

The Daly-Miller Test

How to Calculate and Read Your Score

To determine your score, first, add together all point values for positive statements (PSV) only. Second, add together all point values for negative statements (NSV) only. Then place those scores into the following formula to discover your Writing Apprehension (WA) score:

$$WA = 78 + PSV - NSV$$

PSV questions = 1; 4; 5; 7; 8; 13; 16; 18; 21; 22; 24; 25; 26

NSV questions = 2; 3; 6; 9; 10; 11; 12; 14; 15; 17; 19; 20; 23

Writing Apprehension scores may range from 26 to 130. The following general observations may be made about scores in certain ranges, and only general observations, but note that the further a score is from the mean of 78, the more likely the description of a range of scores will apply.

Range 60-96:

Most students who score in this range do not experience a significantly unusual level of writing apprehension. However, the closer the score to the limits of this range--that is, scores close to 60 and 96--the more apt you are to experience feelings or behaviors characteristic of the next range of scores. A score of 78 places you as a writer on the mean, which is the middle point between two extremes, or conditions recorded in a large sample of students. The closer you are to the mean, the better. Nonetheless, you should be alert to the fact that you may manifest signs of writing apprehension in performing certain writing tasks or in writing with varying purposes for different types of audiences. While you may not experience harmful apprehension while writing an expository essay, for example, you may experience excessive apprehension writing a placement essay for faceless evaluators or in writing an in-class essay exam for a history professor.

Range 97-130:

A score in this range indicates that you have a low level of writing apprehension. The higher your score in this range, the more troublesome your lack of apprehension. You may not be motivated to listen or read carefully your assignments, to pay attention to due dates, to remember criteria for evaluation, or to act upon recommendations that might improve subsequent drafts of your essays. You do not fear writing or evaluation of writing, but you may not be adequately motivated to work on your writing.

Range 26-59:

A score in this range indicates you have a high level of writing apprehension. The lower your score in this range, the more severe your anxiety. You are nervous about writing and fearful of evaluation. In fact, research shows that those who score extremely low in this range will not take a course, select a major, or accept a job they know involves writing.

How to Understand Your Score

If your score indicates either low or high levels of writing apprehension, then look closely on the questionnaire to see if you can determine which component(s) of the writing process you need to more closely monitor. Most problems of this kind fall into three main categories:

- * evaluation apprehension,
- * stress apprehension, and
- * product apprehension.

When these specific components of writing apprehension are cross-referenced with your scoring level information, you will receive further insight into your particular attitudes toward writing and toward the evaluation of your writing. Student writers who experience evaluation apprehension expect to do poorly in composition courses even before the courses begin. You feel as though the teacher will give you a poor grade because you cannot express your ideas clearly. As a result, you often claim to be nervous about writing, dislike showing or talking about your writing even to friends, and do not like seeing your ideas expressed in writing. If you are evaluation apprehensive you believe other

students more clearly and, as a result, receive higher grades than you do.

Questions which you should examine to help you determine if you are evaluation apprehensive are 2, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, and 25.

Those student writers who encounter stress apprehension experience fear early in the writing process, sometimes even before they have written anything. You often procrastinate and report that you do not look forward to beginning a piece of writing, even one required for a course. You experience writer's block. Your hands may cramp soon after you begin a timed writing exercise. Once you are able to begin writing, you claim to run into great difficulty organizing your thoughts.

Questions which you should examine to help you determine if you are stress apprehensive are 1, 3, 7, 10, 15, 21, and 26.

For those students who experience product apprehension, the problem does not exist at a particular stage in the writing process (as with evaluation apprehension) or with a particular skill such as invention (as in stress apprehension). Rather, product apprehensives claim that expressing ideas through writing is a waste of time. Such student writers do not clearly envision an audience or a purpose for academic writing. If you are one of these writers you tend to compose a single draft only, yet you feel uneasy about submitting an essay for a grade.

Questions corresponding to product apprehension are 6, 8, and 17.

Diagnosing your writing process problems will not automatically alleviate them, of course. But the information gleaned from the Daly-Miller questionnaire allows you to anticipate your particular needs and to devise strategies for reducing stress that often inhibits the development of cognitive skills.

Source: From John Daly and Michael Miller's, "The Empirical Development of an Instrument to Measure Writing Apprehension." Research in the Teaching of English 12 (1975): 242-49. Adapted by Michael W. Smith in Reducing Writing Apprehension (Urbana: NCTE, 1984).