$50,000 +	68%	30	1	*
Parent	69%	29	1	--
Non-parent	65%	32	2	*
Fathers	62%	35	2	--
Mothers	76%	24	--	--
Write per day				
None	61%	36	2	--
1 page or less	69%	30	1	*
2-4 pages	72%	27	1	--
5 or more pages	80%	17	3	1
Web writers	69%	29	1	*
Tech-savvy writers	69%	29	2	*
Personal writers	70%	28	1	*
Confident writers	69%	29	1	*
Less confident writers	64%	33	2	*
Northeast	70%	29	1	--
Midwest	60%	38	2	--
Deep South	69%	30	--	*
South Atlantic	67%	29	3	--
West	72%	26	2	*

Impact of Learning to Write Well

How important is learning to write well to: Q28. Learning to read Q24. Learning how to communicate effectively Q26. Improving a person's grammar Q29. Gaining a large vocabulary?

<i>% saying "essential"</i>	Learning to read	Learning to comm. effectively	Improving grammar	Gaining a large vocabulary
Total 2009	59%	59%	59%	57%
Total 2007	75%	66%	63%	58%
Total 2005	69%	65%	60%	53%
Men	56%	56%	57%	56%
Women	62%	62%	60%	59%
18-34	61%	60%	62%	60%
35-44	55%	58%	54%	56%
45-54	59%	56%	59%	54%
55-64	63%	65%	63%	63%
65+	58%	57%	55%	54%
Men <55	56%	55%	59%	56%
Men 55+	56%	58%	52%	57%
Women <55	61%	62%	59%	58%
Women 55+	64%	63%	64%	60%
White	58%	58%	59%	58%
Black	61%	62%	54%	48%
Hispanic	62%	59%	61%	60%
<HS/HS	61%	53%	52%	54%
Some college	61%	61%	62%	60%
College graduate	56%	67%	68%	59%
Post-graduate	53%	69%	66%	66%
<\$50,000/year	60%	55%	54%	55%
\$50,000 +	60%	63%	64%	60%
Parent	59%	60%	60%	58%
Non-parent	59%	58%	58%	57%
Fathers	55%	58%	58%	59%
Mothers	63%	62%	62%	58%
Write per day				
None	57%	54%	54%	53%
1 page or less	58%	59%	57%	58%
2-4 pages	61%	66%	65%	62%
5 or more pages	72%	69%	72%	67%
Web writers	59%	61%	60%	59%
Tech-savvy writers	59%	61%	61%	57%
Personal writers	62%	62%	63%	61%
Confident writers	62%	62%	63%	62%
Less confident writers	55%	55%	52%	51%
Northeast	62%	71%	62%	58%
Midwest	54%	52%	52%	52%
Deep South	63%	64%	57%	61%
South Atlantic	60%	58%	63%	59%
West	59%	54%	61%	59%

Impact of Learning to Write Well (Continued)

How important is learning to write well to: Q30. Learning to analyze and bring details together Q23. Improving critical thinking Q25. Becoming more creative Q27. Gaining organizational skills?

<i>% saying "essential"</i>	Analyze & bring details together	Improving critical thinking	Becoming more creative	Gaining organizational skills
Total 2009	54%	46%	44%	42%
Total 2007	54%	52%	41%	45%
Total 2005	52%	52%	42%	47%
Men	52%	41%	45%	39%
Women	56%	50%	44%	46%
18-34	54%	48%	46%	40%
35-44	54%	40%	36%	36%
45-54	55%	46%	45%	41%
55-64	57%	48%	49%	50%
65+	53%	47%	47%	49%
Men <55	52%	42%	43%	35%
Men 55+	54%	40%	48%	47%
Women <55	56%	49%	43%	42%
Women 55+	56%	53%	47%	52%
White	54%	47%	44%	42%
Black	54%	47%	43%	39%
Hispanic	57%	41%	48%	50%
<HS/HS	51%	40%	46%	43%
Some college	58%	48%	45%	41%
College graduate	56%	52%	42%	45%
Post-graduate	57%	55%	37%	40%
<\$50,000/year	50%	43%	46%	42%
\$50,000 +	58%	49%	43%	42%
Parent	55%	46%	44%	40%
Non-parent	54%	45%	44%	44%
Fathers	56%	45%	48%	40%
Mothers	54%	48%	41%	41%
Write per day				
None	50%	42%	44%	43%
1 page or less	56%	47%	46%	45%
2-4 pages	55%	48%	43%	38%
5 or more pages	62%	53%	42%	40%
Web writers	56%	46%	44%	42%
Tech-savvy writers	56%	47%	43%	42%
Personal writers	57%	49%	45%	43%
Confident writers	60%	47%	45%	44%
Less confident writers	46%	44%	44%	39%
Northeast	58%	47%	41%	44%
Midwest	47%	46%	44%	39%
Deep South	58%	50%	51%	40%
South Atlantic	55%	45%	46%	49%
West	56%	42%	42%	41%

Impact of Learning to Write Well on Career Success

How important is learning to write well to Q32. Succeeding in white collar and professional careers Q33. Succeeding in blue collar jobs?

% saying "essential"

	White Collar/Professional Careers	Blue Collar Jobs
Total 2009	65%	30%
Total 2007 (n = 744)	57%	26%
Men	62%	26%
Women	69%	34%
18-34	63%	28%
35-44	73%	25%
45-54	66%	30%
55-64	64%	32%
65+	63%	36%
Men <55	62%	24%
Men 55+	61%	31%
Women <55	71%	32%
Women 55+	65%	37%
White	68%	27%
Black	59%	34%
Hispanic	64%	44%
<HS/HS	62%	37%
Some college	67%	27%
College graduate	67%	22%
Post-graduate	75%	16%
<\$50,000/year	61%	36%
\$50,000 +	69%	22%
Parent	69%	29%
Non-parent	62%	30%
Fathers	63%	21%
Mothers	74%	36%
Write per day		
None	60%	35%
1 page or less	65%	28%
2-4 pages	72%	24%
5 or more pages	80%	30%
Web writers	66%	29%
Tech-savvy writers	67%	28%
Personal writers	68%	28%
Confident writers	69%	31%
Less confident writers	60%	28%
Northeast	68%	26%
Midwest	62%	26%
Deep South	66%	33%
South Atlantic	63%	28%
West	68%	36%

Required Writing Skills for Success

Q22. Do you think in today's world there is a greater need or less of a need than there was twenty years ago for a person to be able to write well in order to succeed?

	Greater Need	Less Need
Total 2009	80%	18
Total 2007	74%	14
Men	76%	22
Women	83%	15
18-34	80%	19
35-44	79%	19
45-54	77%	19
55-64	78%	20
65+	85%	14
Men <55	76%	23
Men 55+	79%	20
Women <55	82%	15
Women 55+	84%	15
White	78%	20
Black	86%	14
Hispanic	85%	11
<HS/HS	81%	17
Some college	79%	20
College graduate	78%	18
Post-graduate	77%	18
<\$50,000/year	84%	15
\$50,000 +	76%	22
Parent	80%	18
Non-parent	79%	19
Fathers	76%	22
Mothers	83%	13
Write per day		
None	77%	22
1 page or less	81%	17
2-4 pages	82%	15
5 or more pages	77%	16
Web writers	81%	17
Tech-savvy writers	80%	18
Personal writers	79%	20
Confident writers	79%	18
Less confident writers	81%	18
Northeast	74%	24
Midwest	78%	19
Deep South	84%	16
South Atlantic	78%	18
West	83%	16

Importance of Strong Writing Skills at Work

Q46. In performing your own particular job, would you say that strong writing skills are very important, somewhat, not very, or not at all important?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important
Total 2009	47%	20	4	2
Men	43%	20	4	2
Women	52%	19	3	1
18-34	45%	22	5	2
35-44	49%	17	3	2
45-54	51%	21	2	1
55-64	47%	19	3	1
65+	37%	5	4	2
Men <55	44%	21	4	3
Men 55+	39%	18	3	1
Women <55	52%	20	3	1
Women 55+	51%	13	3	1
White	46%	21	5	2
Black	49%	26	--	--
Hispanic	48%	12	2	3
<HS/HS	32%	19	5	1
Some college	47%	23	3	4
College graduate	69%	18	3	--
Post-graduate	83%	13	1	--
<\$50,000/year	37%	18	4	3
\$50,000 +	55%	21	4	*
Parent	51%	18	3	2
Non-parent	43%	21	4	1
Fathers	48%	20	5	3
Mothers	55%	17	2	1
Write per day				
None	--	--	--	--
1 page or less	55%	35	8	3
2-4 pages	77%	20	1	1
5 or more pages	83%	13	4	--
Web writers	56%	21	3	1
Tech-savvy writers	54%	21	3	1
Personal writers	55%	20	3	1
Confident writers	57%	16	3	2
Less confident writers	34%	24	5	2
Northeast	49%	24	4	2
Midwest	46%	21	6	*
Deep South	47%	22	1	--
South Atlantic	49%	14	4	2
West	47%	17	3	3

Frequency of Writing Work-Related E-Mails

Please tell me if you do each of the following every day, at least once a week, sometimes, or never: Q38. Write work-related e-mails.

	Every day	Once a week	Sometimes	Never
Total 2009	33%	9	16	43
Men	35%	10	15	40
Women	31%	8	16	45
18-34	33%	12	18	36
35-44	42%	11	16	30
45-54	44%	8	16	32
55-64	32%	7	12	49
65+	6%	3	12	78
Men <55	40%	11	15	33
Men 55+	21%	5	16	58
Women <55	38%	10	19	33
Women 55+	17%	5	9	69
White	35%	9	14	42
Black	25%	5	21	50
Hispanic	29%	9	15	47
<HS/HS	15%	8	17	60
Some college	35%	11	16	38
College graduate	56%	10	13	22
Post-graduate	74%	5	10	11
<\$50,000/year	16%	8	17	58
\$50,000 +	51%	10	13	26
Parent	40%	9	17	35
Non-parent	26%	9	14	50
Fathers	42%	10	17	32
Mothers	38%	8	17	37
Write per day				
None	5%	6	15	74
1 page or less	33%	13	21	33
2-4 pages	68%	8	11	13
5 or more pages	86%	4	7	3
Web writers	43%	11	19	27
Tech-savvy writers	44%	11	18	27
Personal writers	44%	12	12	32
Confident writers	41%	10	14	35
Less confident writers	21%	7	18	53
Northeast	36%	8	15	42
Midwest	32%	7	14	47
Deep South	31%	9	16	44
South Atlantic	36%	7	18	39
West	30%	13	16	41

Chapter B Tables

Grading Schools in Your Community

Q2. How would you grade the schools in your community overall – A, B, C, D, F?

	A	B	C	D	F	DK/REF
Total 2009	19%	42	25	5	4	4
Total 2007	19%	38	25	6	4	7
Total 2005	18%	34	28	8	4	9
Men	19%	43	23	5	5	3
Women	18%	41	27	5	3	5
18-34	13%	45	29	4	5	3
35-44	23%	39	25	6	3	3
45-54	20%	39	24	6	7	4
55-64	18%	43	23	7	4	5
65+	23%	40	23	5	1	7
Men <55	19%	43	25	5	6	2
Men 55+	21%	44	20	6	4	6
Women <55	17%	41	29	5	4	5
Women 55+	21%	39	25	6	2	7
White	22%	41	23	5	4	5
Black	11%	46	28	11	3	2
Hispanic	14%	44	34	2	4	3
<HS/HS	17%	44	25	4	5	4
Some college	21%	39	27	5	4	4
College graduate	17%	41	27	9	2	4
Post-graduate	24%	40	21	5	6	4
<\$50,000/year	18%	40	27	5	5	5
\$50,000 +	19%	44	23	6	4	3
Parent	17%	43	27	5	5	3
Non-parent	20%	41	24	6	3	6
Fathers	20%	45	23	6	5	2
Mothers	14%	42	30	4	6	3
Write per day						
None	20%	40	25	5	4	5
1 page or less	14%	45	27	6	4	4
2-4 pages	23%	39	25	5	3	4
5 or more pages	21%	45	22	4	5	4
Web writers	18%	39	28	6	4	4
Tech-savvy writers	20%	42	25	6	4	4
Personal writers	19%	41	25	6	4	4
Confident writers	21%	42	23	6	5	4
Less confident writers	16%	42	29	5	3	5
Northeast	18%	51	22	4	2	3
Midwest	22%	43	22	4	4	5
Deep South	19%	39	25	9	5	3
South Atlantic	22%	37	29	5	5	2
West	14%	40	28	5	5	8

High School Graduate Preparedness

Q13. When students graduate high school in the U.S., how many of them do you think have the writing skills they need for college? Q14. When students graduate high school and start work instead of going to college, how many of them do you think can write well enough to do their jobs effectively: most of them, about half, or few of them?

	Prepared for College			Prepared for Work		
	Most	Half	Few	Most	Half	Few
Total	17%	57	25	27%	51	21
Men	17%	54	27	29%	48	22
Women	16%	60	23	26%	54	19
18-34	21%	55	24	31%	48	21
35-44	20%	59	17	32%	53	14
45-54	11%	64	24	23%	53	23
55-64	15%	48	35	19%	53	25
65+	13%	57	28	27%	50	20
Men <55	19%	56	24	32%	47	21
Men 55+	12%	49	36	22%	50	25
Women <55	17%	61	20	26%	55	18
Women 55+	15%	56	28	24%	53	21
White	15%	61	24	27%	51	20
Black	19%	46	34	24%	56	20
Hispanic	27%	48	22	34%	47	19
<HS/HS	21%	58	20	35%	51	14
Some college	15%	57	28	24%	52	23
College graduate	14%	58	27	20%	51	28
Post-graduate	7%	52	36	12%	50	33
<\$50,000/year	20%	56	24	30%	53	16
\$50,000 +	15%	58	26	24%	50	25
Parent	16%	59	23	28%	52	19
Non-parent	17%	55	26	26%	51	22
Fathers	17%	57	25	30%	49	20
Mothers	16%	60	22	27%	54	19
Write per day						
None	19%	58	21	30%	52	16
1 page or less	15%	59	24	32%	48	19
2-4 pages	17%	51	30	17%	54	27
5 or more pages	13%	55	31	12%	57	30
Web writers	17%	60	22	29%	49	21
Tech-savvy writers	18%	57	24	26%	50	23
Personal writers	16%	55	28	24%	53	22
Confident writers	19%	56	24	26%	51	21
Less confident writers	14%	58	26	28%	51	19
Northeast	22%	58	19	24%	56	20
Midwest	10%	63	23	33%	46	18
Deep South	20%	53	27	28%	49	22
South Atlantic	18%	54	27	22%	57	19
West	16%	55	28	26%	49	23

College Graduate Preparedness

Q15. When students graduate *college* in the U.S. and start work, how many of them do you think can write well enough to do their jobs effectively: most of them, about half, or few of them?

	Most of them	About half	Few of them
Total	62%	33	4
Men	62%	33	4
Women	62%	34	4
18-34	71%	26	3
35-44	74%	24	2
45-54	56%	41	2
55-64	50%	43	7
65+	51%	40	8
Men <55	69%	28	3
Men 55+	45%	44	9
Women <55	66%	31	2
Women 55+	54%	39	6
White	64%	32	3
Black	58%	39	3
Hispanic	61%	30	8
<HS/HS	61%	34	5
Some college	68%	29	2
College graduate	61%	35	4
Post-graduate	49%	43	7
<\$50,000/year	61%	34	5
\$50,000 +	63%	34	4
Parent	67%	30	3
Non-parent	58%	36	5
Fathers	67%	31	2
Mothers	66%	30	3
Write per day			
None	58%	36	5
1 page or less	67%	29	3
2-4 pages	64%	32	4
5 or more pages	56%	39	5
Web writers	65%	30	5
Tech-savvy writers	64%	31	4
Personal writers	63%	33	4
Confident writers	65%	30	4
Less confident writers	58%	38	4
Northeast	62%	36	2
Midwest	67%	30	3
Deep South	60%	34	5
South Atlantic	62%	34	5
West	59%	34	5

Grading Writing Instruction Received

Q11. How would you grade the quality of writing instruction YOU received in school – that is in grades K through 12? A, B, C, D or F

	A	B	C	D	F
Total 2009	35%	36	22	4	2
Total 2007	37%	40	17	4	1
Men	31%	38	23	4	3
Women	39%	35	20	4	1
18-34	27%	40	27	5	1
35-44	40%	32	19	6	3
45-54	30%	41	20	4	4
55-64	44%	29	21	4	2
65+	43%	34	18	2	1
Men <55	29%	39	23	5	4
Men 55+	36%	34	24	3	1
Women <55	33%	38	22	5	1
Women 55+	50%	30	16	3	2
White	38%	35	21	4	1
Black	25%	47	21	4	3
Hispanic	31%	38	22	7	2
<HS/HS	27%	41	23	4	3
Some college	39%	34	22	4	1
College graduate	42%	33	18	5	2
Post-graduate	51%	26	17	4	*
<\$50,000/year	31%	40	21	4	3
\$50,000 +	37%	35	21	4	2
Parent	30%	39	24	4	2
Non-parent	39%	34	20	4	2
Fathers	29%	39	23	5	3
Mothers	31%	38	25	3	1
Write per day					
None	29%	38	27	3	2
1 page or less	32%	40	21	5	2
2-4 pages	45%	31	15	6	2
5 or more pages	53%	25	20	2	--
Web writers	35%	39	20	4	1
Tech-savvy writers	37%	36	21	5	1
Personal writers	38%	34	21	4	2
Confident writers	45%	33	16	3	2
Less confident writers	20%	41	29	6	3
Northeast	42%	32	20	3	3
Midwest	36%	39	19	5	1
Deep South	28%	40	22	5	5
South Atlantic	34%	42	18	3	2
West	34%	30	29	5	1

Satisfaction with Writing Skills

Q34. When it comes to your own writing skills, how satisfied are you that you can communicate your thoughts and ideas clearly in writing: almost always satisfied, satisfied part of the time, or rarely satisfied with your writing skills?

	Almost always	Part of the time	Rarely
Total 2009	59%	35	6
Men	55%	37	8
Women	62%	33	5
18-34	60%	34	6
35-44	59%	37	4
45-54	56%	37	7
55-64	64%	29	7
65+	55%	36	9
Men <55	56%	38	6
Men 55+	53%	34	13
Women <55	61%	33	5
Women 55+	65%	31	4
White	60%	33	7
Black	50%	43	6
Hispanic	56%	38	7
<HS/HS	49%	41	10
Some college	61%	34	4
College graduate	71%	27	2
Post-graduate	80%	20	--
<\$50,000/year	52%	40	9
\$50,000 +	64%	32	4
Parent	58%	38	5
Non-parent	60%	32	8
Fathers	54%	41	5
Mothers	60%	35	5
Write per day			
None	49%	43	9
1 page or less	57%	36	7
2-4 pages	72%	25	3
5 or more pages	80%	19	1
Web writers	65%	32	4
Tech-savvy writers	65%	32	4
Personal writers	67%	30	3
Confident writers	100%	--	--
Less confident writers	--	85	15
Northeast	63%	31	7
Midwest	55%	38	7
Deep South	54%	38	8
South Atlantic	59%	36	5
West	63%	32	5

Focus During Writing

Thinking about the kinds of things you write in your personal or work life, please tell me how much attention you pay to each of the following: a great deal, some, not very much, or none at all. Q48. Your spelling Q50. How well-organized and clear your thoughts are Q47. Your grammar Q51. How well the language and tone match the purpose Q49. Your punctuation

<i>% saying "a great deal"</i>	Spelling	Organization	Grammar	Language and Tone	Punctuation
Total 2009	79%	72%	70%	67%	60%
Men	72%	69%	64%	64%	55%
Women	86%	75%	75%	69%	65%
18-34	76%	71%	63%	65%	52%
35-44	87%	78%	78%	72%	68%
45-54	83%	73%	74%	73%	65%
55-64	78%	73%	72%	68%	61%
65+	73%	63%	63%	53%	59%
Men <55	74%	71%	66%	66%	55%
Men 55+	69%	64%	59%	58%	54%
Women <55	88%	77%	75%	73%	65%
Women 55+	81%	70%	74%	62%	65%
White	79%	73%	69%	68%	59%
Black	80%	76%	72%	69%	61%
Hispanic	75%	64%	63%	57%	59%
<HS/HS	72%	60%	57%	54%	48%
Some college	83%	77%	75%	72%	62%
College graduate	89%	86%	84%	82%	77%
Post-graduate	90%	91%	91%	90%	83%
<\$50,000/year	76%	65%	62%	59%	52%
\$50,000 +	81%	79%	76%	73%	66%
Parent	83%	75%	72%	68%	62%
Non-parent	76%	69%	68%	65%	58%
Fathers	76%	72%	70%	66%	58%
Mothers	88%	77%	73%	70%	65%
Write per day					
None	69%	56%	54%	51%	48%
1 page or less	82%	77%	74%	70%	59%
2-4 pages	89%	86%	85%	81%	77%
5 or more pages	93%	94%	86%	95%	83%
Web writers	83%	78%	75%	71%	67%
Tech-savvy writers	83%	78%	75%	72%	66%
Personal writers	84%	80%	76%	75%	67%
Confident writers	88%	83%	82%	77%	71%
Less confident writers	67%	56%	53%	52%	44%
Northeast	78%	75%	68%	69%	62%
Midwest	78%	69%	67%	64%	57%
Deep South	78%	69%	68%	64%	56%
South Atlantic	85%	73%	74%	75%	66%
West	78%	74%	71%	63%	59%

Putting More Emphasis on Writing

Q12. Do you think our public education system from kindergarten through high school should put more emphasis on teaching students to write well, less emphasis on writing, or does it put the right emphasis on writing already?

	More Emphasis	Right Emphasis	Less Emphasis
Total	75%	22	2
Men	76%	20	2
Women	73%	24	1
18-34	73%	25	1
35-44	70%	28	1
45-54	78%	19	1
55-64	75%	19	3
65+	79%	15	3
Men <55	75%	23	1
Men 55+	79%	13	3
Women <55	72%	26	1
Women 55+	76%	20	2
White	74%	22	1
Black	76%	19	2
Hispanic	72%	25	2
<HS/HS	71%	25	2
Some college	73%	23	2
College graduate	82%	17	1
Post-graduate	82%	15	*
<\$50,000/year	71%	24	2
\$50,000 +	77%	22	1
Parent	72%	25	2
Non-parent	77%	20	2
Fathers	76%	21	3
Mothers	69%	28	1
Write per day			
None	69%	25	2
1 page or less	75%	23	2
2-4 pages	82%	17	*
5 or more pages	80%	19	--
Web writers	76%	22	*
Tech-savvy writers	76%	22	1
Personal writers	75%	22	1
Confident writers	74%	23	2
Less confident writers	75%	21	1
Northeast	73%	25	2
Midwest	72%	25	1
Deep South	74%	24	1
South Atlantic	76%	19	1
West	77%	18	3

Teaching Writing Along With Reading

Q18. Please tell me which of the following views you agree with more: [ROTATE STATEMENTS]:
That children need to learn to read in order to learn to write; OR That writing and reading go
hand-in-hand, so students should learn them both at the same time.

	Read in Order to Write	Both at the Same Time
Total 2009	25%	74
Total 2007	20%	79
Men	26%	74
Women	25%	75
18-34	23%	77
35-44	28%	71
45-54	28%	72
55-64	29%	71
65+	23%	77
Men <55	25%	75
Men 55+	29%	71
Women <55	26%	74
Women 55+	23%	76
White	25%	75
Black	30%	70
Hispanic	32%	68
<HS/HS	28%	72
Some college	24%	76
College graduate	23%	77
Post-graduate	24%	73
<\$50,000/year	26%	74
\$50,000 +	24%	75
Parent	27%	72
Non-parent	24%	76
Fathers	26%	74
Mothers	29%	71
Write per day		
None	26%	73
1 page or less	25%	75
2-4 pages	25%	74
5 or more pages	24%	74
Web writers	26%	74
Tech-savvy writers	25%	74
Personal writers	27%	73
Confident writers	26%	73
Less confident writers	24%	75
Northeast	22%	78
Midwest	25%	73
Deep South	31%	69
South Atlantic	24%	76
West	25%	74

School Resource Allocation

Q16. Which of these options do you think would help students become better writers: If schools put more resources into testing students at various grade levels to see how well they are learning to write; OR If schools put more resources into helping teachers teach writing to their students?

	Testing Students	Helping Teachers
Total 2009	33%	66
Total 2007	31%	66
Total 2005	29%	67
Men	31%	67
Women	34%	65
18-34	34%	65
35-44	33%	65
45-54	32%	66
55-64	28%	71
65+	34%	63
Men <55	31%	67
Men 55+	32%	66
Women <55	35%	63
Women 55+	31%	68
White	29%	70
Black	45%	55
Hispanic	39%	59
<HS/HS	41%	58
Some college	27%	71
College graduate	26%	71
Post-graduate	19%	79
<\$50,000/year	39%	60
\$50,000 +	28%	70
Parent	32%	66
Non-parent	33%	65
Fathers	29%	69
Mothers	35%	64
Write per day		
None	36%	63
1 page or less	35%	64
2-4 pages	27%	71
5 or more pages	25%	72
Web writers	35%	64
Tech-savvy writers	31%	67
Personal writers	29%	69
Confident writers	31%	67
Less confident writers	35%	64
Northeast	31%	69
Midwest	31%	67
Deep South	34%	64
South Atlantic	39%	59
West	30%	68

Grade in Which Children Should Begin to Learn to Write

Q17. What do you think is the right grade to start teaching children to write, meaning composing sentences, paragraphs, and longer pieces, NOT penmanship or how one shapes letters? Pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade, 4th grade, 5th grade, or after 5th grade? [IF AFTER 5th: Which grade is that?]

	PreK- Kindergarten	1 st grade	2 nd grade	3 rd grade	4 th grade or later
Total 2009	18%	29	20	17	15
Total 2007	20%	29	19	17	13
Total 2005	22%	34	14	15	13
Men	17%	26	21	16	19
Women	20%	32	19	17	11
18-34	22%	28	20	17	13
35-44	15%	31	24	16	14
45-54	19%	30	19	17	14
55-64	15%	27	19	18	20
65+	18%	31	19	15	16
Men <55	18%	24	23	16	19
Men 55+	14%	30	17	18	21
Women <55	20%	34	19	17	8
Women 55+	20%	28	20	16	16
White	17%	30	21	16	15
Black	25%	21	21	19	14
Hispanic	20%	29	15	18	17
<HS/HS	18%	24	23	16	18
Some college	18%	32	17	20	14
College graduate	22%	36	19	12	11
Post-graduate	14%	37	20	19	8
<\$50,000/year	18%	27	19	18	17
\$50,000 +	19%	32	21	14	14
Parent	19%	29	21	17	13
Non-parent	18%	29	19	16	17
Fathers	15%	23	23	19	20
Mothers	22%	34	19	16	7
Write per day					
None	15%	27	19	18	20
1 page or less	21%	30	19	18	12
2-4 pages	20%	27	27	14	13
5 or more pages	20%	43	16	9	10
Web writers	19%	30	18	17	15
Tech-savvy writers	18%	32	19	17	14
Personal writers	17%	31	23	16	14
Confident writers	21%	30	21	15	13
Less confident writers	15%	29	18	19	18
Northeast	18%	34	17	14	17
Midwest	15%	28	25	16	15
Deep South	23%	29	16	16	16
South Atlantic	18%	28	25	18	11
West	19%	29	17	19	16

Chapter C Tables

Technology's Effect on Writing

Q19. Do you think in general that computers and other new technologies are helpful or harmful in teaching students to write well? Is that strongly or somewhat?

	Net Help	Net Harm	Strong Help	Smwhat Help	Smwht Harm	Strong Harm
Total 2009	56%	39	28%	28	25	14
Total 2007	61%	34	30%	31	24	10
Men	58%	37	29%	29	25	12
Women	55%	41	28%	27	25	16
18-34	63%	34	33%	30	25	9
35-44	61%	35	25%	36	22	13
45-54	53%	43	29%	24	22	21
55-64	49%	47	26%	23	29	18
65+	47%	45	21%	26	29	16
Men <55	62%	36	32%	30	25	11
Men 55+	50%	42	20%	30	26	16
Women <55	59%	38	29%	30	22	16
Women 55+	47%	49	26%	21	31	18
White	55%	41	25%	30	26	15
Black	66%	32	40%	26	23	9
Hispanic	59%	38	32%	27	23	15
<HS/HS	56%	40	29%	27	24	16
Some college	57%	39	27%	30	26	13
College graduate	52%	42	26%	26	27	15
Post-graduate	61%	33	28%	33	24	9
<\$50,000/year	59%	37	30%	29	22	15
\$50,000 +	53%	42	24%	29	29	13
Parent	60%	37	33%	27	22	15
Non-parent	53%	42	24%	29	28	14
Fathers	58%	38	33%	25	23	15
Mothers	60%	37	32%	28	22	15
Write per day						
None	57%	37	26%	31	25	12
1 page or less	57%	40	30%	27	25	15
2-4 pages	54%	43	24%	30	26	17
5 or more pages	56%	38	40%	16	18	20
Web writers	62%	35	34%	28	22	13
Tech-savvy writers	59%	37	31%	28	24	13
Personal writers	57%	38	31%	26	24	14
Confident writers	56%	39	28%	28	23	16
Less confident writers	57%	40	28%	29	28	12
Northeast	58%	37	28%	30	23	14
Midwest	54%	42	26%	28	29	13
Deep South	62%	35	33%	29	22	13
South Atlantic	58%	38	28%	30	25	13
West	52%	42	26%	26	24	18

Computers' Effect on Student Writing

Q20. Which of the following statements do you agree with more? Do you agree more that [ROTATE STATEMENTS]: Using computers to write makes students careless writers because they write so fast they do not think enough about what they are writing; OR more that Computers enable students to become better writers because they write, revise and edit more?

	Makes Students Careless	Become Better Writers
Total 2009	51%	47
Total 2007	42%	52
Men	52%	46
Women	50%	48
18-34	54%	45
35-44	50%	49
45-54	47%	50
55-64	50%	48
65+	51%	42
Men <55	53%	45
Men 55+	48%	46
Women <55	48%	49
Women 55+	52%	44
White	52%	45
Black	46%	52
Hispanic	49%	51
<HS/HS	53%	44
Some college	51%	47
College graduate	49%	49
Post-graduate	42%	53
<\$50,000/year	50%	48
\$50,000 +	54%	44
Parent	49%	49
Non-parent	52%	44
Fathers	52%	45
Mothers	46%	53
Write per day		
None	48%	49
1 page or less	51%	47
2-4 pages	58%	40
5 or more pages	44%	52
Web writers	47%	51
Tech-savvy writers	50%	48
Personal writers	50%	48
Confident writers	49%	48
Less confident writers	52%	45
Northeast	49%	46
Midwest	51%	45
Deep South	49%	50
South Atlantic	52%	47
West	52%	46

Age at Which Children Should be Taught to Use Computers

Q21. At what age should children be taught to use computers?

	Less than 5	5-6	7-8	9-10	11 or older
Total 2009	14%	35	23	14	11
Total 2007	18%	34	20	12	9
Men	12%	34	24	15	13
Women	17%	37	22	13	11
18-34	11%	38	24	14	13
35-44	19%	37	21	12	10
45-54	14%	34	25	12	14
55-64	17%	33	20	20	9
65+	12%	33	23	16	13
Men <55	11%	35	24	15	13
Men 55+	12%	30	27	16	14
Women <55	17%	38	23	10	11
Women 55+	16%	35	18	20	9
White	15%	37	23	14	10
Black	12%	39	24	11	14
Hispanic	8%	25	25	18	21
<HS/HS	12%	30	22	18	17
Some college	15%	37	26	13	9
College graduate	18%	40	24	9	9
Post-graduate	19%	47	19	11	3
<\$50,000/year	13%	34	22	16	14
\$50,000 +	14%	39	25	12	10
Parent	18%	38	20	11	12
Non-parent	11%	33	26	17	12
Fathers	14%	36	23	14	11
Mothers	21%	40	18	9	12
Write per day					
None	14%	30	26	15	14
1 page or less	15%	36	22	15	11
2-4 pages	15%	40	20	10	14
5 or more pages	15%	44	22	15	2
Web writers	15%	38	22	12	12
Tech-savvy writers	15%	39	23	12	11
Personal writers	16%	36	24	13	10
Confident writers	14%	35	23	15	12
Less confident writers	14%	36	23	13	12
Northeast	15%	35	27	12	10
Midwest	15%	36	22	16	10
Deep South	12%	34	17	18	17
South Atlantic	15%	37	24	15	8
West	14%	33	24	11	15

Web and Technology-enhanced Writing

Please tell me if you do each of the following every day, at least once a week, sometimes, or never:
 Q42. Incorporate images, audio, or video into documents or other content you write, Q43. Include links to websites in what you write. Q40. Read blogs. Q41. Write comments on others' blog postings. Q39. Write content for a website or blog

<i>% saying "sometimes" or more</i>	Use images, audio or video	Link to websites	Read blogs	Comment on blogs	Write for website/blog
Total 2009	58%	50%	50%	33%	30%
Men	56%	50%	49%	33%	29%
Women	60%	49%	50%	33%	32%
18-34	68%	58%	62%	48%	43%
35-44	70%	56%	60%	36%	33%
45-54	55%	54%	44%	28%	26%
55-64	50%	48%	42%	21%	26%
65+	31%	22%	27%	18%	11%
Men <55	62%	54%	54%	38%	32%
Men 55+	39%	38%	37%	18%	21%
Women <55	69%	58%	58%	39%	40%
Women 55+	41%	31%	32%	21%	15%
White	56%	49%	47%	31%	29%
Black	55%	56%	50%	30%	30%
Hispanic	65%	45%	63%	45%	34%
<HS/HS	44%	35%	45%	30%	25%
Some college	65%	58%	46%	32%	33%
College graduate	71%	63%	62%	40%	36%
Post-graduate	74%	75%	58%	39%	42%
<\$50,000/year	48%	40%	42%	32%	26%
\$50,000 +	67%	61%	58%	34%	35%
Parent	67%	56%	53%	39%	34%
Non-parent	49%	43%	46%	27%	27%
Fathers	66%	56%	53%	38%	30%
Mothers	68%	56%	54%	40%	36%
Write per day					
None	37%	29%	39%	25%	18%
1 page or less	64%	53%	51%	34%	35%
2-4 pages	79%	72%	59%	40%	37%
5 or more pages	80%	81%	69%	45%	57%
Personal writers	69%	61%	60%	42%	38%
Confident writers	66%	55%	51%	36%	35%
Less confident writers	47%	42%	47%	29%	23%
Northeast	62%	48%	52%	38%	33%
Midwest	53%	48%	40%	26%	26%
Deep South	57%	55%	55%	40%	32%
South Atlantic	57%	49%	51%	34%	31%
West	61%	49%	53%	32%	31%

Appendix C: Detailed Methodology

Methods

The public opinion research reported here is a national survey conducted by telephone January 2 to 11, 2009. The survey was carried out among a representative probability sample of 1,200 adults residing in the US.

The questionnaire for the survey was written by BRS and approved by the National Writing Project. It repeats many of the questions we first put to the public in a 2005 survey for NWP and tested again in 2007, and also includes new questions regarding the writing Americans do in their daily lives and their perceptions of their own and others' writing training and preparation.

Professional, fully-trained and supervised telephone interviewers, using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing system, conducted the fieldwork. A briefing session was conducted to familiarize the interviewers with the sample specifications and the instrument for this study. The sampling frame was a list of randomly created telephone numbers (a technique known as random digit dial or RDD) for telephone exchanges across the U.S. Survey Sampling, Inc. provided the sample. In addition to the RDD sample, cell phone sample was used to insure coverage of cell phone only households. Survey Sampling International provided the random sample of cell phone numbers. Supplemental random sample was used to target African-American and Hispanic households. Interviewers randomly selected respondents by requesting to speak with the adult 18 or older in the household who had the most recent birthday.

The demographic characteristics of the sample were matched to the most recent Census estimates and the data have been weighted statistically in order to bring age and education into their proper proportions. The margin of sampling error (or sampling tolerance) for the survey is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points at the .95 confidence level. Tables in the report use many cross tabulations, based on smaller subgroups and the margin of error for these is higher.

Reading this report: The questionnaire is attached in Appendix B. Illustrative graphs accompany the narrative of this report, and longer crosstab tables appear in Appendix C. Tables and graphs included in the text of this report highlight selected relevant survey findings and are expressed in percentages. The base for each table is all respondents (n = 1,200) unless otherwise noted. In reading the crosstab tables, when the percent sign (%) appears at the top of a column, the numbers add vertically; when % appears at the left of a row, the numbers add

horizontally. An asterisk (*) indicates less than 1%; a double hyphen (–) indicates zero.

Due to weighting, rounding, omission of “don’t know,” “refused,” and other responses, or, in the case of multiple response questions, percentages may add to more than or less than 100%.

Description of banner points: Most of the banner points in the tables are self-evident; however, a few points should be noted.

Parents: For this survey we considered as parents anyone with children 25 or under.

Writers: The survey asked Americans: “In your paid job or as a volunteer, do you sometimes have to write reports, correspondence, email or other text?” (Q. 44) We divided the responses into four categories:

- None– Those who say they do not write at work or as a volunteer.
- Write 1 page or less – Those writing a page or less each day at work or as a volunteer.
- Write 2-4 pages per day– Those who more than one and fewer than five pages at work or as a volunteer.
- Write 5+ pages at work – Those who write five or more pages at work per day at work or as a volunteer.

Web writers: Those who say in Q. 39 or Q. 41 that they ever write for blogs or webpages or comment on those of others.

Tech-savvy writers: Those who say in Q. 42 or Q. 43 that they ever use images, audio, video, or hyperlinks in their writing.

Personal writers: Those who answered in Q. 35, Q. 36, or Q. 37 that they write letters to friends or family, write in a diary, or write letters to elected officials or publications weekly or more often.

Region: The banner points are as follows:

Northeast (18%)	Midwest (20%)	Deep South (20%)	South Atlantic (16%)	West (25%)
Connecticut	Illinois	Alabama	Delaware	Arizona
Maine	Indiana	Arkansas	District of Columbia	Colorado
Massachusetts	Iowa	Kentucky	Florida	California
New Hampshire	Kansas	Louisiana	Georgia	Idaho
New Jersey	Michigan	Mississippi	Maryland	Montana
New York	Minnesota	Oklahoma	Virginia	Nevada
Pennsylvania	Missouri	Tennessee	North Carolina	New Mexico
Rhode Island	Nebraska	Texas	South Carolina	Oregon
Vermont	North Dakota		West Virginia	Utah
	Ohio			Washington
	South Dakota			Wyoming
	Wisconsin			