

GLENCOE LANGUAGE ARTS

# **NORTH CAROLINA**

STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY

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

Grade  
**7**



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## ***INTRODUCTION TO WRITING PROMPTS, SCORING RUBRICS, AND SAMPLE RESPONSES***

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### **Overview of the North Carolina Writing Assessment (Grade 7)**

The North Carolina Writing Assessment is administered to all seventh-grade students. The assessment consists of one prompt that asks students to compose an expository clarification or point-of-view essay. The test is designed to measure core composition skills such as main idea, supporting details, organization, and coherence, as well as grammar and spelling conventions.

The Writing Assessment is administered statewide on a date specified by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Students will have 50 minutes to complete their essays. Total administration time of the exam is 65 minutes. Additional time may be allotted to students with special needs.

The writing prompt will ask students to clarify an opinion they have on a non-controversial topic, such as their favorite type of food, or it will ask students to take a position on a general social issue, such as whether or not students should wear uniforms to school. Besides containing the prompt itself, the assessment page reminds students what they need to do to receive a high score.

The seventh-grade assessment 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 four to one, with four 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 seventh-grade Writing Assessment. 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 in the seventh-grade test. There are four expository clarification, four expository point-of-view, one narrative, and two persuasive prompts. Although narrative and persuasive writing will not be tested on the seventh-grade assessment, they have been included here to allow students practice in these 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 Writing Assessment, it would be best to use one of the expository clarification or point-of-view prompts.

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

- **Thinking About the Writing Prompt** This activity gets students thinking about what direction their essays will take. Students are asked first to put the prompt into their own words. Then, after describing an initial reaction and thinking about the reminders listed on the prompt page, students brainstorm for ideas, details, and information that would support their responses.
- **Organizers for Expository/Persuasive and Expressive Writing** The two graphic organizers are to be used in conjunction with the Thinking About the Writing Prompt activity. The Organizer for Expository/Persuasive Writing is to be used with the expository clarification, expository point-of-view, 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 fifty minutes in-class work time.

### **Student Evaluation Sheets**

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

## Sample Responses and Rubrics

Two of the four expository clarification prompts and two of the four expository point-of-view prompts have sample responses. Both of the persuasive prompts have sample responses. The narrative prompt also has sample responses. The three sample responses for each prompt are all modeled after the same basic essay. However, each has modifications consistent with the holistic scoring scale to account for the difference in score. For instance, the first expository clarification prompt asks students to identify the foreign country they would most like to visit. All three sample responses suggest Scotland as the preferred destination, but the first essay has few details and frequently digresses. The second essay provides some support for the choice of Scotland, but it is not well organized. The third response is well written. The variety of responses allows students to discern the differences between the various score points.

Each prompt type also has a corresponding score scale or rubric. In other words there is one rubric for expository clarification prompts, one for expository point-of-view prompts, one for the narrative prompt, and one for persuasive prompts. There are three main parts to each rubric. The first part of the rubric is the Focused Holistic Score Scale. Here the four 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 grader of the papers, but students will find that reviewing the score scale will help them better understand what the intended audience is looking for. The second part of the rubric is the Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria. The scoring criteria contain the same components for all prompt types—main idea, supporting details, organization, and coherence—though they are slightly altered for each of the four modes. The last part of the rubric is the Conventions Rating. This is a simple (+) or (–) system designed to evaluate proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.

## 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.

## 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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# Writing Strategies

North Carolina

## 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. Others are written in paragraph form. All assign point values based on quality.

The rubrics used here are made up of two descriptive sections, the Score Scale and the Scoring Criteria. The Score Scale outlines the range of possible scores with descriptions of each. The Scoring Criteria 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.”* Use the four point description to make your checklist.

**Main Idea**

- The subject matter I chose is appropriate for the prompt.
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Supporting Details**

- The details I include are clearly related to the subject matter.
- I include enough details to support my main idea.
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Organization**

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

**Coherence**

- I establish relationships between ideas in my composition.
- I use transitional words and phrases, parallel structure, and other techniques to connect sentences and paragraphs.
- I use effective sentence structure and word choice.
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Expository Clarification Essay: Prompt 1

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

Think about the foreign country that you would most like to visit. Name the country and explain why you would like to go there.

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

- Name the country you would most like to visit.
- Give at least two reasons why you would like to visit this country.  
Explain your reasons.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write well-developed paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**You may use scratch paper to plan your essay. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.**

## Focused Holistic Score Scale: Expository Clarification Essay

**SCORE POINT 4** The response reflects a strong mastery of expository writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer clearly identifies the subject matter and focuses on it exclusively, providing relevant reasons to support his or her choice and elaborating on those reasons with details that are both appropriate and clearly articulated. The response follows a clear, logical organization with a beginning, middle, and end. The writer exhibits an appropriate sense of audience. All aspects of the prompt are addressed, and the essay is coherent and seems complete in all aspects.

**SCORE POINT 3** The response reflects a reasonable mastery of expository writing. There is competency in all four criteria. The response clearly identifies the subject matter, focuses on this topic, and gives reasons, details, and examples to support it. Some responses may include only a few clearly elaborated reasons; others may present more reasons with less elaboration. There may be some minor weaknesses in coherence. Some explanations may be unclear, or transitional links may be missing. However, the response is organized and coherent overall, demonstrating a clear, logical progression. The writing shows an acceptable sense of audience. All aspects of the prompt are addressed, and the essay seems complete, but minor weaknesses may appear.

**SCORE POINT 2** The response reflects a weak sense of expository writing. The response focuses on the subject matter but is deficient in some other major area. Some responses provide only one reason to support the main idea. (The minimum number required is two.) Others may provide two or more reasons, but offer little elaboration. The writer makes some effort to include supporting details; but those details are insufficient and not clearly related to the subject matter, requiring the reader to make inferences. The response has some organizational strategy, but the logical progression may be haphazard and occasionally difficult to follow. The writer may lack an appropriate sense of audience. Some aspects of the prompt may not be addressed.

**SCORE POINT 1** The response reflects a lack of understanding of expository writing. It demonstrates an effort to address the prompt but does not sustain consistent focus. The writer makes an effort to support ideas but without an overall sense of strategy or control. If the response offers reasons to support the main idea, they are inappropriate or unintelligible. Elaboration is unclear and off-topic. The writer lacks an appropriate sense of audience. Many essays lack any organizing principle or sense of direction. Others may demonstrate minimal control but are simply too undeveloped to receive a higher score.

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

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

#### **Main Idea**

The writer identifies the subject matter and consistently focuses on the main idea while responding to the prompt.

#### **Supporting Details**

The writer provides sufficient details to explain, develop, and support his or her argument or ideas fully. The writer also provides details that are related to the subject matter and address the inherent question, “*Why?*”

#### **Organization**

The writer establishes a sense of beginning, middle, and ending in the composition. The composition shows a logical development from beginning to end and seems complete.

#### **Coherence**

The writer establishes relationships between the ideas, causes, and/or statements in the composition. Sentences are logically connected. To achieve coherence the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.

### **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.



## Expository Clarification Essay

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

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

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

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

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4. Precise vocabulary and vivid word choice can make an essay more interesting to read. Identify at least three words in this essay that you think can be replaced with more vivid or accurate language. Use a thesaurus or dictionary to find synonyms for these words.

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**Expository Clarification Essay****Score of 1**

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

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

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

**Expository Clarification Essay**

Score of 2

There are several foreign countries I would like to visit, and they include China, Canada, Australia, Scotland, Jamaica, and Japan. The one I most want to see is Scotland. Second on the list close behind is Canada because it's not so far away. I would like to see Scotland because I have heard about some of the mysterious and interesting places there. My heritage is in Scotland.

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

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

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

**Expository Clarification Essay****Score of 4**

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

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

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

My grandmother also told the story of a haunted castle in Edinburgh. She said the castle belonged to Robert Bruce, a legendary warrior and later a king of Scotland. I would like to spend time wandering the castle and visiting other museums and shops in the capital city.

The highlight of my trip, however, would be a visit to the Edinburgh International Festival

**Expository Clarification Essay (continued)**

Score of 4

of the Arts. It is held every year in August and features music and traditional dances. I would like to hear the bagpipes play, and dance the Highland Fling during the festival.

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

## Scoring Explanation: Expository Clarification Essay

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

### Essay 1

**Focused Holistic Score: 1**

The writer responds to the prompt, but he or she provides little real support for the choice and frequently digresses. The essay lacks focus and is incomplete.

**Conventions Rating: –**

This essay is choppy and includes run-on sentences and errors in spelling, subject-verb agreement, and pronoun usage.

### Essay 2

**Focused Holistic Score: 2**

The writer addresses the prompt and includes many reasons to support his or her choice. However, the reasons are listed and lack elaboration. In addition, the organization is somewhat haphazard, and paragraphs lack coherence.

**Conventions Rating: –**

This essay contains sentence fragments and run-on sentences, spelling and punctuation errors, and errors in subject-verb agreement and pronoun use.

### Essay 3

**Focused Holistic Score: 4**

The writer responds to the prompt and stays focused on the main idea throughout the essay. The writer provides several reasons to support his or her choice, and these reasons are well elaborated and clear. Paragraphs are coherent, and the body paragraphs are parallel in structure. The response is well organized with a logical progression of ideas.

**Conventions Rating: +**

This essay contains no significant errors.

## Expository Clarification Essay: Prompt 2

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

Think about a person from history that you would most like to meet if you could. It can be any famous person who is no longer alive—a military leader or an artist, a hero or a villain. Identify this person and explain why you would like to meet her or him.

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

- Identify the person from history that you would like to meet.
- Give at least two reasons why you would like to meet this person.  
Explain your reasons.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write well-developed paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**You may use scratch paper to plan your essay. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.**

## Focused Holistic Score Scale: Expository Clarification Essay

**SCORE POINT 4** The response reflects a strong mastery of expository writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer clearly identifies the subject matter and focuses on it exclusively. The writer provides relevant reasons to support his or her choice and elaborates on those reasons with details that are both appropriate and clearly articulated. The response follows a clear, logical organization with a beginning, middle, and end. The writer exhibits an appropriate sense of audience. All aspects of the prompt are addressed, and the essay is coherent and seems complete in all aspects.

**SCORE POINT 3** The response reflects a reasonable mastery of expository writing. There is competency in all four criteria. The response clearly identifies the subject matter, focuses on this topic, and gives reasons, details, and examples to support it. Some responses may include only a few clearly elaborated reasons; others may present more reasons with less elaboration. There may be some minor weaknesses in coherence. Some explanations may be unclear, or transitional links may be missing. However, the response is organized and coherent overall, demonstrating a clear, logical progression. The writing shows an acceptable sense of audience. All aspects of the prompt are addressed, and the essay seems complete, but minor weaknesses may appear.

**SCORE POINT 2** The response reflects a weak mastery of expository writing. The response focuses on the subject matter but is deficient in some other major area. Some responses provide only one reason to support the main idea. (The minimum number required is two.) Others may provide two or more reasons, but offer little elaboration. The writer makes some effort to include supporting details; but those details are insufficient and not clearly related to the subject matter, requiring the reader to make inferences. The response has some organizational strategy, but the logical progression may be haphazard and occasionally difficult to follow. The writer may lack an appropriate sense of audience. Some aspects of the prompt may not be addressed.

**SCORE POINT 1** The response reflects a lack of understanding of expository writing. It demonstrates an effort to address the prompt but does not sustain consistent focus. The writer makes an effort to support ideas but without an overall sense of strategy or control. If the response offers reasons to support the main idea, they are inappropriate or unintelligible. Elaboration is unclear and off-topic. The writer lacks an appropriate sense of audience. Many essays lack any organizing principle or sense of direction. Others may demonstrate minimal control but are simply too undeveloped to receive a higher score.

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

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

#### **Main Idea**

The writer identifies the subject matter and consistently focuses on the main idea while responding to the prompt.

#### **Supporting Details**

The writer provides sufficient details to explain, develop, and support his or her argument or ideas fully. The writer also provides details that are related to the subject matter and address the inherent question, “*Why?*”

#### **Organization**

The writer establishes a sense of beginning, middle, and ending in the composition. The composition shows a logical development from beginning to end and seems complete.

#### **Coherence**

The writer establishes relationships between the ideas, causes, and/or statements in the composition. Sentences are logically connected. To achieve coherence the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.

### **Conventions Rating**

- + The composition provides evidence that the writer has a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.
- The composition provides evidence that the writer does not have a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.



**Expository Clarification Essay**

Score of 1

I first heard about Martha Graham from a TV show my dad was watching. It had singers, actors, artists, and dancers. Martha Graham was a famous dancer and choreographed many dances. Controversial too. Some people didn't like the way she made dances different. From so called normal ballet.

She was ahead of her time doing things differently. Some people called crazy in one time are later called genius. If I could meet anybody I would meet a great person like Martha Graham. Popular dance is different today and I could ask Martha Graham about it.

Dancing is harder than most adults think, and there's no way that kids can become great dancers unless there are programs in school to help kids become a professional dancer. Dad says no lessons for me til I'm sixteen. I think arts education is just as important as math. If I can't be a dancer I might be an artist. I see great artists on TV and I think about my goals. Martha Graham inspired many other famous dancers and I might want to be a famous dancer. That is why I would want to meet Martha Graham. One of the trates of a great dancer is they inspire other dancers.

**Expository Clarification Essay**

Score of 2

I would like to meet Martha Graham. She was a dancer, choreographer, teacher, and one of the founders of modern dance. I want to be a professional dancer someday. I could learn from her.

I would talk about the challenges she faced about becoming a dancer. She overcame obstacles. Her father did not want her to become a dancer, so she was not able to take dance lessons until she was a teenager. My dad doesn't want me to take dance lessons until I am sixteen, even though my sister got to take tap when she was thirteen. But that's not a good reason to wait. I'll never reach my dreams unless I get support. It's not fair to change the rules just because I am the youngest. I would ask Martha Graham about how she faced her challenges.

Many books in our library have photos and essays about Martha Graham. Some of her dances were based on the stories we studied when we did a unit on mythology.

It would be fun to get a dance lesson from Martha Graham. If I got a lesson from her I would listen carefully. Martha Graham could coach me and tell me what to do to join a famous dance company. I like classical ballet, but I like modern dance much better. My dream is to be the next Martha Graham of modern dance.

**Expository Clarification Essay**

Score of 4

If I could meet anyone from history, I would choose to meet Martha Graham. She was a dancer, choreographer, teacher, and one of the founders of modern dance. She was brilliant and unconventional. I want to be a professional dancer someday, and I believe I could learn many things from her.

I would first ask Ms. Graham how she got her ideas for modern dance. Before her, dance performances on stage were almost always classical ballet. Graham changed dance as an art form by developing new techniques that showed feelings and emotions in new ways. She got her inspiration from famous women and mythology. Her style included much more floor work and different types of costumes and sets. I would want to know her opinions of today's popular dance trends, such as the jazz tapping of Savion Glover or the sounds and movements of the dancers in Stomp.

I would ask Ms. Graham what motivated her. Dancing is very hard work, and self-discipline and motivation are the keys to being successful. Sometimes it's difficult for a dancer to stay disciplined enough to work hard and practice every day. It can be easy to become frustrated, discouraged, or even just busy with other things, but it's important not to give up. Ms. Graham had a very long career, and I would like to know how she stayed motivated.

I would then talk to her about the challenges she faced in

**Expository Clarification Essay (continued)**

Score of 4

becoming a dancer and how she overcame them. Her father did not want her to be a dancer, so she was not able to take dance lessons until she was a teenager. That is very late in the life of a professional dancer. Ms. Graham also had a different type of body from other dancers. She was a short person at a time when most ballet dancers had long, graceful limbs. Everyone, including myself, faces challenges, and sometimes it is helpful to hear about how other people handle their problems.

Most of all, however, I would like to meet Ms. Graham and dance for her. I would listen to her instructions and her advice. I would ask what it takes to join a dance company like hers, and how I can turn my dream into reality. I can think of no better way to get started on my own career than by learning from the best in modern dance, and that, for me, is Martha Graham.

## Scoring Explanation: Expository Clarification Essay

Refer to pages 17–18 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and the Conventions Rating. These scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

### Essay 1

**Focused Holistic Score: 1**

The writer responds to the prompt but does not directly state the main point, or thesis. Although many of the details support the main idea, those details are not elaborated. In addition, the response lacks structure and organization and frequently digresses to other topics.

**Conventions Rating: –**

This essay contains run-on sentences, fragments, and several errors in spelling and punctuation.

### Essay 2

**Focused Holistic Score: 2**

The writer focuses on a topic and attempts to address the prompt. The writer supplies sufficient reasons for his or her choice and elaborates those reasons somewhat. However, the organization is weak, and the response is difficult to follow at times.

**Conventions Rating: +**

This essay contains minor errors in spelling and punctuation.

### Essay 3

**Focused Holistic Score: 4**

The writer provides a strong thesis statement that addresses the prompt and provides clear reasons. The response is well organized. Each reason is amply elaborated with relevant and appropriate details and examples, and the essay shows an appropriate sense of audience.

**Conventions Rating: +**

This essay contains no significant errors.

## Expository Clarification Essay: Prompt 3

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

Think about your favorite character from a book, movie, or TV show. Name the character and explain why he or she is your favorite.

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

- Name your favorite character from a book, movie, or TV show.
- Give at least two reasons why this is your favorite character. Explain your reasons.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write well-developed paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**You may use scratch paper to plan your essay. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.**

## Expository Clarification Essay: Prompt 4

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

There are three main meals in a day—breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Choose the meal of the day that you like best and explain why it is your favorite.

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

- Name your favorite meal of the day.
- Give at least two reasons why this is your favorite meal. Explain your reasons.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write well-developed paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**You may use scratch paper to plan your essay. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.**

## Expository Point-of-View Essay: Prompt 1

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

Take a position on whether your school should require all students to participate in a monthly cleanup of the school grounds. State your position and explain why you think students should or should not be required to participate in a monthly cleanup.

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

- Clearly state your position.
- Include at least two points that support your position.
- Use examples and specific details to support each point.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write well-developed paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**You may use scratch paper to plan your essay. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.**



## Focused Holistic Score Scale: Expository Point-of-View Essay

**SCORE POINT 4** The response reflects a strong mastery of expository writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer clearly states a position, provides reasons to support this position, and supports these reasons with details that are both appropriate and clearly articulated. The overall argument is thoughtful and convincing. The response follows a clear, logical progression with a beginning, middle, and end. The writer shows an appropriate sense of audience. All aspects of the prompt are addressed, and the essay seems complete in all aspects.

**SCORE POINT 3** The response reflects a reasonable mastery of expository writing. There is competency in all four criteria. The writer clearly states a position, focuses on this position, and gives reasons, details, and examples to support it. Some responses may present a few clearly elaborated reasons; others contain more reasons but with less elaboration. There may be minor weaknesses in coherence. The writer may not explain some reasons sufficiently, and a few transitional links may be missing. However, the response is organized and coherent overall, demonstrating a clear, logical progression. The writing shows an acceptable sense of audience. All aspects of the prompt are addressed, and the essay seems complete, but minor weaknesses may appear.

**SCORE POINT 2** The response reflects a weak mastery of expository writing. The writer has focused on a position, but is deficient in some other major area. Some responses provide only one reason to support a position. (The minimum number required is two.) Others may provide reasons that are unclear, inadequately developed, or tangential to the argument. The response clearly has some kind of organizational strategy, but the logical progression may be haphazard and occasionally difficult to follow. The writer may lack an appropriate sense of audience. Some aspects of the prompt may be missing, or the essay may seem incomplete.

**SCORE POINT 1** The response reflects a lack of understanding of expository writing. The response demonstrates an effort to address the prompt; however, the response does not sustain focus. The writer may have made an effort to support his or her points, but there is little or no sense of strategy or control. Reasons offered by the writer may not satisfactorily support the main idea, and support for reasons is weak or nonexistent. Many responses might lack any organizing principle or sense of direction. Others may demonstrate minimal control but are extremely sparse.

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

### **Expository Point-of-View Essay: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria**

#### **Main Idea**

The writer clearly states the issue and his or her position on the topic. If the reader is confused about the subject matter, the writer has not effectively related a main idea.

#### **Supporting Details**

The writer provides sufficient details to explain, develop, and support his or her position fully. The writer also provides details that are related to the subject matter and address the inherent question, “*Why?*”

#### **Organization**

The writer establishes a sense of beginning, middle, and ending in the composition. The composition shows a logical development from beginning to end and seems complete.

#### **Coherence**

The writer establishes relationships between the ideas, reasons, and/or statements in the composition. Sentences are logically connected. To achieve coherence the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.

### **Conventions Rating**

- + The composition provides evidence that the writer has a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.
- The composition provides evidence that the writer does not have a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.

## Expository Point-of-View Essay

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

1. The **thesis statement** of an essay is a statement of the main idea. In a point of view essay, the thesis statement states the writer's point of view on a given topic. Identify the thesis statement in this essay. Is it clearly stated? Explain.

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2. Does *each* paragraph directly relate to the main idea of the essay? If so, explain your answer. If not, identify one or two places where the writer seems to digress (move away from the main point) and offer suggestions for how this essay could be improved.

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3. A point-of-view essay should explain the writer's position on a subject. However, in some cases a writer might use strong language to try to convince readers to agree with his or her point of view. Identify words in this essay that emphasize the writer's conviction or strength of feeling. If you think the language is too strong, suggest one or two places where the writer could state his/her point of view in a more straightforward manner.

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4. The conclusion of an essay should restate the writer's thesis and sum up the main points in the essay. Does the conclusion in this essay do that? If yes, explain why. If not, identify one way the writer could make the conclusion of this essay clearer or more interesting.

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**Expository Point-of-View Essay**

Score of 1

*I think all students should participate in a monthly cleanup. It's a great idea better then the stupid suggestion about no more than two field trips in a year. Kids wouldn't mind it would make everybody feel good. Cleaner schools are what we want, not less field trips.*

*All the kids use the school building and the grounds so they should help keep it clean. We have rules, if my brother doesn't do his chores he doesn't get to watch TV. Most kids are not like my brother and they would be willing to do something.*

*Trash on the ground can be a danger attracting insects of all kinds. It is easier to pick up trash then hiring a pestaside company to kill all the bugs. So it saves money. This school needs more money and they shouldn't be wasting the money they do have anyway.*

*Canceling an after school activity to have a cleanup is not right. Extracurricular activities are important to education. A scedule must be made for the cleanup so we don't have conflicts with sports and clubs.*

## Expository Point-of-View Essay

Score of 2

*I think that all students should participate in a monthly cleanup. It would make things better for everyone.*

*Students have to clean up their rooms at home, so they should have to clean up their school. Nobody likes to see trash. Our society is becoming a bunch of litter bugs. You see trash everywhere. Cans, bottles, people even throw out furniture sometimes. It's not right to pollute. People who make messes should clean them up. There's public trash cans on our streets they don't get used because lazy people would rather throw a fast food bag on the ground than take a few extra steps to throw it away properly. This is a problem at our school and we need it cleaner.*

*School safety is another reason. The school grounds should be safe at all times. No student should ever get hurt at school unless it is an accident playing sports, that's the only way something like a broken ankle should happen at a school. Also, insects attracted to trash can spread disease and pesticides used to kill them can also make people sick. Janitors work hard all day picking up after students. They wouldn't have to work so hard if students could learn to litter less. More trash cans in the school would help the problem. Students will feel better and learn more at a cleaner school. We all want better grades and trash can be a safety hazard at a school.*

*It's just not right to have trash everywhere and we should do something about it this is our school. Show some pride. Why should janitors do all the work. Students need to take responsibility and help cleanup the school because we spend a lot of time here.*

**Expository Point-of-View Essay**

Score of 4

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

Students could volunteer to work one Saturday morning a month. They would pick up litter on the playground and parking lot and in the hallways. This would make the school look better than it does today. Students would be less likely to throw paper on the ground or leave trash in the halls, knowing that they would eventually have to clean them. That would make the job of cleaning the school easier. When many people work together, the job is done faster.

There is another benefit to keeping the grounds cleaner. The building and the grounds would be safer. Broken bottles, discarded soda cans, food wrappers, and old newspapers pollute the playground and parking lot. This trash is not only hazardous, but it attracts pests, such as insects and rodents, that can spread disease. If students picked up the litter frequently, the school would not need to hire exterminators or use pesticides to get rid of unwanted animals.

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

**Expository Point-of-View Essay (continued)**

Score of 4

*other things that can be done with those resources.*

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

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

## Scoring Explanation: Expository Point-of-View Essay

Refer to pages 27–28 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and the Conventions Rating. The following scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

### Essay 1

**Focused Holistic Score: 1**

The writer attempts to address the prompt and takes a position, but the essay is unfocused and the argument does not flow logically. The reasons given in support of the position are poorly organized and elaborated, with multiple digressions.

**Conventions Rating: –**

This essay contains errors in sentence structure, spelling, usage, and punctuation.

### Essay 2

**Focused Holistic Score: 2**

The writer addresses the prompt and clearly states his or her position. The essay contains some organizational structure. The response provides reasons to support the position, but those reasons are not always focused or well developed, and the writer tends to digress in several paragraphs.

**Conventions Rating: –**

This essay contains errors in sentence structure, subject-verb agreement, pronoun use, and spelling.

### Essay 3

**Focused Holistic Score: 4**

The writer clearly states a position for a monthly cleanup and has a strategy to support that position (“make the school more attractive, decrease costs, and increase school spirit”). Each point is fully developed and supported. The overall argument is thoughtful and convincing. The response is thought provoking, articulate, and complete.

**Conventions Rating: +**

This essay contains no significant errors.



## Expository Point-of-View Essay: Prompt 2

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

Take a position on whether or not adults should limit the amount of time that children spend on the Internet. State your position and explain why you think parents or guardians should or should not limit the amount of time that children spend on the Internet.

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

- Clearly state your position.
- Include at least two points that support your position.
- Use examples and specific details to support each point.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write well-developed paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

**You may use scratch paper to plan your essay. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.**

## Focused Holistic Score Scale: Expository Point-of-View Essay

**SCORE POINT 4** The response reflects a strong mastery of expository writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer clearly states a position, provides reasons to support this position, and supports these reasons with details that are appropriate and clearly articulated. The overall argument is thoughtful and convincing. The response follows a clear, logical progression with a beginning, middle, and end. The writer shows an appropriate sense of audience. All aspects of the prompt are addressed, and the essay seems complete in all aspects.

**SCORE POINT 3** The response reflects a reasonable mastery of expository writing. There is competency in all four criteria. The writer clearly states a position, focuses on this position, and gives reasons, details, and examples to support it. Some responses may present a few clearly elaborated reasons; others contain more reasons but with less elaboration. There may be minor weaknesses in coherence. The writer may not explain some reasons sufficiently, and a few transitional links may be missing. However, the response is organized and coherent overall, demonstrating a clear, logical progression. The writing shows an acceptable sense of audience. All aspects of the prompt are addressed, and the essay seems complete, but minor weaknesses may appear.

**SCORE POINT 2** The response reflects a weak mastery of expository writing. The writer has focused on a position, but is deficient in some other major area. Some responses provide only one reason to support a position. (The minimum number required is two.) Others may provide reasons that are unclear, inadequately developed, or tangential to the argument. The response clearly has some kind of organizational strategy, but the logical progression may be haphazard and occasionally difficult to follow. The writer may lack an appropriate sense of audience. Some aspects of the prompt may be missing, or the essay may seem incomplete.

**SCORE POINT 1** The response reflects a lack of understanding of expository writing. The response demonstrates an effort to address the prompt; however, the response does not sustain focus. The writer may have made an effort to support his or her points, but there is little or no sense of strategy or control. Reasons offered by the writer may not satisfactorily support the main idea, and support for reasons is weak or nonexistent. Many responses might lack any organizing principle or sense of direction. Others may demonstrate minimal control but are extremely sparse.

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

### **Expository Point-of-View Essay: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria**

#### **Main Idea**

The writer clearly states the issue and his or her position on the topic. If the reader is confused about the subject matter, the writer has not effectively related the main idea.

#### **Supporting Details**

The writer provides sufficient details to explain, develop, and support his or her position fully. The writer also provides details that are related to the subject matter and address the inherent question, “*Why?*”

#### **Organization**

The writer establishes a sense of beginning, middle, and ending in the composition. The composition shows a logical development from beginning to end and seems complete.

#### **Coherence**

The writer establishes relationships between the ideas, reasons, and/or statements in the composition. Sentences are logically connected. To achieve coherence the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.

### **Conventions Rating**

- + The composition provides evidence that the writer has a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.
- The composition provides evidence that the writer does not have a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.

**Expository Point-of-View Essay**

Score of 1

My Mom lets me have only two hours on the computer each day, and I guess that's a good idea but it isn't always easy. If I could stay up as late as I wanted then two hours would be okay but if I get home from school at 5:00 after soccer practice and then we have dinner at 6:00 and then there's homework and I have to be in bed by 10:00 then it's hard to have those two hours.

The computer at home isn't nearly as fast as the ones at school so two hours is not a lot of time to get things like homework done. Mom says I spend too much time on the internet and she says if she didn't limit my time then I'd be on it all night and never get any exercise or sleep.

My Brother and my Mom use the computer too and sometimes we get in arguments about whose turn it is. Especially Derek and me. He could play videogames for days without stopping. He's getting pretty good at that new car racing game.

So I can see why kids should only have a certain amount of time on the computer if we want to get enough exercise and sleep and get our homework done.

**Expository Point-of-View Essay**

Score of 2

There should be a limit to the amount of time children spend on the Internet. Children should have a well-balanced life.

If children spend too much time on the Internet you might forget to do your homework. Unless they're using the Internet for a homework assignment. That's different. The Internet can be a great tool to help with research papers or if you need to find a photograph you can use a "search engine." I needed to find a photo of our state capitol building and it was easy with the Internet. I used the photo on the cover sheet of my report.

If someone uses the Internet too much you might end up arguing with your family over computer time, you could also get a hand cramp, you might not get enough sleep, your eyes may hurt if there's not enough light, and you will not get enough exercise. Sitting in one spot in front of a computer screen is just as bad as watching TV.

Priorities are important in life. Using the Internet for videogames is okay after homework is done. Some videogames are educational. Too much of a good thing is bad. Like anything else in life using the Internet responsibly is the best way to use it.

Parents and children should discuss issues. Sometimes my older brother Derrick or my mom want to use the Internet at the same time I do. We have school and she has work. We can work it out. If nobody uses it for too long then its fair to everybody in the family. So the limits on time on using the Internet can help the family get along better.

**Expository Point-of-View Essay****Score of 4**

The Internet has become an important source for education and entertainment, and it's easy to lose track of time while "surfing the Web," either for a homework assignment or for fun. That is one of many reasons why adults should limit the amount of time that children spend on the Web. While using the Internet is fun and convenient, it can also become unhealthy if it is used too much.

Children need to have a well-balanced life that includes family and friends. Relationships with family and friends can suffer if a person spends all day and night staring at a computer screen. Someone who spends too much time on the Internet may not spend enough time talking to family members. This lack of family communication can cause tension and arguments. Another source of tension can come when other family members want to use the computer. In my household my mother, my older brother, and I all share one computer. If one of us spends several hours online, the others can't get their work done. Limiting the amount of time that one person can be on the computer lets everyone have a chance and helps prevent family arguments. By sharing we show respect for each other's needs.

Another reason for such limits is that children need plenty of physical activity. Regular exercise helps children grow taller and stronger. Activities such as jogging, swimming, and playing soccer can make for healthy lungs and a strong heart. While using the Internet can increase "brain power," it does little to increase physical health. The key to having a well-balanced life is to find the proper mix of exercise and quiet study time. Both are important, but neither one should be done too much. A person who spends too much time in "cyberspace" may have a weak, unhealthy body because of too little exercise.

Finally, spending too much time on the Internet can lead to bad study habits. For example, it's tempting to play a video game, send messages back and forth to friends who are also online, or read about your favorite soccer player on the Web instead of doing homework. Limiting the amount of time spent on the Web can help students to keep priorities in order.

**Expository Point-of-View Essay (continued)**

Score of 4

Some children may not think it's fair, but setting limits on the amount of Internet time is really for their own good. Even when someone thinks he or she will only be online for a few minutes, time can slip away as the person gets wrapped up in a project, clicking from site to site. Having a parent say, "Time's up!" may be a disappointment, but it also keeps a child from spending too much time in front of a computer screen. Just think about the difference between a soccer game on the Internet and actually playing a soccer game. There's no comparison!

The Internet is a great tool, but if it used too much, a person might turn into an anti-social, lazy student with bad grades and poor study habits. If the Internet is used the right amount, it can help people accomplish many things.

## Scoring Explanation: Expository Point-of-View Essay

Refer to pages 36–37 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and the Conventions Rating. The following scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

### Essay 1

**Focused Holistic Score: 1**

The writer has apparently read and attempted to respond to the prompt, but the essay is unfocused with almost no elaboration for the main points. Organization is weak, the essay lacks coherence, and the argument is confusing, requiring readers to infer much of the meaning.

**Conventions Rating: –**

The essay contains errors in sentence formation, usage, and mechanics.

### Essay 2

**Focused Holistic Score: 2**

The writer addresses the prompt, and provides reasons to support his or her point of view, but the response lacks coherence, the organization is weak, and the writer digresses from the topic. One paragraph simply lists reasons without sufficient elaboration.

**Conventions Rating: –**

The essay shows errors in punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and pronoun use.

### Essay 3

**Focused Holistic Score: 4**

The writer responds to the prompt, stating a position and focusing on explaining and supporting that position throughout the essay. Main points are well elaborated, an appropriate sense of audience exists, and the essay is complete.

**Conventions Rating: +**

There are no significant errors in the essay.



## Expository Point-of-View Essay: Prompt 3

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

Take a position on whether your school should place more emphasis on safety. State your position and explain why you think your school should or should not place more emphasis on safety.

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

- Clearly state your position.
- Include at least two points that support your position.
- Use examples and specific details to support each point.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write well-developed paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**You may use scratch paper to plan your essay. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.**

## Expository Point-of-View Essay: Prompt 4

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

Currently, teenagers in North Carolina must be at least 15 years old to obtain a learner's permit. This permit allows them to drive with adult supervision. Take a position on whether or not the age for obtaining a learner's permit should be lowered to thirteen. State your position and explain why you think the age for getting a permit should or should not be lowered to thirteen.

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

- Clearly state your position.
- Include at least two points that support your position.
- Use examples and details to support each point.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write well-developed paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**You may use scratch paper to plan your essay. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.**

## Personal Narrative Essay: Prompt 1

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

Think about a time when you were embarrassed. Tell the story of your embarrassing moment.

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

- Include the time and place of the story.
- Tell a story that has a beginning, middle, and end.
- Use strategies to maintain the reader's interest, such as dialogue or description.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write well-developed paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**You may use scratch paper to plan your essay. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.**

## Focused Holistic Score Scale: Narrative Essay

**SCORE POINT 4** The response reflects a strong mastery of narrative writing. There is skill in all four criteria. The writer has chosen a subject appropriate to the prompt, addresses all aspects of the prompt, and focuses on the subject throughout the narrative. The writer's organization progresses logically from beginning to end, so that the reader easily grasps the chronology of events. The story seems complete. The writer supplies appropriate details, such as descriptions of characters and settings, that contribute to the story and employs literary devices such as dialogue and suspense to maintain the reader's interest. The composition is coherent, vivid, and engaging.

**SCORE POINT 3** The response reflects a reasonable mastery of narrative writing. The writer focuses on a subject appropriate to the prompt, with perhaps slight digression, and touches on all aspects of the prompt. The story has a clear beginning, middle, and end. It flows with only minor breaks in progression. The writer has attempted to make the composition interesting through the use of descriptive detail, dialogue, and/or suspense. Although some minor weaknesses are present, the response is thorough, coherent, and complete.

**SCORE POINT 2** The response reflects a weak mastery of narrative writing. The subject responds to the prompt, but the writer may not focus on the subject throughout the narrative. The writer attempts to tell a story with a beginning, middle, and end. There may be some ambiguity involving the setting, sequence of events, or characters. Some responses may make a cursory attempt to engage the reader's interest, but much of the story is told in a flat, factual way, with little attempt at dramatization. Other responses might be creative but confusing, with missing transitions and other flaws in coherence. The narrative may seem incomplete.

**SCORE POINT 1** The response reflects a lack of understanding of narrative writing. It demonstrates an effort to address the prompt. However, the response may be sparse, digressive, or confusing. The writer may attempt to tell a story, but critical information is missing. Some responses may not clearly introduce characters or situations; others may begin to tell a story but fail to finish it. The writer employs literary devices sparingly, in a way that is ineffective or confusing. Many responses exhibit a minimal sense of organization but are simply too sparse to warrant a higher score.

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

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

#### **Main Idea**

The writer identifies the subject of the narrative and consistently focuses on the main idea while responding to the prompt.

#### **Supporting Details**

The writer provides sufficient details to explain, develop, and support the events in the narrative. The writer also provides details that enhance the story, such as details about characters and setting.

#### **Organization**

The writer establishes a sense of beginning, middle, and ending in the composition. The composition shows a logical development from beginning to end and seems complete.

#### **Coherence**

The writer establishes relationships between the events in the narrative. Sentences are logically connected. To achieve coherence the writer may use transitions, connectives, parallel structure, repetition, pronouns, and synonyms.

### **Conventions Rating**

- + The composition provides evidence that the writer has a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.
- The composition provides evidence that the writer does not have a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.

# Student Evaluation Sheet

North Carolina

## Personal Narrative Essay

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

1. Does this essay tell a story with a beginning, middle, and end? Did you finish reading this story feeling satisfied? If so, explain why. If not, identify points in the narrative where you wish the writer had supplied more information.

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2. Has the writer used narrative strategies such as description and dialogue to make the story interesting? If so, identify points where the writer used such strategies effectively. If not, explain how you feel the writer could revise the story to make it more dramatic.

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3. Were there any places in the essay where you became confused or uninterested? Identify a specific place where you lost interest or you had an unanswered question.

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4. Reread the final paragraph of this essay. How successful do you think it is as an ending? If you feel it is successful, explain why. If you feel it is unsatisfying in some way, also explain why.

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**Personal Narrative Essay****Score of 1**

The most embarrassing thing that ever happened to me was when I was in my sister Debbie's wedding.

The company sent the wrong size of dress for me to wear. I had told her my size but it was wrong. Debbie said "it will be okay" I didn't believe her. We had to stay up late soing to fix the dress.

At the wedding the stitches started coming out and the sleeve came loose. I tried to hold my arm in a way that hid it. I put on another dress later.

Some companies aren't very good at getting stuff right. That's a company that we won't be buying from again. Going right to the store is maybe a better way so they get the size right.

**Personal Narrative Essay****Score of 2**

My sister Debbie lives three hundred miles away so I don't get to see her as often as I would like. I was excited when she asked me to be in her wedding. I wanted to help Debbie any way I could. The most embarrassing moment of my life happened at her wedding.

Debbie ordered my dress for me, and she said it would arrive in plenty of time to be altered for the wedding.

The week of Debbie's wedding, the dress still had not arrived. The night before we left for Debbie's, my mom and I decided to pack one of my dresses, just in case. When we got to Debbie's house, she said that my dress had arrived that afternoon. It was too big. The company got the size wrong. Mom had to stitch it up to fit me. We stayed up late fixing it. Mom is pretty good at sewing. She usually makes my Halloween costume from scratch. This year I was a space alien.

At the wedding, when I was walking down the aisle, the dress started to become unstitched. I had never been a bridesmaid before and the dress was coming apart and everyone was looking at me. I felt so embarrassed.

After the wedding I changed into the other dress and the wedding was a happy occasion. Nobody seemed to notice.



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

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

Debbie ordered my dress because I live so far away. I was a little nervous about not trying it on, but we told Debbie my dress size. Debbie called me after she ordered it and assured me that it was beautiful. She spoke with a representative from the company and was told that my dress would arrive in plenty of time for any necessary alterations. Everything seemed to be arranged.

Months went by and the dress had not arrived. The other bridesmaids had their dresses, and their alterations were done. I started to worry. Two weeks before the wedding, Mom called the company from which Debbie ordered the dress. Yes, they had the order. Yes, they had the right size. Yes, the dress would arrive in plenty of time. I was still worried.

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

It was huge. I'm twelve years old and the tallest girl in my class, but this dress was clearly made for an adult. I handed the dress to my mom. I couldn't speak. She looked at the tag and said, "Well, that explains it. It's a size 12. The company confused your age and your dress size."

"The wedding is tomorrow. What are we going to do now?" I asked with a sob. Tears were streaming down my cheeks.

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

"I guess we'll have to alter it ourselves," Mom said.

That night, the three of us worked until midnight to fix the dress. We tucked and stitched until it was the right size. We went to sleep exhausted but satisfied with our work.

The next day no one had time to think about my dress. I didn't even think about it because I was busy helping Debbie get dressed. Finally, we were all ready. Standing at the entrance to the church, all I could think about was how beautiful and happy Debbie looked. The music started, and I began to walk down the aisle.

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

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

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

## Scoring Explanation: Personal Narrative Essay

Refer to pages 46–47 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and the Conventions Rating. These scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

### Essay 1

**Focused Holistic Score: 1**

The writer addresses the prompt, but the response is confusing and digressive. The chronology is clear, but there are insufficient details to support the narrative, and many of the details provided do not relate to the subject.

**Conventions Rating: –**

This essay contains some inappropriate word choices, as well as errors in spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure.

### Essay 2

**Focused Holistic Score: 2**

The writer focuses on a subject appropriate to the prompt. The response attempts to tell a story, but the transitions are weak, and the narrative reads like a list of events. There is little dramatization, and the tone is flat.

**Conventions Rating: +**

This essay contains minor errors in usage and sentence structure.

### Essay 3

**Focused Holistic Score: 4**

The writer clearly identifies an embarrassing moment and tells the story from beginning to end. There is a good sense of logical progression within paragraphs and throughout the essay as a whole. The response is well organized, and transitional words are used effectively. The writer uses literary devices such as dialogue and suspense to engage the reader's interest. The essay is coherent, interesting, and vivid.

**Conventions Rating: +**

This essay contains no significant errors.

## Persuasive Essay: Prompt 1

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

Think of an item that you need and do not own. It could be a bicycle, a new pair of shoes, or anything else that you feel you need. Write a letter to convince your parents or guardians of why you need this item.

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

- Clearly state your position.
- Include at least two points that support your position.
- Explain each point, using examples and details.
- Address the arguments that could be made against you, and show why your side is stronger.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write well-developed paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**You may use scratch paper to plan your essay. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.**

## Focused Holistic Score Scale: Persuasive Essay

**SCORE POINT 4** 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 this position, and supports those reasons with details that are appropriate, pertinent, and clearly articulated. The overall argument is thoughtful, logical, and convincing. The response follows a clear, logical progression; employs appropriate transitions to direct the reader's thought; and effectively uses persuasive language to make his or her point. The writer anticipates opposing arguments, concerns, and questions, and addresses them with points that are relevant and convincing. There is an appropriate awareness of audience. All aspects of the prompt are addressed, and the essay is complete.

**SCORE POINT 3** The response reflects a reasonable mastery of persuasive writing. There is competency in all four criteria. The writer clearly states a position, focuses on this position, and gives reasons, details, and examples to support it. Some responses contain a few well-elaborated reasons; others contain more reasons but with less elaboration. Certain points may be superficially relevant but not elaborated enough to be convincing, and a few transitions may be missing. However, the overall argument is appropriate and convincing. The writer uses effective vocabulary and sentence structure, and employs persuasive language to communicate a position. The writer anticipates opposing arguments and addresses them. An appropriate sense of audience exists. The essay seems complete.

**SCORE POINT 2** The response reflects a weak mastery of persuasive writing. The writer has focused on a position and made some attempt to defend it, but the response contains at least one significant weakness. Some responses provide only one reason to support a position. (The minimum number required is two.) Others may provide reasons that are unclear, illogical, inadequately developed, or tangential to the argument. The response has some kind of organizational strategy, but there may be significant breaks in the logical progression, making the argument difficult to follow. The writer makes an attempt to use persuasive language but does not demonstrate command of this technique. Some responses may anticipate opposing arguments but fail to address them clearly or adequately, thereby weakening the strength of the writer's position. Others entirely neglect to address important points of the opposing side. Some aspects of the prompt may be 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. Reasons offered by the writer may not satisfactorily support the argument, and support for reasons is weak or nonexistent. Persuasive strategies may be poorly executed or too sparingly employed to be effective. The writer may fail to identify essential issues pertaining to the prompt, and may digress widely when discussing issues. The writer may avoid addressing opposing arguments entirely, or may address these arguments in a way that is confusing or ineffective. Many responses exhibit minimal control but are simply too undeveloped to receive a higher score.

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

## Persuasive Essay: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria

### Main Idea

The writer identifies 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.

## Conventions Rating

- + The composition provides evidence that the writer has a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.
- The composition provides evidence that the writer does not have a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.

**Student Evaluation Sheet** **North Carolina** 

## Persuasive Essay

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

1. Sometimes a writer will begin a persuasive essay with a shocking story or strong statement to draw in the reader. Does the introduction of this essay draw the reader in? Suggest one way in which the opening statement of this essay could more effectively “hook” the reader.

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2. Do you feel the writer argues his or her stance effectively? Identify any areas in which you think the writer’s argument is weak or unclear, and explain why these areas are ineffective.

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3. Does the writer deal effectively with arguments that can be made against his or her point of view? Identify specific places in the essay where the opposing point of view is addressed. Also, mention any additional arguments that could be made against the writer’s point of view that he or she did not deal with.

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4. Some writers try to sway readers by using strong language. Are there any words in this essay that emphasize the writer’s point of view? What words could you substitute to make the writer’s point of view come across more strongly?

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## Persuasive Essay

Score of 1

Dear Mom,

I would like a phone and phone line in my room. If you get me this, I would really appreciate it a lot. It would make our lives alot better.

Sometimes your boss tries to call you for a business emergincy for example. At your other job they never called you at home. Celluler phones are too much money and trouble.

Research can be done on the Internet without leaving home, the Internet never closes. You can find whatever your looking for. You can print out educational articles without going to the library and paying fifteen cents per copy for a copy machine. Which is usually out of order anyway.

There's a lot of stress and arguing because Tommy hangs up on my friends. Why can't he be taught to leave the phone alone I didn't act like that when I was his age. My privacy must be respected. You always say I should respect your privacy and I do and now I am asking you to respect my privacy with a phone in my room that is always off limits to Tommy.

My phone will be the answer to my not fighting with you and Tommy. Which is what we all want peace and less stress. Other kids in my class have phones and they don't have these problems.

Love,  
Sandy



## Persuasive Essay

Score of 2

Dear Mom,

We need a second phone line for me. This second phone line would be for my personal use. This would help us both.

The Internet is a great tool to help students learn. There are many educational Web sites for seventh graders and kids younger. This is one good reason for another phone line.

You wouldn't always have to check with me when you wanted to call someone, and I wouldn't always have to check with you when I wanted to call someone. Imagine how much quieter and peaceful our house would be. When the phone rings, you would know the call was for you. There would be less stress for you. Everybody would be better off, and people could reach you easily.

I would have the privacy that I need when I'm on the phone. I know that you would never listen to my phone conversations on purpose, but Tommy is only five years old and he doesn't understand that it's not right to pick up the phone when somebody is on it. Tommy hangs up on my friends when they call for me. This makes me mad, and Tommy and I argue all the time.

You want the phone line to be free when your boss calls, and I need the phone line for homework because it can be a modem line. Just think about that time your boss needed to talk to you about the presentation and he couldn't get through because I was talking to Jenny about the math test. You'll get a better evaluation from your boss, and my grades will get better. It's expensive but there would be less stress.

My needs are important. We both need our own phones.

Thanks,

Sandy

## Persuasive Essay

Score of 4

Dear Mom,

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

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

Your relationships with the other people in your life would improve also because they would know that you are there for them. You would be able to communicate with them without worrying about whether or not I'm on the phone. Just imagine how much quieter and more peaceful our house would be if I had my own phone line! When the phone rang, you would know right away that the call was for you. You could decide whether to answer or not, and you would no longer have to shout for me to pick up the phone. That would be better for your health because it would reduce the stress you feel at home. As you can see, the benefits to you are numerous.

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

**Persuasive Essay (continued)**

Score of 4

privacy would be completely protected, and my relationship with my little brother would improve. Sometimes, Tommy picks up the phone and hangs up on my friends when they call. This makes me angry, and then Tommy and I argue. If I had my own phone line, this wouldn't happen. Finally, I would be able to use the new phone line for educational purposes. It would serve double duty as a phone line and a modem line. I would be able to do research for school on my computer using my own phone line.

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

Thank you,  
Sandy

## Scoring Explanation: Persuasive Essay

Refer to pages 55–56 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and the Conventions Rating. These scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

### Essay 1

**Focused Holistic Score: 1**

The writer responds to the prompt by stating the issue and giving two reasons in support of his or her view. In addition, the essay is fairly well organized, and the writer has used the persuasive technique of appealing to the audience's (the mother's) emotions. However, the reasons are not well elaborated, and some paragraphs tend to be digressive. Control and support for the argument are too minimal to rate a higher score.

**Conventions Rating: –**

In addition to showing problems with sentence structure, this essay contains many spelling, usage, and punctuation errors.

### Essay 2

**Focused Holistic Score: 2**

The response is appropriate to the prompt. The writer includes effective reasons and support for his or her position, but only briefly addresses the opposing view. While there is an apparent organizational plan, the writer slips out of that organization, leading to a lack of coherence.

**Conventions Rating: +**

This essay contains minor errors in punctuation and usage.

### Essay 3

**Focused Holistic Score: 4**

The writer clearly identifies the item and provides reasons to support why it is needed. These reasons are appropriate and convincing. The opposing argument is addressed and supported with sufficient reasons. The writer establishes a sense of beginning, development, and ending. The response is complete, convincing, and effective.

**Conventions Rating: +**

This essay contains no significant errors.

## Persuasive Essay: Prompt 2

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

Identify the one invention that you think has harmed society the most. Write a newspaper editorial that convinces your community why society would be better off without that invention.

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

- Clearly state your position.
- Include at least two points that support your position.
- Explain each point, using examples and details.
- Address the arguments that may be made against you, and show why your side is stronger.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Write well-developed paragraphs with topic sentences.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**You may use scratch paper to plan your essay. When you are finished planning, write the final copy of your essay on a separate sheet of paper.**

## Focused Holistic Score Scale: Persuasive Essay

**SCORE POINT 4** 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 this position, and supports those reasons with details that are appropriate, pertinent, and clearly articulated. The overall argument is thoughtful, logical, and convincing. The response follows a clear, logical progression; employs appropriate transitions to direct the reader's thought; and effectively uses persuasive language to make a point. The writer anticipates opposing arguments, concerns, and questions, and addresses them with points that are relevant and convincing. There is an appropriate awareness of audience. All aspects of the prompt are addressed, and the essay is complete.

**SCORE POINT 3** The response reflects a reasonable mastery of persuasive writing. There is competency in all four criteria. The writer clearly states a position, focuses on this position, and gives reasons, details, and examples to support it. Some responses contain a few well-elaborated reasons; others contain more reasons but with less elaboration. Certain points may be superficially relevant but not elaborated enough to be convincing, and a few transitions may be missing. However, the overall argument is appropriate and convincing. The writer uses effective vocabulary and sentence structure, and employs persuasive language to communicate a position. The writer anticipates opposing arguments and addresses them. An appropriate sense of audience exists. The essay seems complete.

**SCORE POINT 2** The response reflects a weak mastery of persuasive writing. The writer has focused on a position and made some attempt to defend it, but the response contains at least one significant weakness. Some responses provide only one reason to support a position. (The minimum number required is two.) Others may provide reasons that are unclear, illogical, inadequately developed, or tangential to the argument. The response has some kind of organizational strategy, but there may be significant breaks in the logical progression, making the argument difficult to follow. The writer makes an attempt to use persuasive language, but does not demonstrate command of this technique. Some responses may anticipate opposing arguments but fail to address them clearly or adequately, therefore weakening the writer's position. Others entirely neglect to address important points of the opposing side. Some aspects of the prompt may be 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. Reasons offered by the writer may not satisfactorily support the argument, and support for reasons is weak or nonexistent. Persuasive strategies may be poorly executed or too sparingly employed to be effective. The writer may fail to identify essential issues pertaining to the prompt, and may digress widely when discussing issues. The writer may avoid addressing opposing arguments entirely, or may address these arguments in a way that is confusing or ineffective. Many responses exhibit minimal control but are simply too undeveloped to receive a higher score.

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

### **Persuasive Essay: Focused Holistic Scoring Criteria**

#### **Main Idea**

The writer identifies 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.

### **Conventions Rating**

- + The composition provides evidence that the writer has a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.
- The composition provides evidence that the writer does not have a reasonable and acceptable level of proficiency in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and mechanics.

**Persuasive Essay****Score of 1**

The worst invention ever was the television. If the television had not been invented, then everybody would be less fat. Without tv, people would be less greedy too.

I saw on TV that kids are more fatter in general than they used to be. On summer vacations my older brother likes to get up and watch all the game shows on tv. He stays up late watching stupid movies, then after he sleeps just keeps watching tv. Some of those game shows are pretty challenging but others are not. All you have to do is be there to win. Who cares about watching people win refrigerators for doing nothing? Anyway, my brother complains that he is getting out of shape but if he just turned off the tv and played tennis or something he wouldn't be getting fatter.

Also tv makes people greedier. Commercials and regular shows have beautiful characters who own big, nice houses, fancy cars, beautiful clothes, personal trainers, and take trips to exotic places. If people see all that on tv they think that's the way everybody lives. Not me, for sure! People get unsatisfied with their own way of living and think there is something wrong with them. I say it's tv that's wrong.

People should stop using tv except for news. And sometimes a sports event. Then we would be less fat and greedy.



**Persuasive Essay****Score of 2**

Of all the modern inventions that are supposed to mean progress, the worst one ever is the television. Because of television, people are getting less exercise and becoming sicker and more out of shape. Also, television makes people greedy.

Many diseases are on the rise, and people in our country are getting fatter and fatter. I say the reason is because we sit around and watch too much television. Children come home and plop in front of the TV, college kids, like my brother, watch television until late into the night, video stores do a booming business in video rentals. Even I would rather watch a new movie on TV instead of having to pay a fortune to go to a movie theater to see one. You can make your own popcorn instead of having to pay a fortune for a tub of oily stuff that only makes you thirsty so you have to buy a soft drink. But instead of all this TV watching, people could be out getting some exercise to keep fit.

Some game shows make everybody feel like they should have a million dollars, or at least want a new car or an all-expenses-paid trip to Hawaii. Most shows that aren't game show, talk shows, sports, or cartoons, show people living better than most people I know in this community. They have big houses and all sorts of other luxuries that make TV viewers think they should have those things too. Television commercials also feed into this problem, making people want everything that they see in the hope that the products will make them feel younger, richer, prettier, cooler, whatever. But most of those things don't really work like they say anyway.

The life viewers see on TV is unreal, but it's hard to remember that as you watch day after day. You begin to think that maybe everyone is supposed to be glamorous like they are on some of the soap operas.

People should stop watching so much TV and get out and see what real life is like. If they did, they'd be healthier and happier with the lives they have.

**Persuasive Essay****Score of 4**

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

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

Television is also responsible for our society's greed. We sit in front of the screen and allow beautiful actors and actresses to convince us that we can't live without the newest, fastest, most expensive thing that they are advertising. And it's not only advertising that's making us greedy. Very few programs on television show the way people really live. The characters live in beautiful houses and have everything they could ever need or want. Some shows are even designed to make us believe that we can become very rich in just a few minutes. All we have to do is answer a few easy questions, and we can all be millionaires. Real people are working longer hours to make more money, just so they can buy the things television tells them to buy.

That brings us to the next problem television has created. Television shows have poured an incredible amount of garbage into our minds. Prime time shows are filled with the kinds of scenes that used to be considered too graphic for R-rated movies. There's a lot of

**Persuasive Essay (continued)****Score of 4**

debate about whether violence on television causes violent behavior. The answer isn't clear, but even the network TV executives have admitted that their shows have been too violent. Seeing violent actions every day for hours at a time can't be good for anyone.

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

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

## Scoring Explanation: Persuasive Essay

Refer to pages 64–65 for the Focused Holistic Score Scale and the Conventions Rating. These scoring guides help explain how these essays were evaluated.

### Essay 1

**Focused Holistic Score: 1**

This essay states a position and offers two appropriate reasons in support of that position, but the reasons are not fully elaborated, and on close inspection, the content of the paragraphs does not fully explain the claims the writer makes. The sense of organization is fairly strong, but the writing digresses. The writer has not addressed opposing arguments, and the essay lacks an appropriate sense of audience.

**Conventions Rating: –**

This essay contains spelling and punctuation errors and problems with sentence structure.

### Essay 2

**Focused Holistic Score: 2**

The writer states a position and defends his or her position. Although there is strong organization, other elements are weak enough to warrant this score. For example, many of the details are insufficiently elaborated or off-topic. The response is occasionally digressive, and the opposing argument is not directly addressed. The essay lacks an appropriate sense of audience.

**Conventions Rating: +**

This essay contains minor errors in spelling and usage.

### Essay 3

**Focused Holistic Score: 4**

The writer states a position on the worst invention and supports it with appropriate reasons and sufficient details. The response has a clear beginning, middle, and ending; ideas flow logically and coherently within paragraphs and throughout the entire essay. Transitional devices are effectively used, and persuasive techniques reinforce the argument. The writer demonstrates a good sense of audience.

**Conventions Rating: +**

This essay contains no significant errors.