



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education

September 16, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Updates to the *Understand Scoring* Application**

The *Understand Scoring* application for the Standards of Learning (SOL) Writing assessments that are based on the 2010 English SOL has been updated to reflect a more current technology platform. As a result of the update to the application, all previous *Understand Scoring* accounts had to be deleted. To practice scoring, teachers must create a new user account using the keyword "Virginia." Depending on the Web browser used to access *Understand Scoring*, it may be necessary to enable pop-up windows or disable a pop-up blocker.

Users will experience minor changes to the functionality of the application; however, the overall purpose of *Understand Scoring* remains the same. Please note that although the Grade 5 SOL Writing assessment is no longer administered to students, the rubrics, papers, and practice sets for grade 5 continue to be provided in the application as a resource for teachers.

For those not familiar with *Understand Scoring*, the application provides educators with information about the SOL Writing assessments, including the rubrics and anchor papers that illustrate each score point on the Composing/Written Expression and Usage/Mechanics domains used to score the short-paper components of the writing tests. The application provides an opportunity to study anchor papers that illustrate each score point of each domain and promote understanding of the differences between score points. Users will be able to score papers in multiple practice sets and verification sets and view scoring based on Virginia's two-domain scoring rubric. Teachers will gain a better understanding of the Virginia SOL Writing assessments; understand the use of the SOL Writing rubrics in scoring student writing; and develop consistency in scoring actual student work.

Teachers may also use *Understand Scoring* with students to facilitate their understanding of the expectations in each of the domains. Guest user functionality is available in the application and was designed specifically to allow students to access the system without having to create an account or save information.

For further information, please contact Tracy Fair Robertson, English coordinator, Office of Humanities and Early Childhood, by e-mail at [Tracy.Robertson@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Tracy.Robertson@doe.virginia.gov) or by telephone at (804) 371-7585; or the student assessment staff, by e-mail at [Student\\_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Student_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov) or by telephone at (804) 225-2102.

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