INTRODUCTION TO WRITING PROMPTS, SCORING RUBRICS, AND SAMPLE RESPONSES

Overview of the North Carolina End-of-Course Test of English II

The North Carolina End-of-Course Test of English II is administered to all tenth-grade students. The assessment consists of one prompt that asks students to compose an expository literary analysis essay. The test is designed to measure core composition skills such as main idea, supportive details, organization, and coherence, as well as grammar and spelling conventions.

The End-of-Course Test is administered statewide on a date specified by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Students will have 100 minutes to complete their essays. Total administration time of the exam is 115 minutes. Students with special needs may be allotted additional time if it is used routinely during instruction and if appropriate documentation is presented.

The writing prompt will ask students to analyze a work of world literature (other than American or British literature). Besides containing the prompt itself, the assessment page reminds students what they need to do to receive a high score.

The End-of-Course Test of English II is evaluated with the use of a holistic score scale and a conventions rating. The holistic score scale ranks students’ proficiency in the use of main idea, supporting details, organization, and coherence. Graders of the exam use these four criteria, along with the explanations given in the holistic score scale, to assign each essay a score from six to zero, with six being the top score. An additional category of non-scorable exists for those papers that are illegible, incoherent, off-topic, blank, or in a language other than English. The conventions rating further evaluates each paper on the basis of sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics. Those essays with a favorable rating receive a (+) while those with a negative rating receive a (–).

Writing Prompts, Scoring Rubrics, and Sample Responses Content

This book is composed of reproducible pages that are designed to help students improve on their basic writing skills as they prepare for the upcoming End-of-Course Test of English II. In addition to the prompts, rubrics, and sample responses, the book includes an activity for thinking about the writing prompt, an organizer for expository and persuasive writing, an organizer for expressive writing, an explanation of the scoring rubrics and how to use them, and student evaluation sheets for students to evaluate the responses of their peers. These activities are to be used to supplement the writing activities and to help focus students who may be having trouble organizing the writing process.

The prompts are modeled on those given on the English II test. There are four expository literary prompts, four expository problem/solution prompts, two personal narrative prompts, and two persuasive writing prompts. The End-of-Course Test will only test students on their abilities to answer a literary prompt, but the other types of prompts have been included here to allow students practice in these particular modes and to allow students additional writing practice in a test-like environment. Holistic score scales, or rubrics, for each type of prompt are also included, as well as sample responses at various score levels.
How to Use the Writing Prompts, Scoring Rubrics, and Sample Responses Content

Choose a Prompt

Before you begin working with students, you will need to select a prompt. If you are specifically preparing for the End-of-Course Test, it would be best to use one of the expository literary prompts.

Once you have chosen a prompt, you may wish to use the prewriting activities included in the book.

- **Thinking About the Writing Prompt** This activity gets students thinking about what direction their essays will take. Students are asked first to put the prompt into their own words. Then, after describing an initial reaction and thinking about the reminders listed on the prompt page, students brainstorm for ideas, details, and information that would support their responses.

- **Organizers for Expository/Persuasive and Expressive Writing** The two graphic organizers are to be used in conjunction with the Thinking About the Writing Prompt Exercise. The Organizer for Expository/Persuasive Writing is to be used with the expository literary, expository clarification, expository problem/solution, and persuasive prompts. This organizer shows one way of graphically representing the thesis statement, supporting details, and concluding statement. Students use their main ideas and supporting details from the brainstorming activity and organize them coherently into basic essay form. The Organizer for Expressive Writing is to be used with the narrative prompts. It helps make sure students include a beginning, a middle, and an end to their narratives and ensures that the stories have a main idea.

- **Using Scoring Rubrics** For those students uncomfortable or unfamiliar with scoring rubrics, we have included a basic explanation and exercise to help ease the anxiety of the assessment. These pages explain what exactly the rubrics are, how they are organized, and how students can use them to perform their best on the assessment. A checklist is included that students can use to clarify the four scoring criteria. Students are directed to customize the checklist to the specific mode of writing they will be creating. This additional reinforcement will help to solidify in students’ minds the requirements of a strong essay.

Writing the Essay

Once students have completed their prewriting activities, they are ready to begin working. You can either assign essays for homework, or you can simulate the test environment by allowing students one hundred minutes in-class work time, if possible, or by splitting the mock test into two testing sections.

Student Evaluation Sheets

Student Evaluation Sheets have been included to allow students the opportunity to review the sample responses or to review the writing of their peers. There is a different student evaluation sheet for each type of prompt.
Sample Responses and Rubrics

Two of the four expository literary prompts and two of the four expository problem/solution prompts have sample responses. The expository clarification prompt, and both narrative and persuasive prompts also have sample responses. The three sample responses for each prompt are all modeled after the same basic essay. However, each has modifications consistent with the rubrics to account for the difference in score. For instance, the first expository literary prompt asks a student to discuss a dynamic literary character. All three essays discuss Squeaky from “Raymond’s Run,” but the first essay is unclear and digressive. The second essay is more focused, and the third essay is well written. The variety of responses allows students to discern the differences between the various score points.

Each prompt type also has a corresponding score scale or rubric. In other words, there is one rubric for expository literary essays, one for expository clarifications essays, one for problem/solution essays, one for personal narratives, and one for persuasive essays. There are three main parts to each rubric. The first part of the rubric is the Focused Holistic Score Scale. Here the six score points are broken down into explanations of what each paper should contain to earn a particular score. The score scale is designed to help the essay evaluators, but students will find that reviewing the score scale will help them better understand what the intended audience is looking for. The second part of the rubric is the Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria. The scoring criteria contain the same components for all prompt types—main idea, supporting details, organization, and coherence—though they are slightly altered for each of the five modes. The last part of the rubric is the Conventions Score Scale. Students are rated on a three-point scale regarding their proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics. Students averaging a two or above on all four components are given a positive (+) rating while those averaging below a two receive a negative (–) rating. Details of the Conventions Score Scale are on page vii.

Transparencies

The transparencies that accompany the book are designed to show students the difference between writing at each of the various score points. Each transparency takes a brief excerpt of one of the sample responses and highlights the excerpted response’s proficiency, or lack thereof, in one of the four holistic scoring criteria. Be sure students have complete copies of the sample responses while the transparencies are reviewed. This way students will better understand the context of the excerpt.

It is important to note that the transparencies do not highlight or note errors in spelling, sentence formation, or usage. You may wish to correct these errors on the transparency with your class while explaining the error.
Conventions Score Scale

Sentence Formation
Score Point 1: Exhibits weak control of sentence formation.
Contains several major errors and/or frequent minor errors.
Score Point 2: Exhibits marginal control of sentence formation.
Contains one or two major errors and/or several minor errors.
Score Point 3: Exhibits strong control of all aspects of sentence formation with only an occasional minor error.

Usage
Score Point 1: Exhibits weak control of usage.
Contains several major errors and/or frequent minor errors.
Score Point 2: Exhibits marginal control of usage.
Contains several major errors and/or frequent minor errors.
Score Point 3: Exhibits strong control of all aspects of verb usage, pronoun usage, and other usage with only an occasional minor error.

Mechanics
Score Point 1: Exhibits weak control of mechanics.
Contains several major errors and/or frequent minor errors.
Score Point 2: Exhibits marginal control of mechanics.
Contains one or two major errors and/or several minor errors.
Score Point 3: Exhibits strong control of all aspects of mechanics with only an occasional minor error.

Spelling
Score Point 1: Exhibits weak control of spelling.
Contains several major errors and/or frequent minor errors.
Score Point 2: Exhibits marginal control of spelling.
Contains one or two major errors and/or several minor errors.
Score Point 3: Exhibits strong control of spelling with only an occasional minor error.

Conventions Rating
+ The composition provides evidence that the writer has a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.
− The composition provides evidence that the writer does not have a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.
Thinking About the Writing Prompt

Taking time to think about the prompt and to plan your writing will improve the quality of your final essay. Planning can help you compose a more organized, polished response. Use this guide to plan your composition.

Restate
1. Read the prompt carefully and restate it in your own words. Think specifically about what the prompt is asking you to do (for example, make an argument, tell a story, or explain a process).

Respond
2. After you have thought about the prompt and it is clear what you’re being asked to do, write one or two sentences describing your initial reaction to the prompt. This response may be the basis for your thesis statement, or the main idea of your essay.

Remember
3. Read the reminder list that follows the prompt. (If you are still unclear about the prompt, the list may help you better understand it.) Think about those items that you have particular trouble with and write them down. Explain how to avoid those mistakes in your writing.
Record

4. Brainstorm ideas, details, or information to support your response to the prompt. You may use a brainstorming technique such as freewriting, making a list, or creating a web. Record anything that comes to mind.

Review

5. Review the things you wrote as you brainstormed. What ideas support your thesis statement? What details add information to those supporting ideas? Underline or highlight the ideas and details you plan to use in your composition.

Represent

6. There are many ways to organize your ideas. You may wish to use a visual representation such as a web, an outline, or a chart. The graphic organizers that follow are some examples of ways to structure your ideas.
Organizer for Expository/Persuasive Writing

This organizer is useful for many types of writing, including expository and persuasive essays. Use the thesis statement from the Respond exercise and the ideas from the Record and Review exercises to complete the graphic organizer. You may add additional Supporting Ideas and Details boxes as necessary.

**Introductory Paragraph/Thesis Statement:**

**Supporting Idea:**
- Detail:
- Detail:
- Detail:

**Supporting Idea:**
- Detail:
- Detail:
- Detail:

**Supporting Idea:**
- Detail:
- Detail:
- Detail:

**Concluding Paragraph/Restatement of Thesis:**
## Organizer for Expressive Writing

This organizer is useful for expressive writing, such as narrative essays. Use the main idea from the Respond exercise and the ideas from the Record and Review exercises to complete the graphic organizer. You may add additional Action boxes as necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the central event of your narrative?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is in your narrative?</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When and/or where does your narrative take place?</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How will you begin your narrative?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What happens next?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How will you end your narrative?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using Scoring Rubrics

What Are Scoring Rubrics?

Rubrics, or score scales, are one way to evaluate compositions. Rubrics represent a range of quality by showing how weaker essays compare to stronger essays. Using specific characteristics and descriptions, they provide a basic rating scale for writing.

In addition to being useful to those who evaluate essays, rubrics are helpful for writers. Knowing what makes an essay strong \textit{before you begin writing} will help you produce a better overall composition.

How Are Scoring Rubrics Organized?

Not all rubrics look alike. Some rubrics consist of lists that describe different traits of writing. Others are written in paragraph form. All assign point values based on quality.

The rubrics used here are made up of two descriptive sections, the Score Scale and the Scoring Criteria. The Score Scale outlines the range of possible scores with descriptions of each. The Scoring Criteria detail four characteristics that are important in a strong composition. Combined, they illustrate the features of an effective piece of writing.

Different types of writing, such as persuasive, expository, and narrative, have their own rubrics. Although the rubrics have some elements in common—the use of effective sentence structure, for example—they also include traits that are specific to each writing form.

How Can I Use Scoring Rubrics?

As mentioned above, rubrics provide valuable information that can help you focus on the qualities of strong writing. One way to do this is to take information from the Score Scale and Scoring Criteria and make a writing checklist. Use this checklist as follows:

- As you plan your essay, think about how you will meet the criteria on your checklist.
- As you write, refer to your checklist and monitor your work to ensure that your essay meets the criteria.
- When you have completed your essay, review it against the checklist. Reread your essay, looking for examples of each item. As you find them, check off the appropriate box. If you find that your essay is weak in any area, revise it as needed.
Use the appropriate Score Scale and Scoring Criteria for the corresponding type of writing to complete the writing checklist below. Add items that address the specific qualities of this type of writing. For example, with a persuasive essay, you would include under the Main Idea heading “I clearly state my position.” Use the four-point description to make your checklist.

**Main Idea**
- The subject matter I chose is appropriate for the prompt.
- ________________________________

**Supporting Details**
- The details I include are clearly related to the subject matter.
- I include enough details to support my main idea.
- ________________________________

**Organization**
- My composition has a strong beginning, a well-developed middle, and an effective ending.
- My essay follows a clear, logical progression.
- ________________________________

**Coherence**
- I establish relationships between ideas in my composition.
- I use transitional words and phrases, parallel structure, and other techniques to connect sentences and paragraphs.
- I use effective sentence structure and word choice.
- ________________________________
Expository Literary Essay: Prompt 1

DIRECTIONS: Write a well-organized composition on the topic below.

Throughout life, people are constantly changing. As they undergo new experiences, they develop new ways of seeing the world, other people, and themselves.

Tell about a literary character who changes over the course of a work. This character can be from a short story, novel, autobiography, poem, play, or any other work you have read. Identify this character. Explain how the character changes, what causes this change, and how the change affects the character or others in the story.

As you write your composition, remember to do the following:

• Focus on a character who changes.
• Explain how the character changes and what causes this change.
• Explain whether this change is good for the character or others in the story.
• Give specific examples and details.
• Give any necessary plot information, but avoid giving a plot summary.
• Write in complete sentences.
• Write coherent paragraphs with topic sentences.
• Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

You may use scratch paper to plan your composition. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.
Focused Holistic Score Scale: Expository Literary Composition

**SCORE POINT 6**  The response reflects a strong mastery of expository writing. There are strengths in all four criteria. The writer clearly identifies the subject matter, and the essay is focused and has a fluent, clear progression of ideas and evenness of development. The writer provides specific, relevant details to support ideas. The writer clearly develops all parts of the prompt. The response refers to an appropriate work of literature and clearly connects that work to the prompt. An appropriate sense of audience exists. Sentence structure is varied and effective, and word choice demonstrates the ability to use a large vocabulary skillfully. The essay is complete.

**SCORE POINT 5**  The response reflects a very good mastery of expository writing. There are strengths in all four criteria. The writer identifies the topic. The essay stays focused and progresses logically with no break. The writer uses specific details and clearly links events and relationships. A few minor flaws in coherence may be present. The response refers to an appropriate work of literature and clearly connects that work to the prompt. An appropriate sense of audience exists. The essay seems complete.

**SCORE POINT 4**  The response reflects a reasonable mastery of expository writing. It is focused on the topic and establishes a progression of ideas and events, but there may be minor breaks in focus and continuity. These papers elaborate and support their points with specific details. They follow a clear pattern of organization but may contain minor problems with coherence. The writer clearly deals with the topic and supports it, but some facet of the prompt may be missing. The response refers to an appropriate work of literature and clearly connects that work to the prompt. In some responses, an appropriate sense of audience may be lacking.

**SCORE POINT 3**  The response reflects a moderate mastery of expository writing. It shows some progression of ideas and events and provides some elaboration and support. The elaboration may be inadequate in some way, but it is suitable to the demands of the prompt. These responses have a general organizational pattern but contain minor defects. The papers are generally coherent, although minor weaknesses in coherence may be present. The writer focuses on the prompt and discusses a work of literature but may not have addressed all aspects of the prompt. Some papers may tend to summarize at times or have a listing, but they should have solid supporting details.
**SCORE POINT 2** The response reflects a weak sense of expository writing. The writer appears to have seen the prompt and addressed it, but the response may be unclear and incoherent. Some responses may supply few links between the main idea and the details provided to support it. Other responses may lack a consistent focus. Some responses may be list-like with only minimal development. The writer has a rudimentary sense of organization, but the essay may be simply too minimal to rate a higher score. Some of the essays do not directly address all facets of the prompt, and some may merely summarize. The essay may lack an appropriate sense of audience.

**SCORE POINT 1** The response reflects a lack of understanding of expository writing. There is an indication that the writer has seen and attempted to respond to the prompt, but the response does not stay focused on the topic. The writer may attempt to support ideas, but there is little or no sense of organization or control. Many responses exhibit rudimentary organizational control but are extremely inadequate. Some responses are incoherent and/or exhibit an unsuitable strategy (for example, summarizing or listing without elaboration).

**SCORE POINT 0** This response addresses a literary work but is incorrect in its perception of the literary concept.

**NON-SCORABLE** The composition is entirely unreadable, incomprehensible, off-topic, blank, or written in a language other than English.

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**Expository Literary Essay: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria**

**Main Idea**
- The writer clearly identifies the main idea and states the thesis of the composition. The essay consistently focuses on the main idea while responding to the prompt.

**Supporting Details**
- The writer provides sufficient details to support and explain the thesis. All details should be related to the main idea.

**Organization**
- The writer provides an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The composition shows a logical development from beginning to end.

**Coherence**
- The writer clearly demonstrates how the details support and explain the topic of the composition. Sentences are logically connected. To achieve coherence, the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.
Expository Literary Essay

DIRECTIONS: After you have read the student essay, fill in this sheet with your observations. Provide thoughtful, thorough responses, and be sure to provide specific references to the essay. Write a response to every question.

1. You may not be familiar with the work of literature discussed in this essay. Does the writer provide background information about the work so that you can understand his or her ideas? Are the main characters, setting, and plot briefly introduced? If not, explain what additional information about the work you wish the writer had supplied.

2. Does the writer clearly present the main idea of the essay? Does he or she continue to focus on that main idea throughout the essay? Explain how the writer’s evidence supports, or does not support, the main idea.

3. Could you follow the writer’s argument throughout the essay? Identify points at which you became lost or confused, and try to define why you lost track of the argument.

4. Does the writer include specific details to show that he or she knows the work of literature well? Do these details help support the main idea? Explain your answer, and identify any points in the essay where you wish the writer had supplied more detail.
Expository Literary Essay

Squeaky is a character that changes in a story with the title Raymond's Run. I thought it was a good story because Squeaky always tells you what she's thinking and isn't phoney. She's not spoiled either she has a big job on her hands because she takes care of her brother Raymond who has a handicapp and needs her alot. A real tuff person and pretty funny too. The way she describes her life and the people she knows made me laugh. Don't mess with Squeaky because you'll be sorry if you do.

Squeaky like other people throughout life are changing so much because they have new experiences that make the way they see things different. Taking care of her brother Raymond changes Squeaky because she dont want anyone to hurt his feelings. Squeaky likes to be a winner and who can blame her. She wants to beat everyone in the big race because she works hard to be the most fastest runner around. She wants to be the best and gets a little mad at a girl in the story. She's good runner too so maybe Squeaky is jealous or worried that she could win the race instead. Squeaky likes this girl better at the end of story because Squeaky is in first place and the other one just comes in second. This is a change Squeaky has that makes her a better person because now she might even be freinds with the girl.

Raymond changes in the story and Squeaky changes right along with him. At first you think Squeaky is the only runner in the family but later on you find out that Raymond could be a pretty good runner hisself with Squeaky acting as his coach. So a brother and sister change the way they see other people and themselves.
I really like stories that tell about characters who learn new things about themselves and change for the better. Raymond’s Run was one of those stories. I wish more people I know would change like Squeaky did, becoming more honest and more understanding of others like people should be.

Squeaky is a girl living in Harlem. She doesn’t have to do chores or work for extra spending money. She just cares for Raymond, which is her main responsibility. Raymond is her bigger and older brother. She thinks of him as her little brother though because Raymond relies on her. Squeaky is sensitive about Raymond’s differences. He has a large head and is mentally handicapped, so that is why he seems like a younger brother.

Squeaky narrates the story, which reveals her thoughts about her life, herself and Raymond too. I kind of felt that Squeaky was talking to me, telling me about everything that’s on her mind. Squeaky excepts and loves her brother. Defending and protecting him because he can not really watch out for himself. She does all of this besides studying for the spelling bee and practicing her breathing and thinking about the upcoming race.

Squeaky compares herself with other girls in the story. First, she compares herself with Cynthia, who practices and prepares for events but then claims “she forgot” or that she isn’t ready. Squeaky, on the other hand, admits she’s getting ready. The new girl Gretchen doesn’t know how to smile. But, Squeaky thinks, no girl knows how to smile because they don’t practice and haven’t been taught how. After Gretchen and her girls confront Raymond and Squeaky on the sidewalk, we know that Squeaky’s character is strong. She won’t step
Expository Literary Essay (continued)

Score of 4

to the side because that would be “chicken,” but she’s willing to avoid the conflict for now. This conflict can be settled by the outcome of the race.

It is the fifty-yard dash that changes Squeaky. During the race she becomes aware of Raymond’s own race. She sees him running outside the fence. Winning the race makes Squeaky a different person. Her views of others has changed. She smiles a smile of respect to her opponent Gretchen, and she even considers the idea of Gretchen as an assistant coach for Raymond. During the race, watching Raymond run along the side, Squeaky decided to coach him to run. No longer does Raymond have to be simply in her care because now she is able to see him as having a fuller life. The smile she shared with Gretchen was not only for her, but also for herself and her brother, a person she has defended all along but now knows is worthy of respect.

In conclusion, the recognition and pride of winning the race makes Squeaky become more grown up. She now knows herself better. She can be do well at other things besides running and discovers new ways to improve herself and make things better for her brother too.
Squeaky, the young narrator of “Raymond's Run” by Tony Cade Bambara, changes over the course of the story. In her Harlem neighborhood, Squeaky has earned a reputation as a champion runner who takes great pride in her speed. Competing in the big May Day race has a major impact on her. This event alters how Squeaky views herself, her mentally handicapped brother, Raymond, and her main rival, Gretchen.

Early in the story, Squeaky announces, “I run. That is what I am all about.” However, after the May Day race is over, Squeaky's self-image broadens. She sees herself as more than just a budding track star and begins to consider other talents she might develop. For example, she thinks about taking piano lessons, studying more, and winning a spelling bee. Because Squeaky is a champion at heart, she feels confident that she can succeed in other areas of her life and welcomes new challenges.

Squeaky also comes to realize that her brother Raymond, like herself, has more chances to succeed. Squeaky's devotion to Raymond even outmatches her passion for running. During the May Day race, Squeaky sees Raymond running on the other side of the fence and imitating her moves. This distraction could have cost Squeaky her victory, but it was a sight she will probably never forget. Raymond’s first run changes Squeaky and her attitude toward him. Instead of feeling sorry for Raymond, Squeaky now looks at him “as a great runner in the family tradition.” Besides being his caretaker, she now considers retiring from running and becoming his coach.

Competing in the May Day race changes Squeaky’s social relationships as well as her family relationships. After the race, she seems...
more likely to make friends with other girls, especially Gretchen, Squeaky’s most challenging competitor. Squeaky no longer treats Gretchen rudely and criticizes her. Instead, Squeaky recognizes Gretchen’s athletic skills, gains respect for her, and gives her a warm, sincere smile. Squeaky wonders if Gretchen would like to help coach Raymond too, which is Squeaky’s way of paying Gretchen a very high compliment.

The May Day race is a turning point in Squeaky’s life. She discovers new sides of herself, her brother, and Gretchen. These changes transform Squeaky into a more mature young girl with a greater awareness of her own and other people’s talents.
Scoring Explanation: Expository Literary Essay

Refer to pages 8–9 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and page vii for the Conventions Score Scale and Rating. These scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

Essay 1
Focused Holistic Score: 2
The writer has attempted to respond to the prompt, but the response is unclear. The response conveys some false ideas about the short story, relies too heavily on plot summary, and approaches the analysis in a digressive, haphazard way.

Conventions Rating: –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sentence formation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>run-on sentence; sentence fragment; awkward sentence structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>faulty pronoun reference; shifts in point of view; tense shifts; subject-verb agreement error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>missing internal punctuation; incorrect use of apostrophes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>a few spelling errors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Essay 2
Focused Holistic Score: 4
The writer has responded to the prompt and shows a somewhat logical progression of ideas. Fewer irrelevant plot details and a more careful, focused analysis of Squeaky’s character change are needed to make this essay deserve a higher score.

Conventions Rating: –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sentence formation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>repetitive sentence structure; clarity problems; illogical connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>pronoun-antecedent agreement; subject-verb agreement; pronoun reference; except/accept error; use of idiomatic terms (kind of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>missing internal punctuation; wrong style for short story title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>a few spelling errors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Essay 3
Focused Holistic Score: 6
The writer has clearly related the points of the prompt to “Raymond’s Run.” The response demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the short story, includes specific, relevant details from the story to support the analysis, and uses vocabulary skillfully.

Conventions Rating: +

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sentence formation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expository Literary Essay: Prompt 2

DIRECTIONS: Write a well-organized composition on the topic below.

Many literary works focus on the relationship between a child and his or her mother or father. That relationship can be either positive or negative, and it typically plays a powerful role in the child’s life.

Think of a short story, novel, autobiography, poem, or play you have read that depicts a relationship between a child and a parent. Make sure to focus on the child’s relationship with just one parent, not both of them. Explain what kind of relationship exists and what role it plays in the child’s life. Give the title of the work and, if you remember, the author.

As you write your composition, remember to do the following:

• Focus on a character and his or her relationship with just one parent.
• Explain what relationship exists and what role it plays in the child’s life.
• Give specific examples and details.
• Give necessary plot information but avoid giving a plot summary.
• Write in complete sentences.
• Write in coherent paragraphs with topic sentences.
• Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

You may use scratch paper to plan your composition. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.
Focused Holistic Score Scale: Expository Literary Composition

**SCORE POINT 6**  The response reflects a strong mastery of expository writing. There are strengths in all four criteria. The writer clearly identifies the subject matter, and the essay is focused and has a fluent, clear progression of ideas and evenness of development. The writer provides specific, relevant details to support ideas. The writer clearly develops all parts of the prompt. The response refers to an appropriate work of literature and clearly connects that work to the prompt. An appropriate sense of audience exists. Sentence structure is varied and effective, and word choice demonstrates the ability to use a large vocabulary skillfully. The essay is complete.

**SCORE POINT 5**  The response reflects a very good mastery of expository writing. There are strengths in all four criteria. The writer identifies the topic. The essay stays focused and progresses logically with no break. The writer uses specific details and clearly links events and relationships. A few minor flaws in coherence may be present. The response refers to an appropriate work of literature and clearly connects that work to the prompt. An appropriate sense of audience exists. The essay seems complete.

**SCORE POINT 4**  The response reflects a reasonable mastery of expository writing. It is focused on the topic and establishes a progression of ideas and events, but there may be minor breaks in focus and continuity. These papers elaborate and support their points with specific details. They follow a clear pattern of organization but may contain minor problems with coherence. The writer clearly deals with the topic and supports it, but some facet of the prompt may be missing. The response refers to an appropriate work of literature and clearly connects that work to the prompt. In some responses, an appropriate sense of audience may be lacking.

**SCORE POINT 3**  The response reflects a moderate mastery of expository writing. It shows some progression of ideas and events and provides some elaboration and support. The elaboration may be inadequate in some way, but it is suitable to the demands of the prompt. These responses have a general organizational pattern but contain minor defects. The papers are generally coherent, although minor weaknesses in coherence may be present. The writer focuses on the prompt and discusses a work of literature but may not have addressed all aspects of the prompt. Some papers may tend to summarize at times or have a listing, but they should have solid supporting details.
**SCORE POINT 2** The response reflects a weak sense of expository writing. The writer appears to have seen the prompt and addressed it, but the response may be unclear and incoherent. Some responses may supply few links between the main idea and the details provided to support it. Other responses may lack a consistent focus. Some responses may be list-like with only minimal development. The writer has a rudimentary sense of organization, but the essay may be simply too minimal to rate a higher score. Some of the essays do not directly address all facets of the prompt, and some may merely summarize. The essay may lack an appropriate sense of audience.

**SCORE POINT 1** The response reflects a lack of understanding of expository writing. There is an indication that the writer has seen and attempted to respond to the prompt, but the response does not stay focused on the topic. The writer may attempt to support ideas, but there is little or no sense of organization or control. Many responses exhibit rudimentary organizational control but are extremely inadequate. Some responses are incoherent and/or exhibit an unsuitable strategy (for example, summarizing or listing without elaboration).

**SCORE POINT 0** The response addresses a literary work but is incorrect in its perception of the literary concept.

**NON-SCORABLE** The composition is entirely unreadable, incomprehensible, off-topic, blank, or written in a language other than English.

---

**Expository Literary Essay: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria**

**Main Idea**

The writer clearly identifies the main idea and states the thesis of the composition. The essay consistently focuses on the main idea while responding to the prompt.

**Supporting Details**

The writer provides sufficient details to support and explain the thesis. All details should be related to the main idea.

**Organization**

The writer provides an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The composition shows a logical development from beginning to end.

**Coherence**

The writer clearly demonstrates how the details support and explain the topic of the composition. Sentences are logically connected. To achieve coherence, the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.
Some kids have a good relationship with their parents, other kids have bad ones.

When I first started reading “The Treasure of Lemon Brown”, I thought that Greg, the main character in the story had a bad relationship with his father but by the end of the story I changed my mind. I will tell you about some of the reasons why Greg’s relationship with his father turns out alright.

In the beginning of the story, Greg’s Dad gets mad because Greg got a bad grade on his math test and his Dad gives him a big lecture. Greg is 14 years old, around the same age as me and likes to play basketball like I do. His Dad tells him he can’t play basketball until his grades go up. So that’s why I thought there was a big problem in their relationship because Greg’s angry about getting punished and thinks his Dad doesn’t understand him which is the way alot of kids feel sometimes.

Anyway, Greg goes off and meets this homeless man named Lemon Brown whose in this old apartment where nobody lives any more. The neighborhood isn’t to good either. In this part of the story, Lemon Brown acts a little like a father to Greg. Lemon’s own son got killed in a war so I think Lemon talks to Greg like he was his sort of his son instead of a stranger he just met. Lemon and Greg fight off these guys who want to take away Lemon’s treasure and this teaches Greg a lesson about being a Dad. At the end of the story Lemon Brown is a grown-up that Greg likes.

That’s why I think Greg’s relationship with his Dad isn’t so bad after all. Because Greg is going back to his own home and starts wondering what his Dad will say. He’s pretty sure his Dad will give him a lecture but now he’s not so mad about it. I guess he figures that his Dad wasn’t trying to ruin his life by punishing him for getting a bad grade in math. When my father sits down and has a long talk with me, sometimes I don’t want to listen to what he says. He tells me “its for your own good.”
All teenage boys have conflicts with their fathers. Greg, the main character of “The Treasure of Lemon Brown” by Walter Dean Myers, is no exception. Through Greg’s meeting with a wise, old, homeless man named Lemon Brown, Greg learns to see his conflicts with his dad in a more positive way.

Greg seems to think that playing basketball is more important than studying math. Greg’s dad takes the opposite point of view. He gets angry after receiving a note from the principal about Greg’s poor work in math. In his imagination, Greg hears the voice of his father lecturing him. He’s scolding him for not being a good student and is forbidding him to play basketball. These words are playing like a record in Greg’s head as he hides inside a rundown building in Harlem. Greg is escaping the problem between him and his dad, instead of facing up to it.

Inside the rundown building, Greg meets a man who helps him understand the conflict between his dad and he. The man’s name is Lemon Brown, and he is poor and homeless. Even though Lemon don’t have no money, he is rich in other ways. He has a treasure that money can’t buy. Greg even helps Lemon fight off men who try to steal the treasure. A beat up harmonica and some old newspaper clippings might not seem like much to most people, but these things were treasures that Lemon and his son shared. Lemon gave the treasure to his son before he left for a war. The army I guess sent the treasure back after Lemon’s son was killed. In my opinion, these treasures represent the love that a father and son share and the things that a father passes along to a son.

At the end of the story, Greg better understands the role his father plays in his life. In his imagination, he hears his father giving a lecture again, but now he doesn’t seem to think it won’t cause a conflict between them. Maybe because Lemon Brown lost his son in a war, Greg appreciates his own father more. Greg probably realizes that his dad’s lectures are meant to help instead of hurt him.

In conclusion, Greg and his dad have a caring relationship, even though there are...
conflicts. Greg’s dad plays an important role in Greg’s life because his dad wants him to have a good education and a bright future.
“The Treasure of Lemon Brown” by Walter Dean Myers takes a close look at two sets of father-son relationships. Through his encounter with Lemon Brown, a homeless man and former blues musician, fourteen-year-old Greg Ridley reaches a new understanding about his own father. Lemon Brown keeps the loving memory of his dead son alive through fiercely protecting a few special keepsakes. Both pairs of relationships reveal the close ties that bind fathers and sons together.

At the opening of the story, Greg’s relationship with his father causes Greg to feel tense. Greg’s goals and his father’s goals are in conflict. Greg’s desire to play basketball outweighs his interest in becoming a good math student. Greg’s father makes his position clear in a lecture to Greg. He wishes his son to have every opportunity to succeed in life and places a higher value on passing a math class than on playing basketball. Greg’s father bars Greg from joining the community center’s basketball team until his math grades improve. A couple days later, Greg rebels against his father’s decision by not studying math. Instead, he leaves his house and wanders into a vacant tenement building where he meets Lemon Brown. Lemon Brown teaches Greg an important lesson about father-son relationships.

On the surface, Lemon Brown seems an unlikely person to offer Greg new insights. However, even though Lemon Brown lives in poverty, he has many riches. His most prized possessions, a harmonica and old newspaper clippings, forever remind him of his beloved son Jesse, who was killed in a war. These items were Lemon Brown’s going-away gift to Jesse, who carried them into battle. The “treasure” of Lemon Brown carries a deeper symbolic meaning. As Greg discovers from him, whatever a father hands down to his son can have precious value.

Greg’s father also hands down a treasure to his son. The lectures Greg feels he is sometimes forced to hear are more than just words. Greg comes to realize that he may be inheriting his father’s wisdom, guidance, and concern. This discovery seems to help resolve the conflicts Greg was experiencing with his father at the start of the story.
As the story ends, Greg is smiling as he thinks about the lecture his father is about to give. Greg is now ready to build a better relationship with his father, to have greater respect for his father’s decisions, and to let his father’s wisdom and guidance play an important role in his life.
Scoring Explanation: Expository Literary Essay

Refer to pages 19–20 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and page vii for the Conventions Score Scale and Rating. These scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

**Essay 1**

**Focused Holistic Score: 2**
The response is loosely organized and includes scattered plot details and too many personal comments. A sense of audience is missing. The analysis of Greg’s relationship with his father is sometimes insightful but needs to be clearer, more focused, and more logically developed.

**Conventions Rating: –**

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<td>spelling</td>
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<td>minor spelling errors</td>
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**Essay 2**

**Focused Holistic Score: 4**
This response addresses the prompt and is fairly focused and well organized. However, some of the writer’s conclusions are not well supported. The essay relies too heavily on plot summary and should include a more developed literary analysis of the pair of father-son relationships presented in the story.

**Conventions Rating: –**

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<td>mechanics</td>
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<td>missing internal punctuation; missing apostrophes</td>
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<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>minor spelling errors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Essay 3

Focused Holistic Score: 6  
The writer clearly relates the points of the prompt to the work and demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the work. The response includes specific, relevant details to support analysis and necessary information about setting, plot, and characters. The essay progresses logically and seems complete.

Conventions Rating: +

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</table>
Expository Literary Essay: Prompt 3

**DIRECTIONS:** Write a well-organized composition on the topic below.

Many works of literature depict characters who face a problem, challenge, or crisis. As these characters struggle to cope, they often learn important lessons about life.

Tell about a literary character who faces a problem, challenge, or crisis of some kind. That character can be from a short story, novel, autobiography, poem, play, or any other work you have read. Identify the character. Explain what problem the character faces, how the character copes with it, and what he or she learns as a result of this experience.

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**As you write your composition, remember to do the following:**

- Focus on a character who faces a problem, challenge, or crisis.
- Explain what the nature of the problem is, how the character copes with it, and what he or she learns from the experience.
- Give specific examples and details.
- Give any necessary plot information but avoid giving a plot summary.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

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_You may use scratch paper to plan your composition. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper._
Expository Literary Essay: Prompt 4

DIRECTIONS: Write a well-organized composition on the topic below.

Many authors write about the relationship between humans and animals. Sometimes, humans and animals are drawn together by a bond of love and dependency. Other times, they are opponents or even enemies.

Think of a short story, novel, autobiography, poem, or play you have read that depicts a relationship between a person and an animal. Explain what kind of relationship exists and what role it plays in the person’s life. Give the title of the work and, if you remember, the author.

As you write your composition, remember to do the following:

- Focus on a person’s relationship with an animal.
- Explain what the nature of the relationship is and what role it plays in the person’s life.
- Give specific examples and details.
- Give any necessary plot information but avoid giving a plot summary.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

You may use scratch paper to plan your composition. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.
Expository Clarification Essay: Prompt 1

DIRECTIONS: Write a well-organized composition on the topic below.

There are many types of music—classical, jazz, pop, rock, and hip-hop, just to name a few. Choose the kind of music you like best and explain why it is your favorite.

As you write your composition, remember to do the following:

- Name your favorite type of music.
- Give at least two reasons why this is your favorite type of music and explain your reasons.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

You may use scratch paper to plan your composition. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.
Focused Holistic Score Scale: Expository Clarification Essay

**SCORE POINT 6** The response reflects a strong mastery of expository writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer clearly identifies the subject matter and states his or her position, providing relevant reasons to support that position and elaborating on those reasons with details that are both appropriate and clearly articulated. The writer focuses on the subject exclusively. The response follows a clear, logical progression and skillfully employs transitional rhetorical devices to direct the reader’s thoughts. The response is aimed toward an appropriate audience and successfully employs varied, effective sentence structure and a large vocabulary. All elements of the prompt are addressed. The essay is complete.

**SCORE POINT 5** The response reflects a very good mastery of expository writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer clearly identifies the subject matter and his or her position on the subject and provides reasons, details, and examples to support that position. Some responses contain two clearly elaborated reasons; others may contain more reasons with slightly less elaboration. There may be some minor weaknesses in coherence. However, the response is organized and well developed overall, demonstrating a clear, logical progression. The writer makes use of sentence structure and a large vocabulary successfully. The response is aimed toward an appropriate audience. All elements of the prompt are addressed. The essay seems complete.

**SCORE POINT 4** The response reflects a reasonable mastery of expository writing. It is concise and presents a progression of ideas and events, but there may be minor breaks in focus and progression. The response elaborates and supports the writer’s argument with specific details. The essay is organized, but minor faults may exist. There may be minor problems with coherence. The writer clearly deals with the topic and supports it, but some facet of the prompt may be lacking. In some cases, the writer may lack a sense of an appropriate audience.

**SCORE POINT 3** The response reflects a moderate mastery of expository writing. The response focuses on the subject matter, states a position, exhibits some progression of ideas, and provides elaboration and support. However, it contains at least one significant flaw. The response may have solid, supporting details but occasionally may use summaries or lists without elaboration. Some responses fail to provide adequate elaboration for ideas intended to support the main idea. Others include ideas, reasons, and details that are inadequately explained or tangential to the main idea. Responses are usually organized, although faults in logical progression may weaken the overall impact. Minor lapses in coherence are also common. Some aspects of the prompt may not be addressed.
SCORE POINT 2  The response reflects a weak sense of expository writing. The writer has addressed the prompt, but the response is digressive and undeveloped. Some responses may be lists with little or no extension. The writer attempts to organize the response, but the organization may be too scattered to rate a higher score. In some cases, the writer may fail entirely to demonstrate the link between the main idea and its supporting details or may begin with a focused approach and then stray from it. In general, responses seem unfocused and incomplete, lacking control or progression. In many cases, some elements of the prompt are missing.

SCORE POINT 1  The response reflects a lack of understanding of expository writing. The response shows an effort to address the prompt, but the writer does not maintain consistent focus. The essay seems to lack an overall strategy or sense of control. If the response offers reasons to support the main idea, they are inappropriate or unintelligible. Elaboration is unclear and off-topic. Many responses demonstrate minimal organizational control but are simply too vague to receive a higher score. Some responses are incoherent and/or have an unsuitable strategy (i.e., only summarizing or listing).

SCORE POINT 0  The response may attempt to address the prompt, but the writing is rambling and incoherent.

NON-SCORABLE  The composition is entirely illegible, incoherent, off-topic, blank, or written in a language other than English.

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**Expository Clarification Essay: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria**

**Main Idea**

The writer clearly identifies the main idea—his or her position on the subject. The essay consistently focuses on the main idea while responding to the prompt.

**Supporting Details**

The writer provides sufficient details to support and explain the position taken. All details are related to the main idea.

**Organization**

The writer provides an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The composition shows a logical development from beginning to end.

**Coherence**

The writer clearly establishes links between reasons and the main point. Sentences are logically connected. To achieve coherence, the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.
Expository Clarification Essay

DIRECTIONS: After you have read the student essay, fill in this sheet with your observations. Provide thoughtful, thorough responses, and be sure to provide specific references to the essay. Write a response to every question.

1. The introduction of an essay should catch the reader's attention and let the reader know what the essay will discuss. Evaluate the effectiveness of the introduction in this essay. Then identify one way the introduction could be improved.

2. In a clarification essay, the writer should establish a stance or position and offer reasons to support it. Look over the reasons the writer offers in this essay. Do these reasons clearly support the writer's position? Identify any reasons that are unclear or confusing, and explain why you think they are ineffective.

3. Writers can make an expository essay more interesting by including anecdotes (short accounts of events) and other specific supporting details. Identify two anecdotes or specific details that make this essay more readable. If the writer did not include anecdotes, identify a place where you think it might have been useful to include one.

4. Precise vocabulary and vivid word choice can make an essay more interesting to read. Identify at least three words in this essay that you think can be replaced with more vivid or accurate language. Use a thesaurus or dictionary to find synonyms for these words.
It's not so easy to have to pick my favorite music I like many different kinds. I guess I like listening to classic rock the best but in a few months I might change my mind cause rap music is my second favorite right now. Well, I can tell you a couple of reasons why classic rock is my favorite.

I like loud music with electric guitars when I listen to Led Zeppelin I turn up the CD player all the way and my parents always tell me to turn it down. Besides having electric guitars, I like some classic rock that has pounding drums because I like the heavy beat. Other times I just want to concentrate on the words of classic rock songs because it tells a story or talks about something that happened. Sometimes I sing along with the lead singer. I also think the titles of classic rock songs are cool.

Also, I like to make tapes of my favorite classic rock songs. If a tape turns out okay, I might give it to someone as a gift.

I like listening to many kinds of music and I keep changing my mind about which is my favorite. Like I said, for now it's classic rock. Mostly because of the loud electric guitars.
Despite the many types of music (classical, jazz, pop, rock, hip-hop, and rap to name a few), my favorite type is classic rock. Though I had listened to my parents' tapes from the 1960s and '70s all my life, I didn't begin to really like classic rock music until I was in the sixth grade. I had received a new CD player and two CD's as a birthday gift. One of the CD's was of Led Zeppelin's greatest hits which included "Stairway to Heaven." Soon I was listening to classic rock whenever I had the chance. I enjoy classic rock most because I like the song lyrics and the musical instruments.

A lot of classic rock lyrics tell about historical events or people. An example is "American Pie" by Don McLean. It is about the death of some famous rock and roll stars. Another example is "What's Going On" by Marvin Gaye. The lyrics describe the Vietnam War and how some Americans viewed it. Our social studies teacher even used this song in a lesson about the 1960s. Of course, not all classic rock lyrics are about social issues. The words to love songs and break-up songs such as "Paint It Black" and "Under My Thumb" by the Rolling Stones are great.

I also prefer listening to classic rock because of the musical instruments. The electrical guitar is so amazing and can make so many kinds of incredible sounds. It can sound like screeching tires or play a simple melody. The drums add a heavy beat and can imitate a crash. Drum solos are excellent. The best thing about classic rock musical instruments is how loud they can sound. You know what I mean if you've ever been to a live rock concert of a band, which was popular during the 1960s and 1970s.
Even though there are lots of types of music, my radio is always tuned to classic rock. The words to the songs and the sound of the instruments keeps me listening.
My favorite style of music is classic rock. I grew up listening to my parents’ collection of rock-and-roll records and tapes from the sixties and seventies, but I did not become a real fan until I was in sixth grade and received a Led Zeppelin CD for my birthday. I especially enjoy the loud, pounding rhythms of the instruments that also make classic rock great dance music. I like to listen closely to the words of classic rock, too, because there is such a wide range of wonderful song lyrics.

No classic rock band is complete without the electric guitar and the drums. These two instruments often team up to create a throbbing beat. Sometimes the electric guitar gets more attention. For example, the sixties’ rock star Jimi Hendrix performed amazing solos on his electric guitar. The screeches coming from his guitar could sound like a car crash. When the drummer joins in, banging out the beat, the music can sound like an explosion. Other classic rock groups combine electric guitars and the drums to produce different effects. I enjoy listening to the various ways classic rock groups use these instruments to create loud, pounding rhythms.

These rhythms make classic rock terrific dance music. Depending on the beat, I can dance fast or slow. Sometimes I blast the CD player and dance alone in my room. I might jump up and down or shake all over. I also make up a dance in which I’m playing the “air guitar.” For example, as I listen to the Rolling Stones, I pretend I’m Mick Jagger strumming an invisible electric guitar and strutting across the room. Then I switch roles and imagine I’m the drummer, striking my fingers like drumsticks on any hard surface I can find.
Finally, I prefer classic rock because of the great song lyrics. Some lyrics teach a history lesson because they comment about important issues of the 1960s and the 1970s. For example, Marvin Gaye’s song “What’s Going On” sends a personal message about the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement. Other lyrics are about subjects, such as boy-girl relationships, that still concern teenagers today. For example, the words to Led Zeppelin’s song “Stairway to Heaven” remind me of a love poem.

In conclusion, classic rock is my favorite kind of music for three main reasons. First, no other style of music can match the exciting rhythms and sounds of instruments such as the electric guitar and the drums. Second, classic rock is excellent music for dancing. Third, the song lyrics help me understand the past as well as my own feelings and situations.
Scoring Explanation:
Expository Clarification Essay

Refer to pages 31–32 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and page vii for the Conventions Score Scale and Rating. These scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

Essay 1
Focused Holistic Score: 2
There is evidence that the writer has seen the prompt and attempted to respond to it. However, the writer provides few reasons to support his or her preference, and development of the support is weak. In addition, the writer digresses and lacks an appropriate sense of audience.

Conventions Rating: –

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<td>spelling</td>
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Essay 2
Focused Holistic Score: 4
The essay is focused and well organized. However, elaboration is somewhat insufficient. Coherence is weak in some places. The essay has a nice conclusion and seems complete.

Conventions Rating: +

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Essay 3
Focused Holistic Score: 6
This response is focused, well organized, and follows a logical progression. The reasons given are well supported with specific details and are clearly articulated. Transitional rhetorical devices are skillfully employed.

Conventions Rating: +

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Expository Problem/Solution Essay: Prompt 1

DIRECTIONS: Write a well-organized composition on the topic below.

American cities can be places of great opportunity and cultural exchange, but they also face many problems. Think of one major problem that American cities face today. In a well-developed essay, define the problem and propose one specific way that people could help solve that problem.

As you write your composition, remember to do the following:

• Identify a problem that you think exists in American cities.
• Explain why it is a problem.
• Propose a solution.
• Use examples and details to support your points.
• Write in complete sentences.
• Write coherent paragraphs with topic sentences.
• Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

You may use scratch paper to plan your composition. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.
Focused Holistic Score Scale: Expository Problem/Solution Composition

**SCORE POINT 6** The response reflects a strong mastery of expository writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The response clearly identifies and explains the problem and proposes a reasonable solution, then focuses exclusively on the problem and solution identified. The solution clearly follows a thoughtful analysis of the problem. The writer provides appropriate commentary on the problem and relevant reasons to support this solution, elaborating upon these reasons with details that are both appropriate and clearly articulated. The response follows a clear, logical progression and skillfully employs transitional devices to direct the reader's thoughts. The response is consistent in addressing an appropriate audience. The response contains varied, effective sentence structure and uses a large vocabulary successfully. All elements of the prompt are addressed. The essay is complete.

**SCORE POINT 5** The response reflects a very good mastery of expository writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer clearly identifies the problem and proposes a relevant solution, providing reasons, details, and examples to support his or her position. Some responses contain two clearly elaborated reasons; others may contain more reasons with slightly less elaboration. There may be some minor weaknesses in coherence. However, the response is organized and well developed overall, demonstrating a clear, logical progression of thought. The writer successfully makes use of sentence structure and a large vocabulary, and maintains an appropriate sense of audience. All elements of the prompt are addressed, and the essay is complete.

**SCORE POINT 4** The response reflects a reasonable mastery of expository writing. The writer states the problem and proposes a solution, providing some reasons to support his or her solution. The essay is concise and presents a progression of ideas, but there may be minor breaks in focus and progression. The response may elaborate and support the writer's argument with specific details, but some of the elaboration may be incomplete or irrelevant. Minor problems with organization and/or coherence may exist. Some aspect of the prompt may be lacking.

**SCORE POINT 3** The response reflects a moderate mastery of expository writing. The writer focuses on the problem and solution, presents some progression of ideas, and provides elaboration and support. However, the essay contains at least one significant flaw. These responses may have solid supporting details, but occasionally they may use summaries or lists without elaboration. Some fail to adequately elaborate reasons that are intended to support the main idea. Others include ideas, reasons, and details that are inadequately explained or tangential to the main idea. Responses are usually organized, although faults in logical progression may weaken the overall impact. Minor lapses in coherence are also common. Some aspects of the prompt may not be addressed.
SCORE POINT 2  The response reflects a weak sense of expository writing. The writer may identify a problem and offer a solution, but the response may address the prompt vaguely and may be digressive and undeveloped. Some responses may be lists with little or no extension. The writer attempts to organize the response, but it may be too ambiguous to score higher. Some writers may fail entirely to demonstrate the link between the main idea and its supporting details or may begin with a focused approach and then stray from it. In general, responses seem unfocused and incomplete, lacking mastery or progression of ideas. In many cases, some elements of the prompt are missing.

SCORE POINT 1  The response reflects a lack of understanding of expository writing. The response shows an effort to address the prompt. However, the response does not maintain consistent focus. The writer has attempted to support ideas but without an overall strategy or sense of control. If the response offers reasons to support the main idea, they are inappropriate or unintelligible. Elaboration is unclear and off-topic. Many responses demonstrate minimal control but are simply too vague. Some responses are incoherent and/or have an unsuitable strategy (for example, only summarizing or listing).

SCORE POINT 0  The response may attempt to address the prompt, but the writing is rambling and incoherent.

NON-SCORABLE  The composition is entirely illegible, incoherent, off-topic, blank, or written in a language other than English.

---

**Expository Problem/Solution Essay: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria**

**Main Idea**

The writer identifies the problem and suggests a solution to that problem. The essay consistently focuses on the main idea while responding to the prompt.

**Supporting Details**

The writer provides sufficient details to support and explain the problem and solution. All details are related to the main idea.

**Organization**

The writer provides an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The composition shows a logical development from beginning to end.

**Coherence**

The writer clearly establishes links between the problem, the proposed solution, and the reasons supporting the solution. Sentences are logically connected. To achieve coherence, the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.
Expository Problem/Solution Essay

DIRECTIONS: After you have read the student essay, fill in this sheet with your observations. Provide thoughtful, thorough responses, and be sure to provide specific references to the essay. Write a response to every question.

1. How effectively does the writer convey the importance of this problem? If you feel the writer is convincing, explain why. If not, explain what other points he or she could have made.

2. Good organization is an important aspect of an effective essay. Do the points of this essay follow one another in a logical, step-by-step manner? If not, identify an area where the organization of this essay could be improved.

3. The use of examples can strengthen a writer's point. What examples does the writer of this essay use to prove his or her point? Are there any additional examples that could add to this point? If so, write them below.

4. Reread the conclusion of this essay. Does it sum up the writer's point? What, if anything, could strengthen or improve the conclusion of this essay?
Expository Problem/Solution Essay

Score of 2

American cities can be places of great opportunity and places where people of different cultures live together and exchange their customs like food and music. But the cities have problems anyways and I'm going to tell you one thing that's wrong. Because cities are so crowded with buildings, there's not enough playgrounds and parks for people to go to. A lot of times kids play in the alleys instead. I know that's a fact because where I live there's a group of teenage boys who play field hockey in the alley behind my house. They make a racket when they slam the ball against the garbage cans with their hockey sticks. If there was a playing field close by, those boys could just play there game there. Instead of having to play in the alley and make up special rules. Like what if a car is going down the alley. Then the boys have to call a time out until the car goes by. So that's another problem if kids have to play in the alley. It's not as safe as a playground because you have to watch for cars.

Also, one of my neighbors has a basketball hoop on his garage door so his kids can shoot baskets in the alley. So they have the same problem as the boys who play field hockey because there's no playground near by with a basketball court. Sometimes I hear a car honking the horn because the kids are so busy playing basketball they probably didn't see the car coming. So you see that's why not having enough playgrounds and parks is a big problem for city kids.

I propose that the city workers tear down old buildings to make space for more parks and playgrounds. This would solve a problem because all kinds of people would have a great place to go and have fun.
American cities provide opportunities to people from many cultures. That's why so many people are moving to the city. Where I live, new apartments and houses are being built all over the place. But all this building has caused a major problem. My city like alot of other American cities I seen are over crowded. There are hardly any big empty lots left that could be used for a park or playground which people in the city really need. I think kids suffer the most from too many buildings and too few playgrounds and parks.

Let me explain why the problem of overcrowding is so bad for city kids. Pretend you and your family live on a block jammed with houses and apartments that are all real close together. Hardly anyone on your block has a front yard or a back yard. Where can kids go bike riding, roller blading or play thier favorite outdoor sports with thier friends. The answer is easy, they can't because the street they live on is too congested and the closest park with a playground is too far away.

I have a proposal to solve the problem and may be I'll even write the mayor and tell him my solution. Next time the wrecking crew comes around and knocks down an old factory that takes up about two square blocks in the city, why not take advantage of all that land and make a beautiful park and playground instead of building a bunch of apartment buildings. The park could have lotsa green grass, trees, a bike path and a playing field. The playground could have swings, slides and a sand lot for little kids. The park and playground would make everyone in the nearby neighborhood happy and provide great opportunities for all kinds of outdoor activities. This solution would be a big improvement.
Although American cities offer many opportunities, they also pose serious problems. One problem that affects people who live in a city is the shortage of parks. What are the effects of this problem? How can city planners solve this problem? What are the benefits of putting their solution into action?

Without enough parks, young and old alike who live in the city are cut off from nature. They become accustomed to the sounds of blaring car horns and whining police sirens instead of chirping birds. They get used to the stench of car fumes and factory smoke and forget the scent of clean, fresh air. They miss being in a wide open space filled with green grass and trees.

I propose that city planners bring nature to the city by increasing the number of parks. They should work to create new parks in run-down areas where existing, decaying buildings are being torn down. Every city should have one huge park with picnic grounds, a pond, a bicycle path, walkways, and a baseball field. City planners should also plot out room for many smaller parks, about one for every city neighborhood. Furthermore, city councils should provide the money to cover the costs of creating new parks. Allowing adequate space for public parks is important for making cities better places to live.

With more parks, young and old alike can feel closer to nature and escape from the noise, pollution, overcrowding, and stress of city life. Parks provide a place where everyone can unwind and appreciate the outdoors. Families in the city can go on picnics, joggers can run in beautiful surroundings, and small children can have fun on the playground.

City kids my age would really take advantage of having more parks. Bike riding, skate boarding, and softball are just a few of the activities city teenagers would enjoy. In addition, middle schools in the city would be able to take classes on field trips to parks, where students could go on wildlife safaris and explore the plants, birds, and...
Expository Problem/Solution Essay (continued)

<table>
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<th>Score of 6</th>
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other animals that thrive there. Everyone, young and old alike, would benefit if city planners created more city parks.
Scoring Explanation: Expository Problem/Solution Essay

Refer to pages 42–43 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and page vii for the Conventions Score Scale and Rating. These scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

Essay 1
Focused Holistic Score: 2
This essay responds to the prompt, follows a plan of organization, and elaborates on the problem with details to support the writer’s observations. However, the writer frequently digresses and the solution suggested is not at all appropriate or well thought out.

Conventions Rating: –


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<tr>
<td>usage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>improper word choices (anyways, alot); there/their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>incorrect end punctuation, apostrophes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>many spelling errors</td>
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</table>

Essay 2
Focused Holistic Score: 4
This essay responds to the prompt and follows a logical progression through describing the problem to presenting and elaborating on a reasonable solution. However, the writer digresses and lacks a sufficient sense of audience for this essay to rate a higher score.

Conventions Rating: –


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<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sentence formation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>run-on sentence; sentence fragment; lack of parallel structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>inappropriate word choice (alot, lotsa); verb tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>missing or incorrect internal and end punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>many misspelled words</td>
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Essay 3

Focused Holistic Score: 2
The essay clearly presents a problem; offers a reasonable, thought-out solution; and provides reasons and specific details in elaboration. The essay responds to the prompt and is complete.

Conventions Rating: +

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sentence formation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usage</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>some idiomatic language <em>(kids, really)</em>; one overused phrase <em>(young and old alike)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>
Expository Problem/Solution Essay: Prompt 2

DIRECTIONS: Write a well-organized composition on the topic below.

While automobiles are very useful to humans, they are also the cause of many problems. Identify one major problem caused by cars. In a well-developed essay, define the problem and propose one specific way that people could help solve this problem.

As you write your composition, remember to do the following:

• Identify one problem associated with automobiles and explain why it is a problem.
• Propose a solution to this problem.
• Support your ideas with relevant examples and details.
• Write in complete sentences.
• Write coherent paragraphs with topic sentences.
• Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

You may use scratch paper to plan your composition. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.
Focused Holistic Score Scale: Expository Problem/Solution Composition

SCORE POINT 6  The response reflects a strong mastery of expository writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The response clearly identifies and explains the problem and proposes a reasonable solution, then focuses exclusively on the problem and solution identified. The solution clearly follows a thoughtful analysis of the problem. The writer provides appropriate commentary on the problem and relevant reasons to support this solution, elaborating upon these reasons with details that are both appropriate and clearly articulated. The response follows a clear, logical progression and skillfully employs transitional devices to direct the reader’s thoughts. The response is consistent in addressing an appropriate audience. The response contains varied, effective sentence structure and uses a large vocabulary successfully. All elements of the prompt are addressed. The essay is complete.

SCORE POINT 5  The response reflects a very good mastery of expository writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer clearly identifies the problem and proposes a relevant solution, providing reasons, details, and examples to support his or her position. Some responses contain two clearly elaborated reasons; others may contain more reasons with slightly less elaboration. There may be some minor weaknesses in coherence. However, the response is organized and well developed overall, demonstrating a clear, logical progression of thought. The writer successfully makes use of sentence structure and a large vocabulary, and maintains an appropriate sense of audience. All elements of the prompt are addressed, and the essay is complete.

SCORE POINT 4  The response reflects a reasonable mastery of expository writing. The writer states the problem and proposes a solution, providing some reasons to support his or her solution. The essay is concise and presents a progression of ideas, but there may be minor breaks in focus and progression. The response may elaborate and support the writer’s argument with specific details, but some of the elaboration may be incomplete or irrelevant. Minor problems with organization and/or coherence may exist. Some facet of the prompt may be lacking.

SCORE POINT 3  The response reflects a moderate mastery of expository writing. The writer focuses on the problem and solution, presents some progression of ideas, and provides elaboration and support. However, the essay contains at least one significant flaw. These responses may have solid supporting details, but occasionally they may use summaries or lists without elaboration. Some fail to adequately elaborate reasons that are intended to support the main idea. Others include ideas, reasons, and details that are inadequately explained or tangential to the main idea. Responses are usually organized, although faults in logical progression may weaken the overall impact. Minor lapses in coherence are also common. Some aspects of the prompt may not be addressed.
**SCORE POINT 2** The response reflects a weak sense of expository writing. The writer may identify a problem and offer a solution, but the response may address the prompt vaguely and may be digressive and undeveloped. Some responses may be lists with little or no extension. The writer attempts to organize the response, but it may be too ambiguous to score higher. Some writers may fail entirely to demonstrate the link between the main idea and its supporting details or may begin with a focused approach and then stray from it. In general, responses seem unfocused and incomplete, lacking mastery or progression of ideas. In many cases, some elements of the prompt are missing.

**SCORE POINT 1** The response reflects a lack of understanding of expository writing. The response shows an effort to address the prompt. However, the response does not maintain consistent focus. The writer has attempted to support ideas but without an overall strategy or sense of control. If the response offers reasons to support the main idea, they are inappropriate or unintelligible. Elaboration is unclear and off-topic. Many responses demonstrate minimal control but are simply too vague. Some responses are incoherent and/or have an unsuitable strategy (for example, only summarizing or listing).

**SCORE POINT 0** The response may attempt to address the prompt, but the writing is rambling and incoherent.

**NON-SCORABLE** The composition is entirely illegible, incoherent, off-topic, blank, or written in a language other than English.

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**Expository Problem/Solution Essay: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria**

**Main Idea**

- The writer identifies the problem and suggests a solution to that problem. The essay consistently focuses on the main idea while responding to the prompt.

**Supporting Details**

- The writer provides sufficient details to support and explain the problem and solution. All details are related to the main idea.

**Organization**

- The writer provides an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The composition shows a logical development from beginning to end.

**Coherence**

- The writer clearly establishes links between the problem, the proposed solution, and the reasons supporting the solution. Sentences are logically connected. To achieve coherence, the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.
Expository Problem/Solution Essay

Score of 2

Generally cars are a good thing. The worst problem about cars is that people get hurt in accidents. I think we need a solution.

To keep people from having accidents and getting hurt, we should make it harder to get a driver’s license. Also, people should always wear seatbelts.

The first part of my plan is to make it harder to get a driver’s license. My brother has a driver’s license, and I don’t know how he got it! He bragged that without even trying he got a perfect score, he never even studied the rules book. In his driver’s education class he went on only a few trips where he actually drove. And, they were pretty short. That’s because their teacher saw right away that he was a good driver, which is what he claims, but I’ve ridden with him, and believe me he’s not.

Another part of my plan is to have drivers take classes every five years to make sure they remember all the tips for car safety. Like always wear your seatbelts. And if you got a baby strap the baby in one of those little car seats. Police should stop cars and check that everyone is using a seat belt. If they aren’t, then give the driver a ticket or take his drivers license away.

The best solution to the problem about people getting hurt in car accidents is to have fewer accidents. The best way to do this is to make it harder to get a driver’s license and to make everyone wear a seat belt.
Cars are very useful and I don’t know what my family would do without one. Cars also cause problems too. In my opinion, one of the most serious problems deals with safety. There are way too many people hurt in car accidents. This problem could be solved if drivers were more responsible and thought about the ways to protect themselves and their passengers before they even pull out of the driveway.

The solution is easy and can be explained by following a simple rule, always wear seat belts. When I was in grade school I learned a song about car safety. The chorus was “Buckle up, buckle up.” I always hear that song in my head whenever I ride in a car. Sometimes my parents are in a big rush and forget to buckle up, so I have to remind them. In this way even kids can do their part in helping solve the problem of preventing injuries from car accidents.

Kids can do their share to make others aware of car safety in other ways too. At my middle school some of my classmates and me were worried about the effects of not wearing seat belts. We decided that the best way to reach students, teachers and other people would be to make public service posters because we have to do some kind of community service project anyway. A bunch of us got together and made posters with slogans about the importance of wearing seat belts. We hung the posters at different places in our community like other schools, the public library and stores. The posters were very colorful and some of them looked like they were made by an artist.

Kids alone can’t make this solution work all by themselves, so we need the help of other people. There is a law that everyone must wear a seat belt, but too many people break the law. That’s why police are also part of my proposal for solving the problem of not wearing seat belts. A lot of people don’t obey the seat belt law because they know they can get away with it. I think police should stop cars more often to make sure that everyone has their seat belt on and give more tickets to drivers for not wearing seat belts. Then people would take the seat belt law more seriously.
Expository Problem/Solution Essay (continued)

Score of 4

One major problem caused by cars is that too many people get injured in car accidents. I proposed one specific way to solve the problem and that was to try to get everyone to wear seat belts. I explained what kids and the police can do to make my solution work.
Though cars are very useful, they can also be unsafe. Many people are injured in car accidents each year. Traffic reporters on the morning news describe the daily “fender benders” and other car accidents that can result in injuries. Many serious injuries could be prevented, however, if people always wore their seat belts.

A public safety ad I watched on television clearly shows what happens when people don’t buckle up their seat belts. Picture this scene. A family of crash dummies are riding in a car. Not one is wearing a seat belt. The crash dummy in the driver’s seat suddenly slams on the brakes and hits the back of another car. The impact throws the crash dummies around the car and the one in the front seat hits the windshield. Another flies halfway out of the window. Then the announcer says, “Don’t be a dummy. Buckle up.” The message of the advertisement is clear. The smart solution for reducing the number of injuries caused by car accidents is to wear a seat belt.

Car manufacturers especially could take steps to make this solution more effective. For example, most cars make a soft warning sound to alert the driver and passengers that the seat belts are not being used. After a short while though, the warning sound goes off automatically, even if the driver has not put on a seat belt. I propose that car manufacturers take a bolder step. They should invent some kind of electronic device that freezes the steering wheel of the car until the driver puts on a seat belt. This safety feature could save many lives.

Police could also play a strong role in making sure that drivers and passengers wear seat belts. Since police have the authority to enforce the law, they can crack down on people who refuse to buckle up. For example, the police patrolling traffic should routinely conduct random checks on cars. If the driver or the passengers are not wearing a seat belt, they should pay a heavy fine. This penalty would force people to realize the importance of obeying the seat belt law.
Unfortunately, the problem of people suffering injuries in car accidents will never disappear entirely. However, people can turn to a simple solution to help reduce the number of injuries: wear seat belts. With new technology installed in cars and the help of the police, more and more people in the future will buckle up.
Scoring Explanation:
Expository Problem/Solution Essay

Refer to pages 53–54 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and page vii for the Conventions Score Scale and Rating. These scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

Essay 1
Focused Holistic Score: 2
The writer responds to the prompt and presents a thesis statement but reveals a simplistic approach to the problem. Although the essay suggests ways toward a solution, the elaboration of these ideas is incomplete and digressive. The essay lacks a focus and an appropriate sense of audience.

Conventions Score: –

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<td>sentence fragments; run-on sentences; rambling sentences with little sense of subordination; missing words</td>
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<td><em>alot, their</em>/they’re; pronoun-antecedent agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>many cases of missing internal punctuation; apostrophes missing in contractions</td>
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<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>3</td>
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Essay 2
Focused Holistic Score: 4
The response is somewhat focused and competently organized. The writer presents a problem and suggests a solution, with support for his or her ideas. However, the writer digresses in one case, and the essay would benefit from more specific details in support of the topic. Paragraphs lack coherence and the essay seems incomplete.

Conventions Score: –

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<tr>
<td>usage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*also . . . too; alot; pronoun-antecedent agreement; verb tense; incorrect plural forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>missing internal punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>minimal number of spelling errors</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Essay 3
Focused Holistic Score: 2
The writer identifies the problem and proposes a thoughtful, detailed solution. All parts of the prompt are elaborated and supported evenly. The paragraphs are coherent, and the essay seems complete.

Conventions Score: +

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sentence formation</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>spelling</td>
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Personal Narrative Essay: Prompt 1

DIRECTIONS: Write a well-organized composition on the topic below.

Think of a moment in your life when you experienced great happiness. Tell the story of what happened that made you feel so happy.

As you write your composition, remember to do the following:

- Include the time and place of the story.
- Tell a story that has a beginning, middle, and end.
- Use strategies such as dialogue or description to keep the reader interested in your story.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

You may use scratch paper to plan your composition. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.
Focused Holistic Score Scale: Personal Narrative Essay

SCORE POINT 6  The response reflects a strong mastery of narrative writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The response tells a story from beginning to end and presents a fluent progression of events. It culminates in a moment of insight, in which the writer reflects upon the events and clearly demonstrates their significance. The writer establishes a vivid sense of time and place and sets the scene so it is easily imaginable. The writer establishes a consistent voice and sense of audience; uses specific, sensory detail to evoke a mood; and employs a variety of literary techniques to engage the reader. The writer uses varied, effective sentence structure and employs a sophisticated vocabulary skillfully. All aspects of the prompt are developed. The essay is complete.

SCORE POINT 5  The response reflects a very good mastery of narrative writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The response tells a story from beginning to end, presents a clear progression of events, and provides reflection upon the described events. The writer sets the scene, establishes a consistent tone and sense of audience, and uses specific details to evoke a mood and dramatize the story. There may be a few minor problems with coherence. The writer may not fully explain some ideas or details, and there may be some lapses in the narrative flow. However, the writer covers all aspects of the prompt and uses vocabulary and sentence structure effectively. The essay seems complete.

SCORE POINT 4  The response reflects a reasonable mastery of narrative writing. It tells a story from beginning to end, although minor lapses in focus and progression may be present. The writer uses specific, concrete details and makes some attempt to dramatize the events, but at times the story may lapse into flat narration or a list of events. A sense of audience may or may not exist. These responses have an organizational pattern, but minor flaws may exist. They may have minor weaknesses in coherence. The writer clearly focuses on the topic and supports it, but some aspect of the prompt may be missing. The writer may provide only minimal reflection on the described events.

SCORE POINT 3  The response reflects a moderate control of narrative writing. It tells a story that proceeds as a series of events and provides some elaboration and support. These responses have a generally organized pattern but contain minor flaws that undermine the reader’s ability to comprehend the story. The writer may fail to provide adequate transitions or may leave important concepts unexplained. The writer includes some concrete, specific details to ground the events, but the narration generally seems sparse and inadequately dramatized. These papers are focused on the prompt but may not deal with all parts of the prompt.
SCORE POINT 2  The response reflects a weak sense of narrative writing. It is evident that the writer has seen the prompt and written in response to it, but the response is digressive and undeveloped. Some responses have little or no sense of narrative progression. They may be unfocused, confusing, or incomplete. Some responses may address a topic that is too broad to sustain a narrative or begin with a story and then lose direction. In other cases, the composition may simply be too undeveloped to receive a higher score.

SCORE POINT 1  The response reflects a lack of understanding of narrative writing. There is evidence that the writer has seen and attempted to respond to the prompt. However, the response lacks focus and coherence. The writer may attempt to narrate a story but without a prevailing sense of organizational strategy. Many responses exhibit minimal control of narrative strategies but are extremely sparse. Some responses lack coherence and/or have an inappropriate strategy (for example, listing events instead of dramatizing them).

SCORE POINT 0  The response may attempt to tell a story, but the response is rambling and incoherent.

NON-SCORABLE  The response is entirely illegible, incoherent, off-topic, blank, or written in a language other than English.

The Expository Composition: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria

Main Idea
The writer clearly demonstrates the underlying theme or point of the story, and that theme or point relates directly to the prompt.

Supporting Details
The writer provides details that are related to the main point of the story and that evoke the writer’s feelings and experiences. The details are sufficient to support and explain the events of the narrative.

Organization
The writer establishes for the reader a sense of beginning, development, and ending of the composition. The writer may organize the essay chronologically or may use another suitable pattern of organization, such as flashback or organization around a concept. A clear and appropriate organizational strategy, however, must be evident.

Coherence
The writer clearly establishes the sequence of events, even if the narrative is not organized chronologically. To achieve coherence, the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.
Personal Narrative Essay

DIRECTIONS: After you have read the student essay, fill in this sheet with your observations. Provide thoughtful, thorough responses, and be sure to provide specific references to the essay. Write a response to every question.

1. A narrative should dramatize events, using devices such as suspense, description, and characterization to develop the story and engage the reader. Does the writer of the essay effectively dramatize the events depicted in this essay? Can you identify places in the piece that need more dramatization? Explain.

2. Often, one well-chosen piece of description can make an individual, event, or setting come alive for the reader. Identify one descriptive detail in this narrative that is particularly effective for you. Also, identify one place in the essay where you feel more description is needed, and explain why.

3. In personal narrative essays, the writer's word choice, insights, and thoughts should all convey a clearly identifiable voice (a sense of the narrator's personality and unique perspective). If you feel this essay has a distinctive voice, identify two points where this voice comes through most strongly. If you feel the voice is bland or impersonal, identify a section that could be revised to convey a more distinctive voice.

4. In some narratives, the events described provide insights about the narrator. Did you learn anything about the narrator from this essay? If not, what might the writer have done to help you learn more about the narrator?
Every soccer player knows that winning a tournament is the greatest moment and makes you feel so happy you can’t hardly believe it. That was my experience when my soccer team won the most biggest game of the season.

My story takes place in a soccer field during one afternoon. We are all so excited. And pretty nervous too because our coach wants us to win so bad. So I’m playing left half back now in the biggest game of the season even though I like playing fullback better.

Before the game starts we all gather in a circle. The coach tries to make us feel like winners, so we give each other high fives and say let’s beat them. Than we jump and down like were already doing a victory dance. The ref blows the whistle I start kicking the ball with my left foot and try to pass it to Vicky who is also my best friend. The ref blows the whistle again and gives the other team the ball. My coach gets mad at the ref because he thinks its a bad call. Some of the parents in the stands think its a bad call too they are sitting in the stands yelling thier heads off.

The next part of my story has a happy ending. Our team has the ball again but then the other team gets it. Suddenly I find a way to steal it away and then I’m moving so fast down the sidelines none on the other team can catch up with me or steal the ball either.

The game is going to be over soon so I know I better score or we might lose which makes me tense. The goalie on the other team, her name is Sylvia looks worried because she see me coming closer and closer. She starts weaving from side to side but it’s not going to do her any good. I kick the ball real hard and score the winning goal of the game. Everybody in the stands up and starts cheering and I can’t stop from jumping up and down because that moment in my life made me feel so happy.
“I scored! I scored!” I couldn’t believe it had finally happened! I scored the winning goal in the tournament finals. I was as happy as our dog Lightning is when you feed him. I jumped and screamed and practically fainted because I was so excited.

Let me give you a little background. I played a half-back position on the Strikers, but I had always played full-back until that season. Playing full-back carried a lot less pressure to perform. I mean, if somebody came toward my goal, I just charged the ball and kicked it out of there. No problem.

Then this year we were assigned a new coach, and he changed my position to right-half. I didn’t like it. I didn’t even know what a half-back was supposed to do.

After several practices, I had gotten the position down well enough to feel comfortable working with Rachel, the right forward. Rachel was not only fast, but she was as tall as the goal bar, and as big as Zena, the Warrior Princess. After only one game playing behind her, I admired her skills with the ball and her ability to guide the team. In fact, after only one game, I felt totally in place behind her.

But that wasn’t enough mixing things up for our coach. The second period of our third game, my second in the half-back position, he changed my position to left-half.

If you have ever played soccer then you know that the side of the field becomes as comfortable as the hand you write with. I thought that I wasn’t going to like it.

Again I was wrong. It turns out left was the perfect spot for me. I could throw in the ball just along the sideline almost perfectly for Vicky, the left forward. I learned quickly enough to use my left foot to tap the ball right around the competition and send it speeding up the field to our forwards.

Then it was time for our tournament. This time Coach didn’t make any last minute changes, and I went in to my new, now favorite position of left half-back. We really wanted to beat the Cyclones since their center-half had quit our team after the previous season. I especially wanted to beat them since she also went to my school. She was always bragging...
about how well she played soccer and how everyone always wanted her on their teams. But back to the game.

I can see it all now in slow motion. We had the ball and I was throwing it in. We had practiced this a million times. Down the sideline, zip. Vicky gets it and passes it to Beth, but out of nowhere came April to defend. I don’t know what she was doing so horribly, wonderfully out of position but this was my chance. As I suspected, she took control, and then I did. She didn’t even see me come around her, around her own teammate. That’s when I knew I had my chance. I zipped down the sidelines as quick as you please. So fast that no one could catch me. Then I drew back my leg like an archer does a bow, looked straight at the goalie and hooked it with my right toe neatly into the right corner of the net. Yes! Nothing can bring the happiness of teamwork and triumph like my goal did that day.

We won the tournament, but later our team eventually broke up. School interfered with practice and games too much for those of us not planning to go anywhere with a career in soccer. But that goal, the only one for me, stands out as one of the happiest moments of my life.
One of my happiest moments was when I scored the winning goal in our soccer league championship tournament last year. My team, the Strikers, was playing against the Cyclones. We always played hard to beat the Cyclones, but we were especially anxious to win this time. The Cyclones had beaten us for the league championship the year before. Also, April Ferguson, their center-half, had recently quit our team to play for the Cyclones because she thought they were a better team than the Strikers were.

With only about a minute left to play, the score was tied. Then our left forward got the ball and passed it to Beth. Suddenly, April seemed to come from nowhere and stole the ball from Beth. April began to bring the ball down the field, but then I saw my chance. I got the ball away from her, took control for our team, and headed back up the field.

I like to remember what happened next as if a television sports caster were giving a play-by-play account:

Number 11 is flying down mid field. She must have wings on her feet. She’s in complete control of the ball as she moves toward the sidelines. The Cyclones defense must have shut down. No one can stop her! No one can break Number 11’s pace. Now she’s heading toward the goal! The clock is ticking. There’s only 1 minute left in the game. The goalkeeper feels the pressure as Number 11 draws back her leg and kicks the ball with incredible force. The goalkeeper is waving her hands wildly as she tries to block the kick coming at her like a rocket. Number 11 scores! Number 11 scores!
It was one of the happiest times of my life. That goal won the game, and the championship, for the Strikers. Everyone was cheering. April even came over to say, “Good game!” I pinned my number 11 jersey on my bulletin board to remind me of my proud, happy moment.
Scoring Explanation: Personal Narrative Essay

Refer to pages 62–63 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and page vii for the Conventions Score Scale and Rating. These scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

Essay 1
Focused Holistic Score: 2
Although the writer responds to the prompt, she shows little control of the content included and digresses throughout the essay. There are simply too many details and side comments for this composition to rate a higher score.

Conventions Rating: –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Errors</th>
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<td>sentence formation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>run-on sentences; rambling sentences with little sense of subordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>than/then, their/there; double negative; incorrect formation of superlative adjective; subject/verb agreement; slang (ref); wrong form of adverb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>missing internal punctuation; missing apostrophes in contractions; missing words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>a couple of spelling errors besides usage errors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Essay 2
Focused Holistic Score: 4
The writer responds to the prompt and has made a conscious effort to incorporate elements that add interest to her narrative, but the essay lacks focus and includes digressions and unnecessary details. There is a lack of clear progression of events.

Conventions Rating: +

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Errors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sentence formation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>fragments; rambling sentences with confusing interruptions; run-on sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usage</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>soccer jargon; unclear pronoun reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>inappropriate verb tense shifts; internal punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Essay 3
Focused Holistic Score: 6
The essay responds to the prompt by focusing on one event and following a logical progression in relating the event. The writer gives reasons why the event was important and provides details to support those reasons. The writer employs various literary techniques (the play-by-play account) to make the narrative interesting for readers. A consistent voice exists, and the essay is complete.

Conventions Rating: +

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Errors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sentence formation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Personal Narrative Essay: Prompt 2

DIRECTIONS: Write a well-organized composition on the topic below.

Think about a time when something strange or unexpected happened to you. Tell the story of what happened that was so strange or unexpected.

As you write your composition, remember to do the following:

- Explain why the experience was strange or unexpected.
- Include the time and place of the story.
- Tell a story that has a beginning, middle, and end.
- Use strategies such as dialogue, description, or suspense to keep the reader interested in your story.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

You may use scratch paper to plan your composition. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.
Focused Holistic Score Scale: Personal Narrative Essay

SCORE POINT 6  The response reflects a strong mastery of narrative writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The response tells a story from beginning to end and presents a fluent progression of events. It culminates in a moment of insight, in which the writer reflects upon the events and clearly demonstrates their significance. The writer establishes a vivid sense of time and place and sets the scene so it is easily imaginable. The writer establishes a consistent voice and sense of audience; uses specific, sensory detail to evoke a mood; and employs a variety of literary techniques to engage the reader. The writer uses varied, effective sentence structure and employs a sophisticated vocabulary skillfully. All aspects of the prompt are developed. The essay is complete.

SCORE POINT 5  The response reflects a very good mastery of narrative writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The response tells a story from beginning to end, presents a clear progression of events, and provides reflection upon the described events. The writer sets the scene, establishes a consistent tone and sense of audience, and uses specific details to evoke a mood and dramatize the story. There may be a few minor problems with coherence. The writer may not fully explain some ideas or details, and there may be some lapses in the narrative flow. However, the writer covers all aspects of the prompt and uses vocabulary and sentence structure effectively. The essay seems complete.

SCORE POINT 4  The response reflects a reasonable mastery of narrative writing. It tells a story from beginning to end, although minor lapses in focus and progression may be present. The writer uses specific, concrete details and makes some attempt to dramatize the events, but at times the story may lapse into flat narration or a list of events. A sense of audience may or may not exist. These responses have an organizational pattern, but minor flaws may exist. They may have minor weaknesses in coherence. The writer clearly focuses on the topic and supports it, but some aspect of the prompt may be missing. The writer may provide only minimal reflection on the described events.

SCORE POINT 3  The response reflects a moderate control of narrative writing. It tells a story that proceeds as a series of events and provides some elaboration and support. These responses have a generally organized pattern but contain minor flaws that undermine the reader’s ability to comprehend the story. The writer may fail to provide adequate transitions or may leave important concepts unexplained. The writer includes some concrete, specific details to ground the events, but the narration generally seems sparse and inadequately dramatized. These papers are focused on the prompt but may not deal with all parts of the prompt.
**SCORE POINT 2**   The response reflects a weak sense of narrative writing. It is evident that the writer has seen the prompt and written in response to it, but the response is digressive and undeveloped. Some responses have little or no sense of narrative progression. They may be unfocused, confusing, or incomplete. Some responses may address a topic that is too broad to sustain a narrative or begin with a story and then lose direction. In other cases, the composition may simply be too undeveloped to receive a higher score.

**SCORE POINT 1**   The response reflects a lack of understanding of narrative writing. There is evidence that the writer has seen and attempted to respond to the prompt. However, the response lacks focus and coherence. The writer may attempt to narrate a story but without a prevailing sense of organizational strategy. Many responses exhibit minimal control of narrative strategies but are extremely sparse. Some responses lack coherence and/or have an inappropriate strategy (for example, listing events instead of dramatizing them).

**SCORE POINT 0**   The response may attempt to tell a story, but the response is rambling and incoherent.

**NON-SCORABLE**   The response is entirely illegible, incoherent, off-topic, blank, or written in a language other than English.

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**Personal Narrative Essay: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria**

**Main Idea**
The writer clearly demonstrates the underlying theme or point of the story, and that theme or point relates directly to the prompt.

**Supporting Details**
The writer provides details that are related to the main point of the story and that evoke the writer's feelings and experiences. The details are sufficient to support and explain the events of the narrative.

**Organization**
The writer establishes for the reader a sense of beginning, development, and ending of the composition. The writer may organize the essay chronologically or may use another suitable pattern of organization, such as flashback or organization around a concept. A clear and appropriate organizational strategy, however, must be evident.

**Coherence**
The writer clearly establishes the sequence of events, even if the narrative is not organized chronologically. To achieve coherence, the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.
Surprise parties are a good example of something unexpected that can happen to someone. Last year my parents threw a surprise birthday party for me that I never expected. There were some strange events at the party too. A lot of times people find out about their surprise parties ahead of time and they try to pretend that it’s a big shock.

Last year for my birthday my mother asked me what I wanted to do. She says that she would help me plan a birthday but I refuse because I wasn’t sure who to invite. I didn’t want to hurt some kids feeling by not inviting them and I wasn’t sure if I should just invite guys or ask girls too. I really wanted a party, I like going to them myself. But it seemed like it was getting awfully complickated and a lot of work. Even though I really didn’t mean it. My mother suggested that instead of party I should ask four of my best friends out for pizza and movie. My friends and me really like action adventure movies with great special affects.

Well, was I ever surprised when we came back to my house after the movie. My father picked me and my friends up and as we all pulled in the driveway I started getting a funny feeling that something weird was going on because it sounded like there were people in the backyard. I walk through the door and then into the backyard. A bunch of my friends were hiding in the bushes and a few of them were even hiding in the treehouse. When they saw me, they hollered surprise I was so shocked I probably turned all red.

The party was great everyone had a good time. My dad barbecued hot dogs on the grill and wore one of those aprons with a silly message on it. The surprises weren’t over yet because my parents hired really weird entertainment. They were people who bring a few animals to show to kids some of the animals can do tricks. Most of my friends liked the snakes, but some of them thought they were too gross.
I’ll never forget this scene as long as I live. Kids are springing from the bushes with their arms raised high, their voices so loud they sound like all using microphones. Their yelling “surprise, surprise” at the top of their lungs. I can’t believe this is happening to me. I’m the one who likes to surprise people and catch them off guard. But now I guess it’s my turn. The event I’m describing is a surprise party for my 12th birthday—it’s completely unexpected. I’m so totally shocked that my eyes must be bugging out of my head and my mouth must be wide open like a puppet’s.

Whose responsible for this shock? The answer is two people. Theresa and James, my parents. I probably got my talent to surprise people from them because when it comes to surprises my parents are pros.

This is how they pull off the surprise. First, they made me believe that the only people who would come to my party would be four guys I like to hang out with most. Then, instead of a regular party, the six of us counting my dad would go out for pizza and see a show. A party just for the guys and everyone knows about the real party except for me. Well, I really fell for this story until we arrived home afterward. My dad says, “Let’s go to the backyard.”

I say, “Sure, Dad, what’s up.” My mom’s waiting in the backyard and she can’t keep from grinning. The two of them are so proud that they tricked me. I had no idea that Mom had invited all these kids behind my back. Anyway, it was a good surprise because there’s nothing worse than a bad surprise. However, there is still another good surprise waiting to happen.

Of course, no one was expecting three animal trainers to come to my birthday party. And even more surprising were the animals they brought to entertain everyone.

One of the animal trainers unlatched the top of his animal cage and out came the head of a huge snake. She told everyone, “Don’t be afraid of snakes.” Then she wrapped the snake around her arm like giant bracelet. The other two trainers also had snakes. Soon most of my friends were standing in line, waiting their turn to...
touch or hold a snake.

So you see this is a story about an unexpected event in my life that was filled with surprises.
I should have been more suspicious from the very beginning. A few weeks before my birthday, my mother asked slyly, “How do you want to celebrate your birthday this year, Raymond? I was thinking that instead of a party, Dad can take you and four of your best friends out for pizza and a movie.”

“That sounds like a great idea,” I replied. Of course, I didn’t realize that she was setting me up and that my best friends, Jason, Daryl, Carl, and Will, were part of her scheme. Knowing my mother, she probably made them all take an oath and say aloud, “I promise to keep your plan a secret.”

My dad was sworn to secrecy too. Even after the movie he never gave the slightest hint that while we were all chowing down on pizza, my mother was busy decorating the backyard with colored crepe paper streamers. During the drive back home, he pretended that my birthday celebration was over. As we parked in front of the house, he said, “Why don’t you guys go in the backyard?” My father had successfully set the trap.

From behind the bushes in my backyard, I heard faceless voices yelling, “Surprise! Surprise!” Suddenly, about 20 of my school friends jumped out of their secret hiding places and screamed in unison, “Happy birthday, Raymond!” Was I ever stunned!

Then I congratulated my parents on carrying out their foolproof plan. Few people are clever enough to throw a surprise birthday that really is a surprise.

As the party continued, I discovered that the surprises weren’t over yet. After everyone sang “Happy Birthday” and finished the cake and ice cream, three strangers carrying large wire cages draped with black scarves appeared in the backyard. All the strangers were dressed in black and wore sunglasses. Then my mom introduced the mysterious visitors. “May I have your attention, everybody. I would like to introduce Craig, Tim, and Wanda, a trio of animal trainers from Creepy Crawling Creatures.”

All the guests at my birthday party gathered around Craig, Tim, and Wanda. In a flash the animal trainers slipped off the black scarves covering the cages. All my
friends gasped in amazement. Each cage contained a huge boa constrictor. Wanda, the head animal trainer, explained, “These snakes are over 7 feet long. They are all tame. Don’t be afraid. You can even pet them if you like.” The snakes’ skin was not cold and clammy to touch, as I had expected it to be. Next, the animal trainers coiled the boa constrictors around a stick. My friend Daryl was brave enough to let Wanda wrap one of the boa constrictors around his neck like a scarf.

One of my friends, Martha, pulled me aside and said, “What a cool surprise party! Who would have ever thought that after surprising you, we would all be surprised ourselves?” I just smiled. From this party, I learned an important lesson about my parents: Expect the unexpected.
Scoring Explanation: Personal Narrative Essay

Refer to pages 73–74 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and page vii for the Conventions Score Scale and Rating. These scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

Essay 1

Focused Holistic Score: 2
The essay responds to the prompt but lacks focus and digresses at several points. Many of the events are simply listed without sufficient elaboration, and the piece lacks a sense of completeness.

Conventions Rating: –

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Errors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sentence formation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>many run-on sentences; sentence fragment; rambling sentences with little sense of subordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>its/it’s; pronoun case; alot; switching verb tenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>apostrophes missing in contractions; internal punctuation missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>several misspellings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Essay 2

Focused Holistic Score: 4
This essay responds to the prompt but does not stay focused on the main topic throughout. The writer employs various techniques to add interest for the reader, including an active, intriguing introduction; dialogue; and vivid descriptions. However, the essay goes off topic too often to warrant giving this paper a higher score.

Conventions Rating: –

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<th>Errors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sentence formation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>sentence fragments; run-on sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>they’re/there/their; whose/who’s; 12th; slang; confusing use of verb tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>missing internal punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>totally; responsable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Essay 3

Focused Holistic Score: 6
The writer responds to the prompt and stays focused on the main topic throughout the essay. Events are presented in clear, logical order, and specific details add to the narrative. The writer has used dialogue and suspense to enhance the telling of events. There is an appropriate sense of audience; a distinctive, consistent voice; and the essay is complete.

Conventions Rating: +

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Errors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sentence formation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usage</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>some colloquialisms, but they are part of the narrator’s voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling</td>
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Persuasive Essay: Prompt 1

DIRECTIONS: Write a well-organized composition on the topic below.

Your school board has just decided that each student will be required to participate in an after-school activity. Write a letter to your school board either for or against this decision.

As you write your composition, remember to do the following:

• State the issue and your position on it.
• Include at least two points that support your position.
• Explain each point, using details and examples.
• Address the arguments that may be made by your opponents, and show why your argument is stronger.
• Write in complete sentences.
• Write coherent paragraphs with topic sentences.
• Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

You may use scratch paper to plan your composition. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.
Focused Holistic Score Scale:
Persuasive Essay

SCORE POINT 6  The response reflects a strong mastery of persuasive writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer clearly states a position, provides at least two strong reasons to support it, and supports those reasons with details that are both appropriate and clearly articulated. The response follows a clear, logical progression; employs appropriate transitions to direct the reader’s thoughts; and effectively uses persuasive language to make a point. The writer employs a suitable and effective approach (for example, originality, appropriate tone, and point of view). The writer anticipates opposing arguments and addresses them successfully and thoroughly. There is an appropriate awareness of audience. All aspects of the prompt are developed, and the essay is complete.

SCORE POINT 5  The response reflects a very good mastery of persuasive writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer clearly states a position, provides at least two thoroughly substantiated reasons to support it, and exhibits a logical progression of ideas. The reasons may contain minor flaws in logic, and a few transitional links may be missing. However, the overall argument is organized and coherent, resulting in a clear, logical progression. The writer employs persuasive language to convey his or her position on the topic. The writer anticipates opposing arguments and addresses them. There is an appropriate awareness of audience. All aspects of the prompt are covered, and the essay seems complete.

SCORE POINT 4  The response reflects a reasonable mastery of persuasive writing. The writer clearly states a position; gives reasons, details, and examples to support it; and exhibits a logical progression of ideas. Minor flaws in elaboration and progression may be present. The writer provides some pertinent points and details; however, missing transitions and lapses in logic and insufficient elaboration undermine the argument’s persuasive force. The writer may anticipate opposing arguments but fail to address them in a way that strengthens the argument. Some aspects of the prompt may be missing.

SCORE POINT 3  The response reflects a moderate mastery of persuasive writing. The writer states a position, provides reasons to support it, and employs some progression of ideas. However, the response contains at least one significant flaw. Some of these responses provide only minimal elaboration; others include ideas, reasons, and details that are inadequately explained or tangential to the subject matter. Responses are generally organized but contain significant breaks in logical progression. The writer attempts to use persuasive language but does not demonstrate full command of that technique. Some responses anticipate and address opposing arguments but do so ineffectively; others wholly neglect to address important points of the opposing side. Some aspects of the prompt may be missing.
**SCORE POINT 2** The response reflects a weak sense of persuasive writing. It is evident that the writer has read and responded to the prompt, but the response is digressive or undeveloped. Some responses may simply list arguments without providing further elaboration. Others may offer points that are illogical or irrelevant. They may fail to address important issues or may place inappropriate emphasis on unimportant issues. The writer may attempt to use persuasive language and anticipate opposing arguments, but such strategies are sporadic and ineffective. In general, these responses seem unfocused and incomplete, lacking control or progression. In many cases, some aspects of the prompt are missing.

**SCORE POINT 1** The response reflects a lack of understanding of persuasive writing. It is evident that the writer has read and tried to respond to the prompt. However, the response lacks focus and coherence. The writer may attempt to support ideas, but there is little or no sense of organizational strategy or logical progression. Persuasive strategies are poorly executed or too sparingly employed. The writer may fail to identify essential issues pertaining to the prompt and may digress widely when discussing essential issues. Many responses exhibit minimal control but are simply too undeveloped to receive a higher score.

**SCORE POINT 0** The response may make an attempt at persuasion, but it is incoherent and demonstrates anger rather than logical argument.

**NON-SCORABLE** The composition is entirely illegible, incoherent, off-topic, blank, or written in a language other than English.

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**Persuasive Essay: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria**

**Main Idea**

The writer identifies an issue and clearly states his or her position on it. The writer focuses on supporting this position throughout the composition.

**Supporting Details**

The writer provides at least two main points that support his or her position. The composition contains sufficient facts and reasons to support and fully develop the writer’s argument.

**Organization**

The writer provides an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The composition shows a logical development from beginning to end.

**Coherence**

The writer clearly demonstrates how the facts and reasons that are provided support his or her position on the issue. Sentences are logically connected. To achieve coherence, the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.
Persuasive Essay

**DIRECTIONS:** After you have read the student essay, record your observations on this sheet. Provide thoughtful, thorough responses, and be sure to provide specific references to the essay. Write a response to every question.

1. A writer may begin a persuasive essay with a strong statement or even a shocking story to draw in the reader. Does the writer of this essay do this? If so, explain how. If not, suggest how the introduction to the essay might more effectively “hook” the reader.

   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

2. In your opinion, does the writer argue his or her position effectively? Explain why or why not. Identify specific areas of strength or weakness in the writer’s argument.

   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

3. Does the writer deal effectively with arguments that might be made against his or her position on the issue? Explain why or why not. Identify specific places in the essay where an opposing position is addressed. Also, identify any additional arguments that might be made against the position the writer supports.

   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

4. Writers sometimes use strong language to try to convince readers to agree with their position on an issue. Does the writer use such language in this essay? If so, identify specific examples. What words might you substitute to state the writer’s position more convincingly?

   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
Dear School Board:

Making us students join after school activities are wrong! The school day is already too long, why make us stay longer. Some kids need to get home right away and help out our families. What about kids who have single moms and younger brothers sisters. They can’t afford to hire a babysitter or send their little kids to after school daycare so they count on an older sister or brother instead to do the babysitting. I have a little brother whose in second grade and my mom doesn’t get home from her job until almost 6 o’clock, may be later. I usualy need to get home real quick to watch my brother and set the table. Not to mention doing my homework which takes up alot of time. Some kids that don’t have a brother or sister of thier own to babysit have a regular babysitting job after school that they get paid for. Other kids get different kinds of after school jobs.

Also, schools are not the only place kids can get involved in after school activities so why make that be the only place to do extra things. My friend Nicholas goes to religious classes at 4 o’clock two days a week, and my other friend gets hockey lessons at the ice skating rink which is part of the park district.

The after school activities you want us to join may not be so interesting or too hard to get into. Most kids would like to be on the basketball team but the coach just lets the best athletes play. The computer club sounds boring and more like another class than an after school activity.

Forcing kids to be in an after school activity means they don’t have the freedom to chose what they want to do that’s not fair. We would have to always be with students from our own school. Maybe some of us would like to make friends with kids that go to other schools, which is what we get to do when we join after school activities that the park district offers.

Making after-school activities a requirement is taking away our rights. We have a right to go home or just do nothing after school. I think students should have a say in how the school decides to spend our time, so that’s why I am writing this letter to you. I hope this letter
Persuasive Essay

Score of 2

change your mind. I think my opinion should count because what I'm telling you is also what other students in the school think too.

This letter is against your decision and I have given you reasons that show why. Kids my age have other places to be after school like babysitting or doing other activities.

Sincerely,

A Very Busy Student
Dear School Board:

I know that the members on the school board came to a decision that will have a big affect on me and my friends. Since I wasn't able to go to the last school board meeting when you discussed your decision, I would like to tell you my opinion in this letter. I am against requiring all students to participate in an after-school activity. Here is my side of the argument.

One reason is that many students have responsibilities right after school they make it very difficult for them to get involved in an activity that takes place at the same time. This causes a big conflict for them. Here's two examples. Some kids have working moms who get home around dinner time. That's why these kids have to get home right away because they have more household chores to do and other responsibilities that alot of kids don't have. Who are they suppose to listen to, their moms or the school board? They can't be in two places at the same time. Either they go home and help out or they stay after school and join an activity. I think the school board's decision is interferring with students family life.

Your requirement can cause another conflict. For example, some students are already signed up for after-school activities that aren't at school. Gymnastics lessons, piano or guitar lessons, choir practice, and babysitting jobs, just to name a few. Do you want students to quit what there doing so they can obey your after-school requirement?

Another reason for disagreeing with your requirement is that it cuts into homework time. I have at least one hour of homework every night. Even more when I have a big research report or a test or science project. What is more important to you, getting good grades at school or participating in an after-school activity? Many students can not do both.

I'm trying to see your side of the argument too. The school board probably thinks that after-school activities will keep students out of trouble and will teach them a better way to spend their time instead of hanging out at the shopping mall after school. Students can learn more skills or get together with students who share the same interests. For example, students who like computers can join the computer club and talk about computers with their
club members. But I think students should have a choice about whether or not to join such activities. Making it a requirement takes all the fun out it, also it makes us feel like you don’t trust us and we don’t have good judgement.

Please change your decision and let students have a say in what to do at the end of the school day. Be aware of our family obligations, our outside interests besides school and that we know how to put our free time to good use.

Sincerely,

A Responsible Student
**Dear Members of the School Board:**

Today’s neighborhood newspaper quoted your most recent decision: “All students must participate in mandatory after-school activities.” I understand your point of view. Your ruling expresses your concern for students who get into trouble because they have too much time on their hands. You also want students to become more well-rounded individuals who can succeed in other areas besides their school work. Requiring after-school activities can help students develop their talents and make new friends.

Though you seem to have the students’ best interests in mind, I am not in favor of your decision. In this letter I would like to speak on behalf of students, because I understand their point of view too. Requiring participation in after-school activities places too much pressure on students, interferes with their personal obligations, and may even keep students from learning to take more responsibility for their own actions.

Most students already feel the stress of having a very busy schedule. Going to school, completing homework assignments, and having a social life take up a big chunk of their day. Many students are also already involved in outside activities that help them learn new skills. Playing soccer or another sport, taking music lessons, or volunteering for community service projects are just some of the ways that students spend their extra time. Adding mandatory after-school activities would overload these students. They would feel the strain of trying to succeed at too many things and have difficulty scheduling moments when they can just relax.

Furthermore, mandatory after-school activities prevent students from fulfilling their personal obligations to their families. Working parents depend on their older children to help out around the house and to take care of the younger children. These household chores give students a chance to be reliable and trustworthy and make students aware of their important roles in a family.

Finally, forcing students to join after-school activities will not make them feel more responsible for their behavior. Instead of staying out of trouble, some students might...
intentionally cause trouble and rebel against having to spend even more time at school.
They might think that the teachers who are supervising the activities are really
babysitters in disguise. This kind of situation does not teach students better self-control.

I urge you to reconsider your decision to require after-school activities. Perhaps you
could hold a community meeting and invite students, parents, and teachers to share their
views. Together we could all reach a compromise.

Sincerely,
Ready to Work Together
Scoring Explanation: Persuasive Essay

Refer to pages 83–84 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and page vii for the Conventions Score Scale and Rating. These scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

**Essay 1**

**Focused Holistic Score: 2**

The writer responds to the prompt and has some command of persuasive writing, presenting at least two details in support of his or her reasons. However, the support is minimal, and the essay lacks the focus and coherence that would earn it a higher score.

**Conventions Rating:** –

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<td>missing internal punctuation; incorrect end punctuation</td>
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<td>spelling</td>
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<td>many errors</td>
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**Essay 2**

**Focused Holistic Score: 4**

The writer clearly states a position and gives reasons, details, and examples to support it. However, the writer often digresses, and the paragraphs lack coherence.

**Conventions Rating:** –

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<td>spelling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>many errors</td>
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**Essay 3**

**Focused Holistic Score: 6**

The writer clearly states a position; provides strong reasons to support it; and supports these reasons with appropriate, clearly articulated details. The writer anticipates opposing arguments and addresses them successfully and thoroughly.

**Conventions Rating: +**

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Persuasive Essay: Prompt 2

DIRECTIONS: Write a well-organized composition on the topic below.

Your school is considering introducing a dress code. This dress code forbids students to wear sneakers and jeans while at school. It requires girls to wear skirts or dresses, and boys to wear dress pants. Write a letter to the school board either for or against this dress code.

As you write your composition, remember to do the following:

• State your position.
• Include at least two different points that support your position.
• Explain each point, using examples and details.
• Address the arguments that may be made against you, and show why your argument is stronger.
• Write in complete sentences.
• Check to be sure that you are writing good paragraphs with topic sentences.
• Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

You may use scratch paper to plan your composition. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.
Focused Holistic Score Scale: Persuasive Essay

**SCORE POINT 6**  The response reflects a strong mastery of persuasive writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer clearly states a position, provides at least two strong reasons to support it, and supports those reasons with details that are both appropriate and clearly articulated. The response follows a clear, logical progression; employs appropriate transitions to direct the reader’s thoughts; and effectively uses persuasive language to make a point. The writer employs a suitable and effective approach (for example, originality, appropriate tone, and point of view). The writer anticipates opposing arguments and addresses them successfully and thoroughly. There is an appropriate awareness of audience. All aspects of the prompt are developed, and the essay is complete.

**SCORE POINT 5**  The response reflects a very good mastery of persuasive writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer clearly states a position, provides at least two thoroughly substantiated reasons to support it, and exhibits a logical progression of ideas. The reasons may contain minor flaws in logic, and a few transitional links may be missing. However, the overall argument is organized and coherent, resulting in a clear, logical progression. The writer employs persuasive language to convey his or her position on the topic. The writer anticipates opposing arguments and addresses them. There is an appropriate awareness of audience. All aspects of the prompt are covered, and the essay seems complete.

**SCORE POINT 4**  The response reflects a reasonable mastery of persuasive writing. The writer clearly states a position; gives reasons, details, and examples to support it; and exhibits a logical progression of ideas. Minor flaws in elaboration and progression may be present. The writer provides some pertinent points and details; however, missing transitions and lapses in logic and insufficient elaboration undermine the argument's persuasive force. The writer may anticipate opposing arguments but fail to address them in a way that strengthens the argument. Some aspects of the prompt may be missing.

**SCORE POINT 3**  The response reflects a moderate mastery of persuasive writing. The writer states a position, provides reasons to support it, and employs some progression of ideas. However, the response contains at least one significant flaw. Some of these responses provide only minimal elaboration; others include ideas, reasons, and details that are inadequately explained or tangential to the subject matter. Responses are generally organized but contain significant breaks in logical progression. The writer attempts to use persuasive language but does not demonstrate full command of that technique. Some responses anticipate and address opposing arguments but do so ineffectively; others wholly neglect to address important points of the opposing side. Some aspects of the prompt may be missing.
SCORE POINT 2  The response reflects a weak sense of persuasive writing. It is evident that the writer has read and responded to the prompt, but the response is digressive or undeveloped. Some responses may simply list arguments without providing further elaboration. Others may offer points that are illogical or irrelevant. They may fail to address important issues or may place inappropriate emphasis on unimportant issues. The writer may attempt to use persuasive language and anticipate opposing arguments, but such strategies are sporadic and ineffective. In general, these responses seem unfocused and incomplete, lacking control or progression. In many cases, some aspects of the prompt are missing.

SCORE POINT 1  The response reflects a lack of understanding of persuasive writing. It is evident that the writer has read and tried to respond to the prompt. However, the response lacks focus and coherence. The writer may attempt to support ideas, but there is little or no sense of organizational strategy or logical progression. Persuasive strategies are poorly executed or too sparingly employed. The writer may fail to identify essential issues pertaining to the prompt and may digress widely when discussing essential issues. Many responses exhibit minimal control but are simply too undeveloped to receive a higher score.

SCORE POINT 0  The response may make an attempt at persuasion, but it is incoherent and demonstrates anger rather than logical argument.

NON-SCORABLE  The composition is entirely illegible, incoherent, off-topic, blank, or written in a language other than English.

Persuasive Essay: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria

Main Idea
The writer identifies an issue and clearly states his or her position on it. The writer focuses on supporting this position throughout the composition.

Supporting Details
The writer provides at least two main points that support his or her position. The composition contains sufficient facts and reasons to support and fully develop the writer’s argument.

Organization
The writer provides an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The composition shows a logical development from beginning to end.

Coherence
The writer clearly demonstrates how the facts and reasons that are provided support his or her position on the issue. Sentences are logically connected. To achieve coherence, the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.
Dear School Board,

My school is considering introducing a dress code which forbids wearing sneakers and jeans while at school. It requires girls to wear skirts or dresses to school, and boys to wear dress pants. I think that this new dress code is a real bad idea I am writing you this letter to say that I am against it.

The principle at my school says that kids look to sloppy in sneakers and blue jeans. And that some kids wear blue jeans that are not the right size for them. Some are too tight, some are too baggy. Jeans don't have to fit perfectly to look good in them. He thinks if kids look too sloppy there work in school will be sloppy too but thats not true. My Mom and Dad get to wear jeans and sneakers to work on Fridays and they still do good work on that day because these clothes wont make them do a bad job. So making us dress up for school doesn't mean all of the sudden kids are going to get better grades and act perfect. Anyways, school isn't like going to a job because students don't get paid for their work. The only problem I see is that some kids like to show off their designer blue jeans and atheletic shoes and brag about how much money they spent.

Buying a whole new closet full of dress up clothes is going to cost everyone a lot of money and I dont think its worth it. Following the dress code will make students uncomfortable, I don't know anyone who likes to get dressed up. This dress code sounds just like a school uniform which would be okay if we went to a private school. But we don't, we go to a public school. It sounds like a strict uniform that does not allow students to show what kind of people they are.

Some kids may look sloppy or act like slobs no matter what clothes you put them in. Like I already told you, I'm against the dress code because its too strict and will cost too much money.

Very Truely yours,

An unhappy student
Dear School Board:

“Don’t judge a book by its cover” was something my mother always told me. But it’s something I think everyone does, judging someone else based on looks. I think the principal and some of the teachers at school are making a wrong judgement about me and other students because we like to wear jeans and sneakers. I guess that’s why the principal is considering putting a dress code into effect. He believes a dress code will improve our behavior at school and make us study harder. The principal also says that a dress code will prepare us for getting a job in a few years, since bosses make rules about the clothes people wear at work. I guess he has a point, but I’m still against a dress code. I hope this letter will persuade you to stop the principal from putting the dress code into effect.

My friends and I say, “Don’t judge us by our clothes.” Wearing clothes like blue jeans and sneakers doesn’t mean we don’t care about school work or have bad manners. For example, there are many straight-A students in school who wear jeans and sneakers. They are very polite and never act rudely. Maybe this is because they are just being themselves, no matter what clothes they have on. Trying to make us dress more like grown ups do at their jobs is not going to change our attitude towards other people or make us work harder.

Another important reason why I’d like you to stop the dress code from going into effect is the cost. If the principal’s request for a dress code is passed, who will pay for the outfits? The school cannot afford to buy each student a set of clothes, much less new pieces when students outgrow or wear out the first sets. At the same time, the school cannot expect the students and their families to pay for them either. Who wears the same clothes every single day of the week? So if this proposal passes, who’s going to pay the bill for the dresses, dress pants, and different shoes for all the students at school.

I hope you understand now why I’m against introducing a dress code at school, that forbids sneakers and jeans and requires dressy outfits. Changing the kinds of clothes a
person wears won’t change their study habits or their behavior. Buying new clothes to fit the dress code costs too much money. Persuade the principal not to put dress code into effect.

Sincerely,

Student Against the Dress Code
Dear School Board:

In a debate two opposing teams present their arguments for or against a certain issue. As you read this letter, imagine a debate that centers on whether or not my school should have a dress code for students. The guidelines of the proposed dress code are strict. No sneakers or jeans can be worn at school. Girls must wear skirts and dresses, and boys must wear dress pants.

The principal of my school is for the dress code. These are two of the reasons he would probably give to support his argument. First, the new dress code policy will help prepare students for the real world. Well-dressed students will behave more like grown-ups going to a job. As a result, students will get down to the business of learning; they’ll work harder and receive higher grades. Second, the dress code will build students’ self-respect because they’ll be so proud of their appearance. Therefore, they will respect teachers and other students more and will be less likely to fight or disrupt the class.

I disagree with both of the principal’s arguments because he places too much importance on how clothing affects students. First, a dress code won’t make students focus more on learning. Wearing dressy clothes that are uncomfortable will distract students from their schoolwork. Second, students’ self-respect is not based on the kinds of clothes they wear. In fact, making students conform to a dress code shows disrespect toward students’ ability to choose clothes they think are acceptable for school.

I am against introducing a new dress code policy, especially the ban on blue jeans and sneakers. Blue jeans and sneakers are popular with students for practical reasons. Jeans don’t wear out quickly and are easy to clean. Each student needs only a few pairs of jeans, which can easily be thrown in the washing machine. Sneakers are also more practical because they are sturdier than dress shoes and provide better support for the feet. In addition, sneakers are safer because they have rubber soles that will prevent students from slipping on the slick tile floors and cement stairways in my school.
There is another practical reason for opposing the dress code. Many families in our community live on a tight budget and don’t have the money to invest in a brand-new wardrobe for their school-aged children. Dress pants, dresses, and skirts cost more than a pair of jeans. This expense is unfair to parents who are already struggling to earn enough to clothe and take care of their children.

You, the members of the school board, are the judges of this imaginary debate I have just presented. Please consider the strengths of my arguments as you examine the drawbacks of introducing a strict dress code policy at my school.

Sincerely,

A Concerned Student
Scoring Explanation: Persuasive Essay

Refer to pages 95–96 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and page vii for the Conventions Score Scale and Rating. These scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

Essay 1
Focused Holistic Score: 2
The response addresses the prompt and provides at least two reasons, but some of the arguments presented are poorly elaborated. The response exhibits some sense of organization, though errors in coherence exist.

Conventions Rating: –

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<td>thier; atheletic; uncomfortable; truely</td>
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Essay 2
Focused Holistic Score: 4
The response exhibits a good command of persuasive language. The writer states the issue clearly and provides at least two reasons to support his or her position. However, further elaboration is needed, and minor errors in coherence exist.

Conventions Rating: +

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Essay 3
Focused Holistic Score: 6
This response exhibits a strong command of persuasive writing and persuasive language. The response addresses the prompt and is evenly developed, well organized, and coherent. An appropriate sense of audience exists and the writer’s argument is complete.

Conventions Rating: +

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