

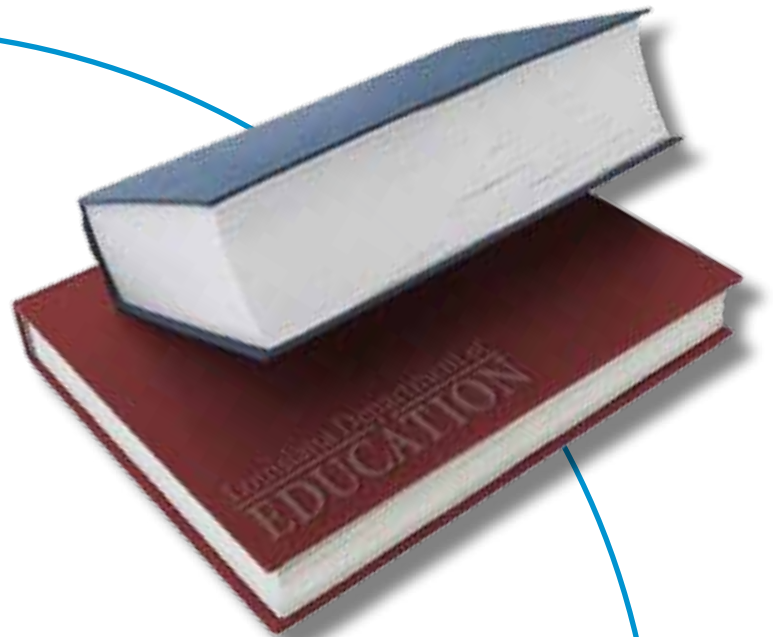
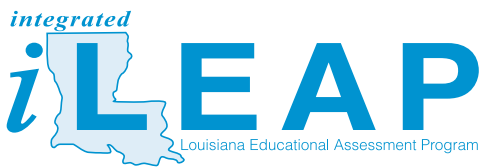
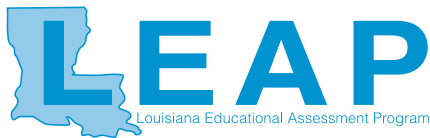
RELEASED TEST ITEMS

Sample Student Work for the Transitional Writing Prompts

Fall 2012

This document does NOT include guidance about the scoring of language conventions for the iLEAP grades (3, 5, 6, and 7); however, the LEAP samples (grades 4 and 8) do include information about scoring language conventions. The 2013-14 LEAP and iLEAP writing prompts will be scored for Conventions.

English Language Arts (Writing Only)



Grades

3-8



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TRANSITIONAL WRITING PROMPTS

SAMPLE STUDENT WORK

Louisiana Believes embraces the principle that all children can achieve at high levels, as evidenced in Louisiana’s recent adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). *Louisiana Believes* also promotes the idea that Louisiana’s educators should be empowered to make decisions to support the success of their students. In keeping with these values, the Department has created released test items documents to help prepare teachers and students as they transition to the new CCSS over the next two years. These released items reflect the State’s commitment to consistent and rigorous assessments and provide educators and families with clear information about expectations for student performance.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is developing transitional LEAP and *i*LEAP assessments for grades 3–8 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics that will be more closely aligned to the CCSS. These tests will be administered in 2012–2013 and 2013–2014, in an effort to introduce students and teachers to the CCSS and to help ease the transition to the assessments developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), which will be administered starting in the 2014–2015 school year.

To better prepare our students for the CCSS, the ELA transitional tests have a new type of writing prompt that focuses on a key instructional shift—writing grounded in textual evidence. Instead of responding to a “stand alone” writing prompt, students will be expected to read one or two passages and then write a composition that includes evidence from the text(s) in the response. This kind of prompt demands more than writing skills alone. Now students must read texts carefully to determine what evidence is most relevant and then create an organized, well-written composition that incorporates that evidence.

The transitional prompts introduce evidence-based writing to students by asking them to use text(s) to support their ideas about a given topic, but the prompts do not emphasize a deep analysis of the texts themselves, something the PARCC writing tasks and CCSS will require. This new type of writing does provide an opportunity to practice a key CCSS instructional shift that will help move our students and educators one step closer to the new expectations.

Purpose of This Document

This document is part of a series of materials meant to promote understanding of the knowledge and skills students must have and the kind of writing they must produce to be successful on the LEAP and *i*LEAP transitional assessments. Writing prompts and samples of student work for grades 3–8 have been assembled in one document so teachers and parents can easily see the changes in passage complexity and the increasing expectations for rigor in student work as students progress from grade 3 to grade 8.

Each chapter includes the following grade-level materials:

- scoring rubrics,
- a sample prompt,
- examples of student writing that have been scored using the new rubrics, and
- explanations of the scores assigned to each student response.

Writer’s Checklists are on pages 113–115.

Test Administration Information

The directions in the Test Administration Manual will clearly explain all the procedures for administering the writing session, but a few details are worth mentioning here so that teachers know what to expect.

Test administrators will be instructed to read aloud the Writer’s Checklist, the writing session directions, and the Writing Topic. However, the reading passages on the writing test must **not** be read aloud or signed to students, except for those students with the accommodations *Tests Read Aloud* or *Communication Assistance*. New directions have been added that encourage students to mark **in pencil** information in the reading passage(s) that they think will be useful when composing their response.

All students are provided with the following materials during the administration of the writing portion of the ELA transitional tests:

- two pencils,
- a dictionary and a thesaurus,
- a Writer’s Checklist, and
- a test booklet and/or answer document that contains the writing prompt, a page for taking notes (brainstorming/outlining), two rough-draft pages, and two final draft pages.

Resources

Below are links to resources that offer additional information about the transitional tests, the CCSS, and the PARCC assessments:

- www.doe.state.la.us/topics/assessment_guides.html
(Assessment Guides for all subjects and grades tested)
- www.louisianapass.org
(transitional writing prompts on the Practice Assessment/Strengthen Skills system)
- www.doe.state.la.us/topics/common_core_samples.html
(CCSS-aligned items)
- www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes
(samples of PARCC assessment items)

iLEAP Grade 3

The Grade 3 Writing Test is **untimed**, but students should be given a minimum of 60 minutes to read the passage(s), plan and write their compositions, and check their work.

Scoring Information

Because of the heavy emphasis of standard 3 (conventions of writing) in the language section of the iLEAP tests, student compositions will be scored only for the dimensions of **Content** and **Style**. The Content dimension measures

- the focus of the student’s central idea;
- the development of that idea, including the appropriate and accurate use of information from the passage(s); and
- the organization of the student’s ideas.

The Style dimension evaluates the ways in which the student shapes and controls the language and the flow of the composition. Features of Style include

- word choice;
- sentence fluency, which includes sentence structure and sentence variety; and
- voice, the individual personality of the writing.

For each of these two dimensions, a student can earn from 1 to 4 score points.

A summary of the score points for the Writing session is shown below.

Dimensions	Maximum Possible Points
Content	4
Style	4
Total Points	8

There are two Content rubrics; one is used to score student compositions that respond to prompts with one passage; the other is for prompts with two passages. The Content and Style rubrics can be found on pages 4 through 6.

CONTENT (One Passage): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passage and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without information from the passage cannot receive a score higher than a 2 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes well-chosen information from the passage to support central idea Passage information and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate information from the passage to support central idea Passage information and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no information from the passage Ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no information from the passage and/or the information shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. clear beginning and ending effective linking words and phrases sense of wholeness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition without confusion. has a beginning and ending some linking words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization weak beginning, ending may lack linking words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

CONTENT (Two Passages): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passages and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE(S) AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without information from both passages cannot receive a score higher than a 3 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes well-chosen information from the passages to support central idea Passage information and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate information from at least one of the passages to support central idea Passage information and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no information from the passage(s) Passage information and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no information from the passage(s) and/or the information shows a misunderstanding of the passage(s) minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. clear beginning and ending effective linking words and phrases sense of wholeness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition without confusion. has a beginning and ending some linking words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization weak beginning, ending may lack linking words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

STYLE: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice

Key Questions: *Would you keep reading this composition if it were longer? Do the words, phrases, and sentences strengthen the content and allow the reader to move through the writing with ease?*

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> precise effective vivid words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear but less specific includes some interesting words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generic limited repetitive overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> functional simple (below grade level) may be inappropriate to the task
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluid, very easy to follow, because of variety in length, structure, and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally varied in length and structure Most sentences have varied beginnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no variety in length and structure Awkward sentences may affect the fluidity of the reading. same beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple sentences no variety Construction makes the response difficult to read.
VOICE (individual personality of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compelling and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, but may not be particularly compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak and/or inconsistent voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no voice Response is too brief to provide an adequate example of style; minimal attempt.

Compositions that are off topic, illegible, blank, insufficient, not written in English, a restatement of the prompt, or include only copied text from the passage(s) are considered unscorable and will receive zero points.

Grade 3 Sample Writing Prompt

At grade 3, the Writing Topic may direct students to write a story, explain something, or give their opinion. On a test that has a prompt with one passage, the passage and the Writing Topic are on facing pages. On a test that has a prompt with two passages, the passages are on facing pages, and the Writing Topic is on the next right-hand page. This will allow students to go back and forth between the passages and the Writing Topic as they prepare their response. Below is a two-passage writing prompt that appeared on the field test administered in March 2012.

Directions: Read the passages about two school events. As you read the passages, think about which event you would choose to have at your school. Then use the passages to help you write a well-organized composition of two or more paragraphs.

Talent Show

Who: YOU!

What: School-wide talent show

When: March 16 from 5:00 PM–7:00 PM

Where: Cafeteria

The Details

Do you have a special talent? Share it with your classmates! Maybe you can sing, dance, or do tricks. Maybe you created an invention. Do you know some jokes that are sure to make people laugh? Tell them! The talent show is the perfect chance for you to show off your skills to the rest of the school!

You can choose to perform alone or as a group. If you are shy, then you can perform with friends. A group can be any size. Students will need to make their own costumes and practice after school. So think about what you will do and sign up by March 8. Get started now!

Something for Everyone

Don't want to perform? You can still be involved in the talent show. Audience members will vote for their favorite acts to help decide the winners of the talent show. Get a ticket to the show today so you can cheer on your classmates. Let your voice be heard! Come one, come all to the school's first talent show ever!

What Students Are Saying

"I can't wait to see what my friends are going to do in the talent show!"
—Lucy Dawson, grade 3

School Carnival

Who: Students

What: School carnival

When: March 11 from 9:00 AM–1:00 PM

Where: School parking lot

The Details

Do you like all kinds of games? If so, then you will love the school carnival! This is no ordinary carnival, no boring games here! It will be run by students. Each class will create a game or a booth and work on it after school. So think about what your class will do. Will it be face painting, a guessing jar contest, a beanbag toss, freeze dancing, maybe even musical chairs?

Students from each class will sign up for time slots to help run the booths. Then students can visit the other booths to play the games and enjoy what their classmates have made. And that is just part of the fun. There is much, much more. You will not want to miss Principal Tanner dressed up as the school mascot!

Not for Everyone

The carnival is for elementary students. There may not be many activities for very young children or older brothers and sisters. Get ready for the best event of the school year—the school carnival.

What Students Are Saying

“Seeing Principal Tanner in a costume will be very funny. I can’t wait for the carnival!”—Jesse Davis, grade 3

Writing Topic

Write a composition for your teacher that tells which event, the talent show or carnival, you would choose to have at your school. Explain why you think this event would be the better of the two. Use details from both passages to help you explain your opinion.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- ▶ Your composition should have two or more paragraphs.
- ▶ Be sure your composition has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- ▶ Use details from both passages and include enough information so your teacher will understand your response.
- ▶ Be sure to write clearly.
- ▶ Check your writing for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Sample Student Work

The student compositions that are included in this release represent a range of scores designed to show teachers several kinds of responses to the new prompts. In the explanations that follow the compositions, rubric language was used whenever possible to help teachers better understand how the scores were determined.

The purpose of the score-point explanations is to

- focus on the three elements of each dimension, with special attention on the student’s use of the passage information;
- provide concrete examples from the composition to show specific strengths and weaknesses; and
- provide recommendations on what the student can do to improve the composition and their writing.

This information will help teachers work with the new prompts and rubrics, but it will also guide them as they begin implementing evidence-based writing, an important instructional shift of the CCSS.

1. Final Draft

→ I choose the school carnival, I choose the school carnival because I think it would be fun to have. We can play ring toss, bean bag toss, Musical chairs, and freeze tag. I think students would enjoy having a carnival. It would be fun if you ran a booth because you can sell stuffed animals to little kids. Another reason is you can make up games that kids can try if they're there. You can get your face painted, you can see your friends, and you can play button 1st guess game. I know many other events but what I like the most is ring toss, bean-bag toss, musical chairs, and freeze tag. I didn't choose the talent show because some people don't know how to dance, sing, do tricks, or make inventions. Some students don't know how to make costumes. Some people might not want to show their skills. Some people might not like talent shows. There are many things that some people might not like. Some people mostly

Final Draft (continued)

don't like are singing, dancing,
doing jokes, or making things.

CONTENT: 4 Points

This student demonstrates consistent control in the Content dimension, and many strengths are present in this response.

The composition is focused on the central idea of why the writer would choose the carnival over the talent show, and it shows a complete understanding of the task by clearly addressing both passages in an attempt to explain why the carnival is the better of the two options.

The writer provides well-chosen information from the passage to support the idea that a carnival is a fun event that students would enjoy and carefully selects information to support the idea that many students might not like a talent show.

The discussion of the carnival being “fun to have” is thoroughly developed using relevant specific details from the passage (“We can play ring toss, bean bag toss, musical chairs, and freeze tag . . . would be fun if you ran a booth . . . you can get you face painted”). The writer’s own ideas are specific and relevant and support his or her opinion (“you can sell stuffed animals to little kids . . . make up games . . . play button Jar guess. game”). The discussion of why “some people might not like talent shows,” while slightly weaker, does use and interpret relevant information from the passage to explain why students might not like the event (“some people don’t know how to dance, sing, do tricks, or make inventions . . . don’t know how to make costumes . . . people mostly don’t like are singing, dancing, doing jokes, or Making things”).

The writer’s opinions are presented in a logical order, beginning with the choice of the carnival and a discussion of the reasons why it was chosen, followed by a discussion of the talent show and the reasons for not choosing it. Effective linking words and phrases are present, allowing the reader to easily move through the composition. While the lack of a clear beginning is somewhat of a weakness, and a strong conclusion would help to improve the overall response, the writer has demonstrated many more strengths than weaknesses and shows consistent control in the Content dimension.

STYLE: 4 Points

The writer demonstrates consistent control in the Style dimension. Although the word choice is not especially vivid, precise words that are appropriate to the task are effectively used to explain the writer’s opinions about both events, and the student clearly expresses why he or she feels that a carnival is the better choice of the two. The response does present a variety of sentence lengths and structures that allows for a fluid and easy-to-follow explanation of the writer’s opinions. The writer’s use of complex sentences is especially impressive for this grade level. The individual personality of the writer is apparent in this argument in favor of the school carnival.

1. Final Draft

Do you adore meriment and exitement? Well if you do, come to the school Carnival it will be awesome to play all those sensational games! This is what you will do. Each class select an activity they think that we should have. Whatever they picked it will be placed in the school carnival. When you are working at your booth, the other people that are not working at the booth they will go and explore what the other classes have. When you are at the carnival you will have lots of activites to do. You can do all of this with your friends and do all the things you love. Of course, they will have lots of games you can participate in. You will have lots of meriment at the carnival! The whole entire school will be there! It will all be located in the parking lot! If you want amity then stay home, be cause it will be lots of talking and playing so it will be a little noisey! It will really be astonishing!

Final Draft (continued)

The reason why I chose the carnival because you can see all the amazing things other classes have prepared, and it would be awesome just to go out of school and have fun and do all those fun activities. You can eat food and just chill out with your friends. It would be just amazing to see the whole entire school out in the parking lot all day long having fun!

CONTENT: 3 Points

This student demonstrates reasonable control in the Content dimension.

A clear central idea that focuses on the reasons for having a school carnival has been presented. However, the response shows only a general understanding of the task, as there is no mention of the talent show and no explanation of why the carnival would be the better choice of the two.

The writer includes sufficient and appropriate information from the *School Carnival* passage to support the central idea that the carnival will be an “awesome” event. These ideas are developed adequately, and relevant accurate details from the passage have been integrated into the composition (“Each class select an activity . . . When you are working at your booth, the other people that are not working at the booth they will go and explore what the other classes have . . . will have lots of games you can participate in . . . all be located in the parking lot . . . all day long”). Had the student also addressed the passage regarding the talent show and provided some explanation of why it would not be the better event, a higher score in Content would have been attained.

The organization is logical and allows the reader to move through the composition. An engaging beginning and appropriate ending are evident, but effective linking words and phrases are lacking.

STYLE: 4 Points

The writer demonstrates consistent control in the Style dimension throughout the composition. Effective word choices (*adore*, *merriment*, *excitement*, *noisy*) and vivid phrases (“it will be awesome to play all those sensational games,” “The whole entire school will be there,” “It will really be astonishing”) are used consistently

throughout the response. A rhetorical question to begin the response is also effective and engages the reader. The writer presents a very fluid and easy-to-follow composition with the use of a variety of sentence structures that vary in length and complexity. The voice is enthusiastic, compelling, and genuinely seems to reflect the personality of a person committed to the exciting prospect of a carnival at his or her school.

1. Final Draft

School Carnivals are better than a talent show because it is awesome.

The cotton candy is great. When you put it on your tongue it melts, and it makes the color darker. Cotton candy can come in different colors like blue, pink, and green. When you touch the cotton and it is soft. Sometimes it makes your mouth stick.

At a carnival they give you prizes. There are lots of prizes you can get. You can win a teddy bear. Sometimes they give you sports stuff. Once my brother got a baseball from there.

The last thing that is at a carnival are the games. Sometimes you can win them. There is a game called holler pop it's really hard. Ball toss is very easy because all you're doing is throwing the ball into a fish bowl.

A carnival is better than a talent show because it has cotton candy, you win prizes, and they have games.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This writer demonstrates inconsistent control in the Content dimension.

Although the writer opens the response with the statement “School Carnivals are better than a talent show,” the writer never explains why carnivals are better and does not provide any information or details about a talent show. This shows a partial understanding of the task and creates a somewhat vague central idea.

The writer’s use of information from the passages and development of ideas are also controlled inconsistently. The writer does not integrate any information from the passage about the talent show, and the information presented about carnivals, while somewhat developed, contains few, if any, details from the passage. For example, the passage does not mention cotton candy and prizes being offered at the school carnival. Only a vague reference to “the games” is evident, and the games mentioned (“bollon pop” and “Ball toss”) are also not from the passage. It is difficult to determine whether this student read and understood the passages or merely read and responded to the writing topic. The integration of more selected details from the passage to support the writer’s opinion that carnivals are “awsome” would improve the Content score of this response.

The organization is a strength in this response. It has a beginning and ending as well as some linking words and phrases to connect the three main points. However, the weaknesses in the use of passage information and in the central idea outweigh the strengths in this composition.

STYLE: 3 Points

The writer demonstrates reasonable control in the Style dimension. The word choices are generally clear and appropriate, but not particularly vivid or precise. A somewhat interesting description of cotton candy is presented (“When you put it on your tounge it melts, and it makes the color darker . . . When you touch the cotton and it is soft . . . it mak your mouth stick”), but a few weaker, more generic word choices are also evident.

The composition is somewhat fluid and easy to read, and sentences generally vary in length and structure. Most sentences have varied beginnings.

The voice is apparent, and there is a degree of excitement and enjoyment for the carnival (“it is awsome,” “cotton candy is great,” “you can win a tedy bear,” “Ball toss is very easy because all your doing is throwing the ball into a fish boll”). An anecdotal reference also adds to the individual personality of the writing (“Onece my brother got an base ball from there”).

1. Final Draft

Let me tell you about my School carnival. It was March the 11th. I heard there was a school carnival coming today. I was so excited about it. My class was excited as well.

There were lots of games. Like musical chairs, guessing jar contest, beanbag toss, freeze dancing, and face painting. Principal Tanner dressed as the school mascot.

The carnival was over. I had lots of fun but I can't wait to do it again.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This writer demonstrates inconsistent control in the Content dimension.

There is a vague central idea about a school carnival in this brief response; however, the attempted narrative with no mention of a talent show and only limited explanation for why the carnival was chosen demonstrate that the writer has only a partial understanding of the task.

The writer attempts to integrate some information from the passage into the story (“It was March the 11th,” “musical chairs, guessing jar contest, beanbag toss,” “Principal Tanner dressed as the school mascot”), but the ideas are not developed.

The composition demonstrates an attempt at organization. The writer uses a simple introduction and ending and provides a hint of a chronological order. The main body of the composition lacks any linking words, producing what appears to be a short list of ideas.

More development of ideas and a clearer explanation of why the student chose the carnival as the better event are needed to achieve a higher score.

STYLE: 2 Points

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control in the Style dimension. The brief response has limited word choice, and much of it is copied or paraphrased from the passage. That which is original is generic. The sentences have little variety in length and structure, and a number of fairly simple sentences contribute to a monotonous style. A weak voice does not reveal the individual personality of the writing.

LEAP Grade 4

The Grade 4 Writing Test is **untimed**, but students should be given a minimum of 75 minutes to read the passage(s), plan and write their compositions, and check their work.

Scoring Information

The LEAP compositions are scored for **Content** and **Style**, but they also are scored for the conventions of writing: Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling. The Content dimension measures

- the focus of the student’s central idea;
- the development of that idea, including the appropriate and accurate use of information from the passage(s); and
- the organization of the student’s ideas.

The Style dimension evaluates the ways in which the student shapes and controls the language and the flow of the composition. Features of Style include

- word choice;
- sentence fluency, which includes sentence structure and sentence variety; and
- voice, the individual personality of the writing.

For each of these two dimensions, a student can earn from 1 to 4 score points.

In addition, the grade 4 compositions are rated as showing either “acceptable control” or “unacceptable control” in the conventions: **Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling**. An acceptable rating earns 1 score point, while an unacceptable rating earns none.

A summary of the score points for the Writing session is shown below.

Dimensions	Maximum Possible Points
Content	4
Style	4
Sentence Formation	1
Usage	1
Mechanics	1
Spelling	1
Total Points	12

There are two Content rubrics; one is used to score student compositions that respond to prompts with one passage; the other is for prompts with two passages. The Content and Style rubrics can be found on pages 21 through 23.

CONTENT (One Passage): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passage and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without information from the passage cannot receive a score higher than a 2 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage, OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

CONTENT (Two Passages): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passages and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE(S) AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition that addresses only one of the two passages cannot receive a score higher than a 3 in Content. A score of 4 cannot be assigned unless both passages have been addressed.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from at least one of the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage(s), OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage(s) and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

STYLE: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice

Key Questions: *Would you keep reading this composition if it were longer? Do the words, phrases, and sentences strengthen the content and allow the reader to move through the writing with ease?*

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> precise effective vivid words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear but less specific includes some interesting words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generic limited repetitive overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> functional simple (below grade level) may be inappropriate to the task
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluid, very easy to follow, because of variety in length, structure, and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally varied in length and structure Most sentences have varied beginnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no variety in length and structure Awkward sentences may affect the fluidity of the reading. same beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple sentences no variety Construction makes the response difficult to read.
VOICE (individual personality of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compelling and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, but may not be particularly compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak and/or inconsistent voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no voice Response is too brief to provide an adequate example of style; minimal attempt.

In some cases, a composition may not be scorable. For example, if it is illegible or if it includes only copied text from the given passage(s), it will not be scored in any dimension and will receive a score of zero. A paper may be off-topic and cannot be scored for Content or Style, but it may be scored for Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling. Such a paper could receive a maximum of 4 of 12 points.

Grade 4 Sample Writing Prompt

At grade 4, the Writing Topic may direct students to write a story, explain or describe something, or convince someone of their position. On a test that has a prompt with one passage, the passage and the Writing Topic are on facing pages. On a test that has a prompt with two passages, the passages are on facing pages, and the Writing Topic is on the next right-hand page. This will allow students to go back and forth between the passages and the Writing Topic as they prepare their response. Below is a two-passage writing prompt that appeared on the field test administered in March 2012.

Directions: Read the passages about future inventions. As you read the passages, think about which invention would be more useful. Then use the passages to help you write a well-organized composition of at least three paragraphs.

Flying Cars

Imagine being picked up for school in a flying bus. Traffic jams will no longer be a problem. Instead of sitting on the road behind other cars, you will be flying above them. Visiting someone far away will be easy too. You will not have to spend hours riding in a car. Simply hop in the car and fly straight to your destination.

Flying cars exist today. However, most are still experimental and are not for sale to the public. One flying car, the X-Hawk, is to be used as a rescue vehicle. For example, firefighters could use it to save people from burning buildings. The military wants it to rescue injured soldiers on the battlefield, and hospitals would use it for quick travel to rescue injured people.

The X-Hawk is about the size of a large van. It is shaped like a boat, except it has four wheels, which are used when it is on the ground. It has two seating areas, one on each side of the vehicle. Both areas are enclosed in glass that acts as a windshield. The X-Hawk rises straight up in the air like a helicopter, but it can also fly forward like an airplane. It is very useful because it can float or “hover” in one place and can fit into places that are too dangerous for a helicopter. Because of its size and the way it moves, firefighters would be able to rescue people who are trapped in areas high above the ground. This experimental car could turn into the flying car of the future, which would be available to all drivers.

A flying car like the X-Hawk seems like it belongs in a story set in the distant future. However, if engineers and scientists keep working day and night, people may have flying cars sooner than we ever imagined. It may be just a matter of time before people will have flying cars.

Helper Robots

In the future, people's lives may be very different thanks to the help of robots. One robot named Mahru-Z has already been created by scientists and engineers in Korea. Mahru-Z is designed to do many household chores. With this kind of robot help, children may never need to clean their rooms or make their own snacks again.

Mahru-Z is just over four feet tall and resembles a human. Its head can rotate, and it moves by walking on two legs. It has two arms and uses six-fingered hands, which are great for picking up things. The most important feature of Mahru-Z is its eyes. These contain visual sensors that allow the robot to observe the surrounding area as it travels from room to room picking up objects off the floor. For example, it can take dirty clothing to the washing machine. It can also place toys in a toy box.

Mahru-Z has other useful skills like making and delivering snacks. It can put food into a microwave oven or toaster, turn it on, and take the food out. It can even locate a human in the house and bring the food to him or her.

Because Mahru-Z can be operated by remote control, it may be useful for completing tasks other than household chores. It could function in areas that are too dangerous for humans. One day it may help scientists by going into space. Scientists on Earth could control its movements while it performs experiments in outer space.

Mahru-Z sounds like something out of a futuristic space cartoon and may not be available in homes for a while. With a little more time and effort, though, it might just be the newest home appliance.

Writing Topic

Write a composition for your teacher telling which invention, flying cars or helper robots, you think would be more useful. Provide reasons and use details from both passages to help you explain your opinion.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- ▶ Your composition should have at least three paragraphs.
- ▶ Be sure your composition has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- ▶ Use details from both passages and include enough information so your teacher will understand your response.
- ▶ Be sure to write clearly.
- ▶ Check your writing for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Sample Student Work

The student compositions that are included in this release represent a range of scores designed to show teachers several kinds of responses to the new prompts. In the explanations that follow the compositions, rubric language was used whenever possible to help teachers better understand how the scores were determined.

The purpose of the score-point explanations is to

- focus on the three elements of each dimension, with special attention on the student’s use of the passage information;
- provide concrete examples from the composition to show specific strengths and weaknesses; and
- provide recommendations on what the student can do to improve the composition and their writing.

This information will help teachers work with the new prompts and rubrics, but it will also guide them as they begin implementing evidence-based writing, an important instructional shift of the CCSS.

1. Final Draft

Zoom! Beep! Beep! Which invention do you think is more useful? A Flying Car or a Helper Robot?

Well, I think Flying Cars would be more useful than a Helper Robot because a Flying Car will help firefighters be able to rescue people quicker without having to stare at a red light 10 to 15 minutes until it turns green. One Flying Car, the X-Hawk, is to be used as a rescue vehicle. For example, firefighters could use it to save people from burning buildings. Also, the military requested that they could use it to rescue hurt soldiers on the battlefields, and hospitals would use it for quick travel to fix up the injured people. Because of its gigantic size and the way it moves rapidly, firefighters would be able to rescue people who are trapped in areas high above the ground.

I thought the Helper Robot wasn't as useful as a Flying Car because the Helper Robot doesn't help save damaged people from the military or from burned down houses. The Helper Robot

Final Draft (continued)

only helps clean house and cook for people and that's it. For example, it takes dirty clothes to the washing machine. Also, it places toys in a toy box. I'm pretty sure kids and parents can do those chores. Flying Cars do way more things than clean the house until it's spotless or cook for the family! All the kids and parent that have or will get a Helper Robot would probably lay on the couch and watch TV and not stay active or do the chores!

Flying Cars would be way more useful to the whole entire world! I would rather spend my money on a Flying Car than a Helper Robot, but that's just my opinion! What I think is the most best thing about the Flying Car is that the firefighters and the military would be able to save many peoples lives!!

CONTENT: 4 Points

This student demonstrates consistent control in the Content dimension.

The student provides and maintains a clear focus, asserting that flying cars provide a more necessary service than helper robots. The writer begins with the premise that a flying car like the X-Hawk could function as a rescue vehicle for firefighters, the military, and in emergency medical situations, based on

information from the passage *Flying Cars*. Other details from the passage include the advantages of its size and speed, as well as its ability to avoid traffic jams. In the next paragraph, the helper robot is described as chiefly a cook, maid, and launderer, whose help might actually harm the family's health through lack of exercise. The writer has drawn this conclusion using information from *Helper Robots*. The writer has chosen this information carefully, avoiding the robot's name, description, and any details that may have contradicted the argument, such as the robot working in environments (like space) that are dangerous to humans. In both cases, the writer provides explanations and examples from the text to prove a point. The writer extends the argument to include financial considerations as well as utility, concluding with the overriding value of saving lives.

STYLE: 4 Points

The comic book sounds “Zoom!” (flying car) and “Beep! Beep!” (helper robot) of these futuristic inventions delightfully greet the reader as the topic is introduced. Then, appropriately, the tone changes to a more serious one as the writer develops the argument about the lifesaving abilities of the flying car. When describing the helper robot, however, the tone becomes more casual, emphasizing its less important role (“ . . . and that's it”). The student also uses imagery effectively (“without having to stare at a red light 10 to 15 minutes”) and incorporates a broad vocabulary to highlight information from the passages: *requested*, *gigantic*, *rapidly*, *spotless*, and *useful*. Sentences are varied in structure and form to provide a fluent reading. This student demonstrates consistent control in the Style dimension.

CONVENTIONS: 4 Points

Throughout this extensive response, the student demonstrates consistent (not perfect) control in the Conventions dimension. The student forms a variety of complex sentences correctly, using correct capitalization and punctuation. The student demonstrates skills beyond this grade level, such as punctuating subordinate clauses and introductory words with commas. There is some redundancy in usage (“the whole entire world,” “the most best thing”) and an occasional awkward phrase (“save damaged people from the military”), but on the whole, the writer uses words skillfully and effectively. In the phrase, “All the kids and parent,” *parent* should be plural. Apostrophes are needed in *wasn't*, *doesn't*, and *people's*. Only the word *battlefields* is misspelled.

1. Final Draft

"It's for your own good"

Many people say that robots will take over the world, and that we need flying cars more than anything else, but they are gravely mistaken. Helper robots are what's going to keep humanity going for a longer time and provide us with more information than we ever imagined. With this information we can stop global warming, conserve our resources, save endangered species, and even populate the moon. Can a flying car do that, I think not.

Helper robots can perform tasks that we might need, or want help with, like cleaning the house, making the bed, or watering the flowers. They can also help in battle, advise political leaders, attend to the injured or sick, or work on the next big invention. These robots can also perform tasks that most humans would consider dangerous, without even breaking a sweat, figuratively, robots can't really sweat.

Final Draft (continued)

By now you might be asking "why are flying cars so bad?" and here are the answers. First of all imagine how much it would cost to buy one of those things, and what percentage of the population has their pilot's licence? Second, think of how many gallons it would take to fuel it up? Third commercial airplane pilots would lose their job rapidly and that would effect the flow of money. Of course save the worst for last, global warming will increase if it burns that much fuel. This may sound like the stuff of the future but it will keep humanity alive longer and stronger.

CONTENT: 3 Points

This response demonstrates reasonable control of the Content dimension, showing some strengths and some weaknesses.

A clear central idea is established in the first sentence and maintained throughout the composition. A general understanding of the task is evident as the writer contrasts the benefits of helper robots and the drawbacks of flying cars. It is clear that the student understands the passages, but he or she misses opportunities to use information from the passages to help develop the central idea. Most of the composition relies on the student's own ideas rather than specific evidence from the passages. These ideas support the student's position that robots are useful (providing information, cleaning, performing dangerous tasks), but some of the assertions are not explained. For example, the writer states that helper robots will "provide us with more information than we ever imagined. With this information we can stop global warming, conserve our resources, save endangered species, and even populate the moon." How any of these objectives will be aided by helper robots is not addressed. When the student addresses the problems with flying cars, the only link to the passage is the notion

of flying cars. No specific evidence from the text is presented. The student does come up with logical problems the flying cars could create, but for a score of 4, well-chosen and specific details from the passage need to be more carefully incorporated. In general, the details the student uses sometimes lack specificity, but they are relevant and accurate.

A clear organizational strategy is present, with a strong introductory sentence and ideas that move in a logical order facilitated by the consistent use of transitions.

STYLE: 4 Points

The writer demonstrates consistent control of the Style dimension, displaying many strengths. Precise word choices and vivid phrases (“gravely mistaken,” “conserve our recources,” “populate the moon,” “comercial airplane pilots”) are used effectively throughout the response. The consistent use of complex sentences with varied beginnings creates a fluid, easy-to-read explanation of the student’s ideas. Furthermore, a compelling individual voice is created through emphatic statements (“they are gravely mistaken,” “I think not”), humor (“robots can also preform task . . . without even breaking a sweat, figureativly, robots can’t really sweat”), and engaging rhetorical questions (“Can a flying car do that,” “By now you might be asking ‘why are flying cars so bad?’”).

CONVENTIONS: 4 Points

This writer has demonstrated strong control of the skills in the Conventions dimension. The complex and varied sentence structures are correct. Most words are used correctly. Punctuation is well controlled, including the correct commas in complex sentences. The one area of weakness is spelling, but the student has taken risks in using a sophisticated vocabulary, and many of the more difficult words are spelled correctly.

1. Final Draft

Have you ever thought about the futur and what you want there to be in it?

The X-Hawk is a flying car that we might use in the futur. The X-Hawk is about the size of a large van and it looks like a boat with weels. If you had a flying car you could get around easily with no trafic because you could fly right over people. Firefighters could get around easyer and get to people that need help faster.

One other thing in the futur is the helper robot named Mahru-Z. Mahru-Z can clean your room and make your bed. He will make you some snacks and And you and give it to you. The best part about it is you would never have to clean again.

The idea scientists made I liked the best was the helper robot because That cleaning my room and he will do it for me. I would not have to miss my show on tv to get a snack if he did it for me. He could do things I do not want to do. Mabeey people could send him to another planet in space and controle Mahru-Z with a remote to see what is on that planet.

Do you know what you want there to be in the futur.

CONTENT: 3 Points

This student demonstrates reasonable control of the Content dimension.

A clear central idea asking a question about what might be wanted in the future is presented and maintained, and a general understanding of the task is shown.

The writer includes sufficient and appropriate information from both passages to show what the advantages of each invention might be. The details are relevant and accurate (“size of a large van and it looks like a boat with weels . . . Mahru-Z can clean your room and make your bed . . . make you some snacks”). Although the student selects some appropriate information from the text, this evidence is simply presented as facts from the passages and not integrated with the student’s own ideas until the last body paragraph. More development of the student’s ideas about the usefulness of these inventions is needed for a higher score.

The response follows a logical order allowing the reader to move through the composition without confusion. Ideas are grouped, and there is a functional beginning and ending.

STYLE: 3 Points

The response demonstrates reasonable control in the Style dimension. The word choices are clear and appropriate to the task, but not precise or vivid. Much of the language is general or borrowed from the passages. The sentences are generally varied in length and structure with varied beginnings, but there is also some repetition of a subject-weak verb construction (“Firefighters could,” “Mahru-Z can,” “He will,” “I would,” “He could”). While the individual voice of the writer is not particularly compelling or engaging, it can be clearly heard, especially in the paragraph discussing why the student likes the helper robot best (“I hat[e] cleaning my room and he will do it for me. I would not have to miss my show on tv to get a snack if he did it for me”).

CONVENTIONS: 3 Points

Most of the skills in the Conventions dimension are well controlled in this composition. The sentences are correct, and words are consistently used correctly. Capitalization and punctuation are correct except for a missing question mark after the final sentence. The one area of weakness is spelling, where many grade-level words are misspelled, including *future*, *wheels*, *traffic*, *easier*, *again*, *hate*, *maybe*, and *control*.

1. Final Draft

Flying Cars

I think flying cars are better. Flying cars are better because you can get from place to place faster. You can get to school on time and never be late with a flying car. It can also help people get to the hospital on time.

It has four wheels. It also is red with black stripes. If I had one I would be out of Louisiana. I would be in Kansas. The bad thing is it is hard to land.

Can you imagine flying on a hot summer day. That's the best time to fly. Imagine flying over the ocean in a flying car. You can see how fun it is too see the world in a flying car.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This student demonstrates inconsistent control in the Content dimension, with the weaknesses outweighing the strengths.

The writer presents a vague central idea that “flying cars are better,” but he or she never addresses what flying cars are better than. Since only the passage about flying cars is addressed, this is an indication that the writer possesses a partial understanding of the task.

Some evidence from the passage about flying cars is presented (getting to school on time, helping people get to the hospital, the fact that flying cars have four wheels), but the choice of passage details seems random rather than purposeful. The ideas are not adequately developed. Irrelevant information is introduced and left unexplained (“If I had one I would be out of Louisiana. I would be in Kansas”), and the idea that the flying car would be hard to land is not supported by the text which, to the contrary, emphasizes the car’s maneuverability.

There is an attempt at organization. The response has a weak beginning and a more successful ending. However, instead of there being a logical order that allows the reader to move through the composition, there are gaps between ideas as well as a digression when the student discusses leaving Louisiana for Kansas. Except for the use of *also* twice in the response, transitions are lacking.

STYLE: 2 Points

Although the language used in this response creates some images for the reader (the flying car is “red with black stripes,” “flying on a hot summer day,” “flying over the ocean”), the word choices are mostly limited. The use of limited, overused verb constructions (*can, has, is, would*) dulls the voice projected by the writer. There is some variety in the lengths and structures of the sentences, but several short, subject-verb constructions create a chopiness that interferes with the fluidity of the reading. Overall, the response demonstrates inconsistent control of the Style dimension.

CONVENTIONS: 4 Points

The student demonstrates consistent control of the features in the Conventions dimension. The student forms different types of sentences correctly (declarative, interrogative, and imperative, as well as simple and complex), and words are properly used throughout the essay. Capitalization is applied correctly in the title, the sentence beginnings, and both state names (*Kansas* and *Louisiana*). Although the student misses a question mark in the rhetorical question (“Can you Imagine flying on a hot summer day”), a period, and the apostrophe in *that’s*, most of the punctuation is correct. This combination of capitalization and punctuation skill is sufficient for this grade level. There is just one spelling error (“too”) in the last sentence.

iLEAP Grade 5

The Grade 5 Writing Test is **untimed**, but students should be given a minimum of 75 minutes to read the passage(s), plan and write their compositions, and check their work.

Scoring Information

Because of the heavy emphasis of standard 3 (conventions of writing) in the language section of the iLEAP tests, student compositions will be scored only for the dimensions of **Content** and **Style**. The Content dimension measures

- the focus of the student’s central idea;
- the development of that idea, including the appropriate and accurate use of information from the passage(s); and
- the organization of the student’s ideas.

The Style dimension evaluates the ways in which the student shapes and controls the language and the flow of the composition. Features of Style include

- word choice;
- sentence fluency, which includes sentence structure and sentence variety; and
- voice, the individual personality of the writing.

For each of these two dimensions, a student can earn from 1 to 4 score points.

A summary of the score points for the Writing session is shown below.

Dimensions	Maximum Possible Points
Content	4
Style	4
Total Points	8

There are two Content rubrics; one is used to score student compositions that respond to prompts with one passage; the other is for prompts with two passages. The Content and Style rubrics can be found on pages 39 through 41.

CONTENT (One Passage): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passage and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without evidence from the passage cannot receive a score higher than a 2 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage, OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

CONTENT (Two Passages): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passages and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE(S) AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition that addresses only one of the two passages cannot receive a score higher than a 3 in Content. A score of 4 cannot be assigned unless both passages have been addressed.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from at least one of the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage(s), OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage(s) and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

STYLE: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice

Key Questions: *Would you keep reading this composition if it were longer? Do the words, phrases, and sentences strengthen the content and allow the reader to move through the writing with ease?*

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> precise effective vivid words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear but less specific includes some interesting words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generic limited repetitive overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> functional simple (below grade level) may be inappropriate to the task
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluid, very easy to follow, because of variety in length, structure, and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally varied in length and structure Most sentences have varied beginnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no variety in length and structure Awkward sentences may affect the fluidity of the reading. same beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple sentences no variety Construction makes the response difficult to read.
VOICE (individual personality of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compelling and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, but may not be particularly compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak and/or inconsistent voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no voice Response is too brief to provide an adequate example of style; minimal attempt.

Compositions that are off topic, illegible, blank, insufficient, not written in English, a restatement of the prompt, or include only copied text from the passage(s) are considered unscorable and will receive zero points.

Grade 5 Sample Writing Prompt

At grade 5, the Writing Topic may direct students to write a story, explain or describe something, or convince someone of their position. On a test that has a prompt with one passage, the passage and the Writing Topic are on facing pages. On a test that has a prompt with two passages, the passages are on facing pages, and the Writing Topic is on the next right-hand page. This will allow students to go back and forth between the passages and the Writing Topic as they prepare their response. Below is a one-passage writing prompt that appeared on the field test administered in March 2012.

Directions: Read the passage about capybaras. As you read the passage, think about what it would be like to be around these animals. Then use the passage to help you write a well-organized multiparagraph story.

Capybaras

When you think of rodents, you might think of mice, rats, or guinea pigs. Adult guinea pigs generally weigh around one pound, about the same as a loaf of bread. A close relative of the guinea pig is the capybara (KAP-uh-BAR-uh). It looks like a giant guinea pig, sometimes weighing over one hundred pounds! It is the largest rodent in the world.

Capybaras can grow up to four feet long and one-half foot tall. That is about the size of a hog. Capybaras have long and wide bodies, short snouts, and no tails. They are chubby and have short legs, which makes them fairly slow runners. Capybaras make a tasty meal for faster animals like jaguars and pumas. The anaconda, a huge snake, also preys on capybaras.

Unlike common rodents, capybaras do not make their homes indoors. They like to be near the water and make their homes in the wetlands of South and Central America. Living near ponds, lakes, rivers, marshes, or swamps, they make a nest or bed in the shallow dirt by the water. Capybaras are herbivores, plant-eating animals, that eat both the tall grass near the water's edge and the plants growing in the water.

The furry, reddish brown capybaras are social animals. They live in groups of about twenty. One male is the leader of each group, and the females share in taking care of the young. Capybaras communicate by making many different kinds of quiet sounds. They make clicking noises much like we can do with our tongues and the roof of our mouths. They also make high-pitched whistles or squeals and breathy barking noises.

Capybaras spend their days in the thick grass near the water. Their webbed feet keep them from sinking in the mud and help them swim well. If they sense danger, capybaras will jump into the water to hide. They can stay underwater for up to five minutes without taking a breath. Sometimes, capybaras may even sleep underwater with their noses poking out so they can get air to breathe. Capybaras are known as the gentle giants of the rodent world.

Writing Topic

Imagine what it would be like to live around capybaras.

Write a multiparagraph story for your teacher that includes the capybara animal as one of the characters. Use what you have learned about capybaras to help you create your story.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- ▶ Be sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- ▶ Use details from the passage and include enough information so your teacher will understand what happened in your story.
- ▶ Be sure to write clearly.
- ▶ Check your writing for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Sample Student Work

The student compositions that are included in this release represent a range of scores designed to show teachers several kinds of responses to the new prompts. In the explanations that follow the compositions, rubric language was used whenever possible to help teachers better understand how the scores were determined.

The purpose of the score-point explanations is to

- focus on the three elements of each dimension, with special attention on the student’s use of the passage information;
- provide concrete examples from the composition to show specific strengths and weaknesses; and
- provide recommendations on what the student can do to improve the composition and their writing.

This information will help teachers work with the new prompts and rubrics, but it will also guide them as they begin implementing evidence-based writing, an important instructional shift of the CCSS.

1. Final Draft

Do you ever wonder what it would be like to spend an entire day with a braumy gentle giant? Well, you can explore that epic adventure with me, L—S— extreme animal biologist. Come and join the fascinating adventure with me!

First of all, I'm here to tell you about a species you probably never heard of before, Capylaras. As I am walking through the swamps of Central America, I notice a pack of Capylaras grazing in a large section of grass. There are about twenty of them each with a reddish brown color of fur, short legs, wide bodies, and big snouts. I'm going to try and get a better look at their amazing features.

The second part of my journey begins now as I creep closer and closer to them. But then, a female Capylara lifts up her head in a sense of danger and begins to leap into the water with all of the others. About five minutes later, the first few Capylaras rise from the water, huffing and puffing as if they lost their breath. The male leader trots over to me, not identifying that I might be danger, but suddenly he starts making odd squeals as if he was saying, "You are one of us." It seemed like I was a "lone wolf" joining their mighty pack.

Amazed by what had just happened, my exploration

Final Draft (continued)

Here in this vast, gorgeous swamp is finally over. I've gathered all of the information I need to make an entire study on Capybaras. Of all the excursions I have made across the globe, I have never seen a creature like the Capybara. Oh how its stomach shakes when it slowly runs or when its webbed feet pound in the calm water. This is the kind of animal that flatters everyone.

A day with the Capybaras has made a huge impact on my life. I am so glad that I have learned about them and I hope you did too. I'm L— S— and I'll see you next time on *Extreme Animal Biologist*.

CONTENT: 4 Points

This response demonstrates consistent control in the Content dimension, and there are many strengths present.

The composition is sharply focused on the central idea of capybaras and a biologist's encounter with them while exploring the swamps of Central America.

The student has thoughtfully and successfully integrated ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage about the capybaras into the story ("As I am walking through the swamps of Central America," "There are about twenty of them each with a reddish brown color of fur, short legs, wide bodies, and big snouts," "a female Capybara lifts up her head in a sense of danger and begins to leap into the water with all of the others," "Capybaras rise from the water, huffing and puffing," "he starts making odd squeals," "how its stomach shakes when it slowly runs or when its webbed feet pound in the calm water"). The story of the biologist's discovery and information gathering is thoroughly developed using specific, relevant, and accurate details.

The response is well organized with evidence of planning and effective transitional phrases ("Come and join the fascinating adventure with me," "First of all, I'm here to tell you," "I'm going to try and get a better look," "now as I creep closer and closer to them," "But then," "About five minutes later," "Amazed by what had just happened"), which are used to connect the main ideas and to take the reader on the journey with the biologist while he or she presumably tapes an episode of *Extreme Animal Biologist*. A clear beginning, middle, and ending are apparent, and the thoughtful conclusion using the "sign-off" from the broadcast by the host contributes to the sense of wholeness.

STYLE: 4 Points

This response demonstrates consistent control in the Style dimension; many strengths are present.

The student has creatively written the composition from the viewpoint of biologist L— S— as he or she narrates an episode of the nature show *Extreme Animal Biologist* about capybaras. Precise and effective word choices are used throughout the composition (*epic, extreme, fascinating, amazing, creep, excursions, globe*). Vivid descriptive phrases and some figurative language appropriate to the task and to the character are used effectively and enhance the style of the composition (“brawny gentle giant,” “a pack of Capybaras grazing in a large section of grass,” “the first few Capybaras rise from the water, huffing and puffing as if they lost their breath,” “It seemed like I was a ‘lone wolf’ joining their mighty pack,” “vast, gorgeous swamp,” “Oh how it’s stomach shakes when it slowly runs or when it’s webbed feet pound in the calm water”).

The sentences consistently vary in length, structure, and beginnings, which allows for a very fluid and easy-to-follow story.

The voice of the writer, or more importantly the individual personality of “L— S— , extreme animal biologist,” is compelling and engaging throughout the composition. The creativity and subtle humor used to develop this characterization strengthen the overall content of the composition.

1. Final Draft

I woke up this morning, the sunlight beaming through my windows and the smell of freshly baked blueberry pancakes, lingering through the air. Waking up to mornings like this, usually give me a safe and joyful feeling, but today it seemed different.

I don't usually wake up like this especially not on Saturdays. I always wake up ready to start some kind of experiment or research project. I looked outside my window as the feeling slipped in my body more and more. Was I scared, sad, nervous? No, I was curious. Curious, about what may be going on.

I saw them. I couldn't believe my eyes. Right next to our pond was a family of Capybaras! In class, we recently learned about an animal very similar to a guinea pig. It looked just like one, but can weigh up to 100 pounds! Capybaras are the largest rodents in the world, and are known as the gentle giants of the rodent world. They have webbed feet and live in wet areas.

Final Draft (continued)

I ran down the stairs to eat breakfast. As soon as I finished I put on my shoes and ran out of the door. I slowed down as I got closer to the pond, I had to make sure I didn't scare the animals. I wanted to learn more about Capybaras. I got closer and closer and there they were, right in front of me.

Over time the Capybaras grew close to me, we swam together and I got more research. Now when I look out my window, I see them chewing grass, swimming and roaming around. I don't know how or why but, it isn't the pancakes and coffee that make me safe and happy, but it's the Capybaras. They are my friends.

CONTENT: 3 Points

This response demonstrates reasonable control in the Content dimension; some strengths and some weaknesses are present.

The student shows a general awareness of the task by writing a story in which an encounter with a family of capybaras is the central idea.

The student has included sufficient evidence from the passage ("next to our pond

was a family of Capybaras,” “similar to a guinea pig,” “weigh up to 100 pounds,” “the largest rodents in the world, and are known as the gentle giants of the rodent world,” “have webbed feet and live in wet areas”). However, the evidence feels somewhat forced into a single paragraph about what the student had learned in class rather than being well integrated and developed throughout the composition. The development of the writer’s original ideas within the narrative is adequate, but more thoughtful integration and development of these ideas in conjunction with evidence from the passage would improve the overall content score.

The composition is reasonably well organized and follows a logical progression detailing how the writer approaches and interacts with the capybaras. The writer uses transitions to move the reader through the events of the story from beginning to end, with a satisfactory ending that refers back to the blueberry pancakes, completing the composition.

STYLE: 4 Points

The writer demonstrates consistent control in the Style dimension, and many strengths are present in this response.

Vivid, effective, and precise word choices and phrases are used consistently throughout the composition (“I woke up this morning, the sunlight beaming through my windows and the smell of freshly baked blueberry pancakes, lingering through the air,” “Was I scared, sad, nervous? No. I was curious,” “chewing grass, swimming, and roaming around”).

Sentence fluency is consistent throughout most of the composition and many complex, sophisticated sentences characterize this response. The variety of sentence lengths and structures results in a fluid, easy-to-read narrative. Even though many sentences begin with “I,” and the third paragraph is somewhat less fluid and less natural sounding than other parts of the composition, these are minor weaknesses that do not detract from the overall consistency of the style.

An engaging voice is evident throughout the response, and the writer successfully exhibits his or her own individual personality in this first-person narrative.

1. Final Draft

One day a girl named Kate was taking pictures and exploring a pond. She saw a capybara go into it's nest. She took a picture. When she was about to walk away the capybara said, "Why go away now, it's beautiful out here.". Kate looked over her shoulder.

"Is anybody there?" Kate said. She saw the capybara and picked it up. "I'm gonna take you home." said Kate without knowing that it talked.

While she was carrying him the capybara said "Hi I'm Henry and can you put me down?!" Kate couldn't believe her eyes.

"I want to take care of you though." Kate said.

"Ok I'll give you a chance to take care of me." said Henry. Kate put Henry in a big tank since Henry is very long.

"Good it fits you!" Kate said with a smile. She put dirt and water in the tank.

Then Henry said, "That looks really comfortable." Kate picked up Henry and put him in the tank.

"Goodnight Henry," Kate said with a whisper. The next morning Kate took Henry to town. Henry gasped.

Final Draft (continued)

"Those flowers look so beautiful and delicious!" said Henry. Someone overheard Henry talking and said, "That's not something you see every day." Kate thought of an idea about putting on a show about Henry talking. She put Henry's tank on the ground.

"Everybody come see the talking capybara it only cost 50¢ cents!" Kate said. A lot of people rushed to Kate.

"This has to be a scam!" said one of the tourist. All the people in line payed and gathered around in a circle.

"Ok Henry say something or a pun." Kate said

"Fine." Henry said under his breathe. "Hi everyone having an excelent day?" Henry said. Everyone didn't believe their eyes. The next day and the next day the kept coming. One day Henry gets sick, Kate released him into the wild.

"Bye Henry!" Kate said

"Bye." said Henry

CONTENT: 2 Points

This response demonstrates inconsistent control in the Content dimension.

The composition has a vague central idea about the writer finding a talking capybara. The writer demonstrates only a partial understanding of the task as the vast majority of the story is conversational dialogue between the writer and the capybara without any specific details or evidence from the passage to show what

capybaras are like.

The only information in the composition that may have been extracted from the passage is the fact that the capybara was discovered near a pond (“Kate was taking pictures and exploring a pond”) and a general comment about its size (“Kate put Henry in a big tank tank since Henry is very long”). These two pieces of evidence are not developed adequately and do not reflect sufficient use of the passage. To get a higher score in Content, the writer needs to integrate evidence and details from the passage into the composition.

The response follows a chronological order using some basic transitions, and it has a beginning and a weak ending (“One day Henry got sick. Kate released him into the wild. ‘Bye Henry!’ Kate said ‘Bye.’ said Henry”). The organization is a strength of this response, but the weaknesses in other elements of the Content dimension, particularly the lack of development and very little passage information, are enough to keep the score at a 2.

STYLE: 3 Points

The writer demonstrates reasonable control in the Style dimension, showing some strengths and some weaknesses. This composition includes some interesting words and phrases that are appropriate to the task (“exploring a pond. She saw a capybara go into it’s nest,” “‘Those flowers look so beautiful and delicious!’ said Henry”). The word choice is clear rather than precise or vivid. The sentences are generally varied in length and structure, and the writer’s personality clearly shows through in the extensive use of dialogue in the essay.

1. Final Draft

I was living peacefully in my house, but when I went outside to play, there were millions of capybaras. I was screaming my head off. So I will tell you a story about capybaras, and living around them.

Capybaras are huge rodents. They can weigh up to 100 pounds. They are feet long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet tall. They can be big enough to knock down my bedroom door, like a hog, they can almost knock down my front door, because they're fast.

They make houses outdoors. If you go outside, run back in the house. They live near water. They are herbivores. They make houses in dirt.

They live in groups of 20. They communicate by making quiet sounds. They click with their tongues, like us. They squeal, whistle, and make breathy barking sounds.

So now you have learned a lot about capybaras, and about living near them. They are creepy. I hope you and I don't live near them.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This response demonstrates inconsistent control in the Content dimension, and the weaknesses outweigh the strengths.

The writer’s central idea about living near capybaras is vague, and the shift from the narrative style at the opening (“I was living peacefully in my house”) to a mainly expository one for the duration of the composition (“Capybaras are huge rodents,” “They make houses outdoors,” “They live in groups of 20”) shows that the writer has only a partial understanding of the task.

While the composition does include some information from the passage, it is not adequately developed; rather it is merely stated with no additional extension of evidence and ideas. The majority of the essay just restates information about the capybaras without integrating it into a story (“They live in groups of 20. They communicate by making quiet sounds. They click with their tongues, like us. They squeal, whistle, and make breathy barking sounds”). The response also includes some inaccurate information (“They can almost knock down my front door, because they’re fast”), which is contradictory to what the passage states regarding their speed (“They are chubby and have short legs, which makes them fairly slow runners”).

While there is some attempt at organization, the lack of transitions weakens the composition. To get a higher score in Content, this writer would need to integrate more well-chosen evidence from the passage into a more fully developed narrative about living near capybaras.

STYLE: 2 Points

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control in the Style dimension; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths. Although the writer includes some interesting words and phrases (“I was screaming my head off,” “They are creepy”), the word choice in this composition tends to be generic and limited. Short, choppy sentences and the lack of variety in sentence structure detract from the fluidity of the response. Many sentences start the same way (“They can,” “They are,” “They make,” “They live,” “They communicate,” “They click”). The writer’s voice is evident at times but inconsistent, because much of the composition consists of the restatement of basic facts from the passage.

iLEAP Grade 6

The Grade 6 Writing Test is **untimed**, but students should be given a minimum of 75 minutes to read the passage(s), plan and write their compositions, and check their work.

Scoring Information

Because of the heavy emphasis of standard 3 (conventions of writing) in the language section of the iLEAP tests, student compositions will be scored only for the dimensions of **Content** and **Style**. The Content dimension measures

- the focus of the student’s central idea;
- the development of that idea, including the appropriate and accurate use of information from the passage(s); and
- the organization of the student’s ideas.

The Style dimension evaluates the ways in which the student shapes and controls the language and the flow of the composition. Features of Style include

- word choice;
- sentence fluency, which includes sentence structure and sentence variety; and
- voice, the individual personality of the writing.

For each of these two dimensions, a student can earn from 1 to 4 score points.

A summary of the score points for the Writing session is shown below.

Dimensions	Maximum Possible Points
Content	4
Style	4
Total Points	8

There are two Content rubrics; one is used to score student compositions that respond to prompts with one passage; the other is for prompts with two passages. The Content and Style rubrics can be found on pages 57 through 59.

CONTENT (One Passage): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passage and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without evidence from the passage cannot receive a score higher than a 2 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage, OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

CONTENT (Two Passages): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passages and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE(S) AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition that addresses only one of the two passages cannot receive a score higher than a 3 in Content. A score of 4 cannot be assigned unless both passages have been addressed.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from at least one of the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage(s), OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage(s) and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

STYLE: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice

Key Questions: *Would you keep reading this composition if it were longer? Do the words, phrases, and sentences strengthen the content and allow the reader to move through the writing with ease?*

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> precise effective vivid words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear but less specific includes some interesting words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generic limited repetitive overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> functional simple (below grade level) may be inappropriate to the task
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluid, very easy to follow, because of variety in length, structure, and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally varied in length and structure Most sentences have varied beginnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no variety in length and structure Awkward sentences may affect the fluidity of the reading. same beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple sentences no variety Construction makes the response difficult to read.
VOICE (individual personality of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compelling and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, but may not be particularly compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak and/or inconsistent voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no voice Response is too brief to provide an adequate example of style; minimal attempt.

Compositions that are off topic, illegible, blank, insufficient, not written in English, a restatement of the prompt, or include only copied text from the passage(s) are considered unscorable and will receive zero points.

Grade 6 Sample Writing Prompt

At grade 6, the Writing Topic may direct students to write a story, explain or describe something, or convince someone of their position. On a test that has a prompt with one passage, the passage and the Writing Topic are on facing pages. On a test that has a prompt with two passages, the passages are on facing pages, and the Writing Topic is on the next right-hand page. This will allow students to go back and forth between the passages and the Writing Topic as they prepare their response. Below is a two-passage writing prompt that appeared on the field test administered in March 2012.

Directions: Read the speeches written by two students running for class president. As you read the speeches, think about which student would get your vote and why. Then use the speeches to help you write a well-organized multiparagraph composition.

Tyrese Caldwell's Speech

Imagine this: It's lunchtime at our school, and outside the halls of the building a perfect spring day awaits. Wouldn't it be great to step outside into the fresh air and eat lunch? With a new outdoor area reserved for students, we could! My name is Tyrese Caldwell. If you elect me as your class president, I will make sure this idea becomes a reality.

For a long time, my friends and I have been thinking of ways to improve our school grounds. We have plans for a student area that includes benches, grassy places for relaxing, and tables with umbrellas for shade. We could even ask for stereo speakers so we could enjoy music during lunch.

Sure, a project this amazing will require funds, but we have a plan for that too. With three or four fund-raising projects, including a car wash and candy and magazine sales, plus a campaign for donations, we could easily make enough money by the spring.

Fellow students, I have both the knowledge and the experience to get the job done. For the last two years I have been a student council class representative. In that short time, I came up with new ideas, and I listened to you. I got a lot done: dress-up day, the fan bus to the parish championship basketball game, order-out pizza days twice a month. Now that we're sixth graders, we have more say than ever on what goes on at our school. As your president for the next nine months, I will put forth all of my efforts to help create a better school. Vote for me if you want to make our school a truly great place.

Felicia Kent's Speech

Homework. Band. Choir. Sports. Chores at home. As sixth-grade students at Willow Middle School, our lives are busy. We don't want extra activities during the school year to take away from our already limited free time. That's why if you elect me, Felicia Kent, I will work for you, rather than the other way around.

"Simplicity and success!" That's my motto. Previous class presidents have introduced many types of activities, such as school dances and volunteer projects. My opponent in this election is doing the same. These ideas always sound great at the time, but they become a problem when we have to raise money, find supplies, and recruit help. For example, even if we build an outdoor student area, how many people could sit there? Certainly not the entire class. Who would supervise the area and clean it? Who would decide what music to play? We simply don't have time to take on such a big project. A vote for me is a vote for simplicity!

With me as your class president, your free time will be protected and our resources will be put to good use. Sixth grade is going to be a challenging year for all of us. I will work with the school administration to organize an after-school homework help center in the library with seventh-grade and eighth-grade volunteers to assist you. We will provide snacks and refreshments to all students who participate. Completing your homework at school will give you plenty of free time at home, time that can be used any way you choose.

Let's concentrate on being successful students while still enjoying time to rest and have fun. Choose Felicia Kent when you vote this Friday. You won't regret it.

Writing Topic

Think about the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate and what qualities would make a good class president.

Write a multiparagraph composition for your teacher explaining which candidate, Tyrese or Felicia, you would vote for and why. Use details from both speeches to help you explain your opinion.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- ▶ Be sure your composition has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- ▶ Use details from both speeches and include enough information so your teacher will understand your response.
- ▶ Be sure to write clearly and to check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Sample Student Work

The student compositions that are included in this release represent a range of scores designed to show teachers several kinds of responses to the new prompts. In the explanations that follow the compositions, rubric language was used whenever possible to help teachers better understand how the scores were determined.

The purpose of the score-point explanations is to

- focus on the three elements of each dimension, with special attention on the student’s use of the passage information;
- provide concrete examples from the composition to show specific strengths and weaknesses; and
- provide recommendations on what the student can do to improve the composition and their writing.

This information will help teachers work with the new prompts and rubrics, but it will also guide them as they begin implementing evidence-based writing, an important instructional shift of the CCSS.

School 1. Final Draft President

Schools are something to be cherished. They help students learn, and give teachers jobs. As students, it is important for us to have a voice, so we can have our opinions viewed as well. That person is normally the school's student president. If I could vote for Tyrese or Felicia for president, I would choose Felicia. I would choose Felicia because she is realistic, she wants to assist the students, and all Tyrese wants to do is have fun.

First of all, Felicia is exceedingly realistic. Her project does not require very much money, unlike Tyrese's project. Also, she isn't building a whole new, or ridiculous part of the school. All she wants is part-time usage of the school's library. She longs for the students to work hard, so their free-time can be put to good use. She is an appropriate, reasonable choice for class president.

Second of all, she wishes to help the students. She intends to set up an after-school homework help center that would aid students with any homework questions they have. The help center would

Final Draft (continued)

also benefit the pupil's grades, and it would assist the students' concentration too. Being in a peaceful, relaxing, and quiet place like that would, truly help them to apply the focus needed to make outstanding grades.

Last of all, while Felicia wants to work for the students, all Tyrese wants to do is have fun. In Tyrese's speech she never mentions the importance of education, nor ever mentions education at all. Tyrese only talked about how much fun an outside space would be, and the amount of labor they would have to put into it. That just doesn't sound appealing. She also mentions how many other "fun" projects she has helped with in the past like: pizza parties and dress-up day. None of which have to do with education.

In conclusion, if I could vote for class President I would choose Felicia over Tyrese. I choose Felicia because she is realistic, she wishes to assist the students, and Tyrese only wants to do fun activities. Felicia is an exceptional candidate, and I would happily choose her.

CONTENT: 4 Points

This response demonstrates consistent control of the Content dimension; many strengths are present.

The composition is sharply focused on assessing the candidates' strengths and weaknesses, with a continuing evaluation of how those candidates'

proposals would affect education. The student makes a choice and explains that choice by giving an appraisal drawn from both speeches, showing a complete understanding of the task.

The writer includes ample, well-chosen evidence from both passages to support the choice of Felicia for class president. This evidence is skillfully incorporated into the student's discussion, providing a logical and convincing rationale for the choice made. The ideas are thoroughly developed with details that are specific, relevant, and accurate ("she isn't building a whole, new, or ridiculous part of the school. All she wants is part-time usage of the schools library . . . She intends to set up an after-school homework help center . . . In Tyrese's speech she never mentions the importance of education, nor ever mentions education at all. Tyrese only talked about how much fun an outside space would be").

Strong organizational skills are displayed throughout this composition. An exceptionally well-crafted beginning sets up the importance of the topic ("As students, it is important for us to have a voice, so we can have our opinions viewed as well. That person is normally the school's student president"). It goes on to introduce the two candidates and then states the central idea and the supporting ideas ("I would choose Felicia because she is realistic, she wants to assist the students, and all Tyrese wants to do is have fun"). This plan is followed with a logical ordering of ideas and effective transitions that allow the reader to easily move through the writing. The ending restates the ideas presented and extends them by concluding, "Felicia is an exceptional candidate, and I would happily choose her," providing a satisfying sense of wholeness and completion.

STYLE: 4 Points

Precise, effective word choices (*ridiculous*, *assist*, *concentration*, *appealing*) and vivid phrases ("exceedingly realistic," "apply the focus needed," "make outstanding grades") communicate clear ideas. Sentences are complex and varied, creating a fluid, very easy-to-follow rhythm. A compelling and engaging voice supporting Felicia's candidacy is clearly evident. Many strengths are present in the Style dimension of this composition, showing consistent control.

1. Final Draft

Tyrese and Felicia speeches were both really great, but I choose Tyrese's speech. Tyrese would be a great class president for the class because he has so much more to offer us, and he's doing more things that kids would like and enjoy, and they also can make new friends.

I choose Tyrese Childrell's speech because kids need a place for kids just to hang out, and to talk and play with friends. Another thing is its fun and exciting. We kids all enjoy music and just to have fun and other things.

The fund-raising for the lunch area is a great idea. Fund-raiser are amazing and it benefits are school, like the car washing, selling candy bars, and selling magazines. Fund-raising is not only good for the school it gets kids active instead of laying down watching T.V.

The dress-up day would be nice also, and the fan bus to the parish championship basket ball game is also good because we are supporting our team and having team spirit.

There would be a big open space like the cafeteria and before we would leave we would pick up after our selves because we are in

Final Draft (continued)

the sixth grade we are old enough. We would have
a certain classes on a specific day to listen to
what ever music they wanted.

I give many reason why I voted for
Tyrese, and I liked what i read better than Felicia's
Speech

CONTENT: 3 Points

This response demonstrates reasonable control of the Content dimension; there are some strengths and some weaknesses.

The writer maintains a clear central idea, that “Tyrese would be a great class president for the class,” throughout the response. A general understanding of the task is shown as the student explains why Tyrese would get his or her vote. However, all the details provided address only one of the two passages (*Tyrese Caldwell’s Speech*), demonstrating that the writer does not have a complete understanding of the task.

The development of the composition includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from Tyrese’s speech to support the student’s choice. There is an argument made to refute two of Felicia’s criticisms of Tyrese’s plan (“before we would leave we would pick up after our selves because we are in the sixth grade we are old enough. We would have a certain classes on a specific day to listen to what ever music they wanted”), but the evidence is not ample and well chosen, as no details are drawn from *Felicia Kent’s Speech* to help clarify the writer’s argument. The student does add his or her own ideas and reflections (“Fund-Raising is not only good for the school it gets kids active instead of laying down wathing T.V.”), and the ideas are developed adequately but not thoroughly, with the reader having to make some of the connections. The details used are relevant and accurate.

The composition has a logical order. The beginning sets up the main idea (“I choos Tyrese’s speech”) and the support (“he has so much more to offer us, and he’s doing more things that kids would like and enjoy, and they also can make new friends”). The idea about making new friends is dropped, but the other ideas are developed. There is a general grouping of ideas, although the outdoor break area is discussed in the second paragraph and then returned to in the fifth paragraph. While there is a logical order to the ideas for the most part, they are not all introduced clearly and linked effectively enough to allow the reader to move easily through the composition. A few transitions are used.

STYLE: 3 Points

The writer’s word choice is clear but not precise or vivid. There are some appropriate and interesting phrases used, such as “gets kids active instead of

laying down watching T.V.” and “supporting our team and having team spirit.” Sentences have varied beginnings and lengths and create a reasonably fluid reading, in spite of a few that are awkward. The voice of the student is clear but not especially compelling or engaging. A reasonable control of the Style dimension is demonstrated.

1. Final Draft

Zyrose and Felicia both have great ideas to improving our school. I think Zyrose has the better plan, because he has plans to bring better things to our school. He has plans to raise money for his ideas.

Felicia don't want us to have a fun time at school she wants the fun to be at home. She wants to get seventh and eighth-graders to participate in a after school program to help with homework but they don't want to do that they want better time at school to see there friends.

I would vote for Zyrose because he will bring new stuff to our school like out side lunch time. He will have music playing and a shady place to relax at. It will bring time for students to visit with friends.

On the other hand Felicia wants we to have more free time at home and have a boring school. Many people would not participate in after school

Final Draft (continued)

programs. They won't better time at school and fun time at home too.

Both of them have great plans for our school but I think Tyrese has a time of fun planned. He has plans to raise money for the event he also knows what the students wants to do. He will also listen to the students at our school to see what they want to improve.

CONTENT: 3 Points

This response demonstrates reasonable control in the Content dimension, with some strengths and some weaknesses.

A clear central idea is established (“I think Tyrese has the better plane because he has plans to bring better things to our school”) and is maintained throughout the composition. The student shows understanding of the task by choosing a candidate and explaining that choice with details from both passages.

A strength of this response is the writer’s use of evidence from both passages. From *Tyrese Caldwell’s Speech*, the student cites Tyrese’s plan to raise money and to provide outside lunchtime, music, and shady places. From *Felicia Kent’s Speech*, the plan for fun at home rather than at school, the participation of seventh and eighth graders to help with homework, and the after-school nature of the proposed program are all incorporated into the discussion. The evidence included, while sufficient and appropriate, stops somewhat short. More development is needed for a higher score. For instance, the student supports the choice of Tyrese by stating twice that “he has plans to raise money,” but those plans are never explained. More thorough development and more specific details are needed.

In discussing the pros of Tyrese’s plans and the cons of Felicia’s, the writer uses a logical order of ideas which allows the reader to move through the composition without confusion. There is a clear beginning. A weaker ending attempts to summarize the main and supporting ideas, but when the student adds new information in the final sentence, it leaves the conclusion feeling somewhat uncertain. Some transitions are used (“on the other hand,” “also”).

STYLE: 2 Points

This response demonstrates inconsistent control of the features in the Style dimension, with weaknesses outweighing the strengths. The word choices are clear when the student is restating ideas from the passages, but at other times the language used is more generic (“plans to bring better things to our school,” “he will bring new stuff to our school”). The verb constructions are limited and overused, often relying on the verbs and helping verbs *has*, *want*, *will*, and *would*. There is little sentence variety, with most sentences beginning with the same type of pronoun plus basic verb construction (“I think,” “He has,” “She won’t,” “I would,” “He will,” “It will,” “They won’t”). A stronger voice would be created with the use of active verbs and different sentence types.

1. Final Draft

Both the candidates have really good ideas but only one candidate can be class president. I'm going to tell you why and why I shouldn't pick both and which one I pick for class president and which one I picked.

First I'm going to tell you why I should pick Tyrese Caldwell for class president. I should pick her because she wants a outdoor arena so that the kids can walk outside so that the kids can eat their lunch and relax outside where there is fresh air. The reason I don't want to pick her is because it has nothing to do with learning.

Next I'm going to tell you why I should choose Felicia Kent for class president. I should pick her because she wants to have a school library, a school dance, and an after school homework help center.

Final Draft (continued)

Fore both things the both candidates
picked we need to work hard and make
money to support their ideas.

Both the ideas are great but I like
one the best. I like Felicia Kent fore class
president because her ideas support learning.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This response demonstrates inconsistent control of the Content dimension; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths.

The central idea is vague (“Both the candidates have really good ideas but . . . I’m going to tell you why and why I shouldn’t pick both and which one I pick for class president”), but the student does show a general understanding of the task by selecting details from both passages to help try to explain his or her choice.

Although the writer addresses both passages, the evidence included is insufficient to explain his or her choice of candidates. Some details explaining the strengths of Tyrese’s candidacy are included (“she wants an outdoor arena so that the kids can walk outside so that the kids can eat their lunch and relax outside where there is fresh air”). However, when the writer explains Felicia’s candidacy, the information is list-like and mostly inaccurate. The student states, “she wants to have a school library,” which shows a misunderstanding of Felicia’s proposal to have the help center *in* the school library. The assertion that she wants a school dance is also a misreading of the passage, since Felicia uses the dance to set up a contrast to her own plans. The student extends ideas from the passages only in the evaluation that Tyrese’s proposals have nothing to do with learning, while Felicia’s support learning. More development of ideas and greater accuracy in the use of text information is required for a higher score.

An attempt to organize the response is made, with a weak beginning and an abrupt ending. The student does use some transitions.

STYLE: 2 Points

Word choice in this response is mostly limited, with few clear words or phrases that are not borrowed from the passages. The sentences are sometimes awkwardly constructed, making them unclear (“I’m going to tell you why and why I shouldnt pick both and wich one I pick fore class president and wich one I picked” and “Fore both things the both candidates picked we need to work hard and make money to support their ideas”). The student’s voice is inconsistent.

iLEAP Grade 7

The Grade 7 Writing Test is **untimed**, but students should be given a minimum of 75 minutes to read the passage(s), plan and write their compositions, and check their work.

Scoring Information

Because of the heavy emphasis of standard 3 (conventions of writing) in the language section of the iLEAP tests, student compositions will be scored only for the dimensions of **Content** and **Style**. The Content dimension measures

- the focus of the student’s central idea;
- the development of that idea, including the appropriate and accurate use of information from the passage(s); and
- the organization of the student’s ideas.

The Style dimension evaluates the ways in which the student shapes and controls the language and the flow of the composition. Features of Style include

- word choice;
- sentence fluency, which includes sentence structure and sentence variety; and
- voice, the individual personality of the writing.

For each of these two dimensions, a student can earn from 1 to 4 score points.

A summary of the score points for the Writing session is shown below.

Dimensions	Maximum Possible Points
Content	4
Style	4
Total Points	8

There are two Content rubrics; one is used to score student compositions that respond to prompts with one passage; the other is for prompts with two passages. The Content and Style rubrics can be found on pages 77 through 79.

CONTENT (One Passage): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passage and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without evidence from the passage cannot receive a score higher than a 2 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage, OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

CONTENT (Two Passages): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passages and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE(S) AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition that addresses only one of the two passages cannot receive a score higher than a 3 in Content. A score of 4 cannot be assigned unless both passages have been addressed.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from at least one of the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage(s), OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage(s) and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

STYLE: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice

Key Questions: *Would you keep reading this composition if it were longer? Do the words, phrases, and sentences strengthen the content and allow the reader to move through the writing with ease?*

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> precise effective vivid words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear but less specific includes some interesting words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generic limited repetitive overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> functional simple (below grade level) may be inappropriate to the task
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluid, very easy to follow, because of variety in length, structure, and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally varied in length and structure Most sentences have varied beginnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no variety in length and structure Awkward sentences may affect the fluidity of the reading. same beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple sentences no variety Construction makes the response difficult to read.
VOICE (individual personality of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compelling and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, but may not be particularly compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak and/or inconsistent voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no voice Response is too brief to provide an adequate example of style; minimal attempt.

Compositions that are off topic, illegible, blank, insufficient, not written in English, a restatement of the prompt, or include only copied text from the passage(s) are considered unscorable and will receive zero points.

Grade 7 Sample Writing Prompt

At grade 7, the Writing Topic may direct students to write a story, explain or describe something, or convince someone of their position. On a test that has a prompt with one passage, the passage and the Writing Topic are on facing pages. On a test that has a prompt with two passages, the passages are on facing pages, and the Writing Topic is on the next right-hand page. This will allow students to go back and forth between the passages and the Writing Topic as they prepare their response. On the following pages is a one-passage writing prompt that appeared on the field test administered in March 2012.

Directions: Read the passage about the California Gold Rush. As you read the passage, think about what it would be like to be a gold digger during the gold rush. Then use the passage to help you write a well-organized multiparagraph composition.

Gold Rush

The California Gold Rush began in 1848. News that the valuable metal had been found in the hills and rivers of California spread quickly. People traveled from as far as the East Coast and other countries to join in the great adventure. Little did they know that this same adventure would also have hardships, danger, and disappointment.

Gold diggers, people who dig and mine for gold, lived in camps and mining towns while looking for gold in the rivers and hills. The towns were small and very simple. Tents and shacks lined the dirt streets. However, as towns grew, cabins and wooden buildings were built. Since gold diggers spent many hours working, meals were usually prepared outdoors over a fire. They often ate game they had hunted during the day, as well as beans, potatoes, and onions they had gathered. Their day-to-day lives were spent hauling supplies to and from camp in search of gold. In the evenings they would relax by playing cards with friends or writing letters home. On the weekends they would travel to one of the nearby cities.

To be a good gold digger, one had to have the right tools. One of the most common tools was the gold pan, which was disc-shaped and about the size of a large dinner plate. It was made of steel and looked like a shallow bowl. The gold digger would work along a river, filling the gold pan with loose sediment and dirt from the river bottom. Then, the materials would be rocked back and forth in the pan while being held under the water. The gold, being heavier than silt, would settle to the bottom of the pan while the lighter, less valuable materials would wash out. Gold diggers would know they had found gold once they caught sight of the flashes of bright gold among the darker stones. This sight was often referred to as “showing the color.” This simple method of searching for gold was one of the first and was available to anyone who had the money for the pan.

Those who “panned” for gold came for many reasons. People from all backgrounds wanted to strike it rich. Many also wanted to support their families back home. The gold rush resulted in so much digging and panning that the available gold in the rivers was quickly depleted, and finding a good source of gold was rare. A small number of gold diggers became rich, despite the hardships of malnutrition and severe weather and the dangers of being robbed. As the sources of gold were found farther into the hills and mountains, mining changed. What had once been a solitary task each miner did with some water and a metal pan or sifter now became projects run by larger organizations, with miners working long hours, often underground, and using heavy machinery to locate gold by crushing rocks. This change also contributed to the decline of gold diggers, but not before they had made an important mark on history.

Writing Topic

Imagine what it would be like to be a gold digger during the California Gold Rush of 1848.

Write a multiparagraph composition for your teacher explaining whether or not you would have wanted to be a gold digger during the California Gold Rush. Use details from the passage to help you explain your choice.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- ▶ Be sure your composition has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- ▶ Use details from the passage and include enough information so your teacher will understand your response.
- ▶ Be sure to write clearly and to check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Sample Student Work

The student compositions that are included in this release represent a range of scores designed to show teachers several kinds of responses to the new prompts. In the explanations that follow the compositions, rubric language was used whenever possible to help teachers better understand how the scores were determined.

The purpose of the score-point explanations is to

- focus on the three elements of each dimension, with special attention on the student’s use of the passage information;
- provide concrete examples from the composition to show specific strengths and weaknesses; and
- provide recommendations on what the student can do to improve the composition and their writing.

This information will help teachers work with the new prompts and rubrics, but it will also guide them as they begin implementing evidence-based writing, an important instructional shift of the CCSS.

1. Final Draft

Gold Digging in California

The Gold Rush of 1848 was a major event in United States history. When people heard of the gold discovered in California, their population boomed. People came from far and wide in the hopes of striking it rich. I would not have been one of them. The obstacles that came with the 'Gold-Rush experience' would not have been worth it.

Many of the people that scurried to California to find gold were left empty handed. The gross amount of diggers left people with even a smaller chance to get their hands on the valuable metal. Multiple panners believed that the gold they would find would pay off the expenses of traveling and the tools needed for digging. What if they were not one of the few lucky people that found gold? If you ask me, it wouldn't be worth the risk.

The trip to the West would be extremely long and dangerous. Many settlers from the East would have to load up their wagons for a trip which would last months. Many of the trails were steep, dry, and rocky. The wagons were not designed for these rough road conditions, and there was also a large chance of getting robbed while traveling. Most of these incidents happened at night while the travelers were resting. I believe gold is not worth putting your own life on the line.

Final Draft (continued)

I also wouldn't want to deal with the living conditions at the camps. The gold diggers were constantly outside in small, unsteady shacks and tents despite the weather conditions. The lack of nutrition at the camps didn't really help the diggers out. They ate the game they were able to hunt, and they consumed whatever they could gather. Being the girly-girl I am, I wouldn't even think about putting up with these conditions.

Although the California Gold Rush led a handful of lucky people to riches, the risks would be far too dangerous for me. The harsh living conditions, the long, grueling trips to the West, and the risk of not even finding gold seem like good enough reasons to not have taken part of the Gold Rush of 1848.

CONTENT: 4 Points

This writer demonstrates consistent control of the Content dimension.

The central idea is sharply focused on whether or not the writer would have wanted to be a gold digger during the California Gold Rush and shows a complete understanding of this task. This focus is maintained throughout the composition.

The composition includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to support the position that the writer would not have wanted to be a gold digger, citing the risks, difficulties, and dangers referred to in the passage ("Many of the people that scurried to California to find gold were left empty handed," "a large chance of getting robbed while traveling," "The gold diggers were constantly outside in small, unsteady shacks and tents despite the weather conditions," "The lack of nutrition at the camps"). It also includes other information about the Gold Rush not found in the passage. Both the passage information and the writer's ideas are well integrated and thoroughly developed.

The composition demonstrates evidence of planning with a logical development and flow of ideas from beginning to end. Evidence is presented in each of the paragraphs and consistently followed by a concluding statement of the writer's opinion for support. This strategy helps guide the reader from one idea to

the next. A clear beginning and ending also contribute to the overall sense of wholeness conveyed in this response.

STYLE: 4 Points

This writer demonstrates consistent control of the Style dimension. Precise and effective word choice and vivid words and phrases are evident throughout the composition (“population boomed,” “obstacles,” “the people that scurried,” “trails were steep, dry, and rocky,” “small, unsteady shacks and tents,” “grueling trips to the West”). The sentences are fluid and easy to follow because the writer utilizes a variety of often complex and sophisticated sentence patterns throughout the composition. The writer’s voice is consistently compelling and engaging, expressing a clear, convincing opinion about not wanting to be a gold digger in the California Gold Rush (“What if they were not one of the few lucky people that found gold? If you ask me, it wouldn’t be worth the risk,” “I believe gold is not worth putting your own life on the line,” “Being the girly-girl I am, I wouldn’t even think about putting up with these conditions”).

1. Final Draft

I, ~~she~~, would absolutely have been a gold miner. There are many advantages and disadvantages about being a gold miner. I, honestly, would want to mine for gold, even if it was a big risk.

The Gold Rush began in 1848 and lasted for a few years. That is where the miners got the name, "miner forty-niners," because, although the Gold Rush began in 1848, it wasn't a very big deal until 1849. I would mainly have been a miner because it would bring wealth to support my family. Also, many people think and say it was more work than any other job. Well, that isn't true. This is because you would only work on week days and only in the daylight hours. At night, they would play cards or write letters to home. On weekends, they would go into the nearest town or city. Also, on some days, they would spend the day hunting, gathering, and farming. They would use the food they hunted, farmed, and gathered to cook over a fire and eat. Sure it was hard being away

Final Draft (continued)

from home, but I still think it's worth working in the mines with your friends.

There are a few minor disadvantages to being a "miner forty-niner." One disadvantage is being so far from home. Because they were all the way across the country, they didn't have time to visit family. Instead, they would write to them. But, this would take nearly a week to get to the family so they wouldn't get a letter from them in two or more weeks. Another negative factor about mining is that you have a slight chance at being robbed. Although, it is your responsibility to hide and keep your gold and belongings safe.

Although there are few negative factors, there are still many positives to being a miner in the 1848 Gold Rush. Therefore, I would choose to be a miner in California. This would bring great fortune to my family.

CONTENT: 3 Points

This writer demonstrates reasonable control of the Content dimension.

The student shows a general understanding of the task, using details from the passage to support the clear central idea that he or she "would want to mine for gold, even if it was a big risk." This idea is maintained throughout the composition, although at times the focus on being a gold miner weakens.

The student includes sufficient and appropriate evidence to support his or her choice of whether or not to be a gold digger. This evidence from the passage generally supports the position that it would be a positive experience, even with risks (“it would bring wealth to support my family,” it is not “more work than any other job” because “you would only work on week days and only in the daylight hours”). The effect of the evidence and the supporting details, however, is undercut at times by the presentation of the disadvantages. While it is an effective technique for the writer to present arguments against his or her choice, the writer does not always effectively refute the counter-examples in these cases (“Sure it was hard being away from home, but I still think it’s worth working in the mines with your friends,” “you have a slight chance at being robbed. Although, it is your responsibility to hide and keep your gold and belongings safe”). Most of the details in the composition are relevant and accurate.

The composition follows a logical order. A clear beginning and ending and the use of basic transitions throughout help guide the reader.

STYLE: 3 Points

The writer demonstrates reasonable control of the features in the Style dimension. Word choice is clear but less specific. Although many of the words are general and fairly common and the composition lacks vivid vocabulary (“it was a big risk,” “it wasn’t a very big deal,” “they would write to them”), the words are appropriate to the task. Most of the sentences have varied beginnings, and they are generally varied in length and structure. Although there is some repetition (“At night, they would play,” “On weekends, they would go,” “Also, on some days, they would spend,” “They would use the food”), the writer does use many complex sentences. The student’s voice comes through in the composition, but it is not particularly compelling or convincing.

1. Final Draft

If I had the choice to be a gold digger from the California Gold Rush, I would be one. I would want to be one to help my family, become rich, and to become more than a poor family no one knows. I know I can be a significant digger because I am full of determination.

The first reason I would want to be a gold digger is to help my family. To help my family, we would have more food and more medicine. If one of my family members get ill, they would be able to heal because of our supply of medication. Also if someone gets injured, we would have the right utensils to help that family member. Helping my family would be a big part of becoming a gold digger for me.

My next reason to become a gold digger is to become rich. When I gather up more and more gold, I will buy more land and build a new house like no other. The land I would garden on, and have for my horses and children. My house would be made of stone or brick. It will stand out while everyone else has a house built of wood.

Final Draft (continued)

One more reason for becoming a gold digger is to become more than a poor family no one knows. Once I build my new house, get more land, and have nice horses, everyone in town would want to be our friend. We would also have nicer clothes. My families loneliness will be gone.

In conclusion, I would become a gold digger for all of those reasons. My life would be much better. Most importantly, my family will be happy.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This writer demonstrates inconsistent control over the features of the Content dimension; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths.

While there is a central idea that the writer would want to be a gold digger to get rich and help his or her family, there is a lack of understanding of the task. The passage is not addressed in the composition, limiting this response to a score point of 2. Instead, the reader is provided with a long list of things the student would do once he or she became rich from mining gold (“If one of my family members get ill, they would be able to heal because of our supply of medication,” “I will buy more land and build a new house like no other. The land I would garden on, and have for my horses and children”). It is possible that the idea of building of a house with a garden was inspired by the shacks the miners lived in that were described in the passage, but this is not at all clear. Much of the information is not relevant to being a gold digger. Other means of getting rich could be substituted for gold digging and the composition would not substantially change.

The composition uses a basic five-paragraph organizational structure with a beginning, three body paragraphs in the middle, and an ending. Although this structure creates a logical order which allows the reader to move through the composition, the transitions (“first reason,” “next reason,” “one more reason,” and “In conclusion”) are very basic.

STYLE: 3 Points

The writer demonstrates reasonable control in the Style dimension, with some strengths and some weaknesses. Word choice is clear but less specific. There

are some precise words (*significant, determination, medication, utensils*) and interesting phrases (“a new house like no other,” “It will stand out while everyone else has a house built of wood”), but most of the language is general. Sentences are generally varied in length and structure, and their beginnings are varied, lending them a natural flow. The writer’s voice is clear but not particularly compelling.

1. Final Draft

Gold diggers are people who dig and mine for gold. They are living in mining towns and camps while looking for gold in the rivers and hills. If you ask me "Whether or not I would have wanted to be a gold digger during the California Gold Rush?", I would say that I wouldn't want to be a gold digger for some reasons.

Gold diggers work hard to just get gold. Their towns were small and very simple, but the town grew, wooden buildings were built and cabins. Gold diggers spent many hours working, looking for gold, and their meals were prepared over fire outdoors. They also spent hauling supplies to and from camp in search for gold, day-to-day, of their lives. Gold diggers also need the right tools for gold.

If you want to be a gold digger during the California Gold Rush, one of them have to have the right tools called the gold pan, that is disc-shape and about the size of a large dinner plate made out of steel. Even gold diggers had to work along a river to get gold with their gold pan. Most of them wanted to support their families back home. A small number of gold diggers became rich, caused the severe weather and hardships of malnutrition and the dangers of being robbed. The California Gold Rush must have been harder back then.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This writer demonstrates inconsistent control over the features of the Content dimension.

The central idea of this response is vague and loosely maintained. While the writer states his or her position (“I would say that I wouldn’t want to be a gold digger for some reasons”), most of the information in the response consists of directly copied or paraphrased text from the passage, with little elaboration. The evidence has not been purposefully selected to support the writer’s position. Some of the sentences describe negative aspects of gold digging, but others do not. Overall, the response is more a retelling of the passage than a composition explaining the writer’s position by using relevant evidence from the passage. The student has attempted to organize the composition. The organizational pattern mimics the organization of the passage itself, in that sentences are copied or paraphrased in the same order as they appear in the passage. This lack of purpose in the organization is one more indication that the writer has only a partial understanding of the task. There is a beginning, but the weak ending (“The California Gold Rush must have been harder back then”) only vaguely relates to the writer’s stated position.

STYLE: 2 Points

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control over the features of the Style dimension; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths.

As most of the information is copied or paraphrased from the passage, it is difficult to determine the writer’s own ability to form varied, correct sentences. The attempts at paraphrasing result in awkward sentences that affect the fluidity of the reading and make the word choice unclear at times (“They also spent hauling supplies to and from camp in search for gold, day-to-day,” “If you want to be a gold digger during the California Gold Rush, one of them have to have the right tools called the gold pan, that is disc-shape and about the size of a large dinner plate made out of steel,” “A small number of gold diggers became rich, caused the severe weather and hardships of malnutrition and the dangers of being robbed”).

The writer’s voice is weak because it has very little opportunity to show through the copied and paraphrased information that comprises the majority of this composition.

LEAP Grade 8

The Grade 8 Writing Test is **untimed**, but students should be given a minimum of 90 minutes to read the passage(s), plan and write their compositions, and check their work.

Scoring Information

The LEAP compositions are scored for **Content** and **Style**, but they also are scored for the conventions of writing: Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling. The Content dimension measures

- the focus of the student’s central idea;
- the development of that idea, including the appropriate and accurate use of information from the passage(s); and
- the organization of the student’s ideas.

The Style dimension evaluates the ways in which the student shapes and controls the language and the flow of the composition. Features of Style include

- word choice;
- sentence fluency, which includes sentence structure and sentence variety; and
- voice, the individual personality of the writing.

For each of these two dimensions, a student can earn from 1 to 4 score points.

In addition, the grade 8 compositions are rated as showing either “acceptable control” or “unacceptable control” in the conventions: **Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling**. An acceptable rating earns 1 score point, while an unacceptable rating earns none.

A summary of the score points for the Writing session is shown below.

Dimensions	Maximum Possible Points
Content	4
Style	4
Sentence Formation	1
Usage	1
Mechanics	1
Spelling	1
Total Points	12

There are two Content rubrics; one is used to score student compositions that respond to prompts with one passage; the other is for prompts with two passages. The Content and Style rubrics can be found on pages 96 through 98.

CONTENT (One Passage): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passage and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without information from the passage cannot receive a score higher than a 2 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate information from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage, OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

CONTENT (Two Passages): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passages and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE(S) AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition that addresses only one of the two passages cannot receive a score higher than a 3 in Content. A score of 4 cannot be assigned unless both passages have been addressed.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from at least one of the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage(s), OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage(s) and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

STYLE: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice

Key Questions: *Would you keep reading this composition if it were longer? Do the words, phrases, and sentences strengthen the content and allow the reader to move through the writing with ease?*

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> precise effective vivid words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear but less specific includes some interesting words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generic limited repetitive overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> functional simple (below grade level) may be inappropriate to the task
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluid, very easy to follow, because of variety in length, structure, and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally varied in length and structure Most sentences have varied beginnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no variety in length and structure Awkward sentences may affect the fluidity of the reading. same beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple sentences no variety Construction makes the response difficult to read.
VOICE (individual personality of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compelling and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, but may not be particularly compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak and/or inconsistent voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no voice Response is too brief to provide an adequate example of style; minimal attempt.

In some cases, a composition may not be scorable. For example, if it is illegible or if it includes only copied text from the given passage(s), it will not be scored in any dimension and will receive a score of zero. A paper may be off-topic and cannot be scored for Content or Style, but it may be scored for Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling. Such a paper could receive a maximum of 4 of 12 points.

Grade 8 Sample Writing Prompt

At grade 8, the Writing Topic may direct students to write a story, explain or describe something, or convince someone of their position. On a test that has a prompt with one passage, the passage and the Writing Topic are on facing pages. On a test that has a prompt with two passages, the passages are on facing pages, and the Writing Topic is on the next right-hand page. This will allow students to go back and forth between the passages and the Writing Topic as they prepare their response. Below is a one-passage writing prompt that appeared on the field test administered in March 2012.

Directions: Read the passage about a student who is thinking about joining a school club. As you read the passage, think about what might happen next. Then use the passage to help you write a well-organized multiparagraph story.

Words of Wisdom

Aiden placed his pencil and notebook into his backpack and walked toward the exit of the classroom. Just as he reached the door, he stopped and turned back to ask his English teacher a question. “Mr. Salter, can you tell me what the word ‘modest’ means?”

Mr. Salter looked up from the papers he was grading and said, “Well, it depends on the context. Could you use it in a sentence so I can give you the correct definition?”

“Sure,” said Aiden. “In fact, I’ll use it in a quotation: ‘A superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions.’”

“Wow, Aiden, that’s quite profound!” laughed Mr. Salter. “Where did you hear that?”

Aiden smiled. “It’s a quotation from Confucius, the ancient Chinese philosopher. Ms. Conley posted it on the bulletin board outside her classroom and said it has something to do with the Middle School Service Club.”

“In that case,” responded Mr. Salter, “‘modest’ means a reasonable amount. A person who is ‘modest in his speech’ does not talk too much. Instead, that person proves his point through his actions. It is similar to another quotation, ‘Actions speak louder than words.’ It means that what you do says more about you than what you say. Does that help you understand?”

“Yes. Thank you, Mr. Salter,” said Aiden.

“You’re quite welcome. I hope you consider joining the Middle School Service Club; they do a lot of important things for our school and our community. If not, I hope you will still think about that quotation and see if you can find a way to use those words each day.”

Aiden had heard about the activities the Middle School Service Club participates in. Club members have helped by participating in School Clean-Up Day, collecting canned goods for the local food bank, and tutoring elementary students after school.

On the bus that afternoon, many of the students were discussing all the clubs and other activities that they might join that year. A few were talking on and on about their plans. Aiden noticed that none of them mentioned the Service Club. When he told them that he was thinking about joining, the boys looked at him, and for a split second there was silence. Then they burst out laughing.

“Aiden,” said Tim, “who wants to be part of that club? All they do is work. I don’t see what’s fun about cleaning up trash and serving meals at a homeless shelter. Why don’t you join the debate team with us? We’ll talk about the issues that matter. That’s how things really get done.”

Aiden didn’t respond. He sat quietly in his seat thinking about the quotation on Ms. Conley’s bulletin board and what Mr. Salter said about it.

Writing Topic

Think about what Aiden might do next. Do you think he will join the Service Club? How do you think the quotation and the boys' reaction might affect Aiden?

Write a multiparagraph story for your teacher about Aiden and what you think will happen next. Use details from the passage to help you tell your story.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- ▶ Be sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- ▶ Use details from the passage and include enough information so your teacher will understand what happened in your story.
- ▶ Be sure to write clearly and to check your story for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Sample Student Work

The student compositions that are included in this release represent a range of scores designed to show teachers several kinds of responses to the new prompts. In the explanations that follow the compositions, rubric language was used whenever possible to help teachers better understand how the scores were determined.

The purpose of the score-point explanations is to

- focus on the three elements of each dimension, with special attention on the student’s use of the passage information;
- provide concrete examples from the composition to show specific strengths and weaknesses; and
- provide recommendations on what the student can do to improve the composition and their writing.

This information will help teachers work with the new prompts and rubrics, but it will also guide them as they begin implementing evidence-based writing, an important instructional shift of the CCSS.

1. Final Draft

Aiden sat in his seat, remembering that quote. "A superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions." He went home that day, thinking about what he should do. "I know what I'll do," Aiden thought to himself, "I'll ask Mr. Salter what he thinks I should do." So the next day, as the bell rang for lunch, Aiden packed his things and walked toward his teacher's desk. "Mr. Salter, I have a question to ask you."

Mr. Salter closed the book he was reading and looked up at Aiden. "And what might that question be?"

"Well," Aiden said, "It's about the Middle School Service Club. I was talking to some kids about it, and they laughed at me for wanting to join. They said I should join the debate team instead, so I came to ask you about what you think I should do."

"Aiden," Mr. Salter began, "Do you remember that quote you told me about yesterday?"

"Yes," Aiden replied, "A superior man is modest in his

Final Draft (continued)

speech, but exceeds in his actions."

"Well there's your answer," Mr. Salter said, smiling.

Aiden understood what he had to do. During lunchtime, he talked to Ms. Conley about joining the Service Club. He filled out some papers, got permission from his parents, and the very next day he was picking up trash in the city streets with the club. As he picked up garbage, he could see the kids from the bus walking toward him. "Hey, Aiden," Tim said, "I see you didn't follow my advice. Why would you even want to be a part of this club, anyway?"

"Because," Aiden said, "A superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions. In other words, actions speak louder than words."

"Wow. I never thought of it that way," Timmy said. Two days later, Aiden, Timmy, and the boys were all serving food at homeless shelter.

CONTENT: 4 Points

The writer demonstrates consistent control in the Content dimension, and many strengths are present in this response.

The writer demonstrates a complete understanding of the task by continuing the story and fully describing what happened next as well as how the quotation affected Aiden's decision. The story is sharply focused on the central idea of

how the quotation affected Aiden’s deliberations about joining the Middle School Service Club.

The response includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to build on and support the central theme (“Aiden sat in his seat, remembering that quote,” “Do you remember that quote you told me about yesterday?” “In other words, actions speak louder than words”). The writer thoughtfully integrates the principle characters (Mr. Salter, Ms. Conley, and Tim) and the ongoing dialogue between them into the conclusion of the story. The details used are relevant, accurate, and add to the development of the story (“It’s about the Middle School Service Club. I was talking to some kids about it, and they laughed at me,” “As he picked up garbage, he could see the kids from the bus,” “Two days later, Aiden, Timmy, and the boys were all serving food at homeless shelter”).

The organization shows evidence of thoughtful planning throughout, moving the reader easily through the story to a satisfying conclusion that contributes a sense of wholeness to the composition. Sophisticated use of subtle transitional phrases embedded into the narrative (“He went home that day, thinking about what he should do,” “So the next day, as the bell rang for lunch,” “Mr. Salter closed the book he was reading and looked up at Aiden,” “During lunchtime,” “As he picked up garbage,” “Two days later”) effectively move the reader through the story and clearly define the timeline of events.

STYLE: 4 Points

The writer demonstrates consistent control in the Style dimension; many strengths are present in this response.

Effective and precise word choices and phrases appropriate to a narrative task are used throughout the response. Excellent use of dialogue, which mirrors the style of the passage, is well integrated into the narrative, adding relevance to the story and character development (“I know what I’ll do,’ Aiden thought to himself, ‘I’ll ask Mr. Salter,’” “‘Aiden,’ Mr. Salter began, ‘Do you remember that quote you told me about yesterday?’” “‘Well there’s your answer,’ Mr. Salter said, smiling”).

Sentences flow smoothly throughout the composition. There are many complex, sophisticated structures with a variety of beginnings and lengths, all of which lend a fluid, easy readability to the narrative. The writer thoughtfully and effectively reproduces the voice of the main characters from the passage and integrates it with his or her own individual personality, resulting in a consistently compelling and engaging voice.

CONVENTIONS: 4 Points

This writer demonstrates consistent control of sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling in the Conventions dimension. With exceptional skill in composing sentences, this writer incorporates variety and complexity to express thematic ideas and extend the narrative (“Mr. Salter closed the book he was reading and looked up at Aiden. ‘And what might that question be?’”) The only usage error is omitting the *a* preceding “homeless shelter.” The writer also shows exceptional skill in correctly punctuating and capitalizing extensive dialogue throughout the essay, missing only one end quote (“ . . . actions speak louder than words”). Words are spelled correctly throughout the composition.

1. Final Draft

Aiden went home that night and thought about what he should do. He had a big decision to make, and was not quite sure about it. He decided to talk to his mom about the situation.

When Aiden told his mom about the quote and what the other boys said, she was all for the idea about him joining the club. "The boys are only using words, not actions," said his mom. Aiden thought about the quote: "A superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions." That meant if he joined the Service Club, he would be making a difference in his actions. That was better than only talking about the problems. So, he decided he would talk to Mr. Satter the next day.

"Mr. Satter," said Aiden, "I want to join the Service Club." "Good!" replied the teacher. "Maybe you can talk your friends into it too." So at lunch, Aiden told his friends the quote and explained his reasoning. Eventually, they all chose to join the club with him. Together, they would all make a difference.

CONTENT: 3 Points

The writer demonstrates a reasonable control of the Content dimension, exhibiting some strengths and some weaknesses.

A clear central idea is defined in the second sentence ("He had a big decision to make and was not quite sure about it") and is maintained as the student builds the response around this conflict. An understanding of the task is shown as the student picks up the story and continues the narrative until a decision is made and acted on by the main character.

The writer includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from the passage by

restating the quotation at the center of the conflict, by maintaining the idea that the conflict is about joining the Service Club, and by bringing in characters from the story (the other boys and Mr. Salter). The student integrates text ideas into his or her own thinking, writing, “That meant if he joined the Service Club, he would be making a difference in his actions. That was better than only talking about the problems.” While this evidence provides sufficient and appropriate support, it is not ample, and the development of the rest of the story is adequate rather than thorough. More development and details in the story line would need to be added for a higher score. The ending feels hurried.

There is a clear organizational strategy, with a logical order of ideas and events which allows the reader to move through the composition unobstructed. A beginning, middle, and ending are present, although they are not sufficiently developed to provide a satisfying sense of wholeness. Transitions are used throughout the response.

STYLE: 3 Points

The word choices used in this composition are clear but more general than precise or vivid. The composition includes dialogue but would be improved by the use of other narrative techniques, especially the addition of more descriptive language. The sentences are generally varied in length and structure and have varied beginnings, creating a reasonably smooth flow throughout. The writer’s voice is clear and sometimes engaging. The use of dialogue creates interest, drawing the reader in and helping move the action of the story forward. This composition demonstrates reasonable control of the features in the Style dimension.

CONVENTIONS: 4 Points

This student demonstrates strong control of sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling skills in the Conventions dimension. A variety of complex sentences are skillfully used to give emphasis to the content (“That meant if he joined the Service Club, he would be making a difference in his actions. That was better than only talking about the problems”). Words are selectively chosen, consistently used correctly, and appropriately punctuated (“Together, they would all make a difference”). Throughout the response, capitalization and punctuation are particularly well controlled, especially in the dialogue. Spelling skills are also consistently demonstrated.

1. Final Draft

In the short story, "Words of Wisdom" Aiden has to make a difficult choice. Do you think he will join the school service club? I think he will join the club, the quotation inspires him, and the boys reaction won't affect him. I think Aiden will join the club.

Aiden will join the school service club. At the end of the story he was thinking of the quotation, that probably means he's foreshadowing that he will join the club. He was inspired by his teacher (Mr. Satter) to join this club. The quote made him want to join from the beginning.

The quotation was something that greatly inspired Aiden. The quotation made Aiden want to join the club in the beginning. The quote said action speak louder than words and that's is what the school service club does, it acts. Aiden took the quotation

Final Draft (continued)

to heart. The boy's reaction won't affect Aiden.

The boy's words won't affect Aiden greatly. Their words will inspire him to join the club even more. The kids tell him to join the debate team to talk out their problems, and the quote says actions speak louder than words. Their words will make Aiden act to join the club.

Aiden will join the school service club, the quote inspired him, and the boy's reaction will make him act. I think he will join the club, with all the clues the author is almost saying he will. What do you think he will do?

CONTENT: 2 Points

This response demonstrates inconsistent control of the Content dimension.

The student shows only a partial understanding of the task by merely responding to the questions posed in the first part of the prompt (Do you think he will join the Service Club? How do you think the quotation and the boys' reaction might affect Aiden?). The student simply addresses the questions rather than writing a focused multiparagraph story about Aiden and what will happen next.

Evidence from the passage is insufficient and details are not integrated into the composition. While the student says what he or she thinks will happen next and develops those ideas somewhat, presenting them as answers to questions creates a list-like quality to the development. The organizational plan is functional. The composition has a beginning and an ending and three body paragraphs that follow the order of the questions posed ("Aiden will join the school service club," "The quotation was something that greatly inspired Aiden," and "The boy's words won't affect Aiden greatly"); however, the information is repetitive at times, and the transitions necessary to connect the writer's thoughts are lacking.

STYLE: 3 Points

This response demonstrates reasonable control of the Style dimension. The word choices are clear and appropriate, and there are occasional interesting words and phrases (“Aiden has to make a difficult choice,” “The quotation was something that greatly inspired Aiden,” “The quote said action speak louder than words and that’s is what the school service club does, it acts”). There is some variety in sentence structure, and although there is a degree of repetition in the way the writer has presented the answers to the questions, the overall fluency is reasonable. The individual personality of the writer is evident, but it is not particularly compelling or engaging.

CONVENTIONS: 4 Points

Although there are a few errors, this writer consistently demonstrates skills in sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling. For instance, in composing this complex sentence, the writer should have used a semicolon instead of a comma to connect these related ideas: “I think he will join the club, with all the clues the author is almost saying he will.” However, most of the sentences are correct. The writer misses an apostrophe (“boys reaction”) and misuses others (“the boy’s reaction,” “The boy’s words”) but also uses the apostrophe correctly in “he’s foreshadowing.” The writer consistently uses correct quotation marks, commas, and end punctuation throughout the essay (except for a missing question mark after the final sentence). There are only minor usage errors (“action speak louder than words,” “that’s is what the school service club does”) and no spelling errors.

1. Final Draft

Decisions

First, I think Aiden will talk to Mr. Satter or Ms. Courtney about him joining the debate team or the school service club. Tim is telling Aiden that the school service club clean up trash and even serve meals for the homeless shelter.

Second, Maybe Aiden will think about joining the school service club. Aiden will think about joining the school service club because Mr. Satter told him they do alot of important things. Another reason is they help the school and the community. He will think about joining the club because he heard they do alot of activities. An activity they do is collecting can goods for an local food bank. They also help tutor elementary students after school. They also helped by participating in School Clean-Up Day.

Final Draft (continued)

Third, Aiden is debating on joining the club and not joining the club.

Tim told Aiden he should join the debate team. Tim also said the debate team talk about issues that matter. Aiden is really thinking about which club he should join. Aiden is thinking about the quote that was on Ms. Conley's bulletin board. Mr. Salter said the quote has something to do with the Middle School Service Club.

Finally, Aiden should talk to one of the teachers, either Mr. Salter or Ms. Conley. Aiden will think about joining the school service club. because Mr. Salter said they do alot of important things. Aiden is debating if he should join the debate team or the school service club.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This response demonstrates inconsistent control of the Content dimension, with the weaknesses outweighing the strengths.

The central idea is vague because the student merely restates the basic information from the text. This also shows that there is only a partial understanding of the task because the student does not write a story about what

might happen next. Instead, the student uses an expository approach to explain Aiden’s dilemma.

The development of the response consists of a summary of the ideas in the passage. The student does not extend the passage information with his or her own ideas. The closest expression of the student’s own idea about what might happen next is the statement in the first sentence, “I think Aiden will talk to Mr. Salter or Ms. Conley about him joining the debate team or the school service club.” Because the student simply uses the information from the passage to explain the choice Aiden faces, the development offered is not relevant to the task of writing a story about what might happen next. To achieve a higher score, the student would need to use the scenario in the passage and devise a possible sequence of events that would show how Aiden makes his decision.

An attempt is made to organize the response, but the weak beginning and ending contain ideas that are disconnected. The presentation of ideas in the body paragraphs is rambling and repetitive, creating obstacles for the reader in moving through the composition. Transitions are used throughout the response, but they are only somewhat effective in linking the ideas.

STYLE: 2 Points

The word choices used in this response, while clear, are often repetitive. *Join*, *joining*, and “school service club” are overused, and most of the verbs and helping verbs are generic (*will*, *is*, *told*, *help*). There is little sentence variety. Many simple sentences beginning with a name or pronoun make the flow of the writing more choppy than fluid. The control of Style is inconsistent; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths.

CONVENTIONS: 3 Points

This writer demonstrates reasonable control of the Conventions dimension. Although most of the sentences are basic, declarative sentences, they are correctly formed, and the writer combines ideas effectively (“Tim is telling Aiden that the school service club clean up trash and even serve meals for the homeless shelter”). However, errors in word usage are evident throughout the response. There are errors in agreement (“the school service club clean up trash and even serve meals,” “the debate team talk about issues”) and wrong words used (“An activity the do is collecting can goods for an local food bank,” “Aiden is debating on joining the club”). Punctuation and capitalization are usually correct, with the exception of a few capitalization errors within sentences (“Second, Maybe,” “help tutor elementary Students,” and “school service club”). Spelling is consistently correct.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITER'S CHECKLIST

As you write your composition, remember these important points.

Content:

- Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic carefully and write on all parts.
- Present a clear main idea.
- Give enough details about your main idea.
- Use examples from the passage(s) to explain your ideas.
- Present your ideas in a way that makes sense. Include a beginning, middle, and ending.

Style:

- Choose interesting words that say exactly what you mean.
- Write complete sentences and use different kinds of sentences to make your writing easy to follow.



Important Reminders:

Your composition will be scored on content.

- your central idea
- development of ideas
- use of the passage(s)
- organization

Your composition will be scored on style.

- word choice
- expression of ideas
- sentence variety

DIRECTIONS FOR WRITING

Follow the steps below to help you write your composition.

Step 1: Planning and Drafting

- ⇒ Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic in your test booklet carefully.
- ⇒ Think about what you will write before you begin.
- ⇒ Make sure to use examples from the passage(s).
- ⇒ Use the space provided in your test booklet for planning your composition and writing your rough draft.
- ⇒ Remember that your planning notes and rough draft will not be scored.

Step 2: Revising

- ⇒ Review your composition to make sure you have covered all the points on the Writer's Checklist.
- ⇒ Reread your rough draft.
- ⇒ Rearrange ideas or change words to make your meaning clear and improve your composition.
- ⇒ Write your final draft neatly on the correct page(s) in your answer document.
- ⇒ Write your final draft in either print or cursive using a No. 2 pencil.
- ⇒ Use appropriate formatting.

Step 3: Proofreading

- ⇒ Read your final draft.
- ⇒ Correct any errors in subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, word meanings, and word endings.
- ⇒ Correct errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
- ⇒ Erase or strike through words if necessary.



Only the writing on the Final Draft pages in your answer document will be scored.



Remember to print or write neatly.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
WRITER'S CHECKLIST**

As you write your composition, remember these important points.

Content:

- Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic carefully and write on **all** parts as directed.
- Present a clear main idea.
- Give enough details to support and develop your main idea.
- Make sure to use well-chosen details from the passage(s) to support your ideas.
- Present your ideas in a logical order and include a clear beginning, middle, and ending.

Style:

- Use words that express your meaning well.
- Use a variety of sentence types and lengths to make your writing easy to follow.

Sentence Formation:

- Write in complete sentences and use a variety of sentence patterns.

Usage:

- Write using appropriate subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, word meanings, and word endings.

Mechanics:

- Write using correct punctuation.
- Write using correct capitalization.
- Write using appropriate formatting (e.g., indentations, margins).

Spelling:

- Write using correct spelling.








Remember to print or write neatly.






DIRECTIONS FOR WRITING

Follow the steps below to help you write a successful composition.




Step 1: Planning and Drafting

-  Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic in your test booklet carefully.
-  Think about what you will write before you begin.
-  Make sure to use well-chosen details from the passage(s) to support your ideas.
-  Use the space provided in your rough draft booklet for planning your composition and writing your rough draft.
-  Remember that your planning notes and rough draft will not be scored.



Step 2: Revising

-  Review your composition to make sure you have covered all the points on the Writer's Checklist.
-  Reread your rough draft.
-  Rearrange ideas or change words to make your meaning clear and improve your composition.
-  Write your final draft neatly on the correct page(s) in your test booklet.
-  Write your final draft in either print or cursive using a No. 2 pencil.

Step 3: Proofreading

-  Read your final draft.
-  Make any needed corrections.
-  Erase or strike through words if necessary.


Points to Remember:

-  Only the writing on the **Final Draft** pages in your test booklet will be scored.
-  Your composition will be scored on (1) development and support of ideas including how you use the information in the passage(s), (2) expression of ideas, (3) correct sentence formation, (4) usage, (5) mechanics, and (6) spelling.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITER'S CHECKLIST

As you write your composition, remember these important points.

Content:

- Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic carefully and write on **all** parts as directed.
- Present a clear main idea.
- Give enough details to support and develop your main idea.
- Make sure to use well-chosen details from the passage(s) to support your ideas.
- Present your ideas in a logical order and include a beginning, middle, and ending.

Style:

- Use interesting words that express your meaning well.
- Write complete sentences and use a variety of sentence types and lengths to make your writing easy to follow.



Important Reminders:

Your composition will be scored on content.

- your central idea
- development of ideas
- use of the passage(s)
- organization

Your composition will be scored on style.

- word choice
- expression of ideas
- sentence variety

DIRECTIONS FOR WRITING

Follow the steps below to help you write your composition.

Step 1: Planning and Drafting

- Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic in your test booklet carefully.
- Think about what you will write before you begin.
- Make sure to use well-chosen details from the passage(s) to support your ideas.
- Use the space provided in your test booklet for planning your composition and writing your rough draft.
- Remember that your planning notes and rough draft will not be scored.

Step 2: Revising

- Review your composition to make sure you have covered all the points on the Writer's Checklist.
- Reread your rough draft.
- Rearrange ideas or change words to make your meaning clear and improve your composition.
- Write your final draft neatly on the correct page(s) in your answer document.
- Write your final draft in either print or cursive using a No. 2 pencil.
- Use appropriate formatting.

Step 3: Proofreading

- Read your final draft.
- Correct any errors in usage (subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, word meanings, and word endings).
- Correct errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
- Erase or strike through words if necessary.



Only the writing on the Final Draft pages in your answer document will be scored.



Remember to print or write neatly.



Fall 2012

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Office of Standards, Assessments, and Accountability
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TRANSITIONAL WRITING PROMPTS

SAMPLE STUDENT WORK

Louisiana Believes embraces the principle that all children can achieve at high levels, as evidenced in Louisiana’s recent adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). *Louisiana Believes* also promotes the idea that Louisiana’s educators should be empowered to make decisions to support the success of their students. In keeping with these values, the Department has created released test items documents to help prepare teachers and students as they transition to the new CCSS over the next two years. These released items reflect the State’s commitment to consistent and rigorous assessments and provide educators and families with clear information about expectations for student performance.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is developing transitional LEAP and *i*LEAP assessments for grades 3–8 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics that will be more closely aligned to the CCSS. These tests will be administered in 2012–2013 and 2013–2014, in an effort to introduce students and teachers to the CCSS and to help ease the transition to the assessments developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), which will be administered starting in the 2014–2015 school year.

To better prepare our students for the CCSS, the ELA transitional tests have a new type of writing prompt that focuses on a key instructional shift—writing grounded in textual evidence. Instead of responding to a “stand alone” writing prompt, students will be expected to read one or two passages and then write a composition that includes evidence from the text(s) in the response. This kind of prompt demands more than writing skills alone. Now students must read texts carefully to determine what evidence is most relevant and then create an organized, well-written composition that incorporates that evidence.

The transitional prompts introduce evidence-based writing to students by asking them to use text(s) to support their ideas about a given topic, but the prompts do not emphasize a deep analysis of the texts themselves, something the PARCC writing tasks and CCSS will require. This new type of writing does provide an opportunity to practice a key CCSS instructional shift that will help move our students and educators one step closer to the new expectations.

Purpose of This Document

This document is part of a series of materials meant to promote understanding of the knowledge and skills students must have and the kind of writing they must produce to be successful on the LEAP and *i*LEAP transitional assessments. Writing prompts and samples of student work for grades 3–8 have been assembled in one document so teachers and parents can easily see the changes in passage complexity and the increasing expectations for rigor in student work as students progress from grade 3 to grade 8.

Each chapter includes the following grade-level materials:

- scoring rubrics,
- a sample prompt,
- examples of student writing that have been scored using the new rubrics, and
- explanations of the scores assigned to each student response.

Writer’s Checklists are on pages 113–115.

Test Administration Information

The directions in the Test Administration Manual will clearly explain all the procedures for administering the writing session, but a few details are worth mentioning here so that teachers know what to expect.

Test administrators will be instructed to read aloud the Writer’s Checklist, the writing session directions, and the Writing Topic. However, the reading passages on the writing test must **not** be read aloud or signed to students, except for those students with the accommodations *Tests Read Aloud* or *Communication Assistance*. New directions have been added that encourage students to mark **in pencil** information in the reading passage(s) that they think will be useful when composing their response.

All students are provided with the following materials during the administration of the writing portion of the ELA transitional tests:

- two pencils,
- a dictionary and a thesaurus,
- a Writer’s Checklist, and
- a test booklet and/or answer document that contains the writing prompt, a page for taking notes (brainstorming/outlining), two rough-draft pages, and two final draft pages.

Resources

Below are links to resources that offer additional information about the transitional tests, the CCSS, and the PARCC assessments:

- www.doe.state.la.us/topics/assessment_guides.html
(Assessment Guides for all subjects and grades tested)
- www.louisianapass.org
(transitional writing prompts on the Practice Assessment/Strengthen Skills system)
- www.doe.state.la.us/topics/common_core_samples.html
(CCSS-aligned items)
- www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes
(samples of PARCC assessment items)

iLEAP Grade 3

The Grade 3 Writing Test is **untimed**, but students should be given a minimum of 60 minutes to read the passage(s), plan and write their compositions, and check their work.

Scoring Information

Because of the heavy emphasis of standard 3 (conventions of writing) in the language section of the iLEAP tests, student compositions will be scored only for the dimensions of **Content** and **Style**. The Content dimension measures

- the focus of the student’s central idea;
- the development of that idea, including the appropriate and accurate use of information from the passage(s); and
- the organization of the student’s ideas.

The Style dimension evaluates the ways in which the student shapes and controls the language and the flow of the composition. Features of Style include

- word choice;
- sentence fluency, which includes sentence structure and sentence variety; and
- voice, the individual personality of the writing.

For each of these two dimensions, a student can earn from 1 to 4 score points.

A summary of the score points for the Writing session is shown below.

Dimensions	Maximum Possible Points
Content	4
Style	4
Total Points	8

There are two Content rubrics; one is used to score student compositions that respond to prompts with one passage; the other is for prompts with two passages. The Content and Style rubrics can be found on pages 4 through 6.

CONTENT (One Passage): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passage and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without information from the passage cannot receive a score higher than a 2 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes well-chosen information from the passage to support central idea Passage information and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate information from the passage to support central idea Passage information and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no information from the passage Ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no information from the passage and/or the information shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. clear beginning and ending effective linking words and phrases sense of wholeness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition without confusion. has a beginning and ending some linking words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization weak beginning, ending may lack linking words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

CONTENT (Two Passages): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passages and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE(S) AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without information from both passages cannot receive a score higher than a 3 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes well-chosen information from the passages to support central idea Passage information and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate information from at least one of the passages to support central idea Passage information and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no information from the passage(s) Passage information and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no information from the passage(s) and/or the information shows a misunderstanding of the passage(s) minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. clear beginning and ending effective linking words and phrases sense of wholeness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition without confusion. has a beginning and ending some linking words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization weak beginning, ending may lack linking words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

STYLE: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice

Key Questions: *Would you keep reading this composition if it were longer? Do the words, phrases, and sentences strengthen the content and allow the reader to move through the writing with ease?*

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> precise effective vivid words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear but less specific includes some interesting words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generic limited repetitive overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> functional simple (below grade level) may be inappropriate to the task
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluid, very easy to follow, because of variety in length, structure, and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally varied in length and structure Most sentences have varied beginnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no variety in length and structure Awkward sentences may affect the fluidity of the reading. same beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple sentences no variety Construction makes the response difficult to read.
VOICE (individual personality of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compelling and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, but may not be particularly compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak and/or inconsistent voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no voice Response is too brief to provide an adequate example of style; minimal attempt.

Compositions that are off topic, illegible, blank, insufficient, not written in English, a restatement of the prompt, or include only copied text from the passage(s) are considered unscorable and will receive zero points.

Grade 3 Sample Writing Prompt

At grade 3, the Writing Topic may direct students to write a story, explain something, or give their opinion. On a test that has a prompt with one passage, the passage and the Writing Topic are on facing pages. On a test that has a prompt with two passages, the passages are on facing pages, and the Writing Topic is on the next right-hand page. This will allow students to go back and forth between the passages and the Writing Topic as they prepare their response. Below is a two-passage writing prompt that appeared on the field test administered in March 2012.

Directions: Read the passages about two school events. As you read the passages, think about which event you would choose to have at your school. Then use the passages to help you write a well-organized composition of two or more paragraphs.

Talent Show

Who: YOU!

What: School-wide talent show

When: March 16 from 5:00 PM–7:00 PM

Where: Cafeteria

The Details

Do you have a special talent? Share it with your classmates! Maybe you can sing, dance, or do tricks. Maybe you created an invention. Do you know some jokes that are sure to make people laugh? Tell them! The talent show is the perfect chance for you to show off your skills to the rest of the school!

You can choose to perform alone or as a group. If you are shy, then you can perform with friends. A group can be any size. Students will need to make their own costumes and practice after school. So think about what you will do and sign up by March 8. Get started now!

Something for Everyone

Don't want to perform? You can still be involved in the talent show. Audience members will vote for their favorite acts to help decide the winners of the talent show. Get a ticket to the show today so you can cheer on your classmates. Let your voice be heard! Come one, come all to the school's first talent show ever!

What Students Are Saying

"I can't wait to see what my friends are going to do in the talent show!"
—Lucy Dawson, grade 3

School Carnival

Who: Students

What: School carnival

When: March 11 from 9:00 AM–1:00 PM

Where: School parking lot

The Details

Do you like all kinds of games? If so, then you will love the school carnival! This is no ordinary carnival, no boring games here! It will be run by students. Each class will create a game or a booth and work on it after school. So think about what your class will do. Will it be face painting, a guessing jar contest, a beanbag toss, freeze dancing, maybe even musical chairs?

Students from each class will sign up for time slots to help run the booths. Then students can visit the other booths to play the games and enjoy what their classmates have made. And that is just part of the fun. There is much, much more. You will not want to miss Principal Tanner dressed up as the school mascot!

Not for Everyone

The carnival is for elementary students. There may not be many activities for very young children or older brothers and sisters. Get ready for the best event of the school year—the school carnival.

What Students Are Saying

“Seeing Principal Tanner in a costume will be very funny. I can’t wait for the carnival!”—Jesse Davis, grade 3

Writing Topic

Write a composition for your teacher that tells which event, the talent show or carnival, you would choose to have at your school. Explain why you think this event would be the better of the two. Use details from both passages to help you explain your opinion.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- ▶ Your composition should have two or more paragraphs.
- ▶ Be sure your composition has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- ▶ Use details from both passages and include enough information so your teacher will understand your response.
- ▶ Be sure to write clearly.
- ▶ Check your writing for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Sample Student Work

The student compositions that are included in this release represent a range of scores designed to show teachers several kinds of responses to the new prompts. In the explanations that follow the compositions, rubric language was used whenever possible to help teachers better understand how the scores were determined.

The purpose of the score-point explanations is to

- focus on the three elements of each dimension, with special attention on the student’s use of the passage information;
- provide concrete examples from the composition to show specific strengths and weaknesses; and
- provide recommendations on what the student can do to improve the composition and their writing.

This information will help teachers work with the new prompts and rubrics, but it will also guide them as they begin implementing evidence-based writing, an important instructional shift of the CCSS.

1. Final Draft

→ I choose the school carnival, I choose the school carnival because I think it would be fun to have. We can play ring toss, bean bag toss, musical chairs, and freeze tag. I think students would enjoy having a carnival. It would be fun if you ran a booth because you can sell stuffed animals to little kids. Another reason is you can make up games that kids can try if they're there. You can get your face painted, you can see your friends, and you can play button 1st guess game. I know many other events but what I like the most is ring toss, bean-bag toss, musical chairs, and freeze tag. I didn't choose the talent show because some people don't know how to dance, sing, do tricks, or make inventions. Some students don't know how to make costumes. Some people might not want to show their skills. Some people might not like talent shows. There are many things that some people might not like. Some people mostly

Final Draft (continued)

don't like are singing, dancing,
doing jokes, or making things.

CONTENT: 4 Points

This student demonstrates consistent control in the Content dimension, and many strengths are present in this response.

The composition is focused on the central idea of why the writer would choose the carnival over the talent show, and it shows a complete understanding of the task by clearly addressing both passages in an attempt to explain why the carnival is the better of the two options.

The writer provides well-chosen information from the passage to support the idea that a carnival is a fun event that students would enjoy and carefully selects information to support the idea that many students might not like a talent show.

The discussion of the carnival being “fun to have” is thoroughly developed using relevant specific details from the passage (“We can play ring toss, bean bag toss, musical chairs, and freeze tag . . . would be fun if you ran a booth . . . you can get you face painted”). The writer’s own ideas are specific and relevant and support his or her opinion (“you can sell stuffed animals to little kids . . . make up games . . . play button Jar guess. game”). The discussion of why “some people might not like talent shows,” while slightly weaker, does use and interpret relevant information from the passage to explain why students might not like the event (“some people don’t know how to dance, sing, do tricks, or make inventions . . . don’t know how to make costumes . . . people mostly don’t like are singing, dancing, doing jokes, or Making things”).

The writer’s opinions are presented in a logical order, beginning with the choice of the carnival and a discussion of the reasons why it was chosen, followed by a discussion of the talent show and the reasons for not choosing it. Effective linking words and phrases are present, allowing the reader to easily move through the composition. While the lack of a clear beginning is somewhat of a weakness, and a strong conclusion would help to improve the overall response, the writer has demonstrated many more strengths than weaknesses and shows consistent control in the Content dimension.

STYLE: 4 Points

The writer demonstrates consistent control in the Style dimension. Although the word choice is not especially vivid, precise words that are appropriate to the task are effectively used to explain the writer’s opinions about both events, and the student clearly expresses why he or she feels that a carnival is the better choice of the two. The response does present a variety of sentence lengths and structures that allows for a fluid and easy-to-follow explanation of the writer’s opinions. The writer’s use of complex sentences is especially impressive for this grade level. The individual personality of the writer is apparent in this argument in favor of the school carnival.

1. Final Draft

Do you adore meriment and exitement? Well if you do, come to the school Carnival it will be awesome to play all those sensational games! This is what you will do. Each class select an activity they think that we should have. Whatever they picked it will be placed in the school carnival. When you are working at your booth, the other people that are not working at the booth they will go and explore what the other classes have. When you are at the carnival you will have lots of activites to do. You can do all of this with your friends and do all the things you love. Of course, they will have lots of games you can participate in. You will have lots of meriment at the carnival! The whole entire school will be there! It will all be located in the parking lot! If you want amity then stay home, be cause it will be lots of talking and playing so it will be a little noisey! It will really be astonishing!

Final Draft (continued)

The reason why I chose the carnival because you can see all the amazing things other classes have prepared, and it would be awesome just to go out of school and have fun and do all those fun activities. You can eat food and just chill out with your friends. It would be just amazing to see the whole entire school out in the parking lot all day long having fun!

CONTENT: 3 Points

This student demonstrates reasonable control in the Content dimension.

A clear central idea that focuses on the reasons for having a school carnival has been presented. However, the response shows only a general understanding of the task, as there is no mention of the talent show and no explanation of why the carnival would be the better choice of the two.

The writer includes sufficient and appropriate information from the *School Carnival* passage to support the central idea that the carnival will be an “awesome” event. These ideas are developed adequately, and relevant accurate details from the passage have been integrated into the composition (“Each class select an activity . . . When you are working at your booth, the other people that are not working at the booth they will go and explore what the other classes have . . . will have lots of games you can participate in . . . all be located in the parking lot . . . all day long”). Had the student also addressed the passage regarding the talent show and provided some explanation of why it would not be the better event, a higher score in Content would have been attained.

The organization is logical and allows the reader to move through the composition. An engaging beginning and appropriate ending are evident, but effective linking words and phrases are lacking.

STYLE: 4 Points

The writer demonstrates consistent control in the Style dimension throughout the composition. Effective word choices (*adore*, *merriment*, *excitement*, *noisy*) and vivid phrases (“it will be awesome to play all those sensational games,” “The whole entire school will be there,” “It will really be astonishing”) are used consistently

throughout the response. A rhetorical question to begin the response is also effective and engages the reader. The writer presents a very fluid and easy-to-follow composition with the use of a variety of sentence structures that vary in length and complexity. The voice is enthusiastic, compelling, and genuinely seems to reflect the personality of a person committed to the exciting prospect of a carnival at his or her school.

1. Final Draft

School Carnivals are better than a talent show because it is awesome.

The cotton candy is great. When you put it on your tongue it melts, and it makes the color darker. Cotton candy can come in different colors like blue, pink, and green. When you touch the cotton and it is soft. Sometimes it makes your mouth stick.

At a carnival they give you prizes. There are lots of prizes you can get. You can win a teddy bear. Sometimes they give you sports stuff. Once my brother got a baseball from there.

The last thing that is at a carnival are the games. Sometimes you can win them. There is a game called holler pop it's really hard. Ball toss is very easy because all you're doing is throwing the ball into a fish bowl.

A carnival is better than a talent show because it has cotton candy, you win prizes, and they have games.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This writer demonstrates inconsistent control in the Content dimension.

Although the writer opens the response with the statement “School Carnivals are better than a talent show,” the writer never explains why carnivals are better and does not provide any information or details about a talent show. This shows a partial understanding of the task and creates a somewhat vague central idea.

The writer’s use of information from the passages and development of ideas are also controlled inconsistently. The writer does not integrate any information from the passage about the talent show, and the information presented about carnivals, while somewhat developed, contains few, if any, details from the passage. For example, the passage does not mention cotton candy and prizes being offered at the school carnival. Only a vague reference to “the games” is evident, and the games mentioned (“bollon pop” and “Ball toss”) are also not from the passage. It is difficult to determine whether this student read and understood the passages or merely read and responded to the writing topic. The integration of more selected details from the passage to support the writer’s opinion that carnivals are “awsome” would improve the Content score of this response.

The organization is a strength in this response. It has a beginning and ending as well as some linking words and phrases to connect the three main points. However, the weaknesses in the use of passage information and in the central idea outweigh the strengths in this composition.

STYLE: 3 Points

The writer demonstrates reasonable control in the Style dimension. The word choices are generally clear and appropriate, but not particularly vivid or precise. A somewhat interesting description of cotton candy is presented (“When you put it on your tounge it melts, and it makes the color darker . . . When you touch the cotton and it is soft . . . it mak your mouth stick”), but a few weaker, more generic word choices are also evident.

The composition is somewhat fluid and easy to read, and sentences generally vary in length and structure. Most sentences have varied beginnings.

The voice is apparent, and there is a degree of excitement and enjoyment for the carnival (“it is awsome,” “cotton candy is great,” “you can win a tedy bear,” “Ball toss is very easy because all your doing is throwing the ball into a fish boll”). An anecdotal reference also adds to the individual personality of the writing (“Onece my brother got an base ball from there”).

1. Final Draft

Let me tell you about my School carnival. It was March the 11th. I heard there was a school carnival coming today. I was so excited about it. My class was excited as well.

There were lots of games. Like musical chairs, guessing jar contest, beanbag toss, freeze dancing, and face painting. Principal Tanner dressed as the school mascot.

The carnival was over. I had lots of fun but I can't wait to do it again.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This writer demonstrates inconsistent control in the Content dimension.

There is a vague central idea about a school carnival in this brief response; however, the attempted narrative with no mention of a talent show and only limited explanation for why the carnival was chosen demonstrate that the writer has only a partial understanding of the task.

The writer attempts to integrate some information from the passage into the story (“It was March the 11th,” “musical chairs, guessing jar contest, beanbag toss,” “Principal Tanner dressed as the school mascot”), but the ideas are not developed.

The composition demonstrates an attempt at organization. The writer uses a simple introduction and ending and provides a hint of a chronological order. The main body of the composition lacks any linking words, producing what appears to be a short list of ideas.

More development of ideas and a clearer explanation of why the student chose the carnival as the better event are needed to achieve a higher score.

STYLE: 2 Points

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control in the Style dimension. The brief response has limited word choice, and much of it is copied or paraphrased from the passage. That which is original is generic. The sentences have little variety in length and structure, and a number of fairly simple sentences contribute to a monotonous style. A weak voice does not reveal the individual personality of the writing.

LEAP Grade 4

The Grade 4 Writing Test is **untimed**, but students should be given a minimum of 75 minutes to read the passage(s), plan and write their compositions, and check their work.

Scoring Information

The LEAP compositions are scored for **Content** and **Style**, but they also are scored for the conventions of writing: Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling. The Content dimension measures

- the focus of the student’s central idea;
- the development of that idea, including the appropriate and accurate use of information from the passage(s); and
- the organization of the student’s ideas.

The Style dimension evaluates the ways in which the student shapes and controls the language and the flow of the composition. Features of Style include

- word choice;
- sentence fluency, which includes sentence structure and sentence variety; and
- voice, the individual personality of the writing.

For each of these two dimensions, a student can earn from 1 to 4 score points.

In addition, the grade 4 compositions are rated as showing either “acceptable control” or “unacceptable control” in the conventions: **Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling**. An acceptable rating earns 1 score point, while an unacceptable rating earns none.

A summary of the score points for the Writing session is shown below.

Dimensions	Maximum Possible Points
Content	4
Style	4
Sentence Formation	1
Usage	1
Mechanics	1
Spelling	1
Total Points	12

There are two Content rubrics; one is used to score student compositions that respond to prompts with one passage; the other is for prompts with two passages. The Content and Style rubrics can be found on pages 21 through 23.

CONTENT (One Passage): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passage and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without information from the passage cannot receive a score higher than a 2 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage, OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

CONTENT (Two Passages): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passages and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE(S) AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition that addresses only one of the two passages cannot receive a score higher than a 3 in Content. A score of 4 cannot be assigned unless both passages have been addressed.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from at least one of the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage(s), OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage(s) and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

STYLE: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice

Key Questions: *Would you keep reading this composition if it were longer? Do the words, phrases, and sentences strengthen the content and allow the reader to move through the writing with ease?*

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> precise effective vivid words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear but less specific includes some interesting words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generic limited repetitive overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> functional simple (below grade level) may be inappropriate to the task
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluid, very easy to follow, because of variety in length, structure, and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally varied in length and structure Most sentences have varied beginnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no variety in length and structure Awkward sentences may affect the fluidity of the reading. same beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple sentences no variety Construction makes the response difficult to read.
VOICE (individual personality of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compelling and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, but may not be particularly compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak and/or inconsistent voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no voice Response is too brief to provide an adequate example of style; minimal attempt.

In some cases, a composition may not be scorable. For example, if it is illegible or if it includes only copied text from the given passage(s), it will not be scored in any dimension and will receive a score of zero. A paper may be off-topic and cannot be scored for Content or Style, but it may be scored for Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling. Such a paper could receive a maximum of 4 of 12 points.

Grade 4 Sample Writing Prompt

At grade 4, the Writing Topic may direct students to write a story, explain or describe something, or convince someone of their position. On a test that has a prompt with one passage, the passage and the Writing Topic are on facing pages. On a test that has a prompt with two passages, the passages are on facing pages, and the Writing Topic is on the next right-hand page. This will allow students to go back and forth between the passages and the Writing Topic as they prepare their response. Below is a two-passage writing prompt that appeared on the field test administered in March 2012.

Directions: Read the passages about future inventions. As you read the passages, think about which invention would be more useful. Then use the passages to help you write a well-organized composition of at least three paragraphs.

Flying Cars

Imagine being picked up for school in a flying bus. Traffic jams will no longer be a problem. Instead of sitting on the road behind other cars, you will be flying above them. Visiting someone far away will be easy too. You will not have to spend hours riding in a car. Simply hop in the car and fly straight to your destination.

Flying cars exist today. However, most are still experimental and are not for sale to the public. One flying car, the X-Hawk, is to be used as a rescue vehicle. For example, firefighters could use it to save people from burning buildings. The military wants it to rescue injured soldiers on the battlefield, and hospitals would use it for quick travel to rescue injured people.

The X-Hawk is about the size of a large van. It is shaped like a boat, except it has four wheels, which are used when it is on the ground. It has two seating areas, one on each side of the vehicle. Both areas are enclosed in glass that acts as a windshield. The X-Hawk rises straight up in the air like a helicopter, but it can also fly forward like an airplane. It is very useful because it can float or “hover” in one place and can fit into places that are too dangerous for a helicopter. Because of its size and the way it moves, firefighters would be able to rescue people who are trapped in areas high above the ground. This experimental car could turn into the flying car of the future, which would be available to all drivers.

A flying car like the X-Hawk seems like it belongs in a story set in the distant future. However, if engineers and scientists keep working day and night, people may have flying cars sooner than we ever imagined. It may be just a matter of time before people will have flying cars.

Helper Robots

In the future, people's lives may be very different thanks to the help of robots. One robot named Mahru-Z has already been created by scientists and engineers in Korea. Mahru-Z is designed to do many household chores. With this kind of robot help, children may never need to clean their rooms or make their own snacks again.

Mahru-Z is just over four feet tall and resembles a human. Its head can rotate, and it moves by walking on two legs. It has two arms and uses six-fingered hands, which are great for picking up things. The most important feature of Mahru-Z is its eyes. These contain visual sensors that allow the robot to observe the surrounding area as it travels from room to room picking up objects off the floor. For example, it can take dirty clothing to the washing machine. It can also place toys in a toy box.

Mahru-Z has other useful skills like making and delivering snacks. It can put food into a microwave oven or toaster, turn it on, and take the food out. It can even locate a human in the house and bring the food to him or her.

Because Mahru-Z can be operated by remote control, it may be useful for completing tasks other than household chores. It could function in areas that are too dangerous for humans. One day it may help scientists by going into space. Scientists on Earth could control its movements while it performs experiments in outer space.

Mahru-Z sounds like something out of a futuristic space cartoon and may not be available in homes for a while. With a little more time and effort, though, it might just be the newest home appliance.

Writing Topic

Write a composition for your teacher telling which invention, flying cars or helper robots, you think would be more useful. Provide reasons and use details from both passages to help you explain your opinion.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- ▶ Your composition should have at least three paragraphs.
- ▶ Be sure your composition has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- ▶ Use details from both passages and include enough information so your teacher will understand your response.
- ▶ Be sure to write clearly.
- ▶ Check your writing for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Sample Student Work

The student compositions that are included in this release represent a range of scores designed to show teachers several kinds of responses to the new prompts. In the explanations that follow the compositions, rubric language was used whenever possible to help teachers better understand how the scores were determined.

The purpose of the score-point explanations is to

- focus on the three elements of each dimension, with special attention on the student’s use of the passage information;
- provide concrete examples from the composition to show specific strengths and weaknesses; and
- provide recommendations on what the student can do to improve the composition and their writing.

This information will help teachers work with the new prompts and rubrics, but it will also guide them as they begin implementing evidence-based writing, an important instructional shift of the CCSS.

1. Final Draft

Zoom! Beep! Beep! Which invention do you think is more useful? A Flying Car or a Helper Robot?

Well, I think Flying Cars would be more useful than a Helper Robot because a Flying Car will help firefighters be able to rescue people quicker without having to stare at a red light 10 to 15 minutes until it turns green. One Flying Car, the X-Hawk, is to be used as a rescue vehicle. For example, firefighters could use it to save people from burning buildings. Also, the military requested that they could use it to rescue hurt soldiers on the battlefields, and hospitals would use it for quick travel to fix up the injured people. Because of its gigantic size and the way it moves rapidly, firefighters would be able to rescue people who are trapped in areas high above the ground.

I thought the Helper Robot wasn't as useful as a Flying Car because the Helper Robot doesn't help save damaged people from the military or from burned down houses. The Helper Robot

Final Draft (continued)

only helps clean house and cook for people and that's it. For example, it takes dirty clothes to the washing machine. Also, it places toys in a toy box. I'm pretty sure kids and parents can do those chores. Flying Cars do way more things than clean the house until it's spotless or cook for the family! All the kids and parent that have or will get a Helper Robot would probably lay on the couch and watch TV and not stay active or do the chores!

Flying Cars would be way more useful to the whole entire world! I would rather spend my money on a Flying Car than a Helper Robot, but that's just my opinion! What I think is the most best thing about the Flying Car is that the firefighters and the military would be able to save many peoples lives!!

CONTENT: 4 Points

This student demonstrates consistent control in the Content dimension.

The student provides and maintains a clear focus, asserting that flying cars provide a more necessary service than helper robots. The writer begins with the premise that a flying car like the X-Hawk could function as a rescue vehicle for firefighters, the military, and in emergency medical situations, based on

information from the passage *Flying Cars*. Other details from the passage include the advantages of its size and speed, as well as its ability to avoid traffic jams. In the next paragraph, the helper robot is described as chiefly a cook, maid, and launderer, whose help might actually harm the family's health through lack of exercise. The writer has drawn this conclusion using information from *Helper Robots*. The writer has chosen this information carefully, avoiding the robot's name, description, and any details that may have contradicted the argument, such as the robot working in environments (like space) that are dangerous to humans. In both cases, the writer provides explanations and examples from the text to prove a point. The writer extends the argument to include financial considerations as well as utility, concluding with the overriding value of saving lives.

STYLE: 4 Points

The comic book sounds “Zoom!” (flying car) and “Beep! Beep!” (helper robot) of these futuristic inventions delightfully greet the reader as the topic is introduced. Then, appropriately, the tone changes to a more serious one as the writer develops the argument about the lifesaving abilities of the flying car. When describing the helper robot, however, the tone becomes more casual, emphasizing its less important role (“ . . . and that's it”). The student also uses imagery effectively (“without having to stare at a red light 10 to 15 minutes”) and incorporates a broad vocabulary to highlight information from the passages: *requested*, *gigantic*, *rapidly*, *spotless*, and *useful*. Sentences are varied in structure and form to provide a fluent reading. This student demonstrates consistent control in the Style dimension.

CONVENTIONS: 4 Points

Throughout this extensive response, the student demonstrates consistent (not perfect) control in the Conventions dimension. The student forms a variety of complex sentences correctly, using correct capitalization and punctuation. The student demonstrates skills beyond this grade level, such as punctuating subordinate clauses and introductory words with commas. There is some redundancy in usage (“the whole entire world,” “the most best thing”) and an occasional awkward phrase (“save damaged people from the military”), but on the whole, the writer uses words skillfully and effectively. In the phrase, “All the kids and parent,” *parent* should be plural. Apostrophes are needed in *wasn't*, *doesn't*, and *people's*. Only the word *battlefields* is misspelled.

1. Final Draft

"It's for your own good"

Many people say that robots will take over the world, and that we need flying cars more than anything else, but they are gravely mistaken. Helper robots are what's going to keep humanity going for a longer time and provide us with more information than we ever imagined. With this information we can stop global warming, conserve our resources, save endangered species, and even populate the moon. Can a flying car do that, I think not.

Helper robots can perform tasks that we might need, or want help with, like cleaning the house, making the bed, or watering the flowers. They can also help in battle, advise political leaders, attend to the injured or sick, or work on the next big invention. These robots can also perform tasks that most humans would consider dangerous, without even breaking a sweat, figuratively, robots can't really sweat.

Final Draft (continued)

By now you might be asking "why are flying cars so bad?" and here are the answers. First of all imagine how much it would cost to buy one of those things, and what percentage of the population has their pilot's licence? Second, think of how many gallons it would take to fuel it up? Third commercial airplane pilots would lose their job rapidly and that would effect the flow of money. Of course save the worst for last, global warming will increase if it burns that much fuel. This may sound like the stuff of the future but it will keep humanity alive longer and stronger.

CONTENT: 3 Points

This response demonstrates reasonable control of the Content dimension, showing some strengths and some weaknesses.

A clear central idea is established in the first sentence and maintained throughout the composition. A general understanding of the task is evident as the writer contrasts the benefits of helper robots and the drawbacks of flying cars. It is clear that the student understands the passages, but he or she misses opportunities to use information from the passages to help develop the central idea. Most of the composition relies on the student's own ideas rather than specific evidence from the passages. These ideas support the student's position that robots are useful (providing information, cleaning, performing dangerous tasks), but some of the assertions are not explained. For example, the writer states that helper robots will "provide us with more information than we ever imagined. With this information we can stop global warming, conserve our resources, save endangered species, and even populate the moon." How any of these objectives will be aided by helper robots is not addressed. When the student addresses the problems with flying cars, the only link to the passage is the notion

of flying cars. No specific evidence from the text is presented. The student does come up with logical problems the flying cars could create, but for a score of 4, well-chosen and specific details from the passage need to be more carefully incorporated. In general, the details the student uses sometimes lack specificity, but they are relevant and accurate.

A clear organizational strategy is present, with a strong introductory sentence and ideas that move in a logical order facilitated by the consistent use of transitions.

STYLE: 4 Points

The writer demonstrates consistent control of the Style dimension, displaying many strengths. Precise word choices and vivid phrases (“gravely mistaken,” “conserve our recources,” “populate the moon,” “comercial airplane pilots”) are used effectively throughout the response. The consistent use of complex sentences with varied beginnings creates a fluid, easy-to-read explanation of the student’s ideas. Furthermore, a compelling individual voice is created through emphatic statements (“they are gravely mistaken,” “I think not”), humor (“robots can also preform task . . . without even breaking a sweat, figureativly, robots can’t really sweat”), and engaging rhetorical questions (“Can a flying car do that,” “By now you might be asking ‘why are flying cars so bad?’”).

CONVENTIONS: 4 Points

This writer has demonstrated strong control of the skills in the Conventions dimension. The complex and varied sentence structures are correct. Most words are used correctly. Punctuation is well controlled, including the correct commas in complex sentences. The one area of weakness is spelling, but the student has taken risks in using a sophisticated vocabulary, and many of the more difficult words are spelled correctly.

1. Final Draft

Have you ever thought about the futur and what you want there to be in it?

The X-Hawk is a flying car that we might use in the futur. The X-Hawk is about the size of a large van and it looks like a boat with weels. If you had a flying car you could get around easily with no trafic because you could fly right over people. Firefighters could get around easier and get to people that need help faster.

One other thing in the futur is the helper robot named Mahru-Z. Mahru-Z can clean your room and make your bed. He will make you some snacks and And you and give it to you. The best part about it is you would never have to clean again.

The idea scientists made I liked the best was the helper robot because That cleaning my room and he will do it for me. I would not have to miss my show on tv to get a snack if he did it for me. He could do things I do not want to do. Mabe people could send him to another planet in space and controle Mahru-Z with a remote to see what is on that planet.

Do you know what you want there to be in the futur.

CONTENT: 3 Points

This student demonstrates reasonable control of the Content dimension.

A clear central idea asking a question about what might be wanted in the future is presented and maintained, and a general understanding of the task is shown.

The writer includes sufficient and appropriate information from both passages to show what the advantages of each invention might be. The details are relevant and accurate (“size of a large van and it looks like a boat with weels . . . Mahru-Z can clean your room and make your bed . . . make you some snacks”). Although the student selects some appropriate information from the text, this evidence is simply presented as facts from the passages and not integrated with the student’s own ideas until the last body paragraph. More development of the student’s ideas about the usefulness of these inventions is needed for a higher score.

The response follows a logical order allowing the reader to move through the composition without confusion. Ideas are grouped, and there is a functional beginning and ending.

STYLE: 3 Points

The response demonstrates reasonable control in the Style dimension. The word choices are clear and appropriate to the task, but not precise or vivid. Much of the language is general or borrowed from the passages. The sentences are generally varied in length and structure with varied beginnings, but there is also some repetition of a subject-weak verb construction (“Firefighters could,” “Mahru-Z can,” “He will,” “I would,” “He could”). While the individual voice of the writer is not particularly compelling or engaging, it can be clearly heard, especially in the paragraph discussing why the student likes the helper robot best (“I hat[e] cleaning my room and he will do it for me. I would not have to miss my show on tv to get a snack if he did it for me”).

CONVENTIONS: 3 Points

Most of the skills in the Conventions dimension are well controlled in this composition. The sentences are correct, and words are consistently used correctly. Capitalization and punctuation are correct except for a missing question mark after the final sentence. The one area of weakness is spelling, where many grade-level words are misspelled, including *future*, *wheels*, *traffic*, *easier*, *again*, *hate*, *maybe*, and *control*.

1. Final Draft

Flying Cars

I think flying cars are better. Flying cars are better because you can get from place to place faster. You can get to school on time and never be late with a flying car. It can also help people get to the hospital on time.

It has four wheels. It also is red with black stripes. If I had one I would be out of Louisiana. I would be in Kansas. The bad thing is it is hard to land.

Can you imagine flying on a hot summer day. That's the best time to fly. Imagine flying over the ocean in a flying car. You can see how fun it is too see the world in a flying car.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This student demonstrates inconsistent control in the Content dimension, with the weaknesses outweighing the strengths.

The writer presents a vague central idea that “flying cars are better,” but he or she never addresses what flying cars are better than. Since only the passage about flying cars is addressed, this is an indication that the writer possesses a partial understanding of the task.

Some evidence from the passage about flying cars is presented (getting to school on time, helping people get to the hospital, the fact that flying cars have four wheels), but the choice of passage details seems random rather than purposeful. The ideas are not adequately developed. Irrelevant information is introduced and left unexplained (“If I had one I would be out of Louisiana. I would be in Kansas”), and the idea that the flying car would be hard to land is not supported by the text which, to the contrary, emphasizes the car’s maneuverability.

There is an attempt at organization. The response has a weak beginning and a more successful ending. However, instead of there being a logical order that allows the reader to move through the composition, there are gaps between ideas as well as a digression when the student discusses leaving Louisiana for Kansas. Except for the use of *also* twice in the response, transitions are lacking.

STYLE: 2 Points

Although the language used in this response creates some images for the reader (the flying car is “red with black stripes,” “flying on a hot summer day,” “flying over the ocean”), the word choices are mostly limited. The use of limited, overused verb constructions (*can, has, is, would*) dulls the voice projected by the writer. There is some variety in the lengths and structures of the sentences, but several short, subject-verb constructions create a chopiness that interferes with the fluidity of the reading. Overall, the response demonstrates inconsistent control of the Style dimension.

CONVENTIONS: 4 Points

The student demonstrates consistent control of the features in the Conventions dimension. The student forms different types of sentences correctly (declarative, interrogative, and imperative, as well as simple and complex), and words are properly used throughout the essay. Capitalization is applied correctly in the title, the sentence beginnings, and both state names (*Kansas* and *Louisiana*). Although the student misses a question mark in the rhetorical question (“Can you Imagine flying on a hot summer day”), a period, and the apostrophe in *that’s*, most of the punctuation is correct. This combination of capitalization and punctuation skill is sufficient for this grade level. There is just one spelling error (“too”) in the last sentence.

iLEAP Grade 5

The Grade 5 Writing Test is **untimed**, but students should be given a minimum of 75 minutes to read the passage(s), plan and write their compositions, and check their work.

Scoring Information

Because of the heavy emphasis of standard 3 (conventions of writing) in the language section of the iLEAP tests, student compositions will be scored only for the dimensions of **Content** and **Style**. The Content dimension measures

- the focus of the student’s central idea;
- the development of that idea, including the appropriate and accurate use of information from the passage(s); and
- the organization of the student’s ideas.

The Style dimension evaluates the ways in which the student shapes and controls the language and the flow of the composition. Features of Style include

- word choice;
- sentence fluency, which includes sentence structure and sentence variety; and
- voice, the individual personality of the writing.

For each of these two dimensions, a student can earn from 1 to 4 score points.

A summary of the score points for the Writing session is shown below.

Dimensions	Maximum Possible Points
Content	4
Style	4
Total Points	8

There are two Content rubrics; one is used to score student compositions that respond to prompts with one passage; the other is for prompts with two passages. The Content and Style rubrics can be found on pages 39 through 41.

CONTENT (One Passage): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passage and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without evidence from the passage cannot receive a score higher than a 2 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage, OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

CONTENT (Two Passages): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passages and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE(S) AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition that addresses only one of the two passages cannot receive a score higher than a 3 in Content. A score of 4 cannot be assigned unless both passages have been addressed.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from at least one of the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage(s), OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage(s) and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

STYLE: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice

Key Questions: *Would you keep reading this composition if it were longer? Do the words, phrases, and sentences strengthen the content and allow the reader to move through the writing with ease?*

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> precise effective vivid words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear but less specific includes some interesting words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generic limited repetitive overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> functional simple (below grade level) may be inappropriate to the task
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluid, very easy to follow, because of variety in length, structure, and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally varied in length and structure Most sentences have varied beginnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no variety in length and structure Awkward sentences may affect the fluidity of the reading. same beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple sentences no variety Construction makes the response difficult to read.
VOICE (individual personality of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compelling and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, but may not be particularly compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak and/or inconsistent voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no voice Response is too brief to provide an adequate example of style; minimal attempt.

Compositions that are off topic, illegible, blank, insufficient, not written in English, a restatement of the prompt, or include only copied text from the passage(s) are considered unscorable and will receive zero points.

Grade 5 Sample Writing Prompt

At grade 5, the Writing Topic may direct students to write a story, explain or describe something, or convince someone of their position. On a test that has a prompt with one passage, the passage and the Writing Topic are on facing pages. On a test that has a prompt with two passages, the passages are on facing pages, and the Writing Topic is on the next right-hand page. This will allow students to go back and forth between the passages and the Writing Topic as they prepare their response. Below is a one-passage writing prompt that appeared on the field test administered in March 2012.

Directions: Read the passage about capybaras. As you read the passage, think about what it would be like to be around these animals. Then use the passage to help you write a well-organized multiparagraph story.

Capybaras

When you think of rodents, you might think of mice, rats, or guinea pigs. Adult guinea pigs generally weigh around one pound, about the same as a loaf of bread. A close relative of the guinea pig is the capybara (KAP-uh-BAR-uh). It looks like a giant guinea pig, sometimes weighing over one hundred pounds! It is the largest rodent in the world.

Capybaras can grow up to four feet long and one-half foot tall. That is about the size of a hog. Capybaras have long and wide bodies, short snouts, and no tails. They are chubby and have short legs, which makes them fairly slow runners. Capybaras make a tasty meal for faster animals like jaguars and pumas. The anaconda, a huge snake, also preys on capybaras.

Unlike common rodents, capybaras do not make their homes indoors. They like to be near the water and make their homes in the wetlands of South and Central America. Living near ponds, lakes, rivers, marshes, or swamps, they make a nest or bed in the shallow dirt by the water. Capybaras are herbivores, plant-eating animals, that eat both the tall grass near the water's edge and the plants growing in the water.

The furry, reddish brown capybaras are social animals. They live in groups of about twenty. One male is the leader of each group, and the females share in taking care of the young. Capybaras communicate by making many different kinds of quiet sounds. They make clicking noises much like we can do with our tongues and the roof of our mouths. They also make high-pitched whistles or squeals and breathy barking noises.

Capybaras spend their days in the thick grass near the water. Their webbed feet keep them from sinking in the mud and help them swim well. If they sense danger, capybaras will jump into the water to hide. They can stay underwater for up to five minutes without taking a breath. Sometimes, capybaras may even sleep underwater with their noses poking out so they can get air to breathe. Capybaras are known as the gentle giants of the rodent world.

Writing Topic

Imagine what it would be like to live around capybaras.

Write a multiparagraph story for your teacher that includes the capybara animal as one of the characters. Use what you have learned about capybaras to help you create your story.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- ▶ Be sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- ▶ Use details from the passage and include enough information so your teacher will understand what happened in your story.
- ▶ Be sure to write clearly.
- ▶ Check your writing for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Sample Student Work

The student compositions that are included in this release represent a range of scores designed to show teachers several kinds of responses to the new prompts. In the explanations that follow the compositions, rubric language was used whenever possible to help teachers better understand how the scores were determined.

The purpose of the score-point explanations is to

- focus on the three elements of each dimension, with special attention on the student’s use of the passage information;
- provide concrete examples from the composition to show specific strengths and weaknesses; and
- provide recommendations on what the student can do to improve the composition and their writing.

This information will help teachers work with the new prompts and rubrics, but it will also guide them as they begin implementing evidence-based writing, an important instructional shift of the CCSS.

1. Final Draft

Do you ever wonder what it would be like to spend an entire day with a braumy gentle giant? Well, you can explore that epic adventure with me, L—S— extreme animal biologist. Come and join the fascinating adventure with me!

First of all, I'm here to tell you about a species you probably never heard of before, Capybaras. As I am walking through the swamps of Central America, I notice a pack of Capybaras grazing in a large section of grass. There are about twenty of them each with a reddish brown color of fur, short legs, wide bodies, and big snouts. I'm going to try and get a better look at their amazing features.

The second part of my journey begins now as I creep closer and closer to them. But then, a female Capybara lifts up her head in a sense of danger and begins to leap into the water with all of the others. About five minutes later, the first few Capybaras rise from the water, huffing and puffing as if they lost their breath. The male leader trots over to me, not identifying that I might be danger, but suddenly he starts making odd squeals as if he was saying, "You are one of us." It seemed like I was a "lone wolf" joining their mighty pack.

Amazed by what had just happened, my exploration

Final Draft (continued)

Here in this vast, gorgeous swamp is finally over. I've gathered all of the information I need to make an entire study on Capybaras. Of all the excursions I have made across the globe, I have never seen a creature like the Capybara. Oh how its stomach shakes when it slowly runs or when its webbed feet pound in the calm water. This is the kind of animal that flatters everyone.

A day with the Capybaras has made a huge impact on my life. I am so glad that I have learned about them and I hope you did too. I'm L— S— and I'll see you next time on *Extreme Animal Biologist*.

CONTENT: 4 Points

This response demonstrates consistent control in the Content dimension, and there are many strengths present.

The composition is sharply focused on the central idea of capybaras and a biologist's encounter with them while exploring the swamps of Central America.

The student has thoughtfully and successfully integrated ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage about the capybaras into the story ("As I am walking through the swamps of Central America," "There are about twenty of them each with a reddish brown color of fur, short legs, wide bodies, and big snouts," "a female Capybara lifts up her head in a sense of danger and begins to leap into the water with all of the others," "Capybaras rise from the water, huffing and puffing," "he starts making odd squeals," "how its stomach shakes when it slowly runs or when its webbed feet pound in the calm water"). The story of the biologist's discovery and information gathering is thoroughly developed using specific, relevant, and accurate details.

The response is well organized with evidence of planning and effective transitional phrases ("Come and join the fascinating adventure with me," "First of all, I'm here to tell you," "I'm going to try and get a better look," "now as I creep closer and closer to them," "But then," "About five minutes later," "Amazed by what had just happened"), which are used to connect the main ideas and to take the reader on the journey with the biologist while he or she presumably tapes an episode of *Extreme Animal Biologist*. A clear beginning, middle, and ending are apparent, and the thoughtful conclusion using the "sign-off" from the broadcast by the host contributes to the sense of wholeness.

STYLE: 4 Points

This response demonstrates consistent control in the Style dimension; many strengths are present.

The student has creatively written the composition from the viewpoint of biologist L— S— as he or she narrates an episode of the nature show *Extreme Animal Biologist* about capybaras. Precise and effective word choices are used throughout the composition (*epic, extreme, fascinating, amazing, creep, excursions, globe*). Vivid descriptive phrases and some figurative language appropriate to the task and to the character are used effectively and enhance the style of the composition (“brawny gentle giant,” “a pack of Capybaras grazing in a large section of grass,” “the first few Capybaras rise from the water, huffing and puffing as if they lost their breath,” “It seemed like I was a ‘lone wolf’ joining their mighty pack,” “vast, gorgeous swamp,” “Oh how it’s stomach shakes when it slowly runs or when it’s webbed feet pound in the calm water”).

The sentences consistently vary in length, structure, and beginnings, which allows for a very fluid and easy-to-follow story.

The voice of the writer, or more importantly the individual personality of “L— S— , extreme animal biologist,” is compelling and engaging throughout the composition. The creativity and subtle humor used to develop this characterization strengthen the overall content of the composition.

1. Final Draft

I woke up this morning, the sunlight beaming through my windows and the smell of freshly baked blueberry pancakes, lingering through the air. Waking up to mornings like this, usually give me a safe and joyful feeling, but today it seemed different.

I don't usually wake up like this especially not on Saturdays. I always wake up ready to start some kind of experiment or research project. I looked outside my window as the feeling slipped in my body more and more. Was I scared, sad, nervous? No, I was curious. Curious, about what may be going on.

I saw them. I couldn't believe my eyes. Right next to our pond was a family of Capybaras! In class, we recently learned about an animal very similar to a guinea pig. It looked just like one, but can weigh up to 100 pounds! Capybaras are the largest rodents in the world, and are known as the gentle giants of the rodent world. They have webbed feet and live in wet areas.

Final Draft (continued)

I ran down the stairs to eat breakfast. As soon as I finished I put on my shoes and ran out of the door. I slowed down as I got closer to the pond, I had to make sure I didn't scare the animals. I wanted to learn more about Capybaras. I got closer and closer and there they were, right in front of me.

Over time the Capybaras grew close to me, we swam together and I got more research. Now when I look out my window, I see them chewing grass, swimming and roaming around. I don't know how or why but, it isn't the pancakes and coffee that make me safe and happy, but it's the Capybaras. They are my friends.

CONTENT: 3 Points

This response demonstrates reasonable control in the Content dimension; some strengths and some weaknesses are present.

The student shows a general awareness of the task by writing a story in which an encounter with a family of capybaras is the central idea.

The student has included sufficient evidence from the passage ("next to our pond

was a family of Capybaras,” “similar to a guinea pig,” “weigh up to 100 pounds,” “the largest rodents in the world, and are known as the gentle giants of the rodent world,” “have webbed feet and live in wet areas”). However, the evidence feels somewhat forced into a single paragraph about what the student had learned in class rather than being well integrated and developed throughout the composition. The development of the writer’s original ideas within the narrative is adequate, but more thoughtful integration and development of these ideas in conjunction with evidence from the passage would improve the overall content score.

The composition is reasonably well organized and follows a logical progression detailing how the writer approaches and interacts with the capybaras. The writer uses transitions to move the reader through the events of the story from beginning to end, with a satisfactory ending that refers back to the blueberry pancakes, completing the composition.

STYLE: 4 Points

The writer demonstrates consistent control in the Style dimension, and many strengths are present in this response.

Vivid, effective, and precise word choices and phrases are used consistently throughout the composition (“I woke up this morning, the sunlight beaming through my windows and the smell of freshly baked blueberry pancakes, lingering through the air,” “Was I scared, sad, nervous? No. I was curious,” “chewing grass, swimming, and roaming around”).

Sentence fluency is consistent throughout most of the composition and many complex, sophisticated sentences characterize this response. The variety of sentence lengths and structures results in a fluid, easy-to-read narrative. Even though many sentences begin with “I,” and the third paragraph is somewhat less fluid and less natural sounding than other parts of the composition, these are minor weaknesses that do not detract from the overall consistency of the style.

An engaging voice is evident throughout the response, and the writer successfully exhibits his or her own individual personality in this first-person narrative.

1. Final Draft

One day a girl named Kate was taking pictures and exploring a pond. She saw a capybara go into its nest. She took a picture. When she was about to walk away the capybara said, "Why go away now, it's beautiful out here!". Kate looked over her shoulder.

"Is anybody there?" Kate said. She saw the capybara and picked it up. "I'm gonna take you home," said Kate without knowing that it talked.

While she was carrying him the capybara said "Hi I'm Henry and can you put me down?!" Kate couldn't believe her eyes.

"I want to take care of you though," Kate said.

"Ok I'll give you a chance to take care of me," said Henry. Kate put Henry in a big tank since Henry is very long.

"Good it fits you!" Kate said with a smile. She put dirt and water in the tank.

Then Henry said, "That looks really comfortable." Kate picked up Henry and put him in the tank.

"Goodnight Henry," Kate said with a whisper. The next morning Kate took Henry to town. Henry gasped.

Final Draft (continued)

"Those flowers look so beautiful and delicious!" said Henry. Someone overheard Henry talking and said, "That's not something you see every day." Kate thought of an idea about putting on a show about Henry talking. She put Henry's tank on the ground.

"Everybody come see the talking capybara it only cost 50¢ cents!" Kate said. A lot of people rushed to Kate.

"This has to be a scam!" said one of the tourist. All the people in line payed and gathered around in a circle.

"Ok Henry say something or a pun." Kate said

"Fine." Henry said under his breathe. "Hi everyone having an excelent day?" Henry said. Everyone didn't believe their eyes. The next day and the next day the kept coming. One day Henry gets sick, Kate released him into the wild.

"Bye Henry!" Kate said

"Bye." said Henry

CONTENT: 2 Points

This response demonstrates inconsistent control in the Content dimension.

The composition has a vague central idea about the writer finding a talking capybara. The writer demonstrates only a partial understanding of the task as the vast majority of the story is conversational dialogue between the writer and the capybara without any specific details or evidence from the passage to show what

capybaras are like.

The only information in the composition that may have been extracted from the passage is the fact that the capybara was discovered near a pond (“Kate was taking pictures and exploring a pond”) and a general comment about its size (“Kate put Henry in a big tank tank since Henry is very long”). These two pieces of evidence are not developed adequately and do not reflect sufficient use of the passage. To get a higher score in Content, the writer needs to integrate evidence and details from the passage into the composition.

The response follows a chronological order using some basic transitions, and it has a beginning and a weak ending (“One day Henry got sick. Kate released him into the wild. ‘Bye Henry!’ Kate said ‘Bye.’ said Henry”). The organization is a strength of this response, but the weaknesses in other elements of the Content dimension, particularly the lack of development and very little passage information, are enough to keep the score at a 2.

STYLE: 3 Points

The writer demonstrates reasonable control in the Style dimension, showing some strengths and some weaknesses. This composition includes some interesting words and phrases that are appropriate to the task (“exploring a pond. She saw a capybara go into it’s nest,” “‘Those flowers look so beautiful and delicious!’ said Henry”). The word choice is clear rather than precise or vivid. The sentences are generally varied in length and structure, and the writer’s personality clearly shows through in the extensive use of dialogue in the essay.

1. Final Draft

I was living peacefully in my house, but when I went outside to play, there were millions of capybaras. I was screaming my head off. So I will tell you a story about capybaras, and living around them.

Capybaras are huge rodents. They can weigh up to 100 pounds. They are feet long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet tall. They can be big enough to knock down my bedroom door, like a hog, they can almost knock down my front door, because they're fast.

They make houses outdoors. If you go outside, run back in the house. They live near water. They are herbivores. They make houses in dirt.

They live in groups of 20. They communicate by making quiet sounds. They click with their tongues, like us. They squeal, whistle, and make breathy barking sounds.

So now you have learned a lot about capybaras, and about living near them. They are creepy. I hope you and I don't live near them.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This response demonstrates inconsistent control in the Content dimension, and the weaknesses outweigh the strengths.

The writer’s central idea about living near capybaras is vague, and the shift from the narrative style at the opening (“I was living peacefully in my house”) to a mainly expository one for the duration of the composition (“Capybaras are huge rodents,” “They make houses outdoors,” “They live in groups of 20”) shows that the writer has only a partial understanding of the task.

While the composition does include some information from the passage, it is not adequately developed; rather it is merely stated with no additional extension of evidence and ideas. The majority of the essay just restates information about the capybaras without integrating it into a story (“They live in groups of 20. They communicate by making quiet sounds. They click with their tongues, like us. They squeal, whistle, and make breathy barking sounds”). The response also includes some inaccurate information (“They can almost knock down my front door, because they’re fast”), which is contradictory to what the passage states regarding their speed (“They are chubby and have short legs, which makes them fairly slow runners”).

While there is some attempt at organization, the lack of transitions weakens the composition. To get a higher score in Content, this writer would need to integrate more well-chosen evidence from the passage into a more fully developed narrative about living near capybaras.

STYLE: 2 Points

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control in the Style dimension; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths. Although the writer includes some interesting words and phrases (“I was screaming my head off,” “They are creepy”), the word choice in this composition tends to be generic and limited. Short, choppy sentences and the lack of variety in sentence structure detract from the fluidity of the response. Many sentences start the same way (“They can,” “They are,” “They make,” “They live,” “They communicate,” “They click”). The writer’s voice is evident at times but inconsistent, because much of the composition consists of the restatement of basic facts from the passage.

iLEAP Grade 6

The Grade 6 Writing Test is **untimed**, but students should be given a minimum of 75 minutes to read the passage(s), plan and write their compositions, and check their work.

Scoring Information

Because of the heavy emphasis of standard 3 (conventions of writing) in the language section of the iLEAP tests, student compositions will be scored only for the dimensions of **Content** and **Style**. The Content dimension measures

- the focus of the student’s central idea;
- the development of that idea, including the appropriate and accurate use of information from the passage(s); and
- the organization of the student’s ideas.

The Style dimension evaluates the ways in which the student shapes and controls the language and the flow of the composition. Features of Style include

- word choice;
- sentence fluency, which includes sentence structure and sentence variety; and
- voice, the individual personality of the writing.

For each of these two dimensions, a student can earn from 1 to 4 score points.

A summary of the score points for the Writing session is shown below.

Dimensions	Maximum Possible Points
Content	4
Style	4
Total Points	8

There are two Content rubrics; one is used to score student compositions that respond to prompts with one passage; the other is for prompts with two passages. The Content and Style rubrics can be found on pages 57 through 59.

CONTENT (One Passage): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passage and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without evidence from the passage cannot receive a score higher than a 2 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage, OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

CONTENT (Two Passages): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passages and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE(S) AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition that addresses only one of the two passages cannot receive a score higher than a 3 in Content. A score of 4 cannot be assigned unless both passages have been addressed.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from at least one of the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage(s), OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage(s) and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

STYLE: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice

Key Questions: *Would you keep reading this composition if it were longer? Do the words, phrases, and sentences strengthen the content and allow the reader to move through the writing with ease?*

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> precise effective vivid words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear but less specific includes some interesting words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generic limited repetitive overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> functional simple (below grade level) may be inappropriate to the task
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluid, very easy to follow, because of variety in length, structure, and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally varied in length and structure Most sentences have varied beginnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no variety in length and structure Awkward sentences may affect the fluidity of the reading. same beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple sentences no variety Construction makes the response difficult to read.
VOICE (individual personality of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compelling and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, but may not be particularly compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak and/or inconsistent voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no voice Response is too brief to provide an adequate example of style; minimal attempt.

Compositions that are off topic, illegible, blank, insufficient, not written in English, a restatement of the prompt, or include only copied text from the passage(s) are considered unscorable and will receive zero points.

Grade 6 Sample Writing Prompt

At grade 6, the Writing Topic may direct students to write a story, explain or describe something, or convince someone of their position. On a test that has a prompt with one passage, the passage and the Writing Topic are on facing pages. On a test that has a prompt with two passages, the passages are on facing pages, and the Writing Topic is on the next right-hand page. This will allow students to go back and forth between the passages and the Writing Topic as they prepare their response. Below is a two-passage writing prompt that appeared on the field test administered in March 2012.

Directions: Read the speeches written by two students running for class president. As you read the speeches, think about which student would get your vote and why. Then use the speeches to help you write a well-organized multiparagraph composition.

Tyrese Caldwell's Speech

Imagine this: It's lunchtime at our school, and outside the halls of the building a perfect spring day awaits. Wouldn't it be great to step outside into the fresh air and eat lunch? With a new outdoor area reserved for students, we could! My name is Tyrese Caldwell. If you elect me as your class president, I will make sure this idea becomes a reality.

For a long time, my friends and I have been thinking of ways to improve our school grounds. We have plans for a student area that includes benches, grassy places for relaxing, and tables with umbrellas for shade. We could even ask for stereo speakers so we could enjoy music during lunch.

Sure, a project this amazing will require funds, but we have a plan for that too. With three or four fund-raising projects, including a car wash and candy and magazine sales, plus a campaign for donations, we could easily make enough money by the spring.

Fellow students, I have both the knowledge and the experience to get the job done. For the last two years I have been a student council class representative. In that short time, I came up with new ideas, and I listened to you. I got a lot done: dress-up day, the fan bus to the parish championship basketball game, order-out pizza days twice a month. Now that we're sixth graders, we have more say than ever on what goes on at our school. As your president for the next nine months, I will put forth all of my efforts to help create a better school. Vote for me if you want to make our school a truly great place.

Felicia Kent's Speech

Homework. Band. Choir. Sports. Chores at home. As sixth-grade students at Willow Middle School, our lives are busy. We don't want extra activities during the school year to take away from our already limited free time. That's why if you elect me, Felicia Kent, I will work for you, rather than the other way around.

"Simplicity and success!" That's my motto. Previous class presidents have introduced many types of activities, such as school dances and volunteer projects. My opponent in this election is doing the same. These ideas always sound great at the time, but they become a problem when we have to raise money, find supplies, and recruit help. For example, even if we build an outdoor student area, how many people could sit there? Certainly not the entire class. Who would supervise the area and clean it? Who would decide what music to play? We simply don't have time to take on such a big project. A vote for me is a vote for simplicity!

With me as your class president, your free time will be protected and our resources will be put to good use. Sixth grade is going to be a challenging year for all of us. I will work with the school administration to organize an after-school homework help center in the library with seventh-grade and eighth-grade volunteers to assist you. We will provide snacks and refreshments to all students who participate. Completing your homework at school will give you plenty of free time at home, time that can be used any way you choose.

Let's concentrate on being successful students while still enjoying time to rest and have fun. Choose Felicia Kent when you vote this Friday. You won't regret it.

Writing Topic

Think about the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate and what qualities would make a good class president.

Write a multiparagraph composition for your teacher explaining which candidate, Tyrese or Felicia, you would vote for and why. Use details from both speeches to help you explain your opinion.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- ▶ Be sure your composition has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- ▶ Use details from both speeches and include enough information so your teacher will understand your response.
- ▶ Be sure to write clearly and to check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Sample Student Work

The student compositions that are included in this release represent a range of scores designed to show teachers several kinds of responses to the new prompts. In the explanations that follow the compositions, rubric language was used whenever possible to help teachers better understand how the scores were determined.

The purpose of the score-point explanations is to

- focus on the three elements of each dimension, with special attention on the student’s use of the passage information;
- provide concrete examples from the composition to show specific strengths and weaknesses; and
- provide recommendations on what the student can do to improve the composition and their writing.

This information will help teachers work with the new prompts and rubrics, but it will also guide them as they begin implementing evidence-based writing, an important instructional shift of the CCSS.

School 1. Final Draft President

Schools are something to be cherished. They help students learn, and give teachers jobs. As students, it is important for us to have a voice, so we can have our opinions viewed as well. That person is normally the school's student president. If I could vote for Tyrese or Felicia for president, I would choose Felicia. I would choose Felicia because she is realistic, she wants to assist the students, and all Tyrese wants to do is have fun.

First of all, Felicia is exceedingly realistic. Her project does not require very much money, unlike Tyrese's project. Also, she isn't building a whole new, or ridiculous part of the school. All she wants is part-time usage of the school's library. She longs for the students to work hard, so their free-time can be put to good use. She is an appropriate, reasonable choice for class president.

Second of all, she wishes to help the students. She intends to set up an after-school homework help center that would aid students with any homework questions they have. The help center would

Final Draft (continued)

also benefit the pupil's grades, and it would assist the students' concentration too. Being in a peaceful, relaxing, and quiet place like that would, truly help them to apply the focus needed to make outstanding grades.

Last of all, while Felicia wants to work for the students, all Tyrese wants to do is have fun. In Tyrese's speech she never mentions the importance of education, nor ever mentions education at all. Tyrese only talked about how much fun an outside space would be, and the amount of labor they would have to put into it. That just doesn't sound appealing. She also mentions how many other "fun" projects she has helped with in the past like: pizza parties and dress-up day. None of which have to do with education.

In conclusion, if I could vote for class President I would choose Felicia over Tyrese. I choose Felicia because she is realistic, she wishes to assist the students, and Tyrese only wants to do fun activities. Felicia is an exceptional candidate, and I would happily choose her.

CONTENT: 4 Points

This response demonstrates consistent control of the Content dimension; many strengths are present.

The composition is sharply focused on assessing the candidates' strengths and weaknesses, with a continuing evaluation of how those candidates'

proposals would affect education. The student makes a choice and explains that choice by giving an appraisal drawn from both speeches, showing a complete understanding of the task.

The writer includes ample, well-chosen evidence from both passages to support the choice of Felicia for class president. This evidence is skillfully incorporated into the student's discussion, providing a logical and convincing rationale for the choice made. The ideas are thoroughly developed with details that are specific, relevant, and accurate ("she isn't building a whole, new, or ridiculous part of the school. All she wants is part-time usage of the schools library . . . She intends to set up an after-school homework help center . . . In Tyrese's speech she never mentions the importance of education, nor ever mentions education at all. Tyrese only talked about how much fun an outside space would be").

Strong organizational skills are displayed throughout this composition. An exceptionally well-crafted beginning sets up the importance of the topic ("As students, it is important for us to have a voice, so we can have our opinions viewed as well. That person is normally the school's student president"). It goes on to introduce the two candidates and then states the central idea and the supporting ideas ("I would choose Felicia because she is realistic, she wants to assist the students, and all Tyrese wants to do is have fun"). This plan is followed with a logical ordering of ideas and effective transitions that allow the reader to easily move through the writing. The ending restates the ideas presented and extends them by concluding, "Felicia is an exceptional candidate, and I would happily choose her," providing a satisfying sense of wholeness and completion.

STYLE: 4 Points

Precise, effective word choices (*ridiculous*, *assist*, *concentration*, *appealing*) and vivid phrases ("exceedingly realistic," "apply the focus needed," "make outstanding grades") communicate clear ideas. Sentences are complex and varied, creating a fluid, very easy-to-follow rhythm. A compelling and engaging voice supporting Felicia's candidacy is clearly evident. Many strengths are present in the Style dimension of this composition, showing consistent control.

1. Final Draft

Tyrese and Felicia speeches were both really great, but I choose Tyrese's speech. Tyrese would be a great class president for the class because he has so much more to offer us, and he's doing more things that kids would like and enjoy, and they also can make new friends.

I choose Tyrese Childrell's speech because kids need a place for kids just to hang out, and to talk and play with friends. Another thing is its fun and exciting. We kids all enjoy music and just to have fun and other things.

The fund-raising for the lunch area is a great idea. Fund-raiser are amazing and it benefits are school, like the car washing, selling candy bars, and selling magazines. Fund-raising is not only good for the school it gets kids active instead of laying down watching T.V.

The dress-up day would be nice also, and the fan bus to the parish championship basket ball game is also good because we are supporting our team and having team spirit.

There would be a big open space like the cafeteria and before we would leave we would pick up after our selves because we are in

Final Draft (continued)

the sixth grade we are old enough. We would have
a certain classes on a specific day to listen to
what ever music they wanted.

I give many reason why I voted for
Tyrese, and I liked what i read better than Felicia's
Speech

CONTENT: 3 Points

This response demonstrates reasonable control of the Content dimension; there are some strengths and some weaknesses.

The writer maintains a clear central idea, that “Tyrese would be a great class president for the class,” throughout the response. A general understanding of the task is shown as the student explains why Tyrese would get his or her vote. However, all the details provided address only one of the two passages (*Tyrese Caldwell’s Speech*), demonstrating that the writer does not have a complete understanding of the task.

The development of the composition includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from Tyrese’s speech to support the student’s choice. There is an argument made to refute two of Felicia’s criticisms of Tyrese’s plan (“before we would leave we would pick up after our selves because we are in the sixth grade we are old enough. We would have a certain classes on a specific day to listen to what ever music they wanted”), but the evidence is not ample and well chosen, as no details are drawn from *Felicia Kent’s Speech* to help clarify the writer’s argument. The student does add his or her own ideas and reflections (“Fund-Raising is not only good for the school it gets kids active instead of laying down wathing T.V.”), and the ideas are developed adequately but not thoroughly, with the reader having to make some of the connections. The details used are relevant and accurate.

The composition has a logical order. The beginning sets up the main idea (“I choos Tyrese’s speech”) and the support (“he has so much more to offer us, and he’s doing more things that kids would like and enjoy, and they also can make new friends”). The idea about making new friends is dropped, but the other ideas are developed. There is a general grouping of ideas, although the outdoor break area is discussed in the second paragraph and then returned to in the fifth paragraph. While there is a logical order to the ideas for the most part, they are not all introduced clearly and linked effectively enough to allow the reader to move easily through the composition. A few transitions are used.

STYLE: 3 Points

The writer’s word choice is clear but not precise or vivid. There are some appropriate and interesting phrases used, such as “gets kids active instead of

laying down watching T.V.” and “supporting our team and having team spirit.” Sentences have varied beginnings and lengths and create a reasonably fluid reading, in spite of a few that are awkward. The voice of the student is clear but not especially compelling or engaging. A reasonable control of the Style dimension is demonstrated.

1. Final Draft

Zyrose and Felicia both have great ideas to improving our school. I think Zyrose has the better plan, because he has plans to bring better things to our school. He has plans to raise money for his ideas.

Felicia don't want us to have a fun time at school she wants the fun to be at home. She wants to get seventh and eighth-graders to participate in a after school program to help with homework but they don't want to do that they want better time at school to see there friends.

I would vote for Zyrose because he will bring new stuff to our school like out side lunch time. He will have music playing and a shady place to relax at. It will bring time for students to visit with friends.

On the other hand Felicia wants we to have more free time at home and have a boring school. Many people would not participate in after school

Final Draft (continued)

programs. They won't better time at school and fun time at home too.

Both of them have great plans for our school but I think Tyrese has a time of fun planned. He has plans to raise money for the event he also knows what the students wants to do. He will also listen to the students at our school to see what they want to improve.

CONTENT: 3 Points

This response demonstrates reasonable control in the Content dimension, with some strengths and some weaknesses.

A clear central idea is established (“I think Tyrese has the better plane because he has plans to bring better things to our school”) and is maintained throughout the composition. The student shows understanding of the task by choosing a candidate and explaining that choice with details from both passages.

A strength of this response is the writer’s use of evidence from both passages. From *Tyrese Caldwell’s Speech*, the student cites Tyrese’s plan to raise money and to provide outside lunchtime, music, and shady places. From *Felicia Kent’s Speech*, the plan for fun at home rather than at school, the participation of seventh and eighth graders to help with homework, and the after-school nature of the proposed program are all incorporated into the discussion. The evidence included, while sufficient and appropriate, stops somewhat short. More development is needed for a higher score. For instance, the student supports the choice of Tyrese by stating twice that “he has plans to raise money,” but those plans are never explained. More thorough development and more specific details are needed.

In discussing the pros of Tyrese’s plans and the cons of Felicia’s, the writer uses a logical order of ideas which allows the reader to move through the composition without confusion. There is a clear beginning. A weaker ending attempts to summarize the main and supporting ideas, but when the student adds new information in the final sentence, it leaves the conclusion feeling somewhat uncertain. Some transitions are used (“on the other hand,” “also”).

STYLE: 2 Points

This response demonstrates inconsistent control of the features in the Style dimension, with weaknesses outweighing the strengths. The word choices are clear when the student is restating ideas from the passages, but at other times the language used is more generic (“plans to bring better things to our school,” “he will bring new stuff to our school”). The verb constructions are limited and overused, often relying on the verbs and helping verbs *has*, *want*, *will*, and *would*. There is little sentence variety, with most sentences beginning with the same type of pronoun plus basic verb construction (“I think,” “He has,” “She won’ts,” “I would,” “He will,” “It will,” “They won’t”). A stronger voice would be created with the use of active verbs and different sentence types.

1. Final Draft

Both the candidates have really good ideas but only one candidate can be class president. I'm going to tell you why and why I shouldn't pick both and which one I pick for class president and which one I picked.

First I'm going to tell you why I should pick Tyrese Caldwell for class president. I should pick her because she wants a outdoor arena so that the kids can walk outside so that the kids can eat their lunch and relax outside where there is fresh air. The reason I don't want to pick her is because it has nothing to do with learning.

Next I'm going to tell you why I should choose Felicia Kent for class president. I should pick her because she wants to have a school library, a school dance, and an after school homework help center.

Final Draft (continued)

Fore both things the both candidates picked we need to work hard and make money to support their ideas.

Both the ideas are great but I like one the best. I like Felicia Kent fore class president because her ideas support learning.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This response demonstrates inconsistent control of the Content dimension; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths.

The central idea is vague (“Both the candidates have really good ideas but . . . I’m going to tell you why and why I shouldn’t pick both and which one I pick for class president”), but the student does show a general understanding of the task by selecting details from both passages to help try to explain his or her choice.

Although the writer addresses both passages, the evidence included is insufficient to explain his or her choice of candidates. Some details explaining the strengths of Tyrese’s candidacy are included (“she wants an outdoor arena so that the kids can walk outside so that the kids can eat their lunch and relax outside where there is fresh air”). However, when the writer explains Felicia’s candidacy, the information is list-like and mostly inaccurate. The student states, “she wants to have a school library,” which shows a misunderstanding of Felicia’s proposal to have the help center *in* the school library. The assertion that she wants a school dance is also a misreading of the passage, since Felicia uses the dance to set up a contrast to her own plans. The student extends ideas from the passages only in the evaluation that Tyrese’s proposals have nothing to do with learning, while Felicia’s support learning. More development of ideas and greater accuracy in the use of text information is required for a higher score.

An attempt to organize the response is made, with a weak beginning and an abrupt ending. The student does use some transitions.

STYLE: 2 Points

Word choice in this response is mostly limited, with few clear words or phrases that are not borrowed from the passages. The sentences are sometimes awkwardly constructed, making them unclear (“I’m going to tell you why and why I shouldnt pick both and wich one I pick fore class president and wich one I picked” and “Fore both things the both candidates picked we need to work hard and make money to support their ideas”). The student’s voice is inconsistent.

iLEAP Grade 7

The Grade 7 Writing Test is **untimed**, but students should be given a minimum of 75 minutes to read the passage(s), plan and write their compositions, and check their work.

Scoring Information

Because of the heavy emphasis of standard 3 (conventions of writing) in the language section of the iLEAP tests, student compositions will be scored only for the dimensions of **Content** and **Style**. The Content dimension measures

- the focus of the student’s central idea;
- the development of that idea, including the appropriate and accurate use of information from the passage(s); and
- the organization of the student’s ideas.

The Style dimension evaluates the ways in which the student shapes and controls the language and the flow of the composition. Features of Style include

- word choice;
- sentence fluency, which includes sentence structure and sentence variety; and
- voice, the individual personality of the writing.

For each of these two dimensions, a student can earn from 1 to 4 score points.

A summary of the score points for the Writing session is shown below.

Dimensions	Maximum Possible Points
Content	4
Style	4
Total Points	8

There are two Content rubrics; one is used to score student compositions that respond to prompts with one passage; the other is for prompts with two passages. The Content and Style rubrics can be found on pages 77 through 79.

CONTENT (One Passage): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passage and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without evidence from the passage cannot receive a score higher than a 2 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage, OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

CONTENT (Two Passages): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passages and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE(S) AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition that addresses only one of the two passages cannot receive a score higher than a 3 in Content. A score of 4 cannot be assigned unless both passages have been addressed.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from at least one of the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage(s), OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage(s) and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

STYLE: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice

Key Questions: *Would you keep reading this composition if it were longer? Do the words, phrases, and sentences strengthen the content and allow the reader to move through the writing with ease?*

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> precise effective vivid words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear but less specific includes some interesting words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generic limited repetitive overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> functional simple (below grade level) may be inappropriate to the task
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluid, very easy to follow, because of variety in length, structure, and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally varied in length and structure Most sentences have varied beginnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no variety in length and structure Awkward sentences may affect the fluidity of the reading. same beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple sentences no variety Construction makes the response difficult to read.
VOICE (individual personality of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compelling and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, but may not be particularly compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak and/or inconsistent voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no voice Response is too brief to provide an adequate example of style; minimal attempt.

Compositions that are off topic, illegible, blank, insufficient, not written in English, a restatement of the prompt, or include only copied text from the passage(s) are considered unscorable and will receive zero points.

Grade 7 Sample Writing Prompt

At grade 7, the Writing Topic may direct students to write a story, explain or describe something, or convince someone of their position. On a test that has a prompt with one passage, the passage and the Writing Topic are on facing pages. On a test that has a prompt with two passages, the passages are on facing pages, and the Writing Topic is on the next right-hand page. This will allow students to go back and forth between the passages and the Writing Topic as they prepare their response. On the following pages is a one-passage writing prompt that appeared on the field test administered in March 2012.

Directions: Read the passage about the California Gold Rush. As you read the passage, think about what it would be like to be a gold digger during the gold rush. Then use the passage to help you write a well-organized multiparagraph composition.

Gold Rush

The California Gold Rush began in 1848. News that the valuable metal had been found in the hills and rivers of California spread quickly. People traveled from as far as the East Coast and other countries to join in the great adventure. Little did they know that this same adventure would also have hardships, danger, and disappointment.

Gold diggers, people who dig and mine for gold, lived in camps and mining towns while looking for gold in the rivers and hills. The towns were small and very simple. Tents and shacks lined the dirt streets. However, as towns grew, cabins and wooden buildings were built. Since gold diggers spent many hours working, meals were usually prepared outdoors over a fire. They often ate game they had hunted during the day, as well as beans, potatoes, and onions they had gathered. Their day-to-day lives were spent hauling supplies to and from camp in search of gold. In the evenings they would relax by playing cards with friends or writing letters home. On the weekends they would travel to one of the nearby cities.

To be a good gold digger, one had to have the right tools. One of the most common tools was the gold pan, which was disc-shaped and about the size of a large dinner plate. It was made of steel and looked like a shallow bowl. The gold digger would work along a river, filling the gold pan with loose sediment and dirt from the river bottom. Then, the materials would be rocked back and forth in the pan while being held under the water. The gold, being heavier than silt, would settle to the bottom of the pan while the lighter, less valuable materials would wash out. Gold diggers would know they had found gold once they caught sight of the flashes of bright gold among the darker stones. This sight was often referred to as “showing the color.” This simple method of searching for gold was one of the first and was available to anyone who had the money for the pan.

Those who “panned” for gold came for many reasons. People from all backgrounds wanted to strike it rich. Many also wanted to support their families back home. The gold rush resulted in so much digging and panning that the available gold in the rivers was quickly depleted, and finding a good source of gold was rare. A small number of gold diggers became rich, despite the hardships of malnutrition and severe weather and the dangers of being robbed. As the sources of gold were found farther into the hills and mountains, mining changed. What had once been a solitary task each miner did with some water and a metal pan or sifter now became projects run by larger organizations, with miners working long hours, often underground, and using heavy machinery to locate gold by crushing rocks. This change also contributed to the decline of gold diggers, but not before they had made an important mark on history.

Writing Topic

Imagine what it would be like to be a gold digger during the California Gold Rush of 1848.

Write a multiparagraph composition for your teacher explaining whether or not you would have wanted to be a gold digger during the California Gold Rush. Use details from the passage to help you explain your choice.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- ▶ Be sure your composition has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- ▶ Use details from the passage and include enough information so your teacher will understand your response.
- ▶ Be sure to write clearly and to check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Sample Student Work

The student compositions that are included in this release represent a range of scores designed to show teachers several kinds of responses to the new prompts. In the explanations that follow the compositions, rubric language was used whenever possible to help teachers better understand how the scores were determined.

The purpose of the score-point explanations is to

- focus on the three elements of each dimension, with special attention on the student’s use of the passage information;
- provide concrete examples from the composition to show specific strengths and weaknesses; and
- provide recommendations on what the student can do to improve the composition and their writing.

This information will help teachers work with the new prompts and rubrics, but it will also guide them as they begin implementing evidence-based writing, an important instructional shift of the CCSS.

1. Final Draft

Gold Digging in California

The Gold Rush of 1848 was a major event in United States history. When people heard of the gold discovered in California, their population boomed. People came from far and wide in the hopes of striking it rich. I would not have been one of them. The obstacles that came with the 'Gold-Rush experience' would not have been worth it.

Many of the people that scurried to California to find gold were left empty handed. The gross amount of diggers left people with even a smaller chance to get their hands on the valuable metal. Multiple panners believed that the gold they would find would pay off the expenses of traveling and the tools needed for digging. What if they were not one of the few lucky people that found gold? If you ask me, it wouldn't be worth the risk.

The trip to the West would be extremely long and dangerous. Many settlers from the East would have to load up their wagons for a trip which would last months. Many of the trails were steep, dry, and rocky. The wagons were not designed for these rough road conditions, and there was also a large chance of getting robbed while traveling. Most of these incidents happened at night while the travelers were resting. I believe gold is not worth putting your own life on the line.

Final Draft (continued)

I also wouldn't want to deal with the living conditions at the camps. The gold diggers were constantly outside in small, unsteady shacks and tents despite the weather conditions. The lack of nutrition at the camps didn't really help the diggers out. They ate the game they were able to hunt, and they consumed whatever they could gather. Being the girly-girl I am, I wouldn't even think about putting up with these conditions.

Although the California Gold Rush led a handful of lucky people to riches, the risks would be far too dangerous for me. The harsh living conditions, the long, grueling trips to the West, and the risk of not even finding gold seem like good enough reasons to not have taken part of the Gold Rush of 1848.

CONTENT: 4 Points

This writer demonstrates consistent control of the Content dimension.

The central idea is sharply focused on whether or not the writer would have wanted to be a gold digger during the California Gold Rush and shows a complete understanding of this task. This focus is maintained throughout the composition.

The composition includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to support the position that the writer would not have wanted to be a gold digger, citing the risks, difficulties, and dangers referred to in the passage ("Many of the people that scurried to California to find gold were left empty handed," "a large chance of getting robbed while traveling," "The gold diggers were constantly outside in small, unsteady shacks and tents despite the weather conditions," "The lack of nutrition at the camps"). It also includes other information about the Gold Rush not found in the passage. Both the passage information and the writer's ideas are well integrated and thoroughly developed.

The composition demonstrates evidence of planning with a logical development and flow of ideas from beginning to end. Evidence is presented in each of the paragraphs and consistently followed by a concluding statement of the writer's opinion for support. This strategy helps guide the reader from one idea to

the next. A clear beginning and ending also contribute to the overall sense of wholeness conveyed in this response.

STYLE: 4 Points

This writer demonstrates consistent control of the Style dimension. Precise and effective word choice and vivid words and phrases are evident throughout the composition (“population boomed,” “obstacles,” “the people that scurried,” “trails were steep, dry, and rocky,” “small, unsteady shacks and tents,” “grueling trips to the West”). The sentences are fluid and easy to follow because the writer utilizes a variety of often complex and sophisticated sentence patterns throughout the composition. The writer’s voice is consistently compelling and engaging, expressing a clear, convincing opinion about not wanting to be a gold digger in the California Gold Rush (“What if they were not one of the few lucky people that found gold? If you ask me, it wouldn’t be worth the risk,” “I believe gold is not worth putting your own life on the line,” “Being the girly-girl I am, I wouldn’t even think about putting up with these conditions”).

1. Final Draft

I, ~~she~~, would absolutely have been a gold miner. There are many advantages and disadvantages about being a gold miner. I, honestly, would want to mine for gold, even if it was a big risk.

The Gold Rush began in 1848 and lasted for a few years. That is where the miners got the name, "miner forty-niners," because, although the Gold Rush began in 1848, it wasn't a very big deal until 1849. I would mainly have been a miner because it would bring wealth to support my family. Also, many people think and say it was more work than any other job. Well, that isn't true. This is because you would only work on week days and only in the daylight hours. At night, they would play cards or write letters to home. On weekends, they would go into the nearest town or city. Also, on some days, they would spend the day hunting, gathering, and farming. They would use the food they hunted, farmed, and gathered to cook over a fire and eat. Sure it was hard being away

Final Draft (continued)

from home, but I still think it's worth working in the mines with your friends.

There are a few minor disadvantages to being a "miner forty-niner." One disadvantage is being so far from home. Because they were all the way across the country, they didn't have time to visit family. Instead, they would write to them. But, this would take nearly a week to get to the family so they wouldn't get a letter from them in two or more weeks. Another negative factor about mining is that you have a slight chance at being robbed. Although, it is your responsibility to hide and keep your gold and belongings safe.

Although there are few negative factors, there are still many positives to being a miner in the 1848 Gold Rush - Therefore, I would choose to be a miner in California. This would bring great fortune to my family.

CONTENT: 3 Points

This writer demonstrates reasonable control of the Content dimension.

The student shows a general understanding of the task, using details from the passage to support the clear central idea that he or she "would want to mine for gold, even if it was a big risk." This idea is maintained throughout the composition, although at times the focus on being a gold miner weakens.

The student includes sufficient and appropriate evidence to support his or her choice of whether or not to be a gold digger. This evidence from the passage generally supports the position that it would be a positive experience, even with risks (“it would bring wealth to support my family,” it is not “more work than any other job” because “you would only work on week days and only in the daylight hours”). The effect of the evidence and the supporting details, however, is undercut at times by the presentation of the disadvantages. While it is an effective technique for the writer to present arguments against his or her choice, the writer does not always effectively refute the counter-examples in these cases (“Sure it was hard being away from home, but I still think it’s worth working in the mines with your friends,” “you have a slight chance at being robbed. Although, it is your responsibility to hide and keep your gold and belongings safe”). Most of the details in the composition are relevant and accurate.

The composition follows a logical order. A clear beginning and ending and the use of basic transitions throughout help guide the reader.

STYLE: 3 Points

The writer demonstrates reasonable control of the features in the Style dimension. Word choice is clear but less specific. Although many of the words are general and fairly common and the composition lacks vivid vocabulary (“it was a big risk,” “it wasn’t a very big deal,” “they would write to them”), the words are appropriate to the task. Most of the sentences have varied beginnings, and they are generally varied in length and structure. Although there is some repetition (“At night, they would play,” “On weekends, they would go,” “Also, on some days, they would spend,” “They would use the food”), the writer does use many complex sentences. The student’s voice comes through in the composition, but it is not particularly compelling or convincing.

1. Final Draft

If I had the choice to be a gold digger from the California Gold Rush, I would be one. I would want to be one to help my family, become rich, and to become more than a poor family no one knows. I know I can be a significant digger because I am full of determination.

The first reason I would want to be a gold digger is to help my family. To help my family, we would have more food and more medicine. If one of my family members get ill, they would be able to heal because of our supply of medication. Also if someone gets injured, we would have the right utensils to help that family member. Helping my family would be a big part of becoming a gold digger for me.

My next reason to become a gold digger is to become rich. When I gather up more and more gold, I will buy more land and build a new house like no other. The land I would garden on, and have for my horses and children. My house would be made of stone or brick. It will stand out while everyone else has a house built of wood.

Final Draft (continued)

One more reason for becoming a gold digger is to become more than a poor family no one knows. Once I build my new house, get more land, and have nice horses, everyone in town would want to be our friend. We would also have nicer clothes. My families loneliness will be gone.

In conclusion, I would become a gold digger for all of those reasons. My life would be much better. Most importantly, my family will be happy.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This writer demonstrates inconsistent control over the features of the Content dimension; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths.

While there is a central idea that the writer would want to be a gold digger to get rich and help his or her family, there is a lack of understanding of the task. The passage is not addressed in the composition, limiting this response to a score point of 2. Instead, the reader is provided with a long list of things the student would do once he or she became rich from mining gold (“If one of my family members get ill, they would be able to heal because of our supply of medication,” “I will buy more land and build a new house like no other. The land I would garden on, and have for my horses and children”). It is possible that the idea of building of a house with a garden was inspired by the shacks the miners lived in that were described in the passage, but this is not at all clear. Much of the information is not relevant to being a gold digger. Other means of getting rich could be substituted for gold digging and the composition would not substantially change.

The composition uses a basic five-paragraph organizational structure with a beginning, three body paragraphs in the middle, and an ending. Although this structure creates a logical order which allows the reader to move through the composition, the transitions (“first reason,” “next reason,” “one more reason,” and “In conclusion”) are very basic.

STYLE: 3 Points

The writer demonstrates reasonable control in the Style dimension, with some strengths and some weaknesses. Word choice is clear but less specific. There

are some precise words (*significant, determination, medication, utensils*) and interesting phrases (“a new house like no other,” “It will stand out while everyone else has a house built of wood”), but most of the language is general. Sentences are generally varied in length and structure, and their beginnings are varied, lending them a natural flow. The writer’s voice is clear but not particularly compelling.

1. Final Draft

Gold diggers are people who dig and mine for gold. They are living in mining towns and camps while looking for gold in the rivers and hills. If you ask me "Whether or not I would have wanted to be a gold digger during the California Gold Rush?", I would say that I wouldn't want to be a gold digger for some reasons.

Gold diggers work hard to just get gold. Their towns were small and very simple, but the town grew, wooden buildings were built and cabins. Gold diggers spent many hours working, looking for gold, and their meals were prepared over fire outdoors. They also spent hauling supplies to and from camp in search for gold, day-to-day, of their lives. Gold diggers also need the right tools for gold.

If you want to be a gold digger during the California Gold Rush, one of them have to have the right tools called the gold pan, that is disc-shape and about the size of a large dinner plate made out of steel. Even gold diggers had to work along a river to get gold with their gold pan. Most of them wanted to support their families back home. A small number of gold diggers became rich, caused the severe weather and hardships of malnutrition and the dangers of being robbed. The California Gold Rush must have been harder back then.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This writer demonstrates inconsistent control over the features of the Content dimension.

The central idea of this response is vague and loosely maintained. While the writer states his or her position (“I would say that I wouldn’t want to be a gold digger for some reasons”), most of the information in the response consists of directly copied or paraphrased text from the passage, with little elaboration. The evidence has not been purposefully selected to support the writer’s position. Some of the sentences describe negative aspects of gold digging, but others do not. Overall, the response is more a retelling of the passage than a composition explaining the writer’s position by using relevant evidence from the passage. The student has attempted to organize the composition. The organizational pattern mimics the organization of the passage itself, in that sentences are copied or paraphrased in the same order as they appear in the passage. This lack of purpose in the organization is one more indication that the writer has only a partial understanding of the task. There is a beginning, but the weak ending (“The California Gold Rush must have been harder back then”) only vaguely relates to the writer’s stated position.

STYLE: 2 Points

The writer demonstrates inconsistent control over the features of the Style dimension; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths.

As most of the information is copied or paraphrased from the passage, it is difficult to determine the writer’s own ability to form varied, correct sentences. The attempts at paraphrasing result in awkward sentences that affect the fluidity of the reading and make the word choice unclear at times (“They also spent hauling supplies to and from camp in search for gold, day-to-day,” “If you want to be a gold digger during the California Gold Rush, one of them have to have the right tools called the gold pan, that is disc-shape and about the size of a large dinner plate made out of steel,” “A small number of gold diggers became rich, caused the severe weather and hardships of malnutrition and the dangers of being robbed”).

The writer’s voice is weak because it has very little opportunity to show through the copied and paraphrased information that comprises the majority of this composition.

LEAP Grade 8

The Grade 8 Writing Test is **untimed**, but students should be given a minimum of 90 minutes to read the passage(s), plan and write their compositions, and check their work.

Scoring Information

The LEAP compositions are scored for **Content** and **Style**, but they also are scored for the conventions of writing: Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling. The Content dimension measures

- the focus of the student’s central idea;
- the development of that idea, including the appropriate and accurate use of information from the passage(s); and
- the organization of the student’s ideas.

The Style dimension evaluates the ways in which the student shapes and controls the language and the flow of the composition. Features of Style include

- word choice;
- sentence fluency, which includes sentence structure and sentence variety; and
- voice, the individual personality of the writing.

For each of these two dimensions, a student can earn from 1 to 4 score points.

In addition, the grade 8 compositions are rated as showing either “acceptable control” or “unacceptable control” in the conventions: **Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling**. An acceptable rating earns 1 score point, while an unacceptable rating earns none.

A summary of the score points for the Writing session is shown below.

Dimensions	Maximum Possible Points
Content	4
Style	4
Sentence Formation	1
Usage	1
Mechanics	1
Spelling	1
Total Points	12

There are two Content rubrics; one is used to score student compositions that respond to prompts with one passage; the other is for prompts with two passages. The Content and Style rubrics can be found on pages 96 through 98.

CONTENT (One Passage): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passage and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without information from the passage cannot receive a score higher than a 2 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate information from the passage to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage, OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

CONTENT (Two Passages): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer’s use of the text show an understanding of the passages and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer’s ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharply focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE(S) AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition that addresses only one of the two passages cannot receive a score higher than a 3 in Content. A score of 4 cannot be assigned unless both passages have been addressed.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from at least one of the passages to support central idea Evidence and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no evidence from the passage(s), OR only summarizes or paraphrases passage information Evidence and ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no evidence from the passage(s) and/or the evidence shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. Clear beginning, middle, and ending contribute sense of wholeness. effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition. has a beginning and an ending transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization digressions, repetition weak beginning and ending may lack transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

STYLE: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice

Key Questions: *Would you keep reading this composition if it were longer? Do the words, phrases, and sentences strengthen the content and allow the reader to move through the writing with ease?*

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> precise effective vivid words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear but less specific includes some interesting words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generic limited repetitive overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> functional simple (below grade level) may be inappropriate to the task
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluid, very easy to follow, because of variety in length, structure, and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally varied in length and structure Most sentences have varied beginnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no variety in length and structure Awkward sentences may affect the fluidity of the reading. same beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple sentences no variety Construction makes the response difficult to read.
VOICE (individual personality of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compelling and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, but may not be particularly compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak and/or inconsistent voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no voice Response is too brief to provide an adequate example of style; minimal attempt.

In some cases, a composition may not be scorable. For example, if it is illegible or if it includes only copied text from the given passage(s), it will not be scored in any dimension and will receive a score of zero. A paper may be off-topic and cannot be scored for Content or Style, but it may be scored for Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling. Such a paper could receive a maximum of 4 of 12 points.

Grade 8 Sample Writing Prompt

At grade 8, the Writing Topic may direct students to write a story, explain or describe something, or convince someone of their position. On a test that has a prompt with one passage, the passage and the Writing Topic are on facing pages. On a test that has a prompt with two passages, the passages are on facing pages, and the Writing Topic is on the next right-hand page. This will allow students to go back and forth between the passages and the Writing Topic as they prepare their response. Below is a one-passage writing prompt that appeared on the field test administered in March 2012.

Directions: Read the passage about a student who is thinking about joining a school club. As you read the passage, think about what might happen next. Then use the passage to help you write a well-organized multiparagraph story.

Words of Wisdom

Aiden placed his pencil and notebook into his backpack and walked toward the exit of the classroom. Just as he reached the door, he stopped and turned back to ask his English teacher a question. “Mr. Salter, can you tell me what the word ‘modest’ means?”

Mr. Salter looked up from the papers he was grading and said, “Well, it depends on the context. Could you use it in a sentence so I can give you the correct definition?”

“Sure,” said Aiden. “In fact, I’ll use it in a quotation: ‘A superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions.’”

“Wow, Aiden, that’s quite profound!” laughed Mr. Salter. “Where did you hear that?”

Aiden smiled. “It’s a quotation from Confucius, the ancient Chinese philosopher. Ms. Conley posted it on the bulletin board outside her classroom and said it has something to do with the Middle School Service Club.”

“In that case,” responded Mr. Salter, “‘modest’ means a reasonable amount. A person who is ‘modest in his speech’ does not talk too much. Instead, that person proves his point through his actions. It is similar to another quotation, ‘Actions speak louder than words.’ It means that what you do says more about you than what you say. Does that help you understand?”

“Yes. Thank you, Mr. Salter,” said Aiden.

“You’re quite welcome. I hope you consider joining the Middle School Service Club; they do a lot of important things for our school and our community. If not, I hope you will still think about that quotation and see if you can find a way to use those words each day.”

Aiden had heard about the activities the Middle School Service Club participates in. Club members have helped by participating in School Clean-Up Day, collecting canned goods for the local food bank, and tutoring elementary students after school.

On the bus that afternoon, many of the students were discussing all the clubs and other activities that they might join that year. A few were talking on and on about their plans. Aiden noticed that none of them mentioned the Service Club. When he told them that he was thinking about joining, the boys looked at him, and for a split second there was silence. Then they burst out laughing.

“Aiden,” said Tim, “who wants to be part of that club? All they do is work. I don’t see what’s fun about cleaning up trash and serving meals at a homeless shelter. Why don’t you join the debate team with us? We’ll talk about the issues that matter. That’s how things really get done.”

Aiden didn’t respond. He sat quietly in his seat thinking about the quotation on Ms. Conley’s bulletin board and what Mr. Salter said about it.

Writing Topic

Think about what Aiden might do next. Do you think he will join the Service Club? How do you think the quotation and the boys' reaction might affect Aiden?

Write a multiparagraph story for your teacher about Aiden and what you think will happen next. Use details from the passage to help you tell your story.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- ▶ Be sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- ▶ Use details from the passage and include enough information so your teacher will understand what happened in your story.
- ▶ Be sure to write clearly and to check your story for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Sample Student Work

The student compositions that are included in this release represent a range of scores designed to show teachers several kinds of responses to the new prompts. In the explanations that follow the compositions, rubric language was used whenever possible to help teachers better understand how the scores were determined.

The purpose of the score-point explanations is to

- focus on the three elements of each dimension, with special attention on the student’s use of the passage information;
- provide concrete examples from the composition to show specific strengths and weaknesses; and
- provide recommendations on what the student can do to improve the composition and their writing.

This information will help teachers work with the new prompts and rubrics, but it will also guide them as they begin implementing evidence-based writing, an important instructional shift of the CCSS.

1. Final Draft

Aiden sat in his seat, remembering that quote. "A superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions." He went home that day, thinking about what he should do. "I know what I'll do," Aiden thought to himself, "I'll ask Mr. Salter what he thinks I should do." So the next day, as the bell rang for lunch, Aiden packed his things and walked toward his teacher's desk. "Mr. Salter, I have a question to ask you."

Mr. Salter closed the book he was reading and looked up at Aiden. "And what might that question be?"

"Well," Aiden said, "It's about the Middle School Service Club. I was talking to some kids about it, and they laughed at me for wanting to join. They said I should join the debate team instead, so I came to ask you about what you think I should do."

"Aiden," Mr. Salter began, "Do you remember that quote you told me about yesterday?"

"Yes," Aiden replied, "A superior man is modest in his

Final Draft (continued)

speech, but exceeds in his actions."

"Well there's your answer," Mr. Salter said, smiling.

Aiden understood what he had to do. During lunchtime, he talked to Ms. Conley about joining the Service Club. He filled out some papers, got permission from his parents, and the very next day he was picking up trash in the city streets with the club. As he picked up garbage, he could see the kids from the bus walking toward him. "Hey, Aiden," Tim said, "I see you didn't follow my advice. Why would you even want to be a part of this club, anyway?"

"Because," Aiden said, "A superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions. In other words, actions speak louder than words."

"Wow. I never thought of it that way," Timmy said. Two days later, Aiden, Timmy, and the boys were all serving food at homeless shelter.

CONTENT: 4 Points

The writer demonstrates consistent control in the Content dimension, and many strengths are present in this response.

The writer demonstrates a complete understanding of the task by continuing the story and fully describing what happened next as well as how the quotation affected Aiden's decision. The story is sharply focused on the central idea of

how the quotation affected Aiden’s deliberations about joining the Middle School Service Club.

The response includes ample, well-chosen evidence from the passage to build on and support the central theme (“Aiden sat in his seat, remembering that quote,” “Do you remember that quote you told me about yesterday?” “In other words, actions speak louder than words”). The writer thoughtfully integrates the principle characters (Mr. Salter, Ms. Conley, and Tim) and the ongoing dialogue between them into the conclusion of the story. The details used are relevant, accurate, and add to the development of the story (“It’s about the Middle School Service Club. I was talking to some kids about it, and they laughed at me,” “As he picked up garbage, he could see the kids from the bus,” “Two days later, Aiden, Timmy, and the boys were all serving food at homeless shelter”).

The organization shows evidence of thoughtful planning throughout, moving the reader easily through the story to a satisfying conclusion that contributes a sense of wholeness to the composition. Sophisticated use of subtle transitional phrases embedded into the narrative (“He went home that day, thinking about what he should do,” “So the next day, as the bell rang for lunch,” “Mr. Salter closed the book he was reading and looked up at Aiden,” “During lunchtime,” “As he picked up garbage,” “Two days later”) effectively move the reader through the story and clearly define the timeline of events.

STYLE: 4 Points

The writer demonstrates consistent control in the Style dimension; many strengths are present in this response.

Effective and precise word choices and phrases appropriate to a narrative task are used throughout the response. Excellent use of dialogue, which mirrors the style of the passage, is well integrated into the narrative, adding relevance to the story and character development (“I know what I’ll do,’ Aiden thought to himself, ‘I’ll ask Mr. Salter,’” “‘Aiden,’ Mr. Salter began, ‘Do you remember that quote you told me about yesterday?’” “‘Well there’s your answer,’ Mr. Salter said, smiling”).

Sentences flow smoothly throughout the composition. There are many complex, sophisticated structures with a variety of beginnings and lengths, all of which lend a fluid, easy readability to the narrative. The writer thoughtfully and effectively reproduces the voice of the main characters from the passage and integrates it with his or her own individual personality, resulting in a consistently compelling and engaging voice.

CONVENTIONS: 4 Points

This writer demonstrates consistent control of sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling in the Conventions dimension. With exceptional skill in composing sentences, this writer incorporates variety and complexity to express thematic ideas and extend the narrative (“Mr. Salter closed the book he was reading and looked up at Aiden. ‘And what might that question be?’”) The only usage error is omitting the *a* preceding “homeless shelter.” The writer also shows exceptional skill in correctly punctuating and capitalizing extensive dialogue throughout the essay, missing only one end quote (“ . . . actions speak louder than words”). Words are spelled correctly throughout the composition.

1. Final Draft

Aiden went home that night and thought about what he should do. He had a big decision to make, and was not quite sure about it. He decided to talk to his mom about the situation.

When Aiden told his mom about the quote and what the other boys said, she was all for the idea about him joining the club. "The boys are only using words, not actions," said his mom. Aiden thought about the quote: "A superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions." That meant if he joined the Service Club, he would be making a difference in his actions. That was better than only talking about the problems. So, he decided he would talk to Mr. Satter the next day.

"Mr. Satter," said Aiden, "I want to join the Service Club." "Good!" replied the teacher. "Maybe you can talk your friends into it too." So at lunch, Aiden told his friends the quote and explained his reasoning. Eventually, they all chose to join the club with him. Together, they would all make a difference.

CONTENT: 3 Points

The writer demonstrates a reasonable control of the Content dimension, exhibiting some strengths and some weaknesses.

A clear central idea is defined in the second sentence ("He had a big decision to make and was not quite sure about it") and is maintained as the student builds the response around this conflict. An understanding of the task is shown as the student picks up the story and continues the narrative until a decision is made and acted on by the main character.

The writer includes sufficient and appropriate evidence from the passage by

restating the quotation at the center of the conflict, by maintaining the idea that the conflict is about joining the Service Club, and by bringing in characters from the story (the other boys and Mr. Salter). The student integrates text ideas into his or her own thinking, writing, “That meant if he joined the Service Club, he would be making a difference in his actions. That was better than only talking about the problems.” While this evidence provides sufficient and appropriate support, it is not ample, and the development of the rest of the story is adequate rather than thorough. More development and details in the story line would need to be added for a higher score. The ending feels hurried.

There is a clear organizational strategy, with a logical order of ideas and events which allows the reader to move through the composition unobstructed. A beginning, middle, and ending are present, although they are not sufficiently developed to provide a satisfying sense of wholeness. Transitions are used throughout the response.

STYLE: 3 Points

The word choices used in this composition are clear but more general than precise or vivid. The composition includes dialogue but would be improved by the use of other narrative techniques, especially the addition of more descriptive language. The sentences are generally varied in length and structure and have varied beginnings, creating a reasonably smooth flow throughout. The writer’s voice is clear and sometimes engaging. The use of dialogue creates interest, drawing the reader in and helping move the action of the story forward. This composition demonstrates reasonable control of the features in the Style dimension.

CONVENTIONS: 4 Points

This student demonstrates strong control of sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling skills in the Conventions dimension. A variety of complex sentences are skillfully used to give emphasis to the content (“That meant if he joined the Service Club, he would be making a difference in his actions. That was better than only talking about the problems”). Words are selectively chosen, consistently used correctly, and appropriately punctuated (“Together, they would all make a difference”). Throughout the response, capitalization and punctuation are particularly well controlled, especially in the dialogue. Spelling skills are also consistently demonstrated.

1. Final Draft

In the short story, "Words of Wisdom" Aiden has to make a difficult choice. Do you think he will join the school service club? I think he will join the club, the quotation inspires him, and the boys reaction won't affect him. I think Aiden will join the club.

Aiden will join the school service club. At the end of the story he was thinking of the quotation, that probably means he's foreshadowing that he will join the club. He was inspired by his teacher (Mr. Satter) to join this club. The quote made him want to join from the beginning.

The quotation was something that greatly inspired Aiden. The quotation made Aiden want to join the club in the beginning. The quote said action speak louder than words and that's is what the school service club does, it acts. Aiden took the quotation

Final Draft (continued)

to heart. The boy's reaction won't affect Aiden.

The boy's words won't affect Aiden greatly. Their words will inspire him to join the club even more. The kids tell him to join the debate team to talk out their problems, and the quote says actions speak louder than words. Their words will make Aiden act to join the club.

Aiden will join the school service club, the quote inspired him, and the boy's reaction will make him act. I think he will join the club, with all the clues the author is almost saying he will. What do you think he will do?

CONTENT: 2 Points

This response demonstrates inconsistent control of the Content dimension.

The student shows only a partial understanding of the task by merely responding to the questions posed in the first part of the prompt (Do you think he will join the Service Club? How do you think the quotation and the boys' reaction might affect Aiden?). The student simply addresses the questions rather than writing a focused multiparagraph story about Aiden and what will happen next.

Evidence from the passage is insufficient and details are not integrated into the composition. While the student says what he or she thinks will happen next and develops those ideas somewhat, presenting them as answers to questions creates a list-like quality to the development. The organizational plan is functional. The composition has a beginning and an ending and three body paragraphs that follow the order of the questions posed ("Aiden will join the school service club," "The quotation was something that greatly inspired Aiden," and "The boy's words won't affect Aiden greatly"); however, the information is repetitive at times, and the transitions necessary to connect the writer's thoughts are lacking.

STYLE: 3 Points

This response demonstrates reasonable control of the Style dimension. The word choices are clear and appropriate, and there are occasional interesting words and phrases (“Aiden has to make a difficult choice,” “The quotation was something that greatly inspired Aiden,” “The quote said action speak louder than words and that’s is what the school service club does, it acts”). There is some variety in sentence structure, and although there is a degree of repetition in the way the writer has presented the answers to the questions, the overall fluency is reasonable. The individual personality of the writer is evident, but it is not particularly compelling or engaging.

CONVENTIONS: 4 Points

Although there are a few errors, this writer consistently demonstrates skills in sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling. For instance, in composing this complex sentence, the writer should have used a semicolon instead of a comma to connect these related ideas: “I think he will join the club, with all the clues the author is almost saying he will.” However, most of the sentences are correct. The writer misses an apostrophe (“boys reaction”) and misuses others (“the boy’s reaction,” “The boy’s words”) but also uses the apostrophe correctly in “he’s foreshadowing.” The writer consistently uses correct quotation marks, commas, and end punctuation throughout the essay (except for a missing question mark after the final sentence). There are only minor usage errors (“action speak louder than words,” “that’s is what the school service club does”) and no spelling errors.

1. Final Draft

Decisions

First, I think Aiden will talk to Mr. Satter or Ms. Courtney about him joining the debate team or the school service club. Tim is telling Aiden that the school service club clean up trash and even serve meals for the homeless shelter.

Second, Maybe Aiden will think about joining the school service club. Aiden will think about joining the school service club because Mr. Satter told him they do alot of important things. Another reason is they help the school and the community. He will think about joining the club because he heard they do alot of activites. An activity the do is collecting can goods for an local food bank. They also help tutor elementary students after school. They also helped by participating in School Clean-Up Day.

Final Draft (continued)

Third, Aiden is debating on joining the club and not joining the club.

Tim told Aiden he should join the debate team. Tim also said the debate team talk about issues that matter. Aiden is really thinking about which club he should join. Aiden is thinking about the quote that was on Ms. Conley's bulletin board. Mr. Salter said the quote has something to do with the Middle School Service Club.

Finally, Aiden should talk to one of the teachers, either Mr. Salter or Ms. Conley. Aiden will think about joining the school service club. because Mr. Salter said they do alot of important things. Aiden is debating if he should join the debate team or the school service club.

CONTENT: 2 Points

This response demonstrates inconsistent control of the Content dimension, with the weaknesses outweighing the strengths.

The central idea is vague because the student merely restates the basic information from the text. This also shows that there is only a partial understanding of the task because the student does not write a story about what

might happen next. Instead, the student uses an expository approach to explain Aiden’s dilemma.

The development of the response consists of a summary of the ideas in the passage. The student does not extend the passage information with his or her own ideas. The closest expression of the student’s own idea about what might happen next is the statement in the first sentence, “I think Aiden will talk to Mr. Salter or Ms. Conley about him joining the debate team or the school service club.” Because the student simply uses the information from the passage to explain the choice Aiden faces, the development offered is not relevant to the task of writing a story about what might happen next. To achieve a higher score, the student would need to use the scenario in the passage and devise a possible sequence of events that would show how Aiden makes his decision.

An attempt is made to organize the response, but the weak beginning and ending contain ideas that are disconnected. The presentation of ideas in the body paragraphs is rambling and repetitive, creating obstacles for the reader in moving through the composition. Transitions are used throughout the response, but they are only somewhat effective in linking the ideas.

STYLE: 2 Points

The word choices used in this response, while clear, are often repetitive. *Join*, *joining*, and “school service club” are overused, and most of the verbs and helping verbs are generic (*will*, *is*, *told*, *help*). There is little sentence variety. Many simple sentences beginning with a name or pronoun make the flow of the writing more choppy than fluid. The control of Style is inconsistent; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths.

CONVENTIONS: 3 Points

This writer demonstrates reasonable control of the Conventions dimension. Although most of the sentences are basic, declarative sentences, they are correctly formed, and the writer combines ideas effectively (“Tim is telling Aiden that the school service club clean up trash and even serve meals for the homeless shelter”). However, errors in word usage are evident throughout the response. There are errors in agreement (“the school service club clean up trash and even serve meals,” “the debate team talk about issues”) and wrong words used (“An activity the do is collecting can goods for an local food bank,” “Aiden is debating on joining the club”). Punctuation and capitalization are usually correct, with the exception of a few capitalization errors within sentences (“Second, Maybe,” “help tutor elementary Students,” and “school service club”). Spelling is consistently correct.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITER'S CHECKLIST

As you write your composition, remember these important points.

Content:

- Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic carefully and write on all parts.
- Present a clear main idea.
- Give enough details about your main idea.
- Use examples from the passage(s) to explain your ideas.
- Present your ideas in a way that makes sense. Include a beginning, middle, and ending.





Style:

- Choose interesting words that say exactly what you mean.
- Write complete sentences and use different kinds of sentences to make your writing easy to follow.






Important Reminders:

Your composition will be scored on content.

-  your central idea
-  development of ideas
-  use of the passage(s)
-  organization






Your composition will be scored on style.

-  word choice
-  expression of ideas
-  sentence variety







DIRECTIONS FOR WRITING

Follow the steps below to help you write your composition.





Step 1: Planning and Drafting

-  Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic in your test booklet carefully.
-  Think about what you will write before you begin.
-  Make sure to use examples from the passage(s).
-  Use the space provided in your test booklet for planning your composition and writing your rough draft.
-  Remember that your planning notes and rough draft will not be scored.

Step 2: Revising

-  Review your composition to make sure you have covered all the points on the Writer's Checklist.
-  Reread your rough draft.
-  Rearrange ideas or change words to make your meaning clear and improve your composition.
-  Write your final draft neatly on the correct page(s) in your answer document.
-  Write your final draft in either print or cursive using a No. 2 pencil.
-  Use appropriate formatting.

Step 3: Proofreading

-  Read your final draft.
-  Correct any errors in subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, word meanings, and word endings.
-  Correct errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
-  Erase or strike through words if necessary.



Only the writing on the Final Draft pages in your answer document will be scored.



Remember to print or write neatly.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITER'S CHECKLIST

As you write your composition, remember these important points.

Content:

- Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic carefully and write on **all** parts as directed.
- Present a clear main idea.
- Give enough details to support and develop your main idea.
- Make sure to use well-chosen details from the passage(s) to support your ideas.
- Present your ideas in a logical order and include a clear beginning, middle, and ending.

Style:

- Use words that express your meaning well.
- Use a variety of sentence types and lengths to make your writing easy to follow.

Sentence Formation:

- Write in complete sentences and use a variety of sentence patterns.

Usage:

- Write using appropriate subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, word meanings, and word endings.

Mechanics:

- Write using correct punctuation.
- Write using correct capitalization.
- Write using appropriate formatting (e.g., indentations, margins).

Spelling:

- Write using correct spelling.








Remember to print or write neatly.






DIRECTIONS FOR WRITING

Follow the steps below to help you write a successful composition.




Step 1: Planning and Drafting

-  Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic in your test booklet carefully.
-  Think about what you will write before you begin.
-  Make sure to use well-chosen details from the passage(s) to support your ideas.
-  Use the space provided in your rough draft booklet for planning your composition and writing your rough draft.
-  Remember that your planning notes and rough draft will not be scored.

Step 2: Revising



-  Review your composition to make sure you have covered all the points on the Writer's Checklist.
-  Reread your rough draft.
-  Rearrange ideas or change words to make your meaning clear and improve your composition.
-  Write your final draft neatly on the correct page(s) in your test booklet.
-  Write your final draft in either print or cursive using a No. 2 pencil.

Step 3: Proofreading

-  Read your final draft.
-  Make any needed corrections.
-  Erase or strike through words if necessary.



Points to Remember:

-  Only the writing on the **Final Draft** pages in your test booklet will be scored.
-  Your composition will be scored on (1) development and support of ideas including how you use the information in the passage(s), (2) expression of ideas, (3) correct sentence formation, (4) usage, (5) mechanics, and (6) spelling.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITER'S CHECKLIST

As you write your composition, remember these important points.

Content:

- Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic carefully and write on **all** parts as directed.
- Present a clear main idea.
- Give enough details to support and develop your main idea.
- Make sure to use well-chosen details from the passage(s) to support your ideas.
- Present your ideas in a logical order and include a beginning, middle, and ending.

Style:

- Use interesting words that express your meaning well.
- Write complete sentences and use a variety of sentence types and lengths to make your writing easy to follow.



Important Reminders:

Your composition will be scored on content.

- your central idea
- development of ideas
- use of the passage(s)
- organization

Your composition will be scored on style.

- word choice
- expression of ideas
- sentence variety

DIRECTIONS FOR WRITING

Follow the steps below to help you write your composition.

Step 1: Planning and Drafting

- Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic in your test booklet carefully.
- Think about what you will write before you begin.
- Make sure to use well-chosen details from the passage(s) to support your ideas.
- Use the space provided in your test booklet for planning your composition and writing your rough draft.
- Remember that your planning notes and rough draft will not be scored.

Step 2: Revising

- Review your composition to make sure you have covered all the points on the Writer's Checklist.
- Reread your rough draft.
- Rearrange ideas or change words to make your meaning clear and improve your composition.
- Write your final draft neatly on the correct page(s) in your answer document.
- Write your final draft in either print or cursive using a No. 2 pencil.
- Use appropriate formatting.

Step 3: Proofreading

- Read your final draft.
- Correct any errors in usage (subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, word meanings, and word endings).
- Correct errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
- Erase or strike through words if necessary.



Only the writing on the Final Draft pages in your answer document will be scored.



Remember to print or write neatly.



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Louisiana Department of Education
Office of Standards, Assessments, and Accountability
Division of Assessments and Accountability