Dallas Environmental Science Academy

Dallas Environmental Science Academy, affectionately known as DESA, serves approximately 450 students in grades 6 - 8. All students take 2 science courses every year and can receive up to 7 high school credits. DESA was most recently ranked the sixth best middle school in Texas by US News.

How do I apply?

- **Determine eligibility**
  - MAP scores must be in at least the 40th percentile in Reading and Math
  - 75 overall average or higher

- **Prepare to complete application**
  - Most recent report card
  - MAP scores (request from your elementary school counselor)
  - Proof of residency
    - Utility bill (gas, electric or water)
    - Current lease
    - Home Title

- **Complete online application**
  - [www.dallasisd.org/choosedallasisd](http://www.dallasisd.org/choosedallasisd)
  - Select Dallas Environmental Science Academy as your 1st choice
  - Upload documentation

Interview and Assessment Day

- **Interview (10 points)**
  - 10 minutes
  - Leadership, goals, and personal interests

- **District Math Assessment (20 points)**
  - 60 minutes
  - 5th grade math concepts such as:
    - Multiplication and Division
    - Fractions
    - Calculating perimeter and volume
    - Graphing
    - Solving multi-step problems
  - Calculators are not allowed to be used on assessment
  - Visit [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org) to review concepts

- **Essay (20 points)**
  - 30 minutes
  - Focuses on:
    - Development and organization of ideas
    - Use of language
  - [Essay rubric with samples](#)

*Points are also awarded for standardized test scores and grades.*
Sample Interview Questions
1. What are your educational goals and how will our school help you reach those goals?
2. Describe a time when you felt challenged? How did you overcome this challenge?

Sample Math Questions
1. Jim plotted the following ordered pairs on a coordinate grid.
   (1, 3) (3, 6) (7, 6) (9, 3)
   
   Jim connected the points with line segments to form a polygon. Is point (4,5) located inside the polygon?

2. Three friends rode their bikes last week.
   • Christine rode her bike 27 kilometers.
   • Philip rode his bike 12 kilometers less than Christine.
   • Nathan rode his bike 3 times as far as Philip.

   Write an equation using n that represents the distance in kilometers Nathan rode his bike?

3. The combined perimeter of the rectangle and triangle is 63 inches. The model shows the dimensions of the rectangle.

   What is the perimeter in inches of the triangle?

   Answers:
1. yes 2. $(27 - 12) \times 3 = n$ 3. 27 in.
Essay Rubric

STAAR Grade 7 Expository Writing

Score Point 3
The essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Organization/Progression
- The organizing structure of the essay is, for the most part, appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are adequately suited to the expository task.
- The writer establishes a clear controlling idea. Most ideas are related to the controlling idea and are focused on the topic specified in the prompt. The essay is coherent, though it may not always be unified due to minor lapses in focus.
- The writer’s progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and sentence-to-sentence connections are sufficient to support the flow of the essay and show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas
- The development of ideas is sufficient because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and appropriate, adding some substance to the essay.
- The essay reflects some thoughtfulness. The writer’s response to the prompt is original rather than formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a good understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions
- The writer’s word choice is, for the most part, clear and specific. It reflects an awareness of the expository purpose and establishes a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice usually contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- Sentences are varied and adequately controlled, for the most part contributing to the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer demonstrates an adequate command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although some errors may be evident, they create few (if any) disruptions in the fluency of the writing, and they do not affect the clarity of the essay.
STAAR Grade 7 Expository Writing

Score Point 2
The essay represents a basic writing performance.

Organization/Progression
- The organizing structure of the essay is evident but may not always be appropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is not always clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are only somewhat suited to the expository task.
- Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the writer’s controlling idea is weak or somewhat unclear. The lack of an effective controlling idea or the writer’s inclusion of irrelevant information interferes with the focus and coherence of the essay.
- The writer’s progression of ideas is not always logical and controlled. Sometimes repetition or wordiness causes minor disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections are too perfunctory or weak to support the flow of the essay or show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas
- The development of ideas is minimal. The essay is superficial because the writer uses details and examples that are not always appropriate or are too briefly or partially presented.
- The essay reflects little or no thoughtfulness. The writer’s response to the prompt is sometimes formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates only a limited understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions
- The writer’s word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the expository purpose but does little to establish a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice may not contribute to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- Sentences are awkward or only somewhat controlled, weakening the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer demonstrates a partial command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Some distracting errors may be evident, at times creating minor disruptions in the fluency or meaning of the writing.
STAAR Grade 7 Expository Writing

Score Point 1
The essay represents a very limited writing performance.

Organization/Progression
- The organizing structure of the essay is inappropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies that are only marginally suited to the explanatory task, or they are inappropriate or not evident at all. The absence of a functional organizational structure causes the essay to lack clarity and direction.
- Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the controlling idea is missing, unclear, or illogical. The writer may fail to maintain focus on the topic, may include extraneous information, or may shift abruptly from idea to idea, weakening the coherence of the essay.
- The writer’s progression of ideas is weak. Repetition or wordiness sometimes causes serious disruptions in the essay. At other times the lack of transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections causes the writer to present ideas in a random or illogical way, making one or more parts of the essay unclear or difficult to follow.

Development of Ideas
- The development of ideas is weak. The essay is ineffective because the writer uses details and examples that are inappropriate, vague, or insufficient.
- The essay is insubstantial because the writer’s response to the prompt is vague or confused. In some cases, the essay as a whole is only weakly linked to the prompt. In other cases, the writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a lack of understanding of the expository writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions
- The writer’s word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the expository purpose and does not establish a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice may impede the quality and clarity of the essay.
- Sentences are simplistic, awkward, or uncontrolled, significantly limiting the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer has little or no command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Serious and persistent errors create disruptions in the fluency of the writing and sometimes interfere with meaning.