

# The Writing Crisis

## KEY DATA POINTS

Younger people struggle with writing and the data shows that the problem is only getting worse. See what's going on with these metrics.

**4/5 Underperform**  
 In 2011, the National Center for Educational Statistics reported that 80% of students are not proficient writers.

Additionally, there is a gender gap as females outscored men by an average of 20 points from grades 8 to 12. \*

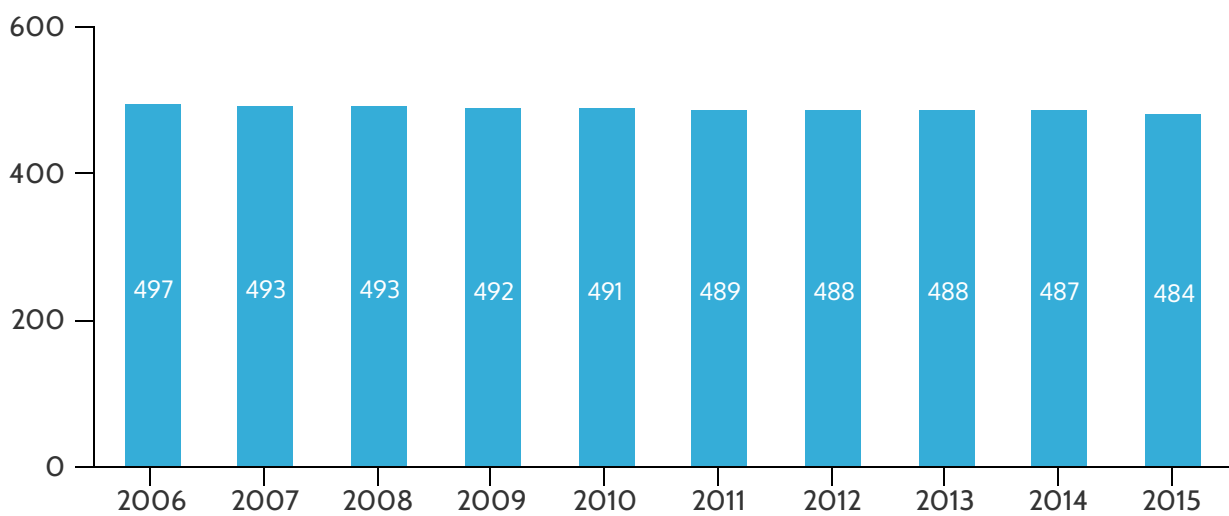
\* This data was based on computer-based assessments administered in 2010.

**Employer Complaints**  
 A P21.org employer research study found that writing skills are lacking among recent hires with college educations. \*

Employers reported that 28% of recent grad-hires lacked writing skills.

\* This data was based on a report published in 2006 by P21.

### Falling SAT Writing Scores



Since 2006, average SAT writing scores have fallen almost 15 points. Data provided courtesy of the College Entrance Examination Board.

**< 3 Hours**

Number of hours per week that fourth graders devote to just writing.

### Early Age Problem

It's very clear that the "writing" problem starts very early on in a student's life. Less than three hours per week makes up just 15% of the total time spent watching television.

\* This data was based on a report published by a panel of educators via College Board. It also appeared in a New York Times article.

### Writing Aversion

An inquiry paper published in 2008 by a PSU student investigated the reasons behind why students don't like to write. The study collected answers from 11th graders and here were the top reasons:

- 1 "I don't know how to write"
- 2 "I don't know what the teacher wants"
- 3 "I don't like the writing prompts"

There were more reasons included, but these were the top ones. Young writers clearly feel confused about the requirements and don't know how to proceed.

### References

1. NAEP. The Nation's Report Card (2011). [http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/writing\\_2011/](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/writing_2011/)
2. P21. Are They Really Ready to Work (2007). [http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/FINAL\\_REPORT\\_PDF09-29-06.pdf](http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/FINAL_REPORT_PDF09-29-06.pdf)
3. New York Times. Writing in Schools is Found Both Dismal and Neglected (2003). <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/26/education/26WRIT.html?tnemail0>
4. PSU. Inquiring the causes for student aversion to writing (2008). <http://ed.psu.edu/englishpds/inquiry/projects/papers08/bricker.pdf>