

GLENCOE LANGUAGE ARTS

# **NORTH CAROLINA**

STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY

# **WRITING PROMPTS, STUDENT RUBRICS, AND SAMPLE RESPONSES**

Grade  
**10**



**Glencoe  
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### **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 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 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 nine expository literary prompts, one expository cause-and-effect prompt, one personal narrative prompt, and one persuasive writing prompt. 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 booklet.

- **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 cause and effect, 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 prompt. 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 nine expository literary prompts have sample responses. All the other prompts 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 work of literature in which a character's death has a profound impact on another character. All three sample responses discuss *Night* and the impact of Wiesel's father's death. The first essay mentions the work but lacks a thesis statement. The second essay contains a thesis statement but has spotty organization. The third essay is well written. The variety of responses allows students to discern the differences between the various score points. Scoring explanations follow each set of responses.

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 cause and effect 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 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 four modes. The last part of the rubric is the Conventions Score Scale. Students are rated on a three-point scale regarding their proficiency in each of the following four categories: 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, mechanics, and spelling.
- The composition provides evidence that the writer does not have a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling.



## 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).

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### 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 may be the basis for your thesis statement, or the main idea of your essay.

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### 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.

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## 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 Supporting Ideas and Details boxes as necessary.

<b>Introductory Paragraph/Thesis Statement:</b>		
<b>Supporting Idea:</b>	<b>Supporting Idea:</b>	<b>Supporting Idea:</b>
Detail:	Detail:	Detail:
Detail:	Detail:	Detail:
Detail:	Detail:	Detail:
<b>Concluding Paragraph/Restatement of Thesis:</b>		

## 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 Action boxes as necessary.

<b>Main Idea</b> What is the central event of your narrative?	
<b>Characters</b> Who is in your narrative?	<b>Setting</b> When and/or where does your narrative take place?
<b>Action</b> How will you begin your narrative?	
What happens next?	
How will you end your narrative?	

## 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 for those who evaluate essays, rubrics are helpful for writers. Knowing what makes an essay strong *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. Other rubrics 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 details 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 you are weak in any area, revise your essay as needed.

# Writing Strategies

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.”*

## 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.*

In literature, as in life, the death of an individual profoundly affects the lives of others.

From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, and poems you have read, choose a work in which a character's death has a profound effect on another character. Identify both the character who dies and the character who is deeply affected by the death, but focus your essay on the surviving character. Using specific references to the work, explain how the surviving character reacts to the death, the way he or she changes as a result of this loss, and the importance of the character's death to the overall work. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. (You may also choose a biography or an autobiography and write about real people instead of fictional characters.) Remember to give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.

**As you write your composition, remember to:**

- Focus on the surviving character.
- Give specific examples and details from the work to explain how the surviving character reacts to the death and how he or she changes as a result of this loss.
- Explain the importance of the character's death to the overall work.
- Give any necessary plot information but avoid giving a plot summary.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent and well-developed paragraphs.
- 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 Essay

**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 and uses an appropriate and highly effective approach (e.g., originality and appropriate tone and point of view). 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 response refers to a work of world literature (other than American or British literature) and clearly links this work to the prompt. The essay seems 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 writer addresses all aspects of the prompt and uses effective vocabulary and sentence structure. The response refers to a work of world literature (other than American or British literature) and clearly connects this 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 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 a work of world literature (other than American or British literature) and clearly connects this 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 world 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 (e.g., 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.

### The Expository Composition 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.

**Student Evaluation Sheet** 

## Expository Literary 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.** You may not be familiar with the work of literature discussed in this essay. Does the student provide enough background information so you can follow his or her discussion of the topic? If not, explain what additional information you wish the student had supplied.

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**2.** Does the student clearly present the topic of the essay? Does he or she continue to focus on this topic throughout the essay? Explain how the student’s evidence does or does not support and explain the topic. Identify any points in the essay where you wish the student had supplied more detail.

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**3.** Does the essay include an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion? If so, identify which paragraphs fulfill each of these functions. Does the essay show a logical development from beginning to end? Explain why or why not.

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**4.** Identify one specific way that the writer could improve this essay. Consider only the content of the essay; do not identify errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or capitalization.

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## Expository Literary Essay

Score: 2

I was really shocked when I read about the Holocaust in a book called *Night*. I'm embarrassed to say I didn't know much about it. How could it happen? How could so there be so much suffering and death? How could people be so cruel to other human beings? I understood the Holocaust a lot better after reading this book. It made it more real and personal to me. In the book, the author whose name is Elie Wiesel, tells how his father suffered and died an awful death in a concentration camp. And Elie had to watch his father suffer and die. He tried to help him but he just couldn't save him. Elie was only a teenager when all of this happened.

Elie and his father got to the concentration camp alive—a lot of people had died on the journey to the camp. But his father said he just couldn't go on, he was too weak and tired. Elie wouldn't let him give up and he kept on looking after him. At times, Elie wished he didn't have to take care of his father so he could concentrate on surviving the camp himself.

Then his father got sick with a disease called dysentery. It's a horrible disease and Elie was sure his father would die from it. The poor man was crying out to his son when a Nazi officer heard him and told him to be quiet. Then the Nazi smashed his skull and Elie's father died.

Finally the Allies came and liberated the camp. After being hungry for so long, Elie finally had plenty to eat—but then he got sick with food poisoning and he almost died from it. It was all just too much sorrow for anyone to bear.

## Expository Literary Essay

Score: 4

When an individual dies, those who are left behind are often deeply affected by the loss. This is certainly true in the case of Elie Wiesel, author of the Holocaust memoir *Night*. In this memoir, Wiesel narrates the story of his father's death in a Nazi concentration camp, close to the end of World War II. Young Elie had to watch as his father died a cruel and agonizing death. He tried to save him but could not. After his father's death, he found himself a changed person—with his father gone, nothing mattered anymore. He felt hollow and empty, unable to be touched emotionally by anything.

By the time Elie and his father arrived at the concentration camp, the older man had used up just about all of his strength. His hope also seemed used up. But Elie would not let him give in to despair. He pointed to the dead bodies in the snow and warned his father that he would end up a corpse too. His father didn't care—he just wanted to lie down and rest, even if he never got up again. Elie wouldn't let him do that. He wasn't going to give up now, not after all that he and his father had suffered and endured up to that point.

There is no doubt that Elie loved his father deeply, but he also considered him a burden. Elie had to struggle for his own survival, and having to take care of his father was an extra burden to carry. Sometimes Elie even wished he could be free from the responsibility of helping his father. These thoughts made him feel deeply ashamed, of course. He continued to care for his father, even though he knew that the older man was dying from dysentery and that there was no way he could save him. His father's death was hastened when a Nazi officer heard him crying out and then smashed his skull. Even though his father was gone forever, Elie did not cry. He says that he didn't have any tears left—he must have already shed all of them.

In the months after his father's death, Elie did virtually nothing. It was almost as if he had died inside. He says that nothing could touch him—meaning that he was dead emotionally. Then the concentration camp was finally liberated by Allied soldiers. After being hungry for so long, the first thing that Elie—and the other inmates of the camp—wanted to do was to eat. Elie didn't even think of his father or other family members. Strangely, he

**Expository Literary Essay (continued)****Score of 4**

didn't think of getting revenge on the Nazis who had killed his father, even when he wasn't hungry anymore.

Not long after the Allied troops arrived, Elie became violently ill with a case of food poisoning and nearly died. When he looked into a mirror, he was shocked: he looked like a corpse. All of the suffering Elie had witnessed and experienced had taken its toll on him. The worst blow, of course, was his father's death. It was especially hard to accept, given that the war was almost over when his father died. Elie's response was to just stop thinking about his father after he died. It was as if he couldn't deal with any more sorrow, so he just turned off his emotions.

## Expository Literary Essay

Score of 6

In many works of literature, both fiction and nonfiction, the death of a character profoundly affects one or more of the other characters in the work. In his memoir *Night*, Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel describes how he watched his father die an agonizing death in a Nazi concentration camp, near the end of World War II. Elie also describes how his father's torment and death affected him, transforming him into a hollow shell of a person.

When Elie and his father arrived at the camp, the older man, already greatly weakened, lacked the energy and the will to go on. His father saw the corpses buried under the snow but was so exhausted that he only wanted to join them. Elie knew that his father had given up and wished to die, but the teenager refused to abandon hope. He screamed at his father and argued with him, feeling that he was arguing with death itself.

Although Elie loved his father and wanted him to survive, he also longed to be free from the burden of helping him so that he could focus on his own struggle for survival. Of course, such thoughts filled Elie with tremendous feelings of guilt and shame. A sense of love and duty made Elie continue to care for his father, who was deathly ill with dysentery. Elie even gave some of his own meager ration of food to his father and did his best to comfort him. When his father finally died, after a Nazi officer crushed his skull, Elie did not cry—he had suffered so much and had witnessed so much suffering that he had no tears left.

Elie spent two more months in the concentration camp before Allied troops finally arrived to liberate the camp. During those months, nothing mattered to Elie; the experience of his father's death had paralyzed him physically and emotionally. Nothing could touch him, he said. He even stopped thinking about his father. Elie did nothing all day long; the only thing he wished to do was to eat. That is just what he and his fellow prisoners did when their liberators finally arrived: they threw themselves on the food that was offered and ate their fill. Elie gave no thought to his family or even to the idea of getting revenge on his tormentors.

A few weeks later, while deathly ill with food poisoning, Elie dragged himself to a mirror and saw the image of a corpse staring back at him. The image showed the hollow, empty

**Expository Literary Essay (continued)**

Score of 6

person Elie had become after witnessing and enduring so much physical and emotional suffering. He had witnessed not only his father's horrific death, but also the deaths of so many others at the hands of the Nazis. Again and again, he had seen the face of evil—it was a human face, and he seemed to cope with it by ceasing to have any emotions at all. He had changed from a person who felt love and compassion for others, as well as hatred and the desire for revenge, to someone who felt almost nothing at all.

In the context of the overall work, the death of Elie's father represents the death of hope. If his father could die, after all they had suffered and endured together, then why bother to struggle any longer? The timing of his death is particularly cruel, given that the war was nearly over.

Eventually, Elie Wiesel would become a world-famous advocate of human rights and a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. The horror of his father's death would never leave him, however. It has had a profound and lasting impact on his life.

## 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

This response reflects a weak sense of expository writing. Despite some occasional references to the prompt, it lacks a thesis statement and has little sense of development, aside from elements of plot summary. The response fails to address all aspects of the prompt, as the writer ignores the character's change. Elaboration is minimal, and some details are irrelevant.

#### Conventions Rating: –

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	1	run-on sentences; sentence fragments
usage	2	pronoun-antecedent errors
mechanics	3	
spelling	2	<i>dysentary</i>

### Essay 2

#### Focused Holistic Score: 4

In this response to *Night*, the writer provides a clear thesis statement but does not stay focused on the topic throughout the essay. Although the writer exhibits an understanding of the literary work, many of the details provided are not related to the subject of the prompt. Organization is spotty, and the essay lacks a sense of completeness.

#### Conventions Rating: +

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	3	
usage	2	Some pronoun-antecedent confusion, vague pronoun reference
mechanics	3	
spelling	3	

**Essay 3****Focused Holistic Score: 6**

This response to Elie Wiesel's *Night* is clear, coherent, and focused throughout, showing a strong command of expository writing. The writer clearly states his or her thesis. He or she understands and explains Elie's guilt and torment about conditions leading to his father's death and relates Elie's reaction to this event. The response shows a sense of audience; sentence structure is varied and effective. The response exhibits an overall sense of completeness and mastery of the literary text.

**Conventions Rating: +**

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	3	
usage	3	
mechanics	3	
spelling	3	

## Expository Literary Essay: Prompt 2

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

Foreshadowing is a literary technique used to heighten the dramatic tension of a work. Whenever a writer hints at what is to come in a literary work, that writer is foreshadowing future events.

From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, and poems you have read, choose a work that employs foreshadowing. Identify one or more examples of this literary technique. Explain how the use of foreshadowing builds suspense and helps prepare the reader for what is to come. Also explain how foreshadowing may convey important information about the theme, and discuss the importance of foreshadowing in the overall work. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.

**As you write your composition, remember to:**

- Identify one or more examples of foreshadowing.
- Give specific examples and details to explain how the author uses foreshadowing to build suspense, prepare the reader for future events, and, if applicable, to convey important information about the theme.
- Explain the importance of foreshadowing to the overall work.
- Give any necessary plot information but do not give a plot summary.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent and well-developed paragraphs.
- 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 and uses an appropriate and highly effective approach (e.g., originality and appropriate tone and point of view). 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 response refers to a work of world literature (other than American or British literature) and clearly links this work to the prompt. The essay seems 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 writer addresses all aspects of the prompt and uses effective vocabulary and sentence structure. The response refers to a work of world literature (other than American or British literature) and clearly connects this 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 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 a work of world literature (other than American or British literature) and clearly connects this 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 world 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 (e.g., 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.

### The Expository Composition 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****Score of 2**

The story of Oedipus the King, a play written by Sophocles is really amazing. This play has a lot of foreshadowing in it. Here's what happens, Oedipus is king and his city is suffering from a truly nasty plague. People are suffering and dying, so Creon goes and asks Apollo how Oedipus can save the city. Apollo says they have to find and punish the person who killed the last king. Then Oedipus sends for an old man that everybody thinks is a prophet. This prophet tells Oedipus that he's the murderer—he says that Oedipus killed King Laius. This is an example of foreshadowing. Of course Oedipus is furious and threatens and insults the prophet. Then believe it or not, Oedipus finds out that this prophet was telling the truth—Oedipus did kill King Laius, who was king before him, he just didn't know who he was.

As I said, everybody is looking for the murderer because the god Apollo says the awful plague will continue in the city which is Thebes, until the killer is hunted down and either killed or sent away from the city. So as time goes on Oedipus does realize that he did commit the murder. Sophocles gives lots of clues to show that Oedipus must be the real killer. All this is bad but it actually gets worse. It turns out that the guy Oedipus killed was not only the king of Thebes—the place Oedipus is now king of. The guy was also the father of Oedipus. Could anything be worse than killing your own father? But that isn't all. After Laius died, after Oedipus killed him, he married his widow Jocasta. During the play Oedipus learns that Jocasta is actually his mother.

So the thing that Oedipus tried to avoid all along happened anyway, it was his fate. It was foreshadowed. When Oedipus was young, Apollo told him that he would kill his father and marry his mother. This seemed so horrible that Oedipus ran away from his home city, and the people he thought were his parents. It sounded like a good plan for escaping his fate, right? But it didn't work. The people he stayed away from weren't his natural parents. They just adopted him when he was a baby when his real parents got rid of him, because they heard he would kill them. But you can't escape your fate in this play—that seems to be the main idea. Oedipus sure couldn't escape his.

**Expository Literary Essay****Score of 4**

Sophocles does a great deal of foreshadowing in his play *Oedipus the King*. The use of this literary device creates suspense and also helps prepare the reader for what is to come.

One instance of foreshadowing occurs when Creon, brother-in-law of King Oedipus, returns to the plague-stricken city of Thebes with a message from Apollo. The message is that the plague will continue until a long-ago murder is avenged through the killing or banishment of the murderer. The person who was murdered was Laius, who was king of Thebes just before Oedipus. Oedipus declares that the guilty person must be found and banished. At the conclusion of the play, the murderer has been discovered and is about to be taken from the city. This occurs just as it was foreshadowed. The use of foreshadowing prepares the reader for this event. This instance of foreshadowing also creates suspense—the reader wonders who the murderer might be, and whether that person will be found and punished.

Who is the murderer? Sophocles uses foreshadowing to suggest who it might be, but the reader has to keep reading to find out if this person is the murderer or not. This foreshadowing occurs when Oedipus sends for the blind prophet Tiresias. This prophet is an old man who, against his will, reveals that Oedipus himself is the one who murdered Laius. Oedipus reacts to the accusation with rage and scorn. He even makes fun of Tiresias's blindness and threatens him. Thus, Oedipus can sometimes be cruel and a bully—he isn't always a wise and caring ruler. This example of foreshadowing heightens the dramatic tension of the work. Is Oedipus really guilty of murder, or is Tiresias a fraud, as Oedipus claims?

As the play unfolds, the reader learns—along with Oedipus—that Tiresias told the truth. Oedipus did murder King Laius, although he had no idea at the time who he had killed. He had no idea that Laius was his natural father. Oedipus didn't know that his wife Jocasta, Laius's widow, is actually his mother. If he had known this, Oedipus certainly would not have married Jocasta after Laius died. So, as it turns out, this is revealed to Oedipus: he killed

**Expository Literary Essay (continued)****Score of 4**

his father and married his mother, just as Apollo told him he would. This was his fate, which he had tried so hard to escape. But as Tiresias foreshadowed at the beginning of the play, Oedipus cannot escape his fate. This seems to be the main theme of the play. This theme is foreshadowed at the start of the play, along with the fact that Oedipus is the murderer who must be discovered and either killed or banished from Thebes.

As you can see, foreshadowing is a very important literary technique in *Oedipus the King*. Without foreshadowing, the play would be much less suspenseful.

**Expository Literary Essay**

Score of 6

Foreshadowing is an important technique that can help unify a literary work. In the Greek drama *Oedipus the King*, Sophocles uses foreshadowing to hint at coming events. The early instances of foreshadowing help determine the theme and the structure of the plot. Other instances of foreshadowing throughout the play help to build suspense and prepare the reader for events to come.

As the play begins, the ancient Greek city of Thebes has been stricken by a plague. Oedipus, king of Thebes, has sent his wife's brother, Creon, to find out how the city might be saved. In an example of foreshadowing, Creon returns with this message from the god Apollo: the murderer of Laius, who was king of Thebes before Oedipus, must be found and either killed or banished. At the end of the play, the murderer has been found and banished from the city. The foreshadowed event thus occurs, and the beginning and end of the play are connected.

Another example of foreshadowing occurs when Oedipus summons the blind prophet Tiresias and forces him to identify the murderer of Laius: it is Oedipus himself. Oedipus is shocked and enraged by Tiresias's accusation, and he threatens and reviles the old man. Tiresias insists that he is telling the truth, however, and warns Oedipus that soon he will learn the horrifying facts about his marriage. The entire play then becomes a sort of ancient detective story, in which Oedipus examines witnesses and follows clues to determine the truth. By the end of the play, Tiresias is proved correct; the events he has foreshadowed have all come to pass. Oedipus has learned that King Laius was his natural father, and that he did indeed kill him. When he married Queen Jocasta, Laius's widow, he unknowingly married his own mother. He is both father and brother to his own children.

In addition to advancing and unifying the plot, foreshadowing highlights the central theme of the play: the impossibility of avoiding one's fate. This theme is foreshadowed early in the play, when Tiresias tells Oedipus that he cannot escape his fate. As the play progresses, the reader learns about events that prove Tiresias is correct. When Oedipus was a baby, his natural parents decided to have him killed to avoid the fate that had been

**Expository Literary Essay (continued)**

Score of 6

prophesied: that he would slay his parents. But a shepherd took pity on the baby and secretly rescued him, giving him to Polybus and Merope, king and queen of Corinth, who raised him as their own son. When young Oedipus learned from Apollo that he was fated to kill his father and marry his mother, he stayed away from Corinth to avoid fulfilling the prophecy. His strategy did not work, however, because his real parents were Laius and Jocasta.

Thus, foreshadowing is critical in this Greek drama. It helps to unify the work and heightens its dramatic tension. Foreshadowing also provides a plot line, prepares the reader for future events, and highlights the play's central theme.

## 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 unfocused and rambling, even though it does address the prompt. The thesis is unclear. The writer never explains what he or she means by *foreshadowing* and seems to have an incorrect understanding of the literary concept. The tone is inappropriately informal. Plot summary substitutes for relevant details and is quite heavy in an otherwise sparse response.

#### Conventions Rating: –

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	1	run-on sentences; clauses strung together, unclear subordination
usage	2	<i>profit</i> instead of <i>prophet</i> , unclear pronoun references
mechanics	2	missing commas, no underlining of title in play
spelling	2	<i>truely</i> , <i>horrible</i>

### Essay 2

#### Focused Holistic Score: 4

The essay responds to the prompt and presents a thesis, but the body of the essay rambles somewhat, and support for the main points is scanty. The writer does not present a clear statement of the literary term or show a complete understanding of the concept. In addition, the writer's argument does not progress logically at all points, and the reader feels a sense of incompleteness.

#### Conventions Rating: +

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	2	repetitious sentence openings ( <i>This . . .</i> )
usage	2	vague pronoun reference, awkward tense shifts
mechanics	3	
spelling	3	

## Essay 3

### Focused Holistic Score: 6

The writer has provided a clear and focused thesis in the first paragraph. The thesis is supported throughout the response, which shows a clear progression of ideas and evenness of development. Each paragraph supports a portion of the thesis. Sufficient and relevant details support each statement.

### Conventions Rating: +

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	3	
usage	3	
mechanics	3	
spelling	3	

## Expository Literary Essay: Prompt 3

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

In many works of literature, a central character takes a long journey or trip and returns a changed individual.

From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, and poems you have read, choose one work in which a central character takes such a journey. Using specific references from the work, explain the nature of this journey, the way it changes the character, and the importance of this journey to the overall work. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.

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

- Identify the specific character and the journey taken.
- Give specific examples, reasons, and details from the work to explain the nature of this journey and its effect on the character.
- Explain the importance of this journey to the overall work.
- Do not give a plot summary.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent and well-developed paragraphs.
- 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 Literary Essay: Prompt 4

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

In many literary works, a main character breaks a societal taboo. A taboo is a behavior forbidden by society because the behavior is regarded as unacceptable.

From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, and poems you have read, choose a work in which a character's decision to break a taboo has a major effect on the character and on the other characters. Identify the character and the taboo that the character breaks. Using specific references to the work, explain why the character decides to break the taboo, how the decision affects both the character's life and the lives of others, and how this action impacts the overall work. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.

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

- Identify the character and taboo that the character breaks.
- Give specific examples, reasons, and details to explain why the character decides to break the taboo and to show the results of that decision.
- Explain the importance of this action to the overall work.
- Do not give a plot summary.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent and well-developed paragraphs.
- 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 Literary Essay: Prompt 5

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

The central idea or concept of a work of literature is called its *theme*. A common theme found throughout literature is the power struggle between men and women. Many works portray male/female relationships as a battle of wills, with each side fighting for control.

From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, biographies, autobiographies, and poems you have read, choose a work that portrays male/female relationships as a battle of wills. Using specific references to the work, explain how the actions, characters, and the overall work illustrate this theme. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.

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

- Focus on a work that depicts male/female relationships as a battle of wills.
- Give specific examples, reasons, and details to explain how this theme is illustrated by the characters, their actions, and the overall work.
- Do not give a plot summary.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent and well-developed paragraphs.
- 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 Literary Essay: Prompt 6

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

In many works of literature, a central character finds himself/herself as an outcast from society. The character may be cast out of society as a result of class, race, gender, or other conditions of birth; or the character may be exiled as a result of his/her actions.

From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, and poems you have read, choose one work in which a main character is an outcast. Using specific references to the work, explain why the character is cast out from society, how the character responds to his/her exile, and how the character's position as an outcast relates to a larger theme in the work. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.

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

- Focus on a character who is an outcast.
- Give specific examples, reasons, and details from the work to explain why the character is cast out from society and how he or she is affected.
- Explain how the character's position relates to a larger theme in the work.
- Do not give a plot summary.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent and well-developed paragraphs.
- 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**

## Expository Literary Essay: Prompt 7

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

Nature is a powerful force, one that can both sustain humanity and destroy it. Many works of literature explore the relationship between humanity and the surrounding natural world.

From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, and poems you have read, choose a work in which the relationship between nature and human beings is a central theme or idea. Identify the central message communicated by the author about this relationship. Using specific references to the work, explain how the actions, characters, and the overall work convey this theme. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.

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

- Focus on the interactions between nature and human beings in the work.
- Identify the message conveyed by the author.
- Give specific examples, reasons, and details to explain how this theme is communicated in the work.
- Do not give a plot summary.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent and well-developed paragraphs.
- 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 Literary Essay: Prompt 8

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

Authors may use humor and wit to convey important information about characters and the society they live in. Through humor, an author can criticize individuals and society in a way that is both more appealing and less threatening to audiences.

From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, poems, biographies, and autobiographies you have read, choose a work in which the author uses humor as a means of social criticism. Identify specific examples of humor. Explain how the author employs humor to point out individual and/or societal flaws, and discuss the overall effect of humor on the work. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.

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

- Focus on a work in which humor is used to criticize individuals or society.
- Give specific examples and details to explain how the author uses humor as a means of criticism, and discuss the overall effect of humor on the work.
- Do not give a plot summary.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent and well-developed paragraphs.
- 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 Literary Essay: Prompt 9

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

Certain main characters in literary works can best be described as dreamers. Some of these characters are so absorbed in their own thoughts that they fail to see what is happening right in front of them. Others see the world as more fantastic or wonderful than it really is.

From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, and poems you have read, choose a work in which a main character is a dreamer. Identify the character. Using specific references to the work, explain why you consider this character a dreamer. Explain how this character's tendency to dream shapes his/her actions, determines the plot, and relates to a larger theme of the work. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.

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

- Focus on a character who is a dreamer.
- Give specific examples, reasons, and details to explain why you consider the character a dreamer and to show how this trait shapes the character's actions, the plot, and the theme of the work.
- Do not give a plot summary.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent and well-developed paragraphs.
- 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 Cause and Effect Essay: Prompt 1

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

Public opinion surveys show that an overwhelming majority of Americans strongly support their nation's democratic system of government. Yet, only slightly more than half of eligible voters actually vote in presidential elections. In elections that do not determine the presidency, even fewer Americans go to the polls.

In a well-developed essay, analyze the reasons that so many Americans neglect to vote in elections. In your essay, identify at least two factors that discourage people from voting. Make sure to use specific examples and details to support your logic and to demonstrate cause and effect relationships. Conclude by suggesting one way to encourage more Americans to vote.

**As you write your composition, remember to:**

- Identify at least two factors that discourage Americans from voting.
- Explain logically how these factors influence the decision not to vote.
- Use specific examples and details to support your logic and to demonstrate cause and effect relationships.
- Conclude by suggesting one way to encourage greater voter turnout.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent and well-developed paragraphs.
- 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 Cause and Effect Essay

**SCORE POINT 6** The response reflects a strong mastery of expository writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer focuses on the situation presented in the prompt, identifies two distinct causes for this situation, and demonstrates these cause/effect relationships. The response provides specific, relevant details to support ideas; supplies all necessary logical links; and demonstrates an underlying understanding of the issues discussed. The writer develops all aspects of the prompt and uses an appropriate and highly effective approach in terms of tone, point of view, and language choice. An appropriate sense of audience exists. The essay seems complete.

**SCORE POINT 5** The response reflects a very good command of expository writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer identifies causes for the situation presented in the prompt. The response progresses logically and clearly demonstrates cause/effect relationships. There is no break in progression. A few minor flaws in coherence may be present. The writer uses specific details to provide support and elaboration for his or her points. However, some points may need slightly more elaboration or analysis, and some transitions may be slightly awkward. The response is thoughtful and clearly organized overall. The writer addresses all aspects of the prompt and uses effective vocabulary and sentence structure. There is a reasonable sense of audience, and the essay seems complete.

**SCORE POINT 4** The response reflects a reasonable mastery of expository writing. The response focuses on the prompt and presents a progression of ideas, with minor digressions or lapses in logic. The writer addresses the situation presented in the prompt and identifies two causes for this situation. The writer makes an effort to show cause/effect relationships; however, these relationships are not always convincingly demonstrated. The writer includes precise details to support and elaborate upon ideas, but these details may not be clearly relevant or sufficiently linked to the argument. Although the writer addresses the topic, some aspect of the prompt may be missing. Some responses may lack a sense of audience.

**SCORE POINT 3** The response reflects a moderate mastery of expository writing. The response exhibits some progression of ideas and provides some elaboration and support in the form of concrete, supporting details. The writer describes the situation presented in the prompt, identifies causes, and attempts to link cause and effect; however, one of these three elements may be marred by logical flaws or limited understanding of the issues. These responses have a generally organized pattern but lack a sense of overall control. Some papers may tend to summarize at times or have a list-like quality. Others state causal relationships without clearly explaining how ideas are related. Some aspects of the prompt may be missing.

**SCORE POINT 2** The response exhibits 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 provide little or no sense of connection between cause and effect; others discuss cause and effect in a way that fails to address the prompt. Some responses may be extended lists rather than more fully developed pieces of expository writing; others may simply summarize information. The writer has some awareness of an organizational plan, but the composition may be sparse.

**SCORE POINT 1** The response reflects a lack of understanding of expository writing. The writer appears to have seen and attempted to respond to the prompt. However, the response lacks focus or coherence. The writer has attempted to support ideas, but there is little or no sense of organizational strategy or control. Some responses exhibit minimal control but lack sufficient development.

**SCORE POINT 0** The response may attempt to address the prompt, but the writing is rambling and incoherent. The writer has little or no sense of cause/effect.

**NON-SCORABLE** The composition 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 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.

**Student Evaluation Sheet** 

## Expository Cause and Effect 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.** The writer should clearly present several causes for the situation discussed in the essay. Summarize these causes in the space below. If there are any additional points that you feel the writer should have included, list them below.

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**2.** In a cause and effect expository essay, the writer must clearly demonstrate how a particular cause or causes result in a specific effect or effects. Does the essay writer do this? Give specific examples in which the writer does or does not show a logical link between cause and effect.

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**3.** Does the essay include an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion? If so, identify which paragraphs fulfill each of these functions. Does the essay show a logical development from beginning to end? Explain why or why not.

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**4.** Identify one specific way that the writer could improve this essay. Consider only the content of the essay; do not identify errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or capitalization.

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**Expository Cause and Effect Essay**

Score of 2

Voters in the United States don't do a great job of showing up to vote. That's true even when they are electing their president. Can you believe that only a little bit more than half of eligible voters actually vote in presidential elections? Seems unbelievable, especially when you consider that voting is a real important part of our system of government. I mean, what's a democracy without the right to vote?

But a lot of Americans don't use that right. I think one reason is that people are just plain lazy. It's too much trouble to register to vote and then actually go to the polls on election day.

Another reason is because of all the mudslinging in politics today. It turns people off. I know it turns me off. Dirty politics—you know, when one candidate says something about the opponent's personal life, it just makes people wonder what kind of person makes that kind of attack. You start to think, what about the issues? Can't we talk about issues instead of everybody's personal business? The media doesn't make it any better. They can't wait to report any dirt or scandal that anyone can dig up. And of course they do a lot of the digging themselves. Why don't Americans demand that the media clean up their own act? And focus on the issues? They have to stop acting like sharks that are attracted to blood in the water. Sharks—that's a good way to describe a lot of political reporters, don't you agree?

We definitely have to think of ways to get more Americans to vote on election day. I mean, it's really embarrassing that so many people don't bother to vote. Maybe there should be penalties for not voting, they could give fines for people who don't vote? That would make them sit up and take notice. It would make them appreciate what a big deal voting really is, and make them more responsible citizens. But I'm guessing that in a democracy you can't force people to vote. But we need to encourage everyone to vote. It's that important.

**Expository Cause and Effect Essay**

Score of 4

*Too many voters in the United States tend to ignore the electoral process. Voter turnout at presidential elections is low: only a little more than half of all eligible voters actually go to the polls. Does this mean that large numbers of Americans do not support their system of government? No. Then what causes low voter turnout? In my opinion, at least two causes contribute to this situation: (1) people feel disconnected from a government that seems too large and impersonal, and (2) people are tired of the mudslinging in politics and have withdrawn from the political process.*

*As government has grown in size and complexity, many people see less need for their participation. Despite continually low voter turnout, the government keeps functioning. Lawmakers continue to push forward laws that benefit their home states, the so-called pork barrel legislation that the media makes fun of but no one seems able to stop. So why bother voting, if you cannot affect the political process in any way? That's the view taken by many people who do not vote. They have heard again and again that every vote counts, that their vote counts, but they just don't believe it.*

*The second cause of voter apathy in my opinion, is all the mudslinging that we see in politics. I think many people—myself included—are just sick and tired of all the name-calling and negative campaigning. Sometimes the candidates even stoop to character assassination! Of course, a candidate's character does matter; most voters want their elected officials to be trustworthy and ethical. But do we really need to know all the details of their personal lives? I think not. And all of those corny political commercials that you see on TV. Do the candidates really think that most voters buy those sugar-coated images? Or that people believe all the negative things candidates say about their opponents? Most voters are a lot smarter than that. They want to know what candidates have done in the past with regard to important issues, and what they plan to do in the future. All of the mudslinging just turns people off to the political process, and many respond by not even bothering to vote.*

*One solution to low voter turnout might be to encourage more responsible media*



**Expository Cause and Effect Essay (continued)** Score of 4

*coverage of election campaigns. Individuals and groups could let media outlets know that they want to hear about the issues, not about candidates' personal lives. Also, local newspapers and television stations could cover more stories that demonstrate the power of individuals to make a difference in the political process. This would remind people that their votes do count.*

**Expository Cause and Effect Essay**

Score of 6

*Why is it that in a presidential election, only slightly more than half of all eligible voters in the United States actually go to the polls on election day? This record of poor turnout does not indicate that large numbers of Americans do not support their system of government; in fact, public opinion surveys indicate that the opposite is true. In my opinion, many Americans do not vote because they believe their vote is unimportant. Two causes seem the most likely reasons for voter apathy: (1) many people feel overwhelmed by big, impersonal government, and (2) many have become cynical about personality-focused, rather than issue-focused, politics.*

*Apparently, many contemporary voters have decided that the historic one-person, one-vote stand is now ineffective. To them, the representation envisioned by the country's founders is no longer a reality. With the resulting growth in bureaucracy on all governmental levels, many people feel completely removed from the political process. They prefer to remain silent rather than speak and be ignored. In addition, the complexity of government itself and of its electoral system discourages people from understanding the difference their votes might make, especially at a national level. Small wonder, then, that these people see no purpose in casting their ballots.*

*Furthermore, contemporary political discourse has too often been reduced to name-calling, background investigations, negative campaigning, and even character assassination. Although voters do want trustworthy and ethical persons in office, most people are more concerned with political records than with personal histories. For many years, for example, it was thought that a divorced person should not hold the office of President, the prevailing idea being that a person who could not hold a marriage together could not hold a nation together. Although most Americans no longer hold such views, political campaigns, and the media that cover them, are still paying too much attention to private rather than public lives. Political advertisements that contain soft music, scenes of domestic bliss, and homespun slogans are designed to enhance a candidate's image as someone who is "just like us." However, most voters*

**Expository Cause and Effect Essay (continued)** Score of 6

know that many candidates' backgrounds do not match these images. Therefore, voters become discouraged about getting any real information on real issues. What difference does it make if a candidate has cute children or wears flannel shirts? Voters want to know what the candidate has done—politically—in the past and what the candidate will do—politically—if elected. Voters want reality, not flannel shirts and empty promises. Consequently, people who are sickened by slick TV ads or those who are uninformed about the real issues may not bother to vote.

How might voter turnout figures be improved? As a beginning, individuals and groups could pressure the media to cover issues instead of personalities. Although serious political discussion may be less entertaining than mudslinging and character assassination, political issues should be the focus of print and broadcast media coverage. In addition, local television stations and newspapers might give more coverage to grass-roots success stories that demonstrate the power of individuals and small groups in the political process. This would remind voters that every single vote counts.

If individuals could be convinced of the value of their votes, then voter turnout could be improved. It is a goal worth working for, given the recent record of apathy and indifference. Certainly the individual can make a difference in the political life of our country.

## Scoring Explanation: Cause and Effect Essay

Refer to pages 36–37 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 lacks a thesis, a clear explanation of cause/effect, and sufficient supporting details and examples. It shows an emotional reaction rather than a logical analysis and is written without an appropriate sense of audience. The writer has some sense of organization but provides little real content.

#### Conventions Rating: –

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	1	fragment, faulty constructions, subject-verb agreement
usage	1	<i>there/their, alot</i> , pronoun-antecedent agreement
mechanics	3	
spelling	2	<i>definatly, responsible</i>

### Essay 2

#### Focused Holistic Score: 4

The writer of this essay addresses the situation presented in the prompt. The beginning, middle, and end of the essay are clear. However, some paragraphs lack coherence, and some word choices and personal comments indicate a lack of appropriate sense of audience. Also, the elaboration tends to drift off topic and away from discussing causes and effects.

#### Conventions Rating: +

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	2	fragments
usage	3	
mechanics	2	comma error
spelling	3	

## Essay 3

### Focused Holistic Score: 6

This response reflects thought, analysis, and a strong command of expository, cause and effect writing. The writer clearly states his or her thesis, and the essay remains focused on the main idea. The essay is well developed, with a clear organization; the language and tone are appropriate to the prompt.

### Conventions Rating: +

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	3	
usage	3	
mechanics	3	
spelling	3	

## Personal Narrative Essay: Prompt 1

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

Sometimes, no matter how hard we try to accomplish something on our own, it becomes necessary to accept help from others. Even though we sometimes look upon such experiences as failures, they can actually be quite rewarding. They can teach us the value of cooperation, friendship, teamwork, and perseverance.

Recall a time in your life when you accepted help to accomplish something you could not do on your own. In a well-developed essay, tell the story of this experience. Reflect on how the experience taught you more than just how to accomplish the task at hand.

**As you write your composition, remember to:**

- Tell the story of a time you accepted help to accomplish an important task.
- Use specific details to help the reader fully understand the experience you are describing.
- Narrate your story using such storytelling techniques as description, dialogue, characterization, and suspense.
- Explain what you learned from the experience.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent and well-developed paragraphs.
- 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: Narrative Composition

**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 that 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 skillfully employs a sophisticated vocabulary. All aspects of the prompt are developed. The essay seems 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 they may begin with a story and then lose direction. In other cases, the composition may simply be extremely sparse.

**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 (e.g., listing events instead of dramatizing them).

**SCORE POINT 0** This 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 Personal Narrative Composition: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria**

#### **Main Idea**

The writer clearly demonstrates the underlying lesson or point of the story, and this lesson 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 and lesson the writer learned.

#### **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.

**Student Evaluation Sheet** 

## Personal Narrative 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 narrative should take events and dramatize them, 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.

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

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3. In personal narrative essays, the writer's word choice, insights, and thoughts should all convey a clearly identifiable voice (a sense of the speaker'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.

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4. Often what happens in a narrative provides a lesson or moral to the reader. Does this narrative provide a lesson? If not, can you think of any way that the writer could convey this lesson more effectively?

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**Personal Narrative Essay**

Score of 2

I really wanted to be class treasurer. I wanted the job so bad that I ran for the office twice! I lost the first election in a landslide. Talk about embarrassing! The second time went a lot better. With a lot of help from my older sister, who offered to be my campaign manager, I got elected treasurer. Now I know that I should of asked for help in the first election, maybe I wouldn't of lost so bad.

Her's what happened in the first election. It was the begining of freshman year and people were signing up to run in the election for class officers. I decided I would be a good class treasurer, I'm really good at math. Plus I have experience. I was the treasurer for my youth group at the community center. So I made a few posters and hung them around school. I wrote a speech and read it at the school assembly. So far, so good. Then the election came. Like I told you, I lost really big.

You can imagine that I wasn't about to run again when sophmore year rolled around. Why look like a fool two years in a row? But my older sister had a different take on it. She's one of those never-say-die types. Do you know what she did? She signed me up to run for treasurer, without even asking me! Then she said she would be my campaign manager.

At first I was really mad at her but then again, I did want to be treasurer. And I have to admit she ran a great campaign. Flyers, cool campaign buttons, posters—you name it. The buttons were so popular that we ran out of them the first day and had to make more of them. I was the only candidate who had campaign buttons, I think they helped people remember my name. Its a good thing my sister is so artistic—the button design she came up with was so cool.

Anyway, I won the election and now I'm treasurer for the sophmore class. I'm doing a pretty good job. If I do say so myself but I have to admit that I never could of been elected on my own. I should of asked for help with my first campaign. I have no idea why I tried to do it all on my own. I'm really glad I have such a nice older sister. True, she's a bit bossy, but she is also talented and has great ideas. I never could of thought of all the ideas she came up with during my campaign.

**Personal Narrative Essay****Score of 4**

Overconfidence can lead to failure. There's no shame in accepting help from others. Those are two lessons I learned when I ran for class treasurer—twice.

The first time I jumped into the election process was in my freshman year. I knew I was well qualified to be class treasurer. After all, didn't I always get good grades in math? Hadn't I already had the job of treasurer for my youth group at the community center? Anyone could see that I was a shoo-in for the job. I tacked up a few posters in the hallways at school and told a few friends that I was running for the office. There really wasn't any need to do more, I thought, except write a speech for the school assembly. So I wrote my speech and delivered it. I thought it was good, and my friends said it was good. But I lost the election—by a landslide.

By the time my sophomore year rolled around, I had already decided that I was through with elections. Why go through that humiliation again? True, I was still well qualified to be class treasurer, and I wouldn't have minded having the job. But there was no way I would subject myself to another embarrassing defeat. My older sister had other ideas, however.

"I signed you up to run for class treasurer," Gabriela told me the evening before the sign-up deadline.

"Why did you do that?" I asked.

"Because I know you want the job," she said. "You can't just give up because you lost the first time around."

Then Gabriela told me that she would be my campaign manager. I didn't like the fact that she was so bossy. I had to admit, though, that she would make a good campaign manager. Gabriela is artistic and outgoing; I'm quiet and sometimes a bit shy. Maybe I needed someone like her. And I did want to be class treasurer, after all. I just didn't want to get buried in a landslide again.

Before long, Gabriela was sitting at the computer, designing a campaign flyer for me. Then she got really ambitious and decided to design a campaign button. She remembered

**Personal Narrative Essay (continued)****Score of 4**

that Dad had given her a whole boxful of buttons that were left over from a convention. She said we could print out the design, cut it out, and attach it to the buttons. Presto! My own campaign buttons.

The next day at lunch we handed out the campaign buttons and the flyers. The buttons were a big hit! In fact, they were so popular that people were asking us to make more of them. Luckily, Dad found more old buttons, and we made some more and handed them out. Did I mention that I also helped Gabriela make some campaign posters? We hung these all around the school.

I won the election. I know I couldn't have done it without Gabriela's help—I'm really grateful to her. I learned that there is nothing wrong with accepting help, and I also learned not to be overconfident.

**Personal Narrative Essay****Score of 6**

Serving as a class officer is a one-person task; however, getting elected takes some help. I learned that lesson over the course of two election campaigns—the first one was disastrous, but the second was much more successful.

At the beginning of freshman year, I decided to run for class treasurer. I knew I was qualified for the job: I had always gotten good grades in math, and I had served as treasurer for my youth group at the community center. Convinced that my qualifications would win the election for me, I didn't bother to ask anyone for help with my campaign. A couple of posters and a lot of smiles ought to do the trick, I thought. Although my friends said I had delivered a good campaign speech in the school assembly, my opponent won the election in a landslide.

In September of this year, when other sophomores were signing up to run in the class election, I stayed as far away from the whole process as I could. No more election campaigns for me, I had decided. One landslide was enough—I didn't need any more humiliation. Besides, I was too busy with my classes and other activities.

The night before the sign-up deadline, my older sister, Gabriela, came into my room.

"I didn't see your name on the tenth-grade slate," she said.

"No, you certainly did not," I responded.

"You're running, though," she announced cheerily.

"I am not. One humiliating defeat is enough."

"Yes, you are. I signed you up."

My sister and I argue a lot—can you see why? She's one of those people who like to take charge of a situation. She's also artistic, outgoing, and really upbeat; I'm quiet and sometimes a little shy, and I tend to get a bit nervous in situations that put me in the limelight. Maybe that's why I ran such a low-key campaign. I really did want to be class treasurer, however.

"What you need is a talented and dynamic campaign manager," said Gabriela. "I'm volunteering for the job. Let's get started. We've got work to do."

## Personal Narrative Essay (continued)

Score of 6

The next thing I knew, Gabriela was sitting at the computer, creating a snappy design for a campaign flyer. When she was finished with the flyer, she started to design a campaign button. Luckily, Dad had given her a whole box of buttons left over from a convention. Here was her plan: she would create the button design on the computer, and then print out the design on large adhesive labels. Finally, we'd cut out the designs and stick them onto the buttons. Just like that, I would have my own custom campaign buttons! It took a while, but eventually we finished all of the buttons.

At lunch the next day, we handed out the buttons, along with a big stack of campaign flyers. The buttons were a big hit, no doubt because Gabriela had come up with such a creative design: it was a coin that showed my face in profile. The words "Tina for Treasurer" were written around the edges of the coin design.

The buttons were so popular that our entire supply ran out the first day. Dad found some more old buttons and Gabriela and I "customized" them. Then I helped her make colorful campaign posters that we hung up around the school the following day. "Let's hang several posters near the main entrance," said Gabriela. "Then we can be sure that lots of students will see them."

The next job we tackled was my campaign speech. I wrote the speech, Gabriela edited it, and I practiced delivering it to my mom and dad. Both of them gave me a few suggestions for improving the speech. It must have been pretty good, because everyone clapped and cheered after I made the speech at the school assembly. A few people even shouted, "Bravo!"

You've probably guessed by now that I won the election. What did I learn from this experience? I learned that although we must take individual responsibility for reaching our goals, we sometimes need the help of others. I am working hard to be a great class treasurer. I know, however, that I could never have won the election without the help of my sister, who unselfishly devoted her time and her talents to helping me reach my goal.

## Scoring Explanation: Personal Narrative Essay

Refer to pages 47–48 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 addresses the prompt and attempts to explain the significance of the event and what she learned from it. However, the details are vague and undeveloped, and the writer does not stay focused on the topic at all times. The writer makes no attempt to enhance her narrative with elements such as dialogue or characterization. An appropriate sense of audience is lacking.

#### Conventions Rating: –

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	1	run-on sentences, sentence fragments
usage	1	<i>its/it's, of/have, adverb/adjective confusion, use of slang</i>
mechanics	3	
spelling	1	<i>embarassing, campain, begining, sophmore</i>

### Essay 2

#### Focused Holistic Score: 4

The writer tells a story and uses some concrete details to dramatize the event. However, the response lapses into flat narrative. There is not much of a sense of conflict, drama, or climax. Dialogue is flat and serves no function in highlighting character. Reflection seems superficial and clichéd.

#### Conventions Rating: +

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	2	run-on, choppy sentences, little variety
usage	3	
mechanics	2	comma errors
spelling	3	

## Essay 3

### Focused Holistic Score: 6

This response exhibits a strong command of narrative writing, especially reflecting an appropriate sense of audience and maintaining a distinctive voice. The writer has responded to all aspects of the prompt and has focused on the main point of the narrative. The characters come alive, with natural-sounding dialogue that helps to define them. The writer voices her thought processes. From the first sentence, the reader is drawn into the events, which progress clearly and logically.

### Conventions Rating: +

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	3	
usage	3	
mechanics	3	
spelling	3	

## Persuasive Essay: Prompt 1

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

Citing the relatively high accident rate for young drivers, some states have considered issuing restricted driver's licenses to youth offenders. Under the new law, a driver under the age of eighteen who is found guilty of any moving violation (for example, speeding or running a red light) would be issued a restricted driver's license. Such a license would allow the license holder to drive only when accompanied by an adult licensed driver. It would also prohibit the license holder from driving after sundown. These restrictions would remain in effect until the driver's eighteenth birthday.

Imagine that your state is considering this change in its driver's license laws. Write the body of a letter to one of your state legislators, expressing your support or your opposition to this law. Clearly state your position and use a series of clear, well-developed points to support your position. Make sure to anticipate and address the arguments of the opposing side.

**As you write your composition, remember to:**

- Clearly state your position.
- Include at least two main points that support your position.
- Use facts and valid reasons to support your main points.
- Address arguments that might be made against your position.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write coherent and well-developed paragraphs.
- 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 Composition

**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 thought; and effectively uses persuasive language to make its point. The writer employs a suitable and effective approach (e.g., 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 this 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. Although the writer has read and responded to the prompt, 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 emphasize unimportant ones. 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 them. Many responses exhibit minimal control but are undeveloped.

**SCORE POINT 0** This 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.

### **The Persuasive Composition: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria**

#### **Main Idea**

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

#### **Supporting Details**

The writer provides at least two main points that support his or her position and supplies 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.

**Student Evaluation Sheet** 

## 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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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?

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## Persuasive Essay

Score of 2

Dear Senator Edwards:

This bill about restricted driver's licenses is both unfair and makes no sense. How can a lot of drivers under 18 get any experience driving at night if this bill passes? Restricting someone's license after one moving violation is ridiculous. Just the other day my friend Marc was ticketed not yielding at an intersection because some guy behind him was honking his horn when Marc started to slow down and got a little rattled. If he stopped, he would of been rear-ended. If this law was in affect, Marc would of been punished for two years, and his Mom would have to leave work to drive him. That is way out of proportion. I think its prejudice against teenage drivers.

We are always told to amount to something. Now our state is taking away how we learn how to be good citizens—by joining outside activities.

How can kids play on a team or sing in chior or act in a play, not to mention working after school, if they can't drive after sun down? Actually, if they can't drive during the day unless a licensed adult driver is with them, they might as well not even have a license. They still have to depend on their parents or other peoples' parents. Why not just take away their licenses altogether? It comes out to about the same thing. We couldn't have night games.

Who says that drivers under 18 are dangerous? Depends on the individual. There are good young drivers and bad older drivers. One moving violation doesn't make you a bad driver. The same rules should to everyone. Come to think of it, a lot of old people admit they don't have good night vision. But nobody is giving them restricted licenses. My Grandfather is a good example. He has terrible night vision and always asks me to drive him at night.

This is a really bad law and I hope you will vote against it. If you don't, a lot of teenagers will be upset and so will their parents.

## Persuasive Essay

Score of 4

Dear Senator Edwards:

I am writing to ask your help in defeating a proposed bill that tries to punish young drivers. As you know, if Bill 3479 passes, any driver under the age of eighteen who is found guilty of committing a moving violation would receive a restricted license. The restrictions include driving only when accompanied by a licensed adult driver and not driving at all after sundown.

I am opposed to this law for two reasons. First, many of us work at part-time jobs after school, on weekends, and during school vacations. How are we supposed to get to and from work if we cannot drive by ourselves? In my community, many parents work long hours and are not available to chauffeur students to and from their jobs. Also, what is the point of making it impossible for students to drive after dark? Many of us work in the late afternoon and evening hours, when the sun has already gone down. This restriction on driving after dark is a problem, especially during the winter months. Are lawmakers concerned that we cannot see properly at night? I think most teenagers have better night vision than older people. My mom is the first to admit that she doesn't see well at night. Anyway, if this bill passes, it's likely that a lot of young people will have to quit their part-time jobs, which they need in order to save money for college and to help pay for their own clothes and other personal items. Why don't students just ride public transportation to their workplaces? As you know, many areas do not have public transportation. In places where it exists, many parents feel that it is not safe for students to travel alone, especially after dark.

Bill 3479 unfairly targets one age group with a punishment that is too harsh to fit the offense. The law applies only to drivers under the age of eighteen—don't drivers over the age of eighteen also commit moving violations? Is the public more at risk when someone who is seventeen runs a red light than when a driver who is thirty does the same thing? There are careful drivers in all age groups, as well as reckless and incompetent ones. Why



**Persuasive Essay (continued)**

**Score of 4**

pick on the youngest drivers? What evidence shows that they are more reckless than drivers in any other age group?

This state already has laws on the books that make it possible to restrict, suspend, or revoke the license of any driver who is reckless or incompetent, regardless of the age of the driver. My suggestion is to spend more time enforcing the laws that already exist. Let's not pass new laws that unfairly target one group of drivers.

Thank you for listening to my ideas about this bill. I hope you will consider my opinion when it is time to vote on Bill 3479. I sincerely hope you vote to defeat this bill. It's definitely the right thing to do. By the way, my parents agree with my position on this bill.

## Persuasive Essay

Score of 6

Dear Senator Edwards:

Safe roads are everyone's concern, and I doubt that anyone would oppose reasonable measures to enhance traffic safety. Thus, the motivation behind Bill 3479 is admirable: to keep young offending drivers off the roads after dark and to ensure that an adult driver accompanies them during daylight hours. However, as a young driver, I must urge you to vote against this bill for two reasons. First, the bill prejudicially targets one portion of the population for unusually harsh punishment. Second, the bill will make it difficult or even impossible for many students to hold part-time jobs and participate in extracurricular activities.

Bill 3479 proposes that a restricted license be issued to any driver under the age of eighteen who is found guilty of a single moving violation, such as running a stop sign or speeding. The holder of a restricted license would be allowed to drive only when accompanied by an adult licensed driver. Furthermore, the proposed bill states a young person with a restricted license cannot drive at all after sundown. This bill clearly discriminates against the youngest drivers; don't licensed drivers over the age of eighteen also commit moving violations? Yet no one is suggesting that they be issued restricted licenses. There is no evidence to indicate that speeding or running a red light presents a greater danger to public safety when the driver is under the age of eighteen. People can be safe drivers or reckless ones, regardless of their ages; they don't automatically become better drivers once they reach the age of eighteen. Therefore, the same rules should apply to drivers of all ages.

Besides the discriminatory nature of the bill, another factor to consider is the impact it will have on young people who depend on their driving privileges in order to work and participate in extracurricular activities. The majority of my classmates hold part-time jobs. Some of us work to save money for college; others work because our parents are struggling financially, and we want to ease some of the pressures our families are experiencing. Many parents are not available to drive students to and from work; thus,

**Persuasive Essay (continued)****Score of 6**

anyone with a restricted license cannot hold a job, unless he or she can walk to work, get a ride, or use public transportation. In situations in which these options do not exist, or are not considered safe, many students will be forced to quit their jobs. Similar problems arise when students are unable to drive to and from extracurricular activities, such as music lessons, sports team practices, and games. If Bill 3479 is passed, many students will have to abandon their extracurricular activities—simply because they have a single moving violation.

Some people will argue that special rules and restrictions should apply to younger drivers, since they lack the experience and judgment of older drivers. But how will younger drivers ever gain the experience and judgment they need if they aren't allowed to drive by themselves? If Mom or Dad is always in the car, playing the role of "back-seat driver," how will a young person ever learn to function independently out on the road? Laws already exist to restrict, suspend, or revoke the license of any driver who is truly reckless or a threat to public safety, regardless of his or her age. Let's enforce the laws that already exist in the state. Let's not start passing new laws that discriminate against drivers under the age of eighteen—such laws simply are not fair.

In closing, I would like to thank you for considering my viewpoint. We young drivers of this state hope that we can count on you to watch out for our interests, as well as those of all citizens. In return, we will act responsibly both on and off the roads.

## Scoring Explanation: Persuasive Essay

Refer to pages 58–59 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

Seriously underdeveloped, the composition reflects a poor command of persuasive writing. The writer has responded to the prompt, but the tone is somewhat angry and some of the arguments are irrational. The writer frequently digresses, weakening his or her argument. The paragraphs are haphazard, and although the writer addresses opponents' arguments, he or she makes no suggestions for a solution to the problem.

#### Conventions Rating: –

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	2	illogical construction, fragment, run-on, lack of parallel structure
usage	1	<i>would of, affect/effect, its/it's, was/were</i> (subjunctive)
mechanics	1	apostrophe, comma, and capitalization errors
spelling	1	<i>chior, sun down</i>

### Essay 2

#### Focused Holistic Score: 4

The letter is well organized and progresses logically. The writer states the issue and his or her position, then gives reasons and examples, although the examples are not always well developed. Paragraphs lack coherence, and the writer tends to digress at times. The writer tries to offer a solution, but it is simplistic. There are shifts in tone and lack of a consistent sense of audience.

#### Conventions Rating: +

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	3	
usage	3	
mechanics	3	
spelling	3	

## Essay 3

### Focused Holistic Score: 6

The writer demonstrates a strong command of persuasive writing. The essay is focused and remains so throughout. The writer clearly states an important thesis and supports it. The writer maintains a respectful tone throughout the letter, conscious of his or her audience. The language is strong and direct; the examples and details are relevant and meaningful. The essay contains clear transitions that highlight its logical progression, and the argument seems complete.

### Conventions Rating: +

Category	Score	Errors
sentence formation	3	
usage	3	
mechanics	3	
spelling	3	