

Opinion: Why Americans can't write

By Natalie Wexler, Washington Post

It's no secret that many Americans are lousy writers. Just ask any college professor or employer, including those at prestigious institutions. With the advent of e-mail, writing ability has become more important than ever, and writing deficiencies have become increasingly apparent.

Surely one reason so many Americans lack writing skills is that, for decades, most U.S. schools haven't taught them. In 2011, a nationwide test found that only 24 percent of students in eighth and 12th grades were proficient in writing, and just 3 percent were advanced.

If students get writing assignments at all, they're usually of the "write about how you feel" variety. There's value to that kind of exercise, but it doesn't provide kids with the tools they need to write analytically.

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