

Describe your Version of the ISTEP Scorer

South Adams Middle School teacher Melissa Beitler initially discussed the role of the ISTEP scorer and the 6 Trait skills that would be expected of a sixth grade writer. Then, she had students write a specific description of the ISTEP scorer they imagined in their minds. (i.e. *male or female, appearance, personality, family, likes/dislikes, writing expectations, etc.*)

THE ISTEP LADY

by Samantha S. (sixth grader)

The lights flickered darkly as a middle-aged, worn out, kind woman tried to grade the ISTEP test essays. Her lush green eyes carried a sparkle of wonder and a shadow of annoyance and her forehead wrinkled with concentration. Her dark, long, curly hair was damp from the humid air in the lonely, shadowed grading room.

Her mind was telling her to get out of there and go have some fun while making friends, but her heart kept her there. She dreamed of swimming under the glistening waterfall back home in Tennessee with her young daughter Haley and hubby Mike. That is where she and Haley would laugh and get as tan as an Indian while they swam.

Even cooking would be better than this and she couldn't stand cooking! She enjoyed grading the ISTEP tests, but not this year when she had to grade in this room. The lights flickered again and her diamond earrings glittered. With one story left, she slowly began to read.

The story almost sounded like her life, too, and she began to remember laughing and stirring up trouble when she was a child just as this kid did. So with a happy heart, she rose from the room that felt like a jail cell and danced in the shimmering sun. She gladly disposed of the tests to their rightful place and traveled home where she swam with Haley, Mike and the new puppy under the glistening waterfall.

ISTEP LADY

by Shelby M. (sixth grader)

She stampeded down the hallway, with her short, curly brown and gray hair waving in the air. "Time to grade the ISTEP tests," she mumbled. She twisted a bright, silver doorknob, stomping into a small room full of ISTEP Tests. She grabbed a test from the very tippy-top to grade. She stared at the test with her bright blue eye, looking through her glasses. She was thinking about how much fun her husband, daughter, and son were having at a water park, while all she did was grade tests.

She started reading a story from the pile of tests. She expected decent spelling, great punctuation, sentence fluency, good word choice, organization, and an awesome story. Unfortunately, that story had nothing that she actually liked. She grabbed her boring red pen and marked a 1 on the test, for the student's effort.

She liked spending time with her family, food, shopping, and swimming. Let's just say she liked pretty much everything. One thing she did not like was grading ISTEP tests.

So, next time you take an ISTEP Test, think of this old lady that has to grade your test, and make sure you write a fantastic story.

Paper Plate Portraits of the ISTEP Scorer

The final piece to the activity included students drawing the face of the ISTEP scorer on a paper plate.

