

MAIN IDEA

I would like to travel to lots of different lands. I would like to take a trip all around the world. There are many places to see. This includes Scotland. 1 My ancestors are from Scotland. There are mysteries there. 2

- 1 The writer attempts to address the prompt by identifying a foreign country.
- 2 The main idea is not focused or elaborated.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

I like to read about mysteries, spooky ghost stories and haunted places. **1** There's haunted castles in Scotland. My friend Karen would be scared to go because she hates all ghost stories and scary movies even on Halloween. I wouldn't be scared to go to a haunted castle in Scotland. I wouldn't be scared to go to Loch Ness and see the monster either. Nessie is like a ghost because there's no clear photographs of her. **2**

- 1** The writer frequently strays from the prompt.
- 2** The response offers little support for the main idea.

ORGANIZATION

Karen is from Peurto Rico. **1** My grandmother came from Scotland. We all have different backgrounds it's interesting to hear about ancesters. Karen and I go to the same school and live in the same town but our ancesters came from different places far away. Karen has been to her home land I want to go to mine. Karen has photos of herself in Peurto Rico, I want photos of myself in Scotland. **2**

- 1** The writer includes information that is unrelated to the main idea.
- 2** This essay has no distinct ending.

COHERENCE

I like to read about mysteries, spooky ghost stories and haunted places. There's haunted castles in Scotland. My friend Karen would be scared to go because she hates all ghost stories and scary movies even on Halloween. I wouldn't be scared to go to a haunted castle in Scotland. I wouldn't be scared to go to Loch Ness and see the monster either. Nessie is like a ghost because there's no clear photographs of her.

1

Karen is from Puerto Rico. My grandmother came from Scotland. We all have different backgrounds it's interesting to hear about ancestors. Karen and I go to the same school and live in the same town but our ancestors came from different places far away. Karen has been to her home land I want to go to mine. Karen has photos of herself in Puerto Rico, I want photos of myself in Scotland.

2

- 1 Paragraphs are not logically connected.
- 2 The writer does not use transitions between paragraphs or between sentences.

MAIN IDEA

There are several foreign countries I would like to visit, and they include China, Canada, Australia, Scotland, Jamaica, and Japan. The one I most want to see is Scotland. 1

2 Second on the list close behind is Canada because it's not so far away. I would like to see Scotland because I have heard about some of the mysterious and interesting places there. My heritage is in Scotland.

- 1 The writer responds to the prompt by identifying a foreign country.
- 2 The writer frequently digresses from the main idea.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

1 My grandmother loves to talk about Scotland. She taught me about it. There are
clans, tartans, the Scottish Highlands, Loch Ness, castles, historical figures, and Edinburgh
International Festival of the Arts. That's a lot to see. I could look for my family tartan. **2**

- 1** The writer makes some effort to include interesting anecdotes.
- 2** The details are flat and not elaborated.

ORGANIZATION

Loch Ness has the Loch Ness Monster some say it is real. They call it "Nessie." I could see if it is real for myself. If I went there. The capital of this country is Edinburgh. There's a castle there you can walk through. The natural landscape have steep valleys, green fields, and blue lakes, and farmers raise sheep there. **1**

It is a place I have always wanted to see. I would take photographs. I could add my photographs to my grandmother's photographs of Scotland. A photo of Nessie would make me famous. My grandmother said a trip to Scotland is like a trip going back home. **2**

- 1** The logical progression within paragraphs is occasionally difficult to follow.
- 2** The writer establishes an appropriate ending.

COHERENCE

Loch Ness has the Loch Ness Monster some say it is real. They call it "Nessie" I could
1 see if it is real for myself. If I went there. The capital of this country is Edinburgh. There's
a castle there you can walk through. The natural landscape have steep valleys, green
fields, and blue lakes, and farmers raise sheep there. **2**

- 1** Ideas in the essay are not logically connected.
- 2** The writer does not establish relationships between ideas.

MAIN IDEA

1 There are several foreign countries I would like to visit, but the one I most want to see is Scotland. Some of my ancestors came from there, and I would really like to find out more about my heritage. I also would like to see Scotland because I have heard about some of the mysterious places there, and I want to investigate them in person. **2**

- 1** The writer clearly responds to the prompt.
- 2** The main idea is focused and well-supported in the first paragraph of the essay.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

My grandmother came from Scotland when she was a little girl, and she has been collecting information about our family for a long time. She told me that many of our ancestors came from Scotland and settled in the United States in the eighteenth century. She explained that each family, or clan, in Scotland has its own tartan. A tartan is a kind of plaid fabric made from wool; it is used in making clothes and banners. Each tartan has its own special design and colors and is an easy way for the Scottish people to identify members of different clans. During my visit, I hope I can find our tartan and locate other members of our clan.

- 1 Anecdotal details are appropriate and add interest to the essay.
- 2 The writer provides relevant reasons to support his or her choice.

ORGANIZATION

I have also heard many family stories about the Scottish Highlands, and I would hope my visit would take me through this beautiful area. **1** My grandmother has photographs of its steep valleys, green fields, and crystal blue lakes. I would especially like to see Loch Ness. It is 23 miles long and about 800 feet deep. Many people claim to have seen a sea creature swimming in this lake. I would like to see the creature, called “Nessie,” for myself. **2**

- 1** The writer has an organizational strategy and establishes a sense of beginning, middle, and ending.
- 2** The progression of ideas makes the response easy to follow.

COHERENCE

1 The highlight of my trip, however, would be a visit to the Edinburgh International Festival of the Arts. It is held every year in August and features music and traditional dances. I would like to hear the bagpipes play, and dance the Highland fling during the festival.

A trip to Scotland, for me, would be a trip back in time, but a trip to remember for a long time to come.

2

- 1** Transitional words, such as “however,” signal a change in thought.
- 2** The writer sustains focus on the main idea by summarizing it in the ending paragraph.

MAIN IDEA

1 Picking up litter may not be an enjoyable activity, but it's one of the most important jobs at our schools. Imagine if we didn't clean up our homes and our neighborhoods! We would live surrounded by trash. The same is true for our school: if we don't clean up the building and grounds, we learn in an environment that is unsanitary and unsafe. I think that all students should be responsible for their environment and participate in a monthly cleanup. It would make the school grounds more attractive, decrease costs, and increase school spirit. **2**

- 1** The writer provides a strong thesis statement that addresses the prompt.
- 2** The writer has a strategy to support the thesis.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

1 A cleaner environment would also save money. The school wouldn't have to hire professional sanitation companies, so money could be used for other things, such as dances and other activities. If a sanitation company charges \$20 per hour per worker, and it takes 6 workers 8 hours to clean the school once a month, the school would have to spend \$960 per month. That's \$9,600 per school year if the company cleaned only during the 10 months when teachers and students are in school. There are so many other things that can be done with those resources.

2

- 1** The writer reiterates and supports the thesis.
- 2** The reasons are fully developed and supported with examples.

ORGANIZATION

Finally, working together for the good of the school would increase school spirit. **1**

students would be proud of a school they help to improve. While vandalism may not be eliminated, more students would be aware of the work involved in a cleanup, and might discourage others from littering. A monthly cleanup would involve students in their school and in their community. A common purpose, like keeping the school attractive and safe, brings people together. It would help bridge some of the differences between different groups of students in the same school. **2**

- 1** The response follows a logical progression, with a clear ending.
- 2** The overall argument is thought-provoking and convincing.

COHERENCE

1 From September to June, students spend more hours in the school building than almost anywhere else. *If students participated in a monthly cleanup of their school, the grounds would stay clean and safe, the district would save money, and students would learn the value of working together. It would be a positive experience for everyone.* **2**

- 1** The writer includes a thought-provoking statement to strengthen his or her position.
- 2** The writer reiterates the major points to achieve coherence.

MAIN IDEA

My sister Debbie lives three hundred miles away so I don't get to see her as often as I would like. That's why I was so excited when she asked me to be in her wedding. I had no idea what a bridesmaid does, but I wanted to help Debbie any way I could. How was I to know that the most embarrassing moment of my life would happen at her wedding?

1

2

- 1 The writer focuses on the prompt throughout the narrative.
- 2 The writer clearly identifies a specific embarrassing moment.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

The week of Debbi's wedding arrived, but my dress did not. The night before we left, my mom and I decided to pack one of my dresses, just in case. When we walked into Debbi's house, she threw her arms around me and announced that my dress had arrived that afternoon. I was so excited that I ran into the living room to look at it. I opened the box on the couch, and there it was. Debbie was right. It was beautiful. It was made of royal blue satin, with tiny pearl buttons and a full skirt. I took it out of the box to get a better look. My screams brought my mom and Debbie running.

- 1 The writer provides sufficient details to explain and support the events in the narrative.
- 2 The writer uses literary devices such as suspense to build interest.

ORGANIZATION

Then it happened. Halfway down the aisle, I felt some of the stitches on my right shoulder snap. I looked at my shoulder and saw the seam was ripping. Then I noticed that other seams were ripping. The side seam was open, and my hem was dragging on the floor. I've never been so embarrassed in my life! I turned very red and tried to hold my self so that the problems didn't show. Every eye in the church was on me. I wanted to disappear. Luckily, the moment didn't last long. The wedding march started and Debbie began her walk down the aisle. Everybody forgot about me and turned to look at her.

- 1 There is a good sense of logical progression within paragraphs.
- 2 The writer uses transitional words and phrases to connect events effectively.

COHERENCE

The rest of the ceremony went just fine, and later I changed into the dress we brought with us. It could have been the worst day of my life, but Debbie was so happy and so beautiful. Her smiles made me forget my embarrassment. **1**

If I'm ever asked to be in a wedding again, I'm going to go directly to a store to buy my dress, and I'll make sure I have it fitted well in advance. I'm not going through that again! **2**

- 1** The writer establishes relationships between the events in the narrative.
- 2** The writer provides a thoughtful ending.

MAIN IDEA

I would like to propose something that I believe would benefit our whole family. It's an idea that would make your life easier and enhance my life as well. I would like to suggest that we install a second phone line for my personal use. **1**

A personal phone line may sound like a selfish request, but the benefits to you are many. Just imagine the many phone calls that you have missed all this time because I've been using the phone. If I had my own phone line, this would never be a problem again. Now, when your boss calls with an important business matter, you would always get the call. I am sure that this would help your career. It might even help you get a promotion and a raise. **2**

- 1** The writer clearly addresses the prompt.
- 2** The main idea is focused and well-supported.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

1 A personal phone line may sound like a selfish request, but the benefits to you are many. Just imagine the many phone calls that you have missed all this time because I've been using the phone. If I had my own phone line, this would never be a problem again. Now, when your boss calls with an important business matter, you would always get the call. I am sure that this would help your career. It might even help you get a promotion and a raise. **2**

- 1** The opposing argument is addressed and supported with sufficient reasons.
- 2** The reasons are appropriate and convincing.

ORGANIZATION

A second phone line would also benefit me. First of all, I would have peace of mind when I'm on the phone because I'd know that I'm not interfering with your need to communicate with other adults. Second, I would have the privacy I need when I'm on the phone. I know that you would never intentionally listen to my phone conversations, but Tommy is only five years old, and he doesn't understand that it's not right to pick up the phone when someone is talking. . .

- 1 The writer shows a logical development of ideas.
- 2 The writer anticipates opposing arguments and addresses them with reasons that are convincing.

COHERENCE

1 As you can see, having a second phone line installed is a great idea. It would be good for you because it would give you back the house phone, help you stay in contact with your boss and your friends, and reduce your stress. It would be good for me because it would give me greater privacy and provide an educational tool. Finally, it would be good for our family because it would improve our relationships by eliminating our arguments about the phone. Please consider my request. **2**

- 1** The writer employs appropriate transitions to direct the reader's thought.
- 2** The writer repeats the major points in his or her arguments.

MAIN IDEA

The past hundred years have brought with them a great deal of change. We call it progress. Some of the changes have been wonderful. Imagine how it would have been to travel across the country on a slow, hot, smoky train instead of on a short, comfortable flight on a jumbo jet. Yes, progress is a great thing. However, some of the items invented in the name of progress have been actually harmful. One such invention is television. **1** Would our lives really be better without television? **2** Definitely. Consider the following points.

- 1** The writer clearly states a position on the worst invention.
- 2** The writer prepares to support the position with appropriate reasons.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

For one thing, we would be in better physical shape. It seems strange that in a time when there's an exercise gym in every town, the population is actually becoming more obese and less healthy. Heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and other health problems continue on the rise. Why is this happening? The answer is television. Instead of taking walks or playing sports for entertainment, we now plant ourselves in front of the magic box, and we tell ourselves that we'll go to the gym tomorrow. This is especially true for children. Before television, kids had to find creative ways to have fun. They played, climbed trees, built forts, and did physical things for fun. Now, they sit in the family room watching television and eating junk food. No wonder we're getting fatter and sicker.

- 1 The writer supports his or her position with reasons that are appropriate and pertinent.
- 2 The writer uses details to elaborate his or her position sufficiently.

ORGANIZATION

- 1** That brings us to the next problem television has created. Television shows have poured an incredible amount of garbage into our minds. Prime time shows are filled with the kinds of scenes that used to be considered too graphic for R-rated movies. There's a lot of debate about whether violence on television causes violent behavior. The answer isn't clear, but even the network TV executives have admitted that their shows have been too
- 2** violent. Seeing violent actions every day for hours at a time can't be good for anyone.
- 1** Ideas flow logically from paragraph to paragraph.
- 2** The writer anticipates opposing arguments and addresses them with points that are relevant.

COHERENCE

Television may have its good points. It does allow the average person to keep up with news around the world. There are a few programs that actually present interesting new information or fine movies or performances by great artists. But these kinds of programs

1 are few compared to all the worthless programming that also exists.

2 We are becoming a nation of fat, unhealthy, greedy, mindless people. Television is to blame. I urge everyone to turn off the television once in a while and go for a walk, play a game, read a book, or even just talk to your family or friends. Our society will be better off if you do!

1 The writer clearly demonstrates how the facts and reasons support his or her position on the issue.

2 Persuasive techniques reinforce the writer's argument.