



March 2005

High School Proficiency Assessment

(HSPA)

Criterion-Based Holistic Scoring:

A Writing Handbook

August 2005

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March 2005
HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT (HSPA)

**CRITERION-BASED HOLISTIC SCORING:
A WRITING HANDBOOK**

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CRITERION-BASED HOLISTIC SCORING

New Jersey has been assessing students' ability to write standard English since 1984. From 1985–86 through 1989–90, this assessment was conducted with ninth-grade students as a component of the Grade 9 High School Proficiency Test (HSPT9). In 1993–94, the HSPT9 was replaced with the Grade 11 High School Proficiency Test (HSPT11) and an eighth-grade Early Warning Test (EWT). The Writing section of these two tests consisted of two components: a writing sample, which assessed students' abilities to write sustained discourse, and a multiple-choice portion, which assessed how well students were able to read critically, revise, and edit the written text of others. With the May 1996 adoption of the Core Curriculum Content Standards, new test specifications were developed to align testing with the knowledge and skills described in the language arts literacy standards. These test specifications identify the components of the new High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), and Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA), which has since been replaced by the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK). All three testing programs elicit two samples of student writing and student responses to two reading passages. Students taking the HSPA and GEPA write original texts in two modes of discourse (narrative and persuasive). The Revising/Editing task, which asked students to orchestrate authentic revisions of a text written by another student, was not part of the 2005 test administration.

This handbook focuses on the writing samples resulting from the March 2005 administration of the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). It presents the scoring method and criteria used to evaluate student writing and offers suggestions for using New Jersey's scoring rubrics and student test data to improve classroom instruction. Additionally, the handbook includes the New Jersey Revising/Editing Guide (R/ESG) and instructional suggestions for using that guide to assess students' knowledge and skills within the classroom. Although the Revising/Editing task was not part of the 2005 test administration due to the high cost of scoring open-ended responses, the task remains an essential source of information because it focuses on students' abilities to orchestrate authentic revisions of a text and reveals what students are able to recognize as strengths and weaknesses in a given written text. Discussion of the Revising/Editing task and use of the scoring rubric is included in this document to support further instruction in this critical aspect of the writing process.

Student writing on the HSPA is scored holistically with a criterion-based rubric or scale, the Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric (RHSR). Developed by the New Jersey State Department of Education in a research study involving approximately 200 educators, criterion-based holistic scoring has been used since 1986 as the scoring method for state-developed writing assessments. The RHSR is not only an index of students' ability to apply standard written English in sustained discourse; it also is a measure of students' ability to communicate effectively within a range of situations and audiences that they are likely to encounter as citizens. Students' ability to generate sustained discourse, that is, the skills they use to develop and control the content of their writing, differs from the skills they use to revise and edit problematic text. Therefore, the New Jersey Revising/Editing Scoring Guide is designed as an index both of students' understanding of revising/editing and their ability to orchestrate, or control, changes to improve the meaning, clarity, and fluency of a given text.

Criterion-Based Holistic Scoring: An Operational Definition

Criterion-based holistic scoring brings uniformity to the evaluation of writing across contents and settings by specifying salient features of writing quality and levels of writing proficiency. The RHSR focuses on four features: content/organization, usage, sentence construction, and mechanics. For any

given sample, these criteria serve as an indicator of how well the writer communicates an intended message to a given audience. The R/ESG focuses on students' ability both to correct surface features (e.g., usage and mechanics) and to address structural problems (e.g., content/organization and sentence construction) that create ambiguity, confusion, or contradiction. For any given sample, these criteria serve as an indicator of how well and how consistently the student controls the changes needed to communicate an intended message to an intended audience.

In criterion-based holistic scoring, these pre-determined features are anchored by descriptions that vary for different values on a scoring guide or rubric. The point values or score points describe the proficiency level or how well the student handles the features.

The RHSR is based on a six-point scale: 1 (lowest) to 6 (highest). Each score point on the six-point scale has the same four features but with different descriptions for each level of proficiency; with the RHSR, evaluations are first made with respect to content/organization and then adjusted with reference to the other three. In this way, an integration of these descriptive features enables readers to evaluate the quality of a written response with respect to a point value on the scale. Much of the focus of the RHSR is on the content/organization of the response. Thus, the organization of a response assigned a value of 2 is not as high quality as the organization of a response assigned a value of 3.

Unlike the narrative and essay sections of the HSPA, which focus on students' ability to generate original text, a revising/editing task provides an authentic student text presenting a range of problems in content/organization, sentence construction, usage, and mechanics. While traditional revise/edit exercises pinpoint errors in a given passage and offer predetermined changes in a multiple-choice format, an authentic revise/edit task requires students to locate problems in an existing text and to apply strategies to solve those problems without altering the integrity of the original text. Students do not generate a whole new text; instead, they demonstrate their knowledge of the conventions of English and their skills with written language by rectifying problems in the text provided. Because student writers are often unable to detach themselves from what they have written, they find it difficult to review and revise their own work. They know what they meant to say and cannot always recognize when their writing does not convey what they intended. Therefore, focus on the work of another student is a useful instructional tool because the reading demand is more obvious and enables them to be sensitive to the actual strengths and weaknesses in the given text.

The R/ESG is a 5-point scale: 0 to 4. Each score point on the 5-point scale has the same features but with different descriptions for each level of proficiency. While emphasis in scoring a first-draft composition with the RHSR is on content and organization, scoring with the R/ESG focuses on students' abilities to transform a problematic draft into text that more closely resembles a finished product. Therefore, evaluations are made with respect to students' demonstrated consistent attention to both the surface features and the deeper structures of the text. Thus, a response with an assigned value of 3 demonstrates more consistent attention to these two dimensions of revision than a response assigned a value of 2. See Appendix A for both the RHSR and R/ESG scoring criteria.

Criterion-based scoring does not rely upon the readers inferring performance criteria from exemplars or anchor papers. Rather, the method defines consistent criteria for judging writing quality independent of the sample of responses. Training and qualifying sets of student papers are used to illustrate how the scoring criteria are applied across the range of possible score points. The samples and accompanying annotations included in Appendices C and E of this document are examples of student performance with respect to the features of written language targeted by the RHSR.

In summary, a criterion-based scoring method:

- uses score-point criteria representing progressive levels of writing skill proficiency;
- uses consistent language across all score points;
- defines each feature at each score point; and
- provides accuracy and consistency through stringent controls on the training and qualifying of scorers.

Appropriateness of Criterion-Based Holistic Scoring

- Criterion-based scoring rubrics anchor consistent features of writing independent of purpose and audience from year to year. This consistency is necessary because a different population sits for the test at each administration, and different writing tasks are administered each time. To assure the same meaning of score points from one test administration to the next (same level of student writing), the scoring method focuses upon invariant criteria of good writing. Although a task can elicit a variety of responses written in a variety of rhetorical modes (narrative, persuasive, etc.), a paper's rating is based on the student's facility with the identified features. That facility is registered by a point on the score scale that describes the student's command of written language.
- The established criteria allow the anchoring of the features consistently from year to year and therefore eliminate scoring procedures that are strictly normative or based on differing evaluation criteria. That is, a paper receiving a "4" one year could conceivably receive a "2" the following year if it were scored with reference to the sample of student skills or to varying scoring criteria. Scored according to New Jersey's criterion-based method, however, a paper receiving a "4" one year will more consistently receive a "4" the next year.
- Because the criteria for scoring are set forth at each score point as descriptive features, scorer reliability can be maintained. The descriptive statements of each feature at each score point describe the quality of writing assigned that score.
- The distribution of scores based on criterion-based methods permits evaluation of districts' instructional programs because the uniform scoring criteria are published and disseminated for inclusion in these programs.
- Reader bias (a personal preference for scoring based on form/number of paragraphs, flavor or style, etc.) is diminished because the criteria are established prior to the actual scoring of the students' responses. In addition, the criteria are essential factors within the training and qualifying papers used to select readers who can consistently and reliably apply the scoring criteria of the score scale.

- New Jersey's criterion-based scoring rubrics emphasize writing as a higher-order thinking skill as measured by the HSPA. Writing requires knowledge of one's topic (content) and a cogent application of that knowledge (organization); use of the English language according to a recognized standard (usage); the structuring of words and sentences to present a complete thought or message to the intended audience(s) (sentence construction); and the application of the conventions of the English language that serve to clarify the author's intended message (mechanics).
- The two scoring rubrics permit an analysis of students' strengths and needs when writing on demand in a timed setting. This benefits educators by providing feedback on the effectiveness of instructional strategies with respect to the evaluation criteria expressed by the two rubrics.

CRITERION-BASED HOLISTIC SCORING: 2005

Scoring with the Criteria

During April and May of 2005, approximately 86,000 New Jersey grade-eleven student writing responses were scored by two independent readers each in Durham, North Carolina, at Measurement Incorporated (MI), the HSPA test contractor. In addition to scoring the HSPA writing tasks, MI also hand-scored student responses to constructed-response reading and mathematics test items.

To accomplish the scoring of the eleventh-grade writing samples, MI selected 100 of its most experienced readers. All readers, regardless of experience, were required to participate in an intensive three-day training period. Only readers who met the 80% agreement standard qualified to score New Jersey writing. By the end of training, the readers had “internalized” the defined criteria (four features) at each of the six score points of the Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric by practice scoring and discussing over one hundred sample student responses. It took approximately six weeks to complete the scoring.

Scoring Personnel and Procedures

Current procedures for scoring student writing on the HSPA are consistent with those used by New Jersey since the inception of a performance-based writing component in the statewide assessment. All writing sections of the 11th-grade test are monitored and scored by trained, experienced personnel who have met the same rigorous standards established with the initial holistic scoring study conducted in 1986. Many individuals are responsible for ensuring the success of scoring any large-scale writing assessment. Key to the process of scoring New Jersey’s grade-eleven responses accurately and reliably were MI’s senior project manager, the chief reader, team leaders, the readers, and clerical aides.

MI’s senior project manager worked closely with the department throughout the hand-scoring process. The senior project manager participated in all range-finding and training paper selection activities prior to the onset of reader training. The senior project manager directed the activities of the chief reader and oversaw all aspects of the project including monitoring reader performance (reader reliability and production rates), directing retraining efforts, and supervising the capture of scoring data.

The chief reader participated in pre-reading and training paper selection along with MI’s senior project manager and the department’s writing assessment specialists. Additionally, the chief reader annotated the anchor papers that, along with the scoring criteria, made up the Scoring Guide and trained the team leaders who would subsequently assist in reader training. It was the responsibility of the chief reader to introduce the writing tasks, rubrics, and sample responses; to conduct the majority of the training sessions (some training sets were discussed in teams); and to ensure that readers scored reliably and consistently throughout the scoring process. The chief reader supervised the team leaders, directed all scoring and validity procedures, read and interpreted reader quality control reports, and conducted all retraining activities. Additionally, the chief reader assigned all nonscorable codes and did resolution readings.

Each team leader was responsible for small-group training sessions with the eight to ten readers who constituted his/her team. Under the supervision of the chief reader, some training sets were discussed in teams to encourage more questions from individual readers and to allow team leaders to get a clearer picture of the level of understanding of each team member.

Team leaders relied heavily upon periodic individual and small-group retraining to correct reader drift (that is, scoring that was not in accord with the criteria). They spot-checked reader scoring packets throughout the project and counseled readers who had a higher than acceptable discrepancy rate. A paper is considered discrepant if two independent readers assign non-adjacent scores to the same response (e.g., one reader assigns a “6,” the second reader a “4”). Additionally, team leaders met twice daily as a group with the chief reader and discussed any scoring differences to guard against team “drift.”

Once trained, the readers’ primary task was to score accurately all grade-eleven student writing. To accomplish this task, clerical aides distributed scoring packets containing 25 responses and two score sheets to each reader. The readers, upon taking a packet, recorded their reader number, team designation, and the date on the packet header sheets. The first reader of the packet then coded his/her reader number on the Reader 1 score sheet and proceeded to score all the papers in that packet. Student identification numbers on the score sheet were checked carefully against the number on the student response document to make sure they were in agreement. If there was an error, the packet was flagged (marked with a sticker) for the aide to check. If the aide was unable to correct the error, the packet was given to the chief reader. After all the papers in a given packet had been scored once, the aide collected the scored packet, removed the Reader 1 score sheet, and distributed the packet to another reader on a different team for a second reading. The second reader followed the same procedures as the first reader, but used the Reader 2 score sheet.

Readers were also responsible for recognizing and flagging nonscorable responses (fragment, off-topic, not English, no response) and “alert” papers (e.g., suspicion of child abuse) so that these papers could be handled in the correct manner. Alert papers were scored, but then forwarded to the chief reader for review. If the chief reader agreed that the student’s own words specifically stated a situation that qualified as an alert or reflected a potential risk situation for a child, the paper was copied and sent to the department for documentation and follow-up with district authorities. The Office of Evaluation and Assessment in the Department of Education brings these alerts to the attention of school district personnel. Alert papers are flagged if they reflect potential abuse, emotional or psychological difficulty, or possible plagiarism.

The clerical aides played an important role in maintaining the paper flow throughout the scoring process. They were responsible for keeping enough packets in the scoring room to keep the readers busy. This included distributing packets for first readings and also directing packets that had one reading completed to different teams for second readings. Once packets had been read twice, the aides took them to the warehouse for filing. In addition, the aides collected completed score sheets and forwarded them to the Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) room, where scores were entered into the data base. If any packets produced resolution readings, the aide retrieved these from the warehouse and gave them to the chief reader for adjudication.

Summary

Scorers using the criteria of the Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric must first focus their attention on the content and organization of the student’s writing as it addresses the topic and then adjust their 1 (lowest) to 6 (highest) score point based on the effect of three other criteria: usage, sentence construction, and mechanics. Only one score point is assigned by each of the two independent readers, and the final score represents either the average of the two scores (for the picture prompt) or the sum of the two scores (for

the persuasive prompt). Student narratives (picture prompt) are reported on a scale of 1 to 6; student essays (persuasive prompt) are reported on a scale of 2 to 12.

To apply the New Jersey Revising/Editing Scoring Guide, readers must look first to the attention given both to surface features and deeper structures and then adjust their score point based on the consistency with which the student attends to content/organization, sentence construction, usage, mechanics, and word choice. One score point on a 0 to 4-point scale is assigned by each of two readers, and the final score represents the sum of the two scores. The score for each student response, therefore, is reported on a scale of 0 to 8. It should be noted that a paper scored a “2” (two readers each give the response a “1”) may have merits in spite of serious needs. Teachers need to identify these strengths for their students so that students can recognize them and build upon their writing ability.

USING THE STUDENT RESPONSES AND CRITERION-BASED HOLISTIC SCORING FOR STUDENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Students’ responses are the best measure of student writing and can provide significant information regarding both the writing curriculum and individual student strengths and needs; therefore, teachers at all grade levels are encouraged to examine this source of information about their students and about their instructional program.

Analysis of the responses alongside the scoring criteria can yield data about how the top-, middle-, and lower-level writers in the school and district write when required to compose or to revise and edit on demand. The series of questions below can be used to help analyze the students’ writing. Note that the questions, which are directly linked to the criteria of the two rubrics, can be used to evaluate students’ understanding of the writing tasks.

Content/Organization

- What organizational patterns have been chosen by the writers? Can they all establish a focus for their papers? Do they have beginnings? Do they have endings? Are the papers cluttered with irrelevant information? Do they progress logically from beginning to end? Are transitions appropriate and varied?
- How many of the students appear to be able to express themselves on a given task? How many seem to find it difficult to write on a given task? For a given purpose? For a given audience?
- Are key ideas developed with appropriate and varied details? Are responses highly effective and vivid?

Usage

- Do students use words that are grammatically correct?
- Does the word usage reflect appropriate tense form and sequence, proper pronoun case, correct use of negatives, pronoun agreement, use of proper modifiers, as well as subject-verb agreement?

- Are the word choices appropriate to the context, purpose, and audience of the responses? Are they vivid, rich, and meaningful?

Sentence Construction

- Is a variety of sentence types used by the writers? What types of sentence construction do they use? Are the statements incoherent, unintelligible, fragmented, repetitive, or rambling?

Mechanics

- What is the impact of the mechanical errors in the papers? Does any pattern emerge with respect to spelling, capitalization, and punctuation?

Student revising/editing responses can also yield valuable information about students' understanding of the task itself. Analysis of individual responses may be facilitated with questions such as the following:

- Do students work with existing text, or do they attempt to compose an entirely new response?
- Do they attend only to surface features? Do they address ambiguous, confusing, or contradictory statements?
- Is their attention to errors and to development consistent throughout?
- Do students introduce new errors? Do the new errors reflect carelessness or lack of knowledge about written language?

From the answers to these and other questions, district staffs can determine a great deal about their programs. For example, perhaps most of the eleventh-grade writers in school fail to use descriptive detail. Is this because the skill is not part of the writing program? Is it because the eleventh-graders cannot apply it to their own writing? Perhaps they are taught various methods of sentence construction, but they cannot apply this knowledge to their own papers.

With the implementation of language arts literacy assessments at grades four, eight, and eleven, local districts should recognize their responsibility to monitor students' written language fluency in the primary and intermediate grades in order to prepare them for the writing tasks. Districts should assess student writing at all grades, and they should incorporate the rubrics into the instructional program so that students will be familiar with the features of good writing and the criteria by which student writing is evaluated on the statewide assessments. The Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric is an appropriate tool for assessing the writing of those who can convey meaning in sustained written discourse (i.e., of students at grade three on up). The New Jersey Revising/Editing Scoring Guide is appropriately used with students once they begin to study the conventions of language (i.e., of students at grade six and up). Monitoring student writing ability in the primary and intermediate grades will produce information about students' progress in writing and will provide an "early warning" of students' needs.

Student-Teacher Analysis of HSPA Responses

In order to improve student writing skills, teachers and students should study the features of written language discussed in this handbook and practice what they learn about the use and control of standard written English. In addition to having students write regularly across varying linguistic contexts, teachers need to help individual students apply an inquiry approach by reviewing the sample responses in this handbook, the annotations on each of the samples, and the features of the respective score scales. This inquiry approach should then be practiced by having students evaluate their own writing for these features. Conference approaches, such as teacher-student or student-student conferencing, will increase student awareness of these features. Writers improve most when they have had an opportunity to confer and then revise in light of the suggestions that result from an audience-author interaction. Since student responses will be returned to your school, take advantage of the opportunity to engage students in attending to the features of their own writing. In addition, students should serve as critical readers (audience) of the writing of other students and suggest possible revisions or edits.

The Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric and New Jersey Revising/Editing Scoring Guide included in Appendix A should assist educators and students when they confer about specific strengths and needs as indicated by the students' written responses to the HSPA and to classroom writing tasks. These rubrics should be duplicated and distributed to students not only as instruments to help them evaluate their writing, but also as tools to increase their understanding of the descriptors at each score point. The rubrics should also provide them with more information about the developmental progression of criteria across the scale points.

When working with the RHSR, remind students that a score of "8" (two "4s" assigned by independent readers) describes their command of standard written English as "adequate." Direct students to look at the description of features for a score point of "4" and to review their own paper for known strengths and needs.

On the 2 to 12 scale in which the two readers' ratings are summed, papers scored "2" through "6" tend to lack command of standard written English and are, therefore, unable to convey the task message sufficiently for the purpose and audience intended. Papers scored "7" through "12" show varying acceptable degrees of command of standard written English and are, therefore, able to effectively address the purpose and audience intended.

A Practical Classroom Application of the RHSR: Bringing Students into the Evaluation Process

Evaluation should be a natural extension of the writing process. By using both rubrics in the classroom frequently, students can understand not only how their writing is evaluated, but also what constitutes good writing.

Teachers may introduce the two rubrics to their students in many ways; however, the following method is one that has been used successfully with students in grades 3–12.

Before introducing the RHSR, the teacher should pass out three papers that represent a range of writing scores. Sample papers may be obtained from Appendix C (narrative responses) or Appendix E (persuasive essays) or from writing handbooks distributed with sample papers in 1994 through 2004. If papers are selected from any of these sources, the teacher may use sample responses that received a "2," "4," "6." The papers should have the scores and annotations removed before they are distributed to the

students. The teacher may also choose to select grade-appropriate papers from previous assignments for this activity.

Working in small groups, students should read the sample papers and decide which one they would rank highest, which one in the middle, and which one lowest. After each group has come to consensus on the ranking of the papers, the students should talk about what makes good writing. They should also consider what makes one piece of writing better than another. Based on their reading of the sample papers and their discussion, each group should decide what criteria constitute effective writing.

When the groups have finished their discussion, a recorder should report each group's criteria for good writing to the entire class. Either a student or the teacher can keep a running list of all the criteria on the chalkboard or a flip-chart. The teacher should then pass out the Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric (see Appendix A) and point out the similarities between the students' criteria for good writing and those identified by the New Jersey Department of Education.

As the teacher reviews the characteristics at each of the score points, students should become more familiar with them. One way to help students internalize the criteria on the guide is to have them actually score sample papers. When students are practicing scoring these papers, they should work in small groups. After each person decides individually what score the paper should be given, the group as a whole should discuss what scores were assigned. Group discussion of the paper helps the students better understand the strengths and weaknesses in writing and helps them become comfortable with using the terminology in the scoring rubric.

Once students are comfortable using the RHSR, they can use it to evaluate one another's papers as well as their own. Periodically, class writing assignments can be scored by peers using the RHSR and the same procedures followed by professional readers. To do this, each paper should be read and scored independently by two students. If the two scores are the same or one point apart, these scores are then added together to determine the final score. However, if the two scores are more than one point apart, the paper is read and scored independently by a third reader, usually the teacher. In this case, the student receives two-thirds the sum of all three ratings, rounded up to the next integer.

As students use criterion-based holistic scoring to evaluate papers, they develop a better understanding of the problems as well as the successes of writing. This understanding helps students produce better writing.

A Practical Classroom Approach to Revising and Editing: Modeling Strategies for Students

Before introducing the R/ESG, the teacher should use an overhead projector to display a student writing sample that received a "3," indicating a partial command of written language. Sample papers may be obtained from Appendix C (narrative responses) or Appendix E (persuasive essays) of this handbook, or from writing handbooks distributed with sample papers in 1994 through 2004. Alternatively, the teacher may select a sample demonstrating a comparable level of proficiency from a previous classroom assignment. All trace of scores, annotations, or comments should be removed from the paper selected for use in this activity. Teachers may find it easier to type the sample paper—errors and all—leaving ample space between the lines to accommodate edited text and short revisions.

After explaining that the focus will be on revising and editing the displayed sample, the teacher should identify the intended purpose and audience for the writing and then read the paper aloud once to show

that reading is an essential aspect of this task. Then, using colored markers, the teacher should highlight, or call attention to, a range of problems in the text that need revising or editing.

Next, using a fine black marker, the teacher should demonstrate her approach to revising and editing, talking out loud to disclose her thinking and problem-solving strategies as she works. Brief revisions and editing can be done directly on the overhead to illustrate techniques for marking the text. A second overhead with blank lines can be used for writing out more complicated revisions or lengthier additions to the text. When all needed changes have been made, the teacher should read the text aloud again to ensure that the revised language has improved the meaning and clarity of the text and to illustrate the ongoing interaction of reading and writing in this activity.

Once students understand this process, they can work in small groups on revising and editing a different but similar sample using the same strategies that were used in the initial demonstration. Group discussion as they work will help students to focus on the intended message in the student writing and to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the given text. When all groups have completed their revisions, student groups should share their versions of the revised and edited text with the entire class and engage in a large-group discussion about the choices the respective groups made. This large-group discussion will help students internalize effective strategies that they can use independently in subsequent revising and editing activities.

The teacher can introduce the R/ESG to students following the same procedure described for introducing the RHSR. As students gain experience in using the R/ESG to evaluate their revisions, they develop a better understanding of both surface features and deeper structures and the need to address both of these consistently when they revise and edit. This understanding helps students produce better writing on their own, but it also improves their ability to revise and edit problematic texts.

Multiple Uses of the Author's Self-Reporting Form

The features and criteria of holistic scoring have been an integral part of both the scoring of eighth- and eleventh-grade student responses and professional development training sessions for teachers since 1986. The Author's Self-Reporting Form (see Appendix F) incorporates these established features and criteria in a structural context that provides versatility in the assessment of writing and the opportunity for greater involvement of individual students in the evaluation of their own writing. It is intended to help students and teachers not only evaluate strengths and needs as indexed by the score on the responses to the HSPA writing tasks, but also to increase their awareness and understanding of the elements of effective writing. In addition, it has been designed to incorporate key components of the writing process: self-assessment at all stages of draft development, revising, editing, student-teacher conferencing, peer conferencing, and monitoring individual growth over time.

One use of the Author's Self-Reporting Form would be in conjunction with the teacher-student review of the scored responses to the HSPA writing tasks. Prior to scheduling student conferences, teachers may provide students with a copy of this form. At that time, teachers could review the RHSR features and discuss with the students the overview and criteria as listed in this handbook. Students could then assess their own responses, focusing upon the individual criteria of each feature. Part of the self-evaluation would include determining whether, in that given paper, each criterion was a strength or a need. Further analysis would be reflected in the comments that the students made about these strengths and needs. These comments on the self-reporting form could then be the basis for opening the dialogue between the student and teacher in an individual conference setting.

This same procedure can also be incorporated as an instructional strategy for other conferencing situations throughout the school year. As students meet with the teacher and with one another to discuss their writing in varying stages of development, reference to common criteria and language provides objectivity to the evaluation process. Using the Author's Self-Reporting Form to record the strengths and needs identified during a conference is one way of documenting what was discussed during the conference, as well as monitoring individual growth. These self-reporting forms could become part of the systematic, cumulative record in each student's writing portfolio or folder.

In addition, this self-reporting form could help teachers tailor their instruction to meet the individual needs of their students. By analyzing patterns of student strengths and weaknesses that emerge in a cumulative review of forms for each student, teachers can determine criteria with which the student has met success and those areas that require further instructional emphasis.

Another instructional and curricular use of this form lies in the analysis of patterns that emerge from an entire class, school, and district. This type of study can provide teachers and administrators with information about the present collective status of students' writing abilities. This type of evaluation is key to discovering instructional and curricular strengths and needs and determining future strategies for the improvement of writing.

Summary

Students should write frequently for a variety of purposes and audiences. Much of students' writing is based on personal experience and self-expression. Patterns of sound symbol relationships are still being formed, so spelling errors may be common in the early grades, though these may have little effect on the child's overall communication skills. Writing in all content areas should be encouraged. Since frequent experience in writing is essential for the development of students' writing skills, teachers are encouraged to use student journals, free writing exercises, and other writing activities which may or may not be graded. Students should be encouraged to generate a topic, plan a piece of writing, write, revise, and edit. Regular experience in writing will increase students' confidence about writing as well as their competence.

To this end, the following practices are recommended:

1. Regular writing instruction
2. A systematic approach to writing instruction
3. Frequent and varied writing assignments
4. Inclusion of writing assignments in all content areas
5. Use of writing folders or portfolios to monitor student progress
6. Establishment of writing standards that are clearly understood by faculty and students
7. Use of student-teacher conferences as an instructional method
8. Use of modeling as an instructional method
9. Peer sharing of writing
10. Coordination of the elements common to the teaching of reading and the teaching of writing

APPENDIX A
HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT
RUBRICS FOR SCORING STUDENT WRITING

New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric

New Jersey Revising/Editing Scoring Guide

NEW JERSEY REGISTERED HOLISTIC SCORING RUBRIC

In scoring, consider the grid of written language	Inadequate Command	Limited Command	Partial Command	Adequate Command	Strong Command	Superior Command
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6
Content and Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May lack opening and/or closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May lack opening and/or closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May lack opening and/or closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally has opening and/or closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening and closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening and closing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal response to topic; uncertain focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to focus May drift or shift focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually has single focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single focus Sense of unity and coherence Key ideas developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single, distinct focus Unified and coherent Well-developed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No planning evident; disorganized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts organization Few, if any, transitions between ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some lapses or flaws in organization May lack some transitions between ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas loosely connected Transitions evident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical progression of ideas Moderately fluent Attempts compositional risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical progression of ideas Fluent, cohesive Compositional risks successful
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details random, inappropriate, or barely apparent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details lack elaboration, i.e., highlight paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repetitious details Several unelaborated details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uneven development of details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details appropriate and varied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details effective, vivid, explicit, and/or pertinent
Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No apparent control Severe/numerous errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errors/patterns of errors may be evident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some errors that do not interfere with meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very few, if any, errors
Sentence Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assortment of incomplete and/or incorrect sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive monotony/same structure Numerous errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little variety in syntax Some errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some variety Generally correct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety in syntax appropriate and effective Few errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precision and/or sophistication Very few, if any, errors
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errors so severe they detract from meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous serious errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patterns of errors evident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No consistent pattern of errors Some errors that do not interfere with meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very few, if any, errors

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NON-SCORABLE RESPONSES	NR = No Response	Student wrote too little to allow a reliable judgment of his/her writing.
	OT = Off Topic/ Off Task	Student did not write on the assigned topic/task, or the student attempted to copy the prompt.
	NE = Not English	Student wrote in a language other than English.
	WF = Wrong Format	Student did not respond in the format (or mode) designated in the prompt.

Content/Organization	Usage	Sentence Construction	Mechanics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates intended message to intended audience Relates to topic Opening and closing Focused Logical progression of ideas Transitions Appropriate details and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tense formation Subject-verb agreement Pronouns usage/agreement Word choice/meaning Proper Modifiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of type, structure, and length Correct construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spelling Capitalization Punctuation

Note: All unscorable responses (NSRs), with the exception of NR, must be coded by the Scoring Director

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NEW JERSEY REVISING/EDITING SCORING GUIDE

Score Point Scale	0	1	2	3	4
Content/Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • central focus • relevant supporting details • use of transitions and other devices to ensure cohesiveness 	no attention to opening or closing; no focus; no organization of ideas	minimal attention to opening or closing; some details but no elaboration; no transitions; unable to focus	limited attention to opening and/or closing; progression of ideas but flawed or uneven; may attempt to use transitions	general attention to opening and closing; sense of focus; some use of transitions, but uneven development may be overlooked	consistent attention to opening and closing; single, distinct focus; organization and elaboration of ideas; logical and cohesive use of transitions
Sentence Construction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subordination/coordination • sentence fragments and run-on sentences • sentence combining • additional words to complete meaning 	incomplete/incorrect sentences	some sentence construction but marked by monotony and/or awkward syntax; no sense of rhetorical modes	some control of syntax; simple sentence structure, but little or no variety	control of syntax; eliminates excessive monotony; varied sentence structure	syntactic and rhetorical sophistication; subordination and coordination; avoids wordiness
Usage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verbs (tense/agreement) • pronouns (number/agreement) • parallel structure • correct modifiers 	numerous and/or serious errors ignored; inability to apply rules	some errors corrected but generally inconsistent application of rules	inconsistent in correcting errors; knowledge of rules but inability to utilize them effectively or consistently	errors corrected, but some may be overlooked; general knowledge and application of rules	knowledge and application of rules, leaving few, if any, errors
Mechanics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spelling • punctuation • capitalization 	numerous and serious errors are ignored; inability to apply rules	inability to apply rules; errors, but inconsistently corrected; may create some errors where none existed	knowledge of rules, but some inconsistency in application; patterns of errors remain	errors, though some may be overlooked; knowledge and application of rules	errors, leaving few, if any; knowledge and application of rules
Word Choice	no attention to word choice	limited word choice	relies on familiar vocabulary	varied vocabulary with some use of rich words	consistent use of rich words and images to develop topic

APPENDIX B

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

TEST ADMINISTRATION MATERIALS
FOR WRITING A NARRATIVE

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 DIRECTIONS – PART 1

Today you are going to take part of the High School Proficiency Assessment for Language Arts Literacy. The assessment contains different types of text and different activities. In the first part of the test, you will look at a picture and then complete a writing task. In this activity, you have an opportunity to demonstrate how well you can organize and express your ideas in written text. You have received a Writer's Checklist of important points to remember as you write. Educators who read your writing will consider these important points when they read and score your writing.

You will have 30 minutes to complete the first writing task. Take a few minutes to think about the task and to plan what you want to say before you begin to write. You may use the prewriting/planning space on pages 33–34 in your test booklet to plan your text, but your prewriting will not be scored. Only your writing on pages 13–14 in your answer folder will be scored. Do your best to make your writing clear and well organized. Keep your purpose in mind as you write and use your checklist.

You must use a No. 2 pencil. You may either print or write your final copy. You may not use a dictionary or any other reference materials during the test. However, you may use the Writer's Checklist. If you finish before the time is called, review what you have written using the Writer's Checklist to read critically and improve what you have written. Then, close your test booklet and wait quietly until you receive further instructions.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 – PART 1



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with thanks to Nylon magazine.

WRITING TASK

An ancient proverb says, "A picture is worth a thousand words." Regardless of the artist's original intent, what we see in the picture can be very different from what others see. What story does this picture tell you? Use your imagination and experience to speculate about what is happening. Then write your story.

PREWRITING/PLANNING SPACE

When you finish your planning, turn to page 13 in your answer folder.

END OF PART 1
Be sure to write your draft on pages 13-14
in your answer folder. You may check your
work on this part only. DO NOT GO ON TO
THE NEXT PAGE.



**NEW JERSEY
HIGH SCHOOL
PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT**

Writer's Checklist

**Important Points to
Remember as You
Write and Critically Read
to Revise/Edit Your Writing**

CONTENT/ORGANIZATION

- _____ 1. Focus on your purpose for writing and your audience.
- _____ 2. Develop a clear topic or central idea.
- _____ 3. Support your ideas with details, explanations, and examples.
- _____ 4. Put your ideas in the order that best communicates what you are trying to say.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

- _____ 5. Use clear and varied sentences.

USAGE

- _____ 6. Use words correctly.
- _____ 7. Use varied and vivid vocabulary.

MECHANICS

- _____ 8. Capitalize, spell, and punctuate correctly.
- _____ 9. Write neatly.

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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APPENDIX C

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF THE NARRATIVE TASK AND
SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES

Description of Task

The responses selected to appear in this handbook were written by eleventh-grade students who took the narrative writing section of the March 2005 High School Proficiency Assessment. The responses appear as the students wrote them; no corrections have been made other than the deletion of specific names that appear to identify the student or the student's school district. A typed version of each response appears before the handwritten response.

Samples are included for each score point of the New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric (a 6-point scale). These sample responses, which are grouped by score point, represent the range of approaches that eleventh-grade students take with this writing task. Each score point is described in detail, and each response is annotated according to the score point criteria.

Students were provided a picture as a writing prompt and given 30 minutes to construct a narrative or story based on the picture or some aspect of it. Prewriting/planning was encouraged, and space was provided for this endeavor. A Writer's Checklist of important ideas was also provided to encourage students to read, revise, and edit their written work. All students' writing was considered a **first draft** in this writing process since students were not permitted to confer with others nor to refer to outside resources (dictionary or thesaurus) and therefore were unable to rely on the feedback and constructive suggestions that result from strategies appropriate for classroom instruction. In this way, the test obtains a sample of each student's **baseline** writing ability within the context of consistent standards that ensure fairness to all who participate.

Score Scale Point 1

The response indicates an **INADEQUATE COMMAND** of written language. The writing samples in this category:

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION

- may not have an opening and/or closing. These papers are on topic and demonstrate at least a minimal attempt to respond to the topic by stating a subject or giving a list of subjects. Some of the lengthier papers are disorganized, making them consistently difficult to follow. In these papers the reader has to infer what the focus is. The overriding characteristic of many of these papers is a lack of control with no sense of planning. Details may be random, inappropriate, or barely apparent.

USAGE

- may display severe/numerous errors in usage. This includes problems in tense formation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun usage and agreement, word choice, and use of proper modifiers.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

- may demonstrate an assortment of grammatically incorrect/incomplete sentences and/or incorrect rhetorical modes. Statements may be either incoherent or unintelligible.

MECHANICS

- may display errors in mechanics so severe as to detract from the meaning of the response.

She is acting in the woods. It could be anything in the woods she is happy about something It could be something from earth or a animal. animals are born every Day so are humans.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

She is acting in the woods.
It could be anything in the woods.
She is happy about something. It could be something
from earth of a animal.
animals are barking every day
so are humans.

Score Point: 1

Enough bare detail is apparent in this response to demonstrate an attempt to respond to the topic [*She is acting in the woods.*] However, the focus of the brief text shifts, [*animals are barking every day so are humans*] forcing the reader to infer a focus and indicating an inadequate command of written language.

The picture is like someones guilty conscience. because she is talking to a person that probably made. Her mad because she is yelling at the thing. Plus who know where she can be at. She can be any Where a faraway land a wonder land or even at her house.

Where ever it is at it snows there because it is on the ground.

I guess you don't need to be classy or anything.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

- x The picture is like someone's guilty conscience.
- x because she is talking to a person that probably made.
- x Her made because she is yelling at the thing.
- x Plus who knows where she can be at. She can be any
- x where a runaway bird a wonder land or even at her
- x house.
- x Where ever it is at it snows there because it is
- x on the ground.
- x I guess you don't need to be classy or anything.

Score Point: 1

Although disorganized and difficult to follow, this writing sample represents an attempt to respond to the topic [*She is yelling at the thing; it snows there because it is on the ground*]. However, details are random and sometimes inappropriate [*I guess you don't need to be classy or anything*]. The prevalence of grammatically incorrect or incomplete sentences indicates an inadequate command of written language.

This story tells me that you can have little friend. In that picture look like they screaming at each other and that she got a person on her hand but that inpossible because the little person can be real far away and the big girl just put her hand flat so it look like she got the little person on her hand.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1

PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

This story tells me that you can have little friend. In that picture look like they screaming at each other and that she got a person on her hand but that impossible because the little person can be real far away and the big girl just put her hand flat so it look like she got the little person on her hand.

Score Point: 1

This expository response represents a minimal attempt to respond to the topic [*tells me that you can have little friend; they screaming at each other and that she got a person on her hand*]. However, the brief text displays an assortment of severe errors in sentence construction, usage, and mechanics, which in such a brief sample of writing indicates an inadequate command of written language.

Score Scale Point 2

The response indicates a LIMITED COMMAND of written language. The writing samples in this category:

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION

- may not have an opening and/or closing. These responses will exhibit an attempt at organization. In other words, there will be some evidence the writer attempted to control the details. The responses relate to the topic, but in some papers, the writer drifts away from the primary focus or abruptly shifts focus. In other papers, there is a single focus, but there are few, if any, transitions, making it difficult to move from idea to idea. Details are presented with little, if any, elaboration—highlight papers.

USAGE

- may have numerous problems with usage, but they are not totally out of control.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

- may demonstrate excessive monotony in syntax and/or rhetorical modes. There may be numerous errors in sentence construction.

MECHANICS

- may display numerous severe errors in mechanics.

One day in the snow a woman and a girl saw that the snow was somewhat melted and the trees were bare. Plus the woman is feeling the ground and is either singing or is surprised. But I think she is blind and so she is using her feel of touch and is trying to discover what might be underground. But it lookes to me like one of those things are rocks. This looks like its done but its not.

I wonder if the house is on wheels. But are they sisters or friends. Maybe the woman is digging up the dirt and is putting it in her hand so she can feel it. They are smiling.

**LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT**

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

One day in the snow a woman and a girl saw that the snow was somewhat melted and the trees were bare. Plus the woman is feeling the ground and is either singing or is surprised. But I think she is blind and so she is using her feel of touch and is trying to discover what might be underground. But it looks to me like one of these things are rocks. This looks like its done but its not.

I wonder if the ^{house} wheel is on wheels. But are they sisters or friends. Maybe the woman is digging up the dirt and is putting it in her hand so she can feel it. They are smiling.

Score Point: 2

This brief response begins with a sentence that suggests that the writer will tell a story, but the writing quickly shifts to an exposition of features in the picture [*the woman is feeling the ground and is either singing or is surprised*]. The details, which are largely unelaborated and sometimes confusing [*This looks like its done but its not*], are further limited by the overuse of “but” as a generic transition between ideas. The overall quality of this response indicates that the writer has a limited command of written language.

I see two young ladies in shock. The one up close looks angry and the one in the back is surprised. They are in a new area and one believes to think it's horrible, yet the other likes it. The place looks as though it's some kind of park. The girl up close is angry with a lot, you can see the expression in her face. She could be yelling maybe at something on the ground. The way the grass looks maybe or litter. The one to the far part of the picture looks as though she is seeing something beautiful in the sky. The picture is comparing and contrasting happiness to anger. By putting the girls together you get that point of view. They also don't show you what they are shocked or angry about. They want you to think and imagine what you can by their faces. It's the look of expression. Watching an expression can let you know a lot more words at all.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

I see two young ladies in shock. The one up close looks angry and the one in the back is surprised. They are in a new area and one believes to think it's horrible, yet the other likes it. The place looks as though it's some kind of park. The girl up close is angry with a lot, you can see the expression in her face. She could be yelling maybe at something on the ground. The way the grass looks maybe a little. The one to the far part of the picture looks as though she is seeing something beautiful in the sky. The picture is comparing and contrasting happiness to anger. By putting the girls together you get that point of view. They also don't show you what they are shocked or angry about. They want you to think and imagine what you can by their faces. It's the look of expression. Watching an expression can let you know a lot more words at all.

Score Point: 2

In this expository response, the writer speculates on what might be occurring in the picture [*The place looks as though its some kind of park; She could be yelling maybe at something on the ground*]. There are a few transitions between ideas [*and, yet, also*] indicating an attempt at organization; but the ideas are undeveloped and sometimes unintelligible [*Its the look of expression. Watching an expression can let you know alot more words at all*]. The lack of elaboration makes this a highlight response.

Marta is one of the worst girls in the high school of NJ. She was born on Feb. 14/1894. When Marta was thinking of doing something bad, she usually speaks to her inner mind, which is a smaller version of her. Marta let her mind get out From her mouth and she starts asking her questions. Some times she listtens and sometimes she doesn't. Usually Marta goes to a park or Somewhere quite to speak to her mind.

Marta went to the park and made her mind out. she wanted to put some girl in trouble, but she also wanted to ask her inner mind. her little mind came out and totaly diseagreed on what she wanted. Marta start fighting with her mind, then she felt bad and she promised that she won't do anything bad. in the next day, she went to school and she hurt the girl anyway. On her way back home, she walked through the park. her mind came out and yelled at her for breaking the promise.

Marta always hated it when somebody yells at her so she throug her mind away and kept walking the inner mind never gave up and kept following her. Marta decided to take her mind and put it back where it belongs. Since she never liked to get yelled at, she never asked her inner mind anymore.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

Marta is one of the worst girls in the high school of NJ. She was born on Feb. 14/1994. When Marta was thinking of doing something bad, she usually speaks to her inner mind, which is a smaller version of her. Marta let her mind get out from her mouth and she starts asking her questions. Some times she listens and sometimes she doesn't. Usually Marta goes to a park or somewhere quite to speak to her mind.

Marta went to the park and made her mind out. She wanted to put some girl in trouble, but she also wanted to ask her inner mind, her little mind came out and totally disagreed on what she wanted. Marta start fighting with her mind, then she felt bad and she promised that she won't do anything bad. In the next day, she went to school and she hurt the girl anyway. On her way back home, she walked through the park, her mind came out and yelled at her for breaking the promise.

Marta always hated it when somebody yells at her so she through her mind away and kept walking. The inner mind never gave up and kept following her. Marta decided to take her mind and put it back where it belongs. Since she never liked to get yelled at, she never asked her inner mind anymore.

Score Point: 2

This narrative response demonstrates an attempt to organize ideas focused on Marta and her struggles with her inner mind. Although the ideas within each paragraph are somewhat elaborated, awkward details [Marta let her mind get out from her mouth; Marta went to the park and made her mind out; so she through her mind away] and numerous errors in sentence construction, usage, and mechanics create confusion. This lack of clarity overall demonstrates a limited command of written language.

Score Scale Point 3

The response indicates a **PARTIAL COMMAND** of written language. The writing samples in this category:

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION

- may not have an opening and/or closing. These responses relate to the topic and usually have a single focus. Some of these papers may drift from the focus or abruptly shift focus; however, in these papers, at least one of the subjects focused on clearly meets the criteria for a “3.” For example, some “3” papers are sparse—they have several details with a little elaboration, but they are organized and controlled; some “3” papers will ramble somewhat, repeating ideas resulting in a lengthy response that would otherwise be sparse; and other “3” papers have elaborated ideas and details, but the writing sample is interrupted by organizational flaws/lapses or by a lack of transition between ideas or between clusters of ideas.

USAGE

- may display (a) pattern(s) of errors in usage.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

- may demonstrate little variety in syntax structure and/or rhetorical modes. There may be errors in sentence construction.

MECHANICS

- may display (a) pattern(s) of errors in mechanics.

Jody was really upset about the argument that she had with Todd. They were having such a great time at the movies until Jack came by to speak. He wanted to thank Jody for helping him with his homework last night. It was innocent enough except Jody forgot to mention it to Todd, which in turn made him mad which started the argument that they were having now. After a while Jody stopped arguing and just let Todd go on and on. Meanwhile her conscience was getting the best of her. She likes to imagine that her conscience is this little person she can hold in her hand and listen or talk to. The more Todd screamed the more her conscience kept going on about how right Todd was until finally she couldn't take it any more and shouted Shut up to her conscience and Todd. He was surprised by the way she said it and equally surprised that everything he was saying was true because she admitted it to him.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

Jody was really upset about the argument that she had with Todd. They were having such a great time at the movies until Jack came by to speak. He wanted to thank Jody for helping him with his homework last night. It was innocent enough except Jody forgot to mention it to Todd which in turn made him mad which started the argument that they were having now. After a while Jody stopped arguing and just let Todd go on and on. Meanwhile her conscience was getting the best of her. She likes to imagine that her conscience is this little person she can hold in her hand and listen or talk to. The more Todd screamed the more her conscience kept going on about how right Todd was until finally she couldn't take it any more and she just shut up to her conscience and Todd. He was surprised by the way she said it and equally surprised that everything he was saying was true because she admitted it to him.

Score Point: 3

This sparse but organized narrative is focused on the details of what happened during Jody and Todd's movie date. The writer's use of simple transitions [*until*, *except*, *in turn*, *after a while*, *meanwhile*] helps to frame the sequence of events and to make connections between the details clear. Although a brief sample, the writing nevertheless demonstrates enough focus, elaboration, and control in this response to indicate a partial command of written language.

Mary is walking through the Park she has Just left her friends. When her other side pops up from inside her and says "your friends will never like you because of the way you dress." Then mary say to her otherside "You will not tell me to dress." Her other side who mary sometimes calls her Sally. Sally then says that "she is telling her how to dress only because she is looking out for mary." Sally is the side that everyone, has in them she is self Pity and regret and depression. Then as mary stops she sticks her hand in her pocket, and yell at Sally for making he think she is crazy. While Mary is saying this Some people are walking by and see mary aruging with herself, and then befor she sees them they slowly backup and run in the other directren. Sally saw the people and said "Look at how they run from you because of how you dress" then mary say that "they are running because they see me fighting with you." They as mary is getting ready to start walking again sally say that "Some people are Just crazy and that others think they are normal" than Mary adds "if their are normal people out there than I would like to see what they are like so I can see am considered a normal person." Sally then say "people who think they are normal are Just as crazy, as everyone else They Just think their normal because they don't have other sides to tell them other wise"

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

Mary is walking through the Park She has just left her friends. When her other side Pops up from inside her and says "Your friends will never like you because of the way you dress". Then Mary says to her other side "You will not tell me to dress." Her other side who Mary sometimes calls her Sally. Sally then says that "She is telling her how to dress only because she is looking out for Mary." Sally is the side that everyone has in them she is self pity and regret and depression. Then as Mary stops she sticks her hand in her pocket, and yell at Sally for making her think she is crazy. While Mary is saying this some people are walking by and see Mary arguing with herself, and then before she sees them they slowly backup and run in the other direction. Sally saw the people and said "Look at how they ran from you because of how you dress" Then Mary says that "they are running because they see me fighting with you". Then as Mary is getting ready to start walking again Sally says that "Some people are just crazy and that others think they are normal" Then Mary adds "if there are normal people out there than I would like to see what they are like so I can see

PICTURE PROMPT (continued)

am considered a normal person?" Sally then say "people who think they are normal are just as crazy, as everyone else they just think their normal because they don't have other sides to tell them other wise"

Score Point: 3

This narrative response focuses on a story of contention between Mary and her alter ego, Sally. The story unfolds through a dialogue that exposes Mary as vulnerable and Sally as the dark side of human experience [*she is self pity and regret and depression*]. The response progresses logically through the use of transitions [*Then; While Mary is saying this; as Mary is getting ready to start walking again*] that convey the sequence of events and connections between ideas. However, repeated problems with sentence construction, usage (tense formation, subject-verb agreement), and mechanics reveal patterns of errors, indicating a partial command of written language.

STOP. – DO NOT WRITE BEYOND THIS PAGE.

If “a picture is worth a thousand words”, then what specific words could be used to describe this picture? Some would call it illusion, while other might call it reality.

A critic would call this picture a fake. But one does have to wonder if any illusions trully are real. I find myself to be a critic in the situation depicted in this photograph taken by Bryan Rindfuss. As I look over the photo there are many signs pointing out that this is an illusion. First off, the “smaller” girls’ feet do not touch the hand of the larger girl. The second obvious sign is that, the girl in the distance is out of focus. Those are the two main reasons that this photograph does not seem real to me.

But there could be other reasons why the photographer had “snapped” this shot. Maybe the artist was trying to capture a humorous event on film. Or, he could have even taken this photo to demonstrate the inner human struggles that we each go thru every day. In all of us, there is, what you could call, a little person or just simply our conscience. Day by day we argue with this little person on our moral standings, personal decisions and inner thoughts.

Whatever the purpose of this photo is, it has different purposes to us. We are all very different animals, that hardly ever think alike. As every one interprets this picture differently, to me this picture shows the inner conflicts within myself.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

If "a picture is worth a thousand words", then what specific words could be used to describe this picture? Some would call it illusion, while other might call it reality.

A critic would call this picture a fake. But one does have to wonder if any illusions truly are real. I find myself to be a critic in the situation depicted in this photograph taken by Bryan Rindfuss. As I look over the photo there are many signs pointing out that this is an illusion. First off, the "smaller" girls' feet do not touch the hand of the larger girl. The second obvious sign is that, the girl in the distance is out of focus. These are the two main reasons that this photograph does not seem real to me.

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Whatever the purpose of this photo is, it has different purposes to us. We are all very different animals, that hardly ever think alike. As every one interprets this picture differently, to me this picture shows the inner conflicts within myself.

Score Point: 3

Sparse but controlled, this expository response explains the writer's point of view that the photograph is an illusion. The writer elaborates on this idea with two sets of speculations: one dealing with the physical features of the photograph that reveal its illusory quality; the other dealing with our daily human struggle with conscience. These speculations are organized into clusters of ideas, which in turn are linked by the use of transitions [*As I look over the photo; But there could be other reasons why; Whatever the purpose of this photo is*]. The elaboration and organization of this response clearly move it beyond the highlight level, but the writing would need more development to move to a higher score point.

Score Scale Point 4

The response indicates an **ADEQUATE COMMAND** of written language. The writing samples in this category:

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION

- generally will have an opening and a closing. The responses relate to the topic. They have a single focus and are organized. There is little, if any, difficulty moving from idea to idea. Ideas may ramble somewhat, and clusters of ideas may be loosely connected; however, an overall progression is apparent. In some papers, development is uneven, consisting of elaborated ideas interspersed with bare, unelaborated details.

USAGE

- may display some errors in usage, but no consistent pattern is apparent.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

- may demonstrate a generally correct sense of syntax. They avoid excessive monotony in syntax and/or rhetorical modes. There may be a few errors in sentence construction.

MECHANICS

- may display some errors in mechanics, but these errors will not constitute a consistent pattern, nor do they interfere with the meaning of the response.

Dana stood there in shock. She couldn't believe what she just did; smash a bagel with cream cheese in Robbie's face? What was she thinking? Just because Brittany and Courtney told her to do it, doesn't mean she had to. She was so angry at herself, and knew she was going to get in a lot of trouble.

She went back to her lunch table where her friends were laughing hysterically. Dana thought it was funny too; at least until the vice-principal, Mr. Bumble, came up to her and said, "Dana, come with me please."

As she walked down the hall, she felt terror. "What is going to happen? What will my parents say? Why did I listen to my friends?" she thought.

Dana and Mr. Bumble sat down in his office, talking about what had just happened. "I have to give you ACI, Dana. What you did was assault. I know you have never been in trouble before, but this is what has to be done."

She left his office in tears and went to class. She went right home after, where she knew her mother would be, fuming. As she walked in she heard the wrath of her mother from the kitchen, "Dana Lorelai, get in here right this instant. You are in big trouble miss."

Dana slowly went into the kitchen. She knew she would be grounded from the big party that weekend. She reached the kitchen door and her mother laced right into her. "Dana, what is the matter with you? You are a straight A student, top of your class, and you go and do a stupid thing like this. You have ACI tomorrow. This is going to be on your permanent record."

Dana couldn't take it any longer. She ran outside to her snow covered backyard. She was so angry at herself. she started to yell at herself and her conscience. "You made me do this. You are my bad side, always making me do stupid things. I am in so much trouble because of you. I am never speaking to you again." Her mother saw this outburst from the window and thought she had gone crazy.

The next day, Dana served her ACI and it was the worst day in her entire life so far. She vowed that from that day forward, she would work harder than before and make a good name for herself again.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

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Dana slowly went into the kitchen.

PICTURE PROMPT (continued)

She knew she would be grounded from the big party that weekend. She reached the kitchen door and her mother laced right into her, "Dana, what is the matter with you? You are a straight A student, top of your class, and you go and do a stupid thing like this. You have ACT tomorrow. This is going to be on your permanent record."

Dana couldn't take it any longer. She ran outside to her snow covered backyard. She was so angry at herself. She started to yell at herself and her conscience, "You made me do this. You are my bad side, always making me do stupid things. I am in so much trouble because of you. I am never speaking to you again." Her mother saw this outburst from the window and thought she had gone crazy.

The next day, Dana served her ACT and it was the worst day in her entire life so far. She vowed that from that day forward, she would work harder than before and make a good name for herself again.

Score Point: 4

This organized narrative has a single focus: the repercussions of Dana's outburst in the lunchroom. Although the response has an overall progression, the elaboration of ideas is uneven, resulting in a rather quick summary of some events [*She left his office in tears, and went to class. She went right home after*]. Additionally, the details at times are conflicting (e.g., initially Dana attributes her outburst to Brittany and Courtney but later blames her actions on her conscience). Precise word choice [*smash, fuming, wrath, laced, vowed*] contributes to this response, which demonstrates an adequate command of language; but the writing lacks the controlled development and sophistication needed for a higher score.

About 400 years ago when pilgrims were first discovering America they set up a colony in Virginia. They would go back every couple of months with messages to the king telling about their travels and progress made. They did this for about a year and a half then all of a sudden they stopped coming back with messages. The king and his nobles were worried that they might have been attacked by Native Americans or froze to death due to a harsh winter. After about a year of the last message received the king ordered a small army to go see what happened to the colony. They didn't return which had the king worried that his once powerful army was being killed by these native savages so he decided to stop people from going to the colony and to order everyone to keep quiet about the lost people. What the king didn't know was that it wasn't Native Americans who were causing all of this mess but an unknown species of humans who were never seen before by Europeans. These people are short only about two feet tall but they are wild, pack hunting cannabals who would feed off of animals or one another if times got desperate. Now you might think that the colonist could fight off these small cannabals but they were too smart for them, they would wait at night to attack the colonist which gave them the element of surprise rendering the colonist defenseless. The leader of the colonist was worried about what was going on because no one ever saw them because it was always dark when they came out and they were fast little creatures. On one fateful night in the winter when food was scarce and stomachs were empty the small cannabals attacked on the colonists like a bloody massacre killing everyone. The animals were fed and soon enough spring came and they had more animals to feed off of but that didn't last long so times were once again desperate until the soldiers came. At one swift attack on the soldiers the cannabals started slaying them merciless but the soldiers were more prepared with muskets and bayonets to defend themselves. It was a bloody battle leaving all of the soldiers dead and most of the cannabals dead. The cannabals then lived in the more unknown sections of Virginia deep in the woods where no one found them until present day when a hiker in the mountains came across them. She was shocked to see this thing and picked it up trying to communicate but couldn't so she grew angry yelling at the cannabal. The cannabal became scared and ran off to where everyone else was and the hiker followed. She felt death on her shoulder because on that fateful morning she was eaten alive by a group of cannabal humans.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

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PICTURE PROMPT (continued)

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STOP. - DO NOT WRITE BEYOND THIS PAGE.

Score Point: 4

As the story of the lost colony unfolds, it becomes clear that this writer is attempting a compositional risk by drawing on an historical/factual era to develop the narrative. The loosely connected details of this writing, however, do not serve to strengthen the overall progression of ideas, which are plentiful but thinly developed. Although precise word choice [*harsh, rendering the colonist defenseless, bloody massacre*] and transitions [*After about a year, What the king didn't know, On one fateful night*] help to link ideas, the writing displays a number of errors in sentence construction and usage. These errors, along with the rather rapidly unfolding tale and inexplicably abrupt shift to contemporary times at the end, demonstrate an adequate command of written language.

Today, the American public is faced daily with millions of difficult questions. Such questions attack each individual, and can tear a person apart. The questions are more often than not problems within a person. They are the problems people encounter that create an internal mind game between what is right and wrong. These problems can deal with any aspect of a persons life. They stem from relationships, friends, family, moral ethics, health, pressure, popularity, etc.. These problems force a person to question and even argue ones self. The can split a person in two. In this picture, one such problem has occurred.

The woman in this picture is battleing another side of herself. She has an important decision to make and must be able to see both sides. The girl in her hand is herself, her subconscious. There is not much around her. There are only a few trees and some snow. The snow represents past choices, wrong choices. There clearly have been more right choices than wrong ones, but the wrong choices have impacted her life strongly and she does not want to make another one. In the distance, there is a white gate, but it is only large enough for one to fit through. In order to make it to the other side, she must stand alone. The gate represents her future. What lies on the other side of it depends on who passes through it. After a battle she makes a decision, but only after a battle. When the girl in this picture is done with the war, the winner is clear. The winner walks through the gate, and into the future.

Everyone will be forced to make difficult decisions in his/her life. Hopefully, something is learned from each decision. The length of the battles of the mind will vary, but no matter how far away it may seem, that gate is just across the yard of life, waiting to be opened.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

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Everyone will be forced to make difficult decisions

PICTURE PROMPT (continued)

in his/her life. Hopefully, something is learned from each decision. The length of the battles of the mind will vary, but no matter how far away it may seem, that gate is just across the yard of life, waiting to be opened.

Score Point: 4

In this focused, organized response, the writer develops an expository theme about the human experience of decision making and the inevitable internal struggle suffered when the decision involves the questions of right or wrong that arise in our daily lives. The topic is extended with a discussion of the symbolic images in the picture and concludes with a return to the psychological dilemma, which is nicely linked back to the discussion of symbolism in the photograph. Although errors are few and word choice is vivid and precise [*tear a person apart, that gate is just across the yard of life*], the ideas are unevenly developed and lack the cohesion, coherence, and completeness necessary for a higher score. Overall, this response demonstrates an adequate command of written language.

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Score Scale Point 5

The response indicates a **STRONG COMMAND** of written language. The writing samples in this category:

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION

- have an opening and a closing. The responses relate to the topic and have a single focus. They are organized and progress logically from beginning to end. The key ideas are developed with appropriate and varied details. Clusters of ideas are strongly connected. Some writers take compositional risks and are, for the most part, successful. Although these papers are flawed, they have a sense of completeness and unity.

USAGE

- have few errors in usage.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

- demonstrate syntactic and verbal sophistication through an effective variety of sentences and/or rhetorical modes. There are few, if any, errors in sentence construction.

MECHANICS

- have few errors in mechanics.

Everyone probably has or has seen one of those silly garden gnomes at least once in their life. Now, until last spring I believed these inanimate objects were not alive. Violet has taught me otherwise.

On my way home from school I walk through the park to cut 10 minutes off my small trip. As I passed the teeter-totter I heard a noise coming from the honeysuckles. Against better judgement I went to investigate. "Hello?" I called, "is someone there?" I received no response so I opted to just press on and get home.

It was not till about 5 minutes later that I heard the distinct sound of little feet behind me on the gravel path. Hurriedly I did an about face. Before me stood a nimble figure of a girl no taller than one ruler. "Who are you?!" I exclaimed frantically. The creature let out a lilting laugh in reply to my panic. "teehee Violet ... teehee."

This had to be a joke there was no way this 'Violet' was real. However, I had time to kill and of course my curiosity got the best of me (I'm a cat person you see). Crouching down in front of Violet I took in her appearance. Her skin pale and her hair was like ink. She wore an indigo skirt as well as a striped shirt. Once more she giggled, "Who are you?" "Kitty," I replied.

I was still so overwhelmed by shock that I could not say anything more than what I already had. Finally, I managed to untie the knots in my tongue and speak once more, "Violet what are you?" "A gnome." At these words she departed disappearing into the nearest bit of greenery.

Honestly I do not if Violet is real or not. I do know this though. Curiosity may have killed the cat but it did not kill me.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

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I was still so overwhelmed by shock that I could not say anything more than what I already had. Finally, I managed to untie the knots in my tongue and speak once more, "Violet what are you?" "A gnome." At these words she departed disappearing into the nearest bit of greenery.

Honestly I do not if Violet is real or not. I do know this though. Curiosity may have killed the cat but it did not kill me.

Score Point: 5

This focused response provides a vivid first-person narrative of a brief encounter with a gnome, Violet. The writer introduces key ideas with sophisticated word choice [*inanimate, nimble, giggled, frantically*], appropriate and varied details [*teeter-totter, honeysuckle, gravel path, indigo skirt and striped shirt*], simile [*hair was like ink*], alliteration [*let out a lilting laugh*], and a playful attempt at the literary device **periphrasis** [*to untie the knots in my tongue*]. In the fourth paragraph, the writer introduces an allusion to an old adage [*curiosity got the best of me (I'm a cat person you see)*] that is reinforced with humor [the narrator's name is *Kitty*] and revealed in the last paragraph [*Curiosity may have killed the cat*]. Although the content is controlled and unified, the response lacks the development needed for a higher score, indicating a strong rather than a superior command of written language.

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“What are you doing to me!”

Jenn was screaming loudly at her opened palm, gesturing and scowling at it as if trying to intimidate it.

“You’re ruining my life! I wish you would just leave me alone!”

“I’m your only friend, Jenn. Why are you pushing me away?”

The response came from the extremely small girl standing in Jenn’s hand. Her name was Lauren. She had been Jenn’s best friend since the time Jenn was a small girl.

Jenn’s parents didn’t think Lauren existed. They had all hoped that Lauren was just Jenn’s imagination running wild, and that the phase would eventually pass. But Jenn grew older, and the problem persisted. She was now a 17 year old high school junior with no real friends besides Lauren. They had always hoped the problem would just die away, that they wouldn’t have to deal with it. But the days events proved it was time for some action.

Roberto and Cielo stood in shock as their daughter screamed at the top of her lungs in the direction of her palm. It appeared, as usual, that she was talking to, or in this case screaming at, absolutely nothing.

“That’s it, Cielo,” Roberto said in a frustrated tone. “We’re taking her to the psychiatrist today.”

Cielo sighed. “Let me talk to her one more time,” she pleaded.

“No,” Roberto replied. “Enough is enough.”

Cielo agreed. She knew that her daughter was on the brink of insanity, but she did not want to subject her to even more mental stress than she was already under. However, she knew that they had to do something about this problem immediately.

That afternoon, Roberto, Cielo, and Jenn drove up to the psychiatrists office. The man they were going to see was named Dr. Gorman. He was widely recognized as a leading expert in the field of child psychology. Roberto had heard about him through a friend at work, and decided that going to see him was worth a try.

They arrived at the office around 2:00 pm. They had only been in the waiting room for ten minutes when Dr. Gorman came out to get her. He had long gray hair, a long, graying beard, and a pleasantly soft and reassuring voice.

“Are you Jenn?” he asked with a warm smile.

Jenn nodded silently.

“Well come on back then.”

The two of them walked back into his office. There were amazing pictures up on Dr. Gorman’s walls. The colors of the room filled Jenn with wonder and intrigue. As she was marveling at the room design Dr. Gorman caught a glance at her amazement and decided to take the moment to start the session.

“So, how does Lauren like the room?”

Jenn was startled by the question. He had caught her totally offguard.

“Umm. n She’s not here right now.”

“Oh, I see. Well, that’s good. Because I just wanted to chat with you anyways.”

Jenn smiled. She was starting to trust the man a great deal.

“Let me tell you a little secret of mine, Jenn...”

Dr. Gorman went on to tell Jenn that, like her, he used to see things that weren’t there. He told of his rough childhood in which he was frequently picked on and made fun of. He told of his families concern over him. And he told of how he went to a psychiatrist when he was around Jenn’s age.

“And he helped me deal with and eventually solve my problem.” Dr. Gorman concluded.

Jenn smiled. She knew that this man was going to help her. She knew it was going to be okay.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

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PICTURE PROMPT (continued)

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"Are you Jennie?" he asked with a warm smile.

Jennie nodded silently.

"Well come on in then."

The two of them walked back into his office. There were amazing pictures up on Dr. Gorman's walls. The colors of the room filled Jennie with wonder and intrigue. As she was marveling at the room design Dr. Gorman caught a glance at her amazement and decided to take the moment to start the session.

"So, how does Jennie like the room?"

Jennie was startled by the question. He had caught her totally off-guard.

"Umm... She's not here right now."

"Oh, I see. Well that's good. Because I just wanted to chat with you anyway, so."

Jennie smiled. She was starting to trust the man a great deal.

"Let me tell you a little secret of mine, Jennie."

Dr. Gorman went on to tell Jennie that, like her, he had used to see things that weren't there. He told of his rough childhood in which he was frequently picked on and made fun of. He told of his family's concerns over him. And he told of how he went to a psychiatrist when he was around Jennie's age.

"And he helped me deal with and eventually solve my problem." Dr. Gorman concluded.

Jennie smiled. She knew that this man was going to help her. She knew she was going to be okay.

STOP. - DO NOT WRITE BEYOND THIS PAGE.

Score Point: 5

This narrative begins with a vivid opening (Jenn screaming at her invisible friend, Lauren), continues with a logical progression of key ideas (parental concern for a daughter displaying emotional problems), and ends with a somewhat unifying conclusion (a visit to the psychiatrist, which is the start to healing Jenn). The main strength of the response is the use of meaningful dialogue, which helps to move the story through time. The characters are revealed through this dialogue as well as through appropriate descriptive details [*gestured and scowling, stood in shock, in a frustrated tone, sighed, with a warm smile*] that convey how the characters feel. Although there are few errors in sentence construction, usage, and mechanics, the writing lacks sustained control. The development of ideas does not adequately account for Jenn's sudden shift from reserve to acceptance at the end of the story and thus demonstrates a strong rather than a superior command of written language.

All Bryan received all day was persecution and hatred for his art, little did he know that one day it would open new doors and set him free upon the world.

At the time the only photography accepted by a society run by squares and “proper photographers” were mind numbing and boring photos. His photography put a new spin on the word photo, it played with perspectives and depth perception.

His father never approved of what he called Bryan’s “hobby.” Do you know what it feels like to have your life-long passion a hobby? That would be like asking Michaelangelo where he learned how to finger paint so well, or asking Einstein why he plays with calculators all day. His father was one of those straight-pathed, go-getters who thought the only way to exceed in life was to work hard at something you hate. He cursed Bryan’s photography and told Bryan if he ever saw a photo or a camera again that he would send him to Pennington State Boarding School.

Bryan didn’t care though. He would prove him wrong and everyone else by winning the statewide Photography Art Scholarship.

But to pick the right photo. There were so many in the dozens of boxes Bryan had hidden in the attic. He sat for hours trying to decide until he came upon one. It was a photo that played with perspective so it looked like a giant person holding a knee-high man. He knew he was the only artist out there doing this kind of thing.

The entrance fee for the Photo Competition was \$50 dollars which Bryan didn’t have. He had to bring himself to sell his camera, the camera his grand father used in the war. Bryan had little regret because he knew there was something special about this photo that would make him a shoe-in.

He entered and about a month later he had the scholarship. Afterwards he knew what drove him to take the award-winning photo.

He needed a way to convey his feelings for his father. He was showing his need of freedom and control of his life through his love and devotion to his art. When it really came down to it the photo meant one thing to Bryan. It was that he was the giant, and his father was the dwarf.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

All Bryan received all day was persecution and hatred for his art, little did he know that one day it would open new doors and set him free upon the world.

At the time the only photography accepted by a society run by squares and "proper photographers" were mind numbing and boring photos. His photography put a new spin on the word photo, it played with perspectives and depth perception.

His father never approved of what he called Bryan's hobby. Do you know what it feels like to have your life-long passion a hobby? That would be like asking Michaelangelo where he learned how to finger paint so well, or asking Einstein why he plays with calculators all day. His father was one of those straight-pathed, go-getters who thought the only way to exceed in life was to work hard at something you hate. He cursed Bryan's photography and told Bryan if he ever saw a photo or a camera again that he would send him to Pennington State Boarding School.

Bryan didn't care though. He would prove him wrong and everyone else by winning the state wide Photography Art Scholarship.

But to pick the right photo. There were so many in the dozens of boxes Bryan had hidden in the attic. He sat for hours trying to decide until he came upon one. It was a photo that played with perspective so it looked like a giant person holding a knee-high man. He knew he was the only artist out there doing this kind of thing.

The entrance fee for the Photo Competition

PICTURE PROMPT (continued)

was \$50 dollars which Bryan didn't have. He had to bring himself to sell his camera, the camera his grand father used in the war. Bryan had little regret because he knew there was something special about this photo that would make him a shoe-in.

He entered and about a month later he had the scholarship. Afterwards he knew what drove him to take the award-winning photo.

He needed a way to convey his feelings for his father. He was showing his need of freedom and control of his life through his love and devotion to his art. When it really came down to it the photo meant one thing to Bryan. It was that he was the giant, and his father was the dwarf.

Score Point: 5

In this narrative response, the writer begins with a clear opening that foreshadows the events to follow. Developed with a single focus on Bryan's struggle to be recognized (not only as an artist but as a worthy son), this moderately fluent story progresses logically with appropriate and vivid word choice [*persecution, mind numbing, straight-pathed, knee-high man*] that conveys how diminished Bryan feels. Bryan's feelings are further illuminated by two explicit analogies that clarify his commitment to photography [*like asking Michaelangelo where he learned how to finger paint; asking Einstein why he plays with calculators all day*] and resolve to prove himself. The story ends with symbolism [*It was that he was the giant, and his father was the dwarf*], effectively creating a chiasmus that instills a sense of unity and completeness to the story line. Although the response would benefit from more development, this writing sample demonstrates overall a strong command of written language.

STOP. – DO NOT WRITE BEYOND THIS PAGE.

Score Scale Point 6

The response indicates a **SUPERIOR COMMAND** of written language. The writing samples in this category:

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION

- have an opening and a closing. The responses relate to the topic and have a single distinct focus. They are well-developed, complete compositions that are organized and progress logically from beginning to end. A variety of cohesive devices are present, resulting in a fluent response. Many of these writers take compositional risks resulting in highly effective, vivid, explicit, and/or pertinent responses.

USAGE

- have very few, if any, errors in usage.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

- demonstrate syntactic and verbal sophistication through an effective variety of sentences and/or rhetorical modes. There will be very few, if any, errors in sentence construction.

MECHANICS

- have very few, if any, errors in mechanics.

It was a Day like any other. A cool, satisfying Breeze swept over the lifeless Seattle landscape, which was recovering from a horrible snow storm that plagued the city in the days before. People were busy with their normal, everyday, boring routine of eating, working, and sleeping. Although on this particular Day none of them seemed to mind, in fact they LIKED it. It was as if they had all gone delusional, maybe it was the day of warm climate that they had received during the blistering cold weather. Or maybe it was because it was Saturday, the day set aside for rest and relaxation. Well whatever it was, not one of them questioned the oddly satisfying Day, although I'm sure they wished they had now. I knew something wasn't right, and I'm always right.

Then, without warning, it all ended with a flash, and a loud bang. In an instant the happy, carefree dream day, had become a postapocalyptic nightmare. How, you ask? You see, the reason the temperature had risen was because an asteroid had torn a hole right through our ozone layer, and was headed for town. I guess in all the rejoicing people didn't even happen to notice that the Sun was falling.

I slowly arose from my near comatose sleep that I can only imagine was brought upon by an injury I sustained during the collision with the asteroid. I slowly stood up and rubbed my eyes trying to correct my double sighted vision. I looked around and what I saw next was the most hellish sight I would ever face. **NOTHING**. Every thing was gone, other than the ruins of once decent houses, there was nothing of the city I once knew. I started walking the desolate landscape only to find the charred remains of my friends and the weirdly mutated beings that still walked the earth. Then I saw her.

I ran over to the old park I had once played in, and there stood my mother, alive and well. I was so overjoyed to see her okay that I didn't even notice, in her hand was the shrunken mutated being that I once called sister. The sight of them in that state was too much for me to handle, I began running frantically, searching for someone, something ... real. I broke store windows, and yelled down streets trying to find life. The pain was finally too much and I broke down crying in the road. Then...

Suddenly I awoke, in my bed, in my room, with my things. It was all a dream, a horrific nightmare brought upon by stress, yep, that's all. Then I peered out my window and saw everything back to normal, everyone fine again, going on with their boring, everyday, routines. Then I saw the Sun out of the corner of my eye ... It **WAS** falling. I wish I wasn't always right. **BAM!!!**

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1

PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

It was a Day like any other. A cool, satisfying breeze swept over the lifeless Seattle landscape, which was recovering from a horrible snow storm that plagued the city in the days before. People were busy with their normal, everyday, boring routine of eating, working, and sleeping. Although on this particular day none of them seemed to mind, in fact they LIKED it. It was as if they had all come delusional, maybe it was the day of warm climate that they had received during the blistering cold weather. Or maybe it was because it was Saturday, the day set aside for rest and relaxation. Well whatever it was, not one of them questioned the oddly satisfying day, although I'm sure they wished they had now. I knew something wasn't right, and I'm always right.

Then, without warning, it all ended with a flash, and a loud bang. In an instant the happy, carefree dream day had become a post-apocalyptic nightmare. How, you ask? You see, the reason the temperature had risen was because an asteroid had torn a hole right through our ozone layer, and was headed for town. I guess in all the rejoicing people didn't even happen to notice that the sun was falling.

I slowly arose from my near comatose sleep that I can only imagine was brought upon by an injury I sustained during the collision with the asteroid. I slowly stood up and rubbed my eyes trying to correct my double sighted vision. I looked around and what I saw next was the most hellish sight I would ever face. NOTHING. Every thing was gone, other than the ruins of once decent houses, there was nothing of the city I once knew. I started walking the desolate landscape only to find the charred remains of my friends and the weirdly mutated beings that still walked the earth. Then I saw her.

I ran over to the old park I had once played in, and there stood my mother, alive and well. I was so overjoyed to see her okay that I didn't even notice, in her hand was the shriveled mutated being that I once called sister. The sight of them in that state was too much for me to handle, I began running frantically, searching for someone, something... (crying). I broke store windows, and yelled down streets trying to find life. The pain was finally too much and I broke down crying in the road. Then...

Suddenly I awoke, in my bed, in my room, with my things. It was all a dream, a horrific nightmare brought upon by stress, ~~etc~~, that's all. Then I peered out my window and saw everything back to normal, everyone fine again, going on with their boring, everyday, routines. Then I saw the sun out of the corner of my eye... It WAS falling. I wish I wasn't always right. BAM!!!

Score Point: 6

The writer of this fluent and controlled response initiates a successful compositional risk in the opening paragraph by foreshadowing events [*I knew something wasn't right, and I'm always right*] that are subsequently explored in a dream sequence, briefly dismissed, and then realized in the surprise ending [*It WAS falling. I wish I wasn't always right. BAM!!!*] that unifies the narrative. Details are pertinent and explicit [*blistering cold, postapocalyptic nightmare, near comatose sleep, shrunken mutated being that I once called sister*], and the syntax varied, effectively conveying the tranquility, desolation, and even incremental awareness of the waking narrator [*Suddenly I awoke, in my bed, in my room, with all my things*]. Sophisticated and precise, this narrative displays the controlled pacing and vivid images that are indicative of a superior command of written language.

Laura had never known silence. Even in the early morning hours, before anyone else was awake, there was the constant buzz of chatter by her side. Cutting through a field on the Pennsylvania college campus at seven that Tuesday morning, she muttered to herself as Stephanie droned on and on.

"I can't wait to get to class! Today's going to be so much fun," she exclaimed. "You know, Laura, you really should have had some coffee before we left. You look awful."

Laura clenched a fist and bit her tongue. She had known Stephanie since birth and had never truly enjoyed her company. However, all Laura's twenty years, she was the only friend she'd ever known.

Stephanie started a childish gallop, her trendy-as-anything vintage skirt swirling in all directions. She turned back to Laura and grinned, "You're no fun!" she declared when Laura refused to play the game.

"Well, excuse me if I'm too mature for skipping at the crack of dawn," Laura muttered in response. She looked down to the far end of the field. A professor of European history was strolling down a paved walk, hands in pockets, headed right in their direction.

"Now what are you saying?" Stephanie's question snatched back Laura's attention and held it.

"I don't want to make a scene right now," Laura surrendered, trying to walk on.

"No! No! Stephanie exclaimed. "Say what you mean!"

Laura snuck a glance at the approaching professor and decided to just go for it. She whirled around, face red, eyes intense. "Alright then, Steph. Why do you follow me everywhere? You go to the same school and take all the same classes! Even though I came all the way out here to escape you. To start over! Heck, Steph! I don't even like you!"

As Laura launched her attack on Stephanie, she could feel her friend losing ground. Stephanie shrunk before Laura's very eyes, her mouth gaping in total shock at the words being thrown at her like hand grenades.

"Enough! Enough!" Stephanie shouted, but her voice had diminished too and produced no more sound than the squeak of an agitated mouse.

Laura still shouted at her, now simply spewing nonsense because she liked the feeling of control. She no longer cared about making a scene.

Suddenly, there was a tap on her shoulder. Laura stopped, took in a breath, and met the concerned gaze of the European history professor.

"Excuse me, Miss. But who are you shouting at?" he asked.

"Why can't you see her? She's right ... " But as Laura turned to point out Stephanie, she realized there was no one there.

Frazzled and confused, Laura didn't say anything more. She stumbled slightly and headed towards her lecture.

Laura had never known silence. Even in the early morning hours, before anyone else was awake, there was the constant buzz of chatter in her head.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

Laura had never known silence. Even in the early morning hours, before anyone else was awake, there was the constant buzz of chatter by her side. Cutting through a field on the Pennsylvania College campus at seven that Tuesday morning, she muttered to herself as Stephanie droned on and on.

"I can't wait to get to class! Today's going to be so much fun," she exclaimed. "You know, Laura, you really should have had some coffee before we left. You look awful."

Laura clenched a fist and bit her tongue. She had known Stephanie since birth and had never truly enjoyed her company. However, all Laura's twenty years, she was the only friend she'd ever known.

Stephanie started a childish gallop, her trendy-as-anything vintage skirt swirling in all directions. She turned back to Laura and grinned, "You're no fun!" she declared when Laura refused to play the game.

"Well, excuse me if I'm too mature for skipping at the crack of dawn," Laura muttered in response. She looked down to the far end of the field. A professor of European history was strolling down a paved walk, hands in pockets, headed right in their direction.

"Now what are you saying?" Stephanie's question snatched back Laura's attention and held it.

"I don't want to make a scene right now," Laura surrendered, turning to walk on.

"No! No!" Stephanie exclaimed. "Say what you mean!"

Laura snuck a glance at the approaching professor

PICTURE PROMPT (continued)

and decided to just go for it. She whirled around, face red, eyes intense. "Alright then, Steph. Why do you follow me everywhere? You go to the same school and take all the same classes! Even though I came all the way out here to escape you. To start over! Heck, Steph! I don't even like you!"

As Laura launched her attack on Stephanie she could feel her friend losing ground. Stephanie shrunk before Laura's very eyes, her mouth gaping in total shock at the words being thrown at her like hand grenades.

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Frazzled and confused, Laura didn't say anything more. She stumbled slightly and headed towards her lecture.

Laura had never known silence. Even in the early morning hours, before anyone else was awake, there was the constant buzz of chatter in her head.

STOP. - DO NOT WRITE BEYOND THIS PAGE.

Score Point: 6

This cohesive writing effectively captures Laura's tension as she endures the incessant noise that has plagued her since the day she was born. The writer's attention to this irritant [*Laura clenched her fist and bit her tongue; She whirled around, face red, eyes intense*] without revealing until the end the real reason for it is a successful compositional risk. The strong opening of the narrative provides an equally strong ending when its repetition with only a slight change in phrasing reveals that Laura's alter ego, Stephanie, will continue on just as she has in the past [*Laura had never known silence. Even in the early morning hours, before anyone else was awake, there was the constant buzz of chatter in her head*]. These literary devices, along with the meaningful dialogue, sophisticated syntax, and pertinent details, render this response fluent, vivid, and unified, indicating a superior command of written language.

It was the kind of day where the air, light and crisp, stung your nostrils but the feeling wasn't entirely unpleasant. The snow had started receding just a few days ago and today, the temperature hovering just below freezing, had temporarily halted the thawing. But the cold couldn't halt the feeling that spring was coming, and many people were out in the park roller blading, walking their dog, or riding their bikes even as snow lay about their feet out of simple defiance. They refused to allow nature to deter them from enjoying the coming spring they felt they deserved after enduring the bitter winter. And contrasting with this blithe, optimistic setting was Nicole.

¶ There she stood by the rocks, watching the roller bladers race up over a hill, blind to what was on the other side. To most it seemed innocent enough, but having known her entire life, I saw what was at work behind those glossy eyes. She had always had the tendency to do devilish things, things she saw as amusing, but they were hardly so to those who fell victim to her pranks. I knew what she was plotting when deep within her I saw a light flicker on as she picked up a stick and look at it as though it were some thing of great value. A ways of on the sidewalk a roller-blader raced along the pavement.

She calmly walked over to the hill which the sidewalk traversed and placed the stick on the side that wasn't visible to the roller blader. She laid the large stick right in the middle of the road. The roller blader never saw it coming.

It was that day that some part of her died. Her childlike impishness ended abruptly. As the ambulance pulled up to get the roller-blader—we later learned her act had placed him into a wheelchair for the rest of her life—I saw her off alone, in the woods. She had removed her coat, which I thought odd in weather as cold as this, and laid it on the ground.

In the woods I, peering through the bushes, saw her shouting, but no one else was around. It took a minute before I realized the name she was shouting was her own, and that she was shouting obscenities at herself.

"Nicole, why do you do things like that!," I heard her yell, "you have to change."

At that point she was red in the face, although I couldn't tell whether it was from the cold or not. She walked purposefully back to where the events from earlier in the day had transpired. The stick still layed there in the middle of the sidewalk, with a blood spattered spot only feet away. She stared at the spot and at that point the mischevious light that illuminated her eyes only a handful of hours before flickered out forever.

She hovered above the stick, looking at it as though it were an accomplice in the crime, as though it had played a larger role than it had in the atrocity that had occurred earlier. No blame ever fell on Nicole. The newspaper article about the roller bladers injury had listed it as an unfortunate accident. But the way Nicole threw the stick into the water let me know that the days events weighed heavily on her. We all grow up through different methods, at different rates, but never had one event accelerated the process as much as it did that day.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 PART 1 – PICTURE PROMPT

BEGIN WRITING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE PROMPT ON THE LINES BELOW.

It was the kind of day where the air, light and crisp, stung your nostrils but the feeling wasn't entirely unpleasant. The snow had started receding just a few days ago and today, the temperature hovering just below freezing, had temporarily halted the thawing. But the cold couldn't halt the feeling that spring was coming, and many people were out in the park roller blading, walking their dog, or riding their bikes even as snow lay about their feet out of simple defiance. They refused to allow nature to deter them from enjoying the coming spring they felt they deserved after enduring the bitter winter. And contrasting with this blithe, optimistic setting was Nicole. There she stood by the rocks, watching the roller bladers race up over a hill, blind to what was on the other side. To most it seemed innocent enough, but having known her her entire life, I saw what was at work behind those glossy eyes. She had always had the tendency to do devilish things, things she saw as amusing, but they were hardly so to those who fell victim to her pranks. I knew what she was plotting when deep within her I saw a light flicker on as she picked up a stick and looked at it as though it were some thing of great value. A ways off on the sidewalk a roller-blader raced along the pavement.

She calmly walked over to the hill which the sidewalk traversed and placed the stick on the side that wasn't visible to the roller blader. She laid the large stick right in the middle of the road. The roller blader never saw it coming.

PICTURE PROMPT (continued)

It was that day that some part of her died. Her childlike impishness ended abruptly. As the ambulance pulled up to get the roller-blader - we later learned her act had placed him into a wheelchair for the rest of her life - I saw her off alone, in the woods. She had removed her coat, which I thought odd in weather as odd as this, and laid it on the ground.

In the woods I, peering through the bushes, saw her shattering, but no one else was around. It took a minute before I realized the name she was shattering was her own, and that she was shattering absently at herself.

"Nicole, why do you do things like that!", I heard her yell, "You have to change."

At that point she was red in the face, although I couldn't tell whether it was from the cold or not. She walked purposefully back to where the events from earlier in the day had transpired. The stick still layed there, in the middle of the sidewalk, with a blood splattered spot only feet away. She stared at the spot and at that point the mischievous light that illuminated her eyes only a handful of hours before flickered out forever.

She hovered above the stick, looking at it as though it were an accomplice in the crime, as though it had played a larger role than it had in the atrocity that had occurred earlier. No blame ever fell on Nicole. The newspaper article about the roller bladers injury had listed it as an unfortunate accident. But the way Nicole threw the stick into the water let me know that the days events weighed heavily on her. We all grew up through different methods, at different rates, but never had one event accelerated the process as much as it did that day.

STOP. - DO NOT WRITE BEYOND THIS PAGE.

Score Point: 6

This well-developed and sophisticated response relates a tale of the narrator's observations the day Nicole finally recognizes the consequences of her destructive behavior, accepts responsibility for her actions, and resolves to change her ways. Explicit and vivid word choice [*blithe, traversed, impishness, transpired, accomplice, atrocity, accelerated*] and varied sentence structures work together to provide rich sensory images [*It was the kind of day where the air, light and crisp, stung your nostrils*] and dramatic pacing in the progression of ideas in the story [*To most, it seemed innocent enough, but having known her her entire life, I saw what was at work behind those glossy eyes*]. The writer's focus on Nicole's eyes and use of repetition [*I saw a light flicker on as she picked up a stick* (2nd paragraph); *the mischevious light that illuminated her eyes only a handful of hours before flickered out forever* (6th paragraph)] further illustrate the exceptional control in this narrative, which radiates a sense of completeness and superior command of written language.

APPENDIX D

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

TEST ADMINISTRATION MATERIALS
FOR WRITING A PERSUASIVE ESSAY

High School Proficiency Assessment



MARCH 3, 2005

STUDENT NAME _____

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2–PART 4

Regular Persuasive Writing Task Folder

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2 DIRECTIONS–PART 4

In this part of the test, you will complete a persuasive writing task. This task gives you an opportunity to demonstrate how well you can organize and express your ideas in written text. You have received a Writer's Checklist of important points to remember as you write. Educators who read your writing will consider these important points when they read and score your writing.

You will have 60 minutes to complete this writing task. Take a few minutes to think about the task and to plan what you want to say before you begin to write. You may use the prewriting/planning space on pages 3 and 4 in your Writing Task Folder to plan your text, but your prewriting will not be scored. Only your writing on pages 25–28 in your answer folder will be scored. Do your best to make your writing clear and well organized. Keep your audience and purpose in mind as you write and use your checklist.

You must use a No. 2 pencil. You may either print or write your final copy. You may not use a dictionary or any other reference materials during the test. However, you may use the Writer's Checklist. If you finish before the time is called, review what you have written using the Writer's Checklist to read critically and improve what you have written. Then, close your answer folder and wait quietly until you receive further instructions.

HSPA PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK FOLDER SECURITY STATEMENT

The HSPA Writing Task Folder and its contents are **secure materials**. Under no circumstances may any of the enclosed contents be copied, either manually or electronically. All Writing Task Folders **must** be returned to the district test coordinator.

FOR USE ON MARCH 3, 2005, ONLY

PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK

Writing Situation

The school board is thinking about instituting a new attendance policy. Beginning next fall, students who are absent more than ten days will not receive credit for the school year.

Your social studies teacher has asked you to write a letter to the school board expressing your views on this proposal.

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to the president of the school board either supporting or opposing the new attendance policy. Support your position with reasons, facts, examples, and other evidence. Convince the school board members to take your position seriously.

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PREWRITING/PLANNING

Directions

You will have 60 minutes to complete this writing task. Take a few minutes to think about the task and to plan what you want to say before you begin to write. You may use the prewriting/planning space on pages 3 and 4 in your Writing Task Folder to plan your text, but your prewriting will not be scored. Only your writing on pages 25–28 in your answer folder will be scored. Do your best to make your writing clear and well organized. Keep your audience and purpose in mind as you write and use your checklist.

PREWRITING/PLANNING SPACE

(More space on next page)

PREWRITING/PLANNING SPACE

**NEW JERSEY
HIGH SCHOOL
PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT**

Writer's Checklist

**Important Points to
Remember as You
Write and Critically Read
to Revise/Edit Your Writing**

CONTENT/ORGANIZATION

- _____ 1. Focus on your purpose for writing and your audience.
- _____ 2. Develop a clear topic or central idea.
- _____ 3. Support your ideas with details, explanations, and examples.
- _____ 4. Put your ideas in the order that best communicates what you are trying to say.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

- _____ 5. Use clear and varied sentences.

USAGE

- _____ 6. Use words correctly.
- _____ 7. Use varied and vivid vocabulary.

MECHANICS

- _____ 8. Capitalize, spell, and punctuate correctly.
- _____ 9. Write neatly.

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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APPENDIX E

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PERSUASIVE TASK
AND SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES

Description of Task

The responses selected to appear in this handbook were written by eleventh-grade students who took the persuasive writing section of the March 2005 High School Proficiency Assessment. The responses appear as the students wrote them; no corrections have been made other than the deletion of specific names of teachers, administrators, students, schools, and districts. A typed version of each response appears before the handwritten response.

Samples are included for each score point of the New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric (a 6-point scale). These sample responses, which are grouped by score point, represent the range of approaches that eleventh-grade students take with this writing task. Each score point is described in detail, and each response is annotated according to the score point criteria.

Students were given 60 minutes to construct a written response to the writing task provided. Prewriting/planning was encouraged, and space was provided for this endeavor. A Writer's Checklist of important ideas was also provided to encourage students to read, revise, and edit their written work. All students' writing was considered a **first draft** in this writing process since students were not permitted to confer with others nor to refer to outside resources (dictionary or thesaurus) and therefore were unable to rely on the feedback and constructive suggestions that result from strategies appropriate for classroom instruction. In this way, the test obtains a sample of each student's **baseline** writing ability within the context of consistent standards that ensure fairness to all who participate.

Score Scale Point 1

The response indicates an **INADEQUATE COMMAND** of written language. The writing samples in this category:

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION

- may not have an opening and/or closing. These papers are on topic and demonstrate at least a minimal attempt to respond to the topic by stating a subject or giving a list of subjects. Some of the lengthier papers are disorganized, making them consistently difficult to follow. In these papers the reader has to infer what the focus is. The overriding characteristic of many of these papers is a lack of control with no sense of planning. Details may be random, inappropriate, or barely apparent.

USAGE

- may display severe/numerous errors in usage. This includes problems in tense formation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun usage and agreement, word choice, and use of proper modifiers.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

- may demonstrate an assortment of grammatically incorrect/incomplete sentences and/or incorrect rhetorical modes. Statements may be either incoherent or unintelligible.

MECHANICS

- may display errors in mechanics so severe as to detract from the meaning of the response.

WE SHOULD NOT ALLOW THEM TO DO THIS. ITS JUST LIKE SAYING IF THEY MISS 10 DAYS THEY DON'T GET PAID FOL THE YEAR. AND I DON'T THINK THEY'II LIKE THAT TO MUCH. JUST LEAVE THINGS THE WAY THEY ALE FOL NOW.

YOUR FRIEND AND EMENY,

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

WE SHOULD NOT ALLOW THEM TO
DO THIS. ITS JUST LIKE SAYING
IF THEY MISS 10 DAYS THEY DON'T
GET PAID FOR THE YEAR. AND
I DON'T THINK THEY'LL LIKE THAT
TO MUCH. JUST LEAVE THINGS THE WAY THEY
ARE FOR NOW.

YOUR FRIEND AND ENEMY

Score Point: 1

This response represents a minimal attempt to respond to the topic. The writer takes a clear but generic position against the policy [*We should not allow them to do this*] and attempts an analogy [*Its just like saying if they miss 10 days they don't get paid fol the year*] comparing school to a job. The analogy serves as evidence that the student is attempting to focus, but the response is brief and vague, indicating an inadequate command of written language.

Dear _____.

I am approving of this situation.

If one student absent ten days, it's absent about two and half days of each term, it's a lot.

Every year we have a lot of a legal holiday, vacation and some other day off. Like this situation, if add more recreation of each class or school, I think we are playing a whole year.

Of course, any students have a claim of any free action. But first important thing for student, it's a study. Just in my opinion. and certainly other people's minds are same-thing with me.

I have a some reasons of why am I saying these.

The first. the surrounding of study is very important. It is a each school amount to fifty percent for each student's grade. and I am also. So if some day many students absent each class, then teachers are can not take next chapter. and probably they are playing the class.

The next. I think study is habit.

Study have to continue to continue. but if we can absent to much, we can not continue study, so that is have to control in the school.

I wish, school have to punishment student.

Thank you for read my letter.

from.

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

●●●●

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear,

I am approving of this situation.

If one student absent ten days, it's absent about two and half days of each term, it's a lot.

Every year we have a lot of a legal holiday, vacation and some other day off. Like this situation, if add more recreation of each class or school, I think we are playing a whole year.

Of course, any students have a claim of any free action. But first important thing for student, it's a study. Just in my opinion, and certainly other people's minds are same-thing with me.

I have a some reasons of why am I saying these.

The first, the surrounding of study is very important. It is a each school amount to fifty percent for each student's grade, and I am also. So if some day many students absent each class, then teachers are can not take next chapter. and probably they are playing the class.

The next, I think study is habit. Study have to continue to continue. but if we can absent to much, we can not continue study, so that is have to control in the school.

I wish, school have to punishment student.

Thank you for read my letter.

From.

Score Point: 1

This writer attempts to provide organizational structure to this longer response by using transitions [*the first, the next*] to list reasons supporting the policy. However, errors in sentence construction, usage, and mechanics [*Of course, any students have a claim of any free action; It is a each school amount to fifty persent for each studen's grade. and I am also*] are so numerous and severe as to detract from meaning, rendering this essay insufficient for a higher score.

To howm it may conserin,

I am a student at _____ senior High. I think it is wrong to tell students. You can not be out of school for over ten day. For meany reasons like corret, a dead family member and sikes.

I think you have reasons to. But are thay good reasons? Would do that to your own kids if you had kids? If you did that you would lose alot of students. Good and bad students. If you said to me will there are alot of students skiping school. I would say that is why we have summer school.

So now that you have heared what I had to say I think your going to think it over becuae of all the students your will lose I really think you will think it over.

cunserally

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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senior High. I think it is wrong to tell
students, You can not be out of school for over
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a dead family ^{member} and sikes,

I think you have reasons to.
But are thay good reasons? Would do
that to your own kids if you have kids?
If ^{you} did that you would lose alot of students,
Good and bad students. If you said to
me will there ^{are} alot of students skipping
school. I would say that is why we
have summer school.

So now that you have heard
what I had to say I think your
going to think it over becuase of
all the students your will lose I
really think you will think it over.

conserdly

Score Point: 1

In this letter, the student takes a position against the attendance policy and lists three unelaborated reasons [corret, a dead family member and sikes] for opposing it. The writer then follows this opening with some random questions and a repetitive and ambiguous conclusion that asks the recipient “to think it over.” The numerous and severe errors in sentence construction (e.g., fragments and run-on sentences) and lack of development of the ideas indicate an inadequate command of written language.

Score Scale Point 2

The response indicates a **LIMITED COMMAND** of written language. The writing samples in this category:

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION

- may not have an opening and/or a closing. These responses will exhibit an attempt at organization. In other words, there will be some evidence the writer attempted to control the details. The responses relate to the topic, but in some papers, the writer drifts away from the primary focus or abruptly shifts focus. In other papers, there is a single focus, but there are few, if any, transitions, making it difficult to move from idea to idea. Details are presented with little, if any, elaboration—highlight papers.

USAGE

- may have numerous problems with usage, but they are not totally out of control.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

- may demonstrate excessive monotony in syntax and/or rhetorical modes. There may be numerous errors in sentence construction.

MECHANICS

- may display numerous severe errors in mechanics.

Dear School Board,

I feel that this plan you want to institute will not and would not be good. A lot of kids would be not getting credit for school. In this school I know a lot of children who have an attendance problem. Also on the other hand it might be good because then kids would have something to motivate them to not be absent. You would have to make it clear that the rules would be only effective to certain circumstances. Even if you tried to tell me every thing good about this I wouldn't still go for this plan.

Sincerely,

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2

PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear School Board,

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Sincerley,

Score Point: 2

In this brief response, the writer takes a position against the policy and explains why [*In this school I know a lot of children who have an attendance problem*]. The writer then acknowledges a potential benefit [*...it might be good because then kids would have something to motivate them to not be absent*] and suggests the need for a compromise [*...the rules would be only affective to certain circumstances*]. Although limited in development, the attempt to focus and organize the details is sufficient for the response to achieve a score point of 2.

Dear president,

It has come to my attention that the school board is thinking about instituting a new attendance policy, which means that students who are absent more than ten days will not receive credit for the school year.

I support the new attendance policy because it is really going to help the students that don't come to school just because! This new attendance policy is going to change the attitude of all these students, and make them think about school. For example, they will know that if having ten absences they won't get credit for the school year is a big risk. One of the biggest reasons not graduated, second not go to college. Third reason time wasted.

How can I support this three reasons? It is like this. First the worst thinking of not graduated is frustrated, imagining that just for the simple reason of not going to school without thinking it could cause this big disadvantage.

Second all students have a dream of going to college or being someone in life, but it would be impossible if you are not measuring the risk and only the absences are doing the job of not letting you realize your dreams. And finally a heavy one "The time you waste." is only one, is only the time we had the opportunity to have a good time for the rest of your life.

So here are some really good reasons to not just think about it, do it. Because with the new policy students will take it seriously.

Concluding with all my reasons and examples I hope you get my point and agree with my opinion.

Sincerely

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

●●●●

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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●●●● PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued) ●●●●

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So here is a really good reasons to not just think about, do it because with the New policy students will take it seriously.

Concluding with all my reasons and examples I hope you get my point and agree with oppinion.

Sincerely

Score Point: 2

This writer takes a stance in support of the policy and attempts to organize ideas with use of an introduction, transitions [*For example, First, Second, Finaly*], and a conclusion. However, the ideas presented are general and have limited support [*...all students have a drime of going to collage or be someone in Life, but it would be imposible if you are not measuring the risk and only the absens are doing the job of not leting you realice does drimes*], which along with the numerous errors in sentence construction, usage, and mechanics indicate a limited command of written language.

Dear School board President,

These days kids try to get out of school as much as they can. The kids even take passes from the attendance office and make their own pass to get out of class. I think it is a great idea that if you are absent more than 10 times then you will not get credit for the school year. There really is no need for 10 absent's. Some reasons why there is no need for the amount of absents is because, if you have a doctors appointment you get a doctors note. If you go on a family vacation or trip, visit colleges or have a religous event they all are excused absents. If you are absent 10 times with no note their is a problem. It's not fair to the other students who come to school everyday and then again kids who miss at least 10 days without a note and everyone gets the same amount of credit. That is why I think it is such a great idea. Thank You

Sincerley,

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

●●●●

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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Sincerley,

Score Point: 2

In this response, the writer introduces the argument with a statement of current practice to support the need for the proposed policy [*The kids even take passes from the attendance office and make their own pass to get out of class*]. The writer then gives an unelaborated list of excused absences (doctor's appointments, family vacations, college visits, religious events) to demonstrate why ten unexcused absences are unnecessary and why it is unfair to award the same credit to everyone. Without further explanation or detail, these ideas remain highlights, indicating a limited command of written language.

Score Scale Point 3

The response indicates a **PARTIAL COMMAND** of written language. The writing samples in this category:

**CONTENT/
ORGANIZATION**

- may not have an opening and/or closing. These responses relate to the topic and usually have a single focus. Some of these papers may drift from the focus or abruptly shift focus; however, in these papers, at least one of the subjects focused on clearly meets the criteria for a “3.” For example, some “3” papers are sparse—they have several details with a little elaboration, but they are organized and controlled; some “3” papers will ramble somewhat, repeating ideas resulting in a lengthy response that would otherwise be sparse; and other “3” papers have elaborated ideas and details, but the writing sample is interrupted by organizational flaws/lapses or by a lack of transition between ideas or between clusters of ideas.

USAGE

- may display (a) pattern(s) of errors in usage.

**SENTENCE
CONSTRUCTION**

- may demonstrate little variety in syntax structure and/or rhetorical modes. There may be errors in sentence construction.

MECHANICS

- may display (a) pattern(s) of errors in mechanics.

Dear President of the School Board,

I have recently heard that the school board is thinking about instituting a new attendance policy. Beginning next fall, students who are absent more than ten days will not receive credit for the school year. I am against this proposal. Mainly, because some people cannot be here for personal reasons.

One reason students might not get to school is because they missed the bus. Some bus drivers are unpredictable, and they could get there early. I know I have missed the bus a lot, and without the bus I have no way to get to school. That is one reason students might not get to school.

The second reason students cannot get to school is because they are sick. A lot of times you're fine one night and you have the flu or a cold in the morning. No one wants to come to school when they are sick because you're miserable and you won't be able to concentrate on your school work. That is the second reason why students cannot get to school.

The final reason students cannot go to school is if there is a death in the family. If someone close to you dies you do not want to come to school. If you came then you would be miserable and have trouble concentrating. That is the final reason I can think of not being able to get to school.

I am against their new attendance policy. My first reason was missing the bus. My second reason was being sick. And my final reason was a death in the family. They are my reasons why I am against the school board's new attendance policy.

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2 PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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The final reason students cannot go to school is because there is a death in the family. If someone close to you dies you do not want to come to school. If you came then you would be miserable and have trouble concentrating. That is the final reason I can think of not being able to get to school.

I am against their new attendance policy. My first reason was missing the bus. My second reason was being sick. And my final reason was a death in the family. They are my reasons why I am against the school board's new attendance policy.

Score Point: 3

This response is organized with the traditional five-paragraph structure outlining reasons for opposing a new attendance policy. Although the argument is weakened by somewhat repetitive details (not being able to concentrate), the writer's use of transitions [*One reason, The second reason, The final reason*] and brief elaboration of each key point (e.g., missing the bus because bus drivers are unpredictable, coming down with the flu and not feeling well enough to concentrate, feeling miserable and not able to concentrate following a death in the family) demonstrate sufficient development and control of ideas for this writing to achieve a score point of 3.

Dear President of the School Board,

I have heard about your proposed attendance policy & I think that it would be a great thing to start. Although I know that some people will try to argue against it, but this policy is not being implemented to be a punishment, but rather to help students get ready for the values of the outside work force.

When you stop & think about it, how many jobs have you ever heard of that you can just call out of more than 10 times in a year. I for one can't think of a single one. You go to school for approximately thirteen years, what school does for you is educates you with the knowledge that will hopefully some day get you a job. In that respect by enforcing this code of action will benefit students in the long run.

The new policy states that you can not have more than ten absences, this will not include absences that are excused. This will make for a greater demand that students will start having excuse notes. In reality terms we all get ill once in a while, nobody is perfect. Some thing as simple as a note from a doctor can be easily obtained so that when something does happen with someone's health it would be a valid, written, excuse that would not count against the ten day policy.

With our school we also have as you, very well know, what is referred to as grieving time. This is time that someone might take to go to a funeral for a family member, friend & so on. The policy states as long as you have some proof, such as a mass card or funeral card or something like that, this will also count under the excused category & would not effect the ten day policy.

When you miss ten days of school, your missing valuable bits of classroom information that you do in fact have to make up & catch up. A lot of the times if you miss more than 10 days your losing out on a lot of valuable information. For the most part, by that tenth day your better off retaking the year over any ways. Information while it can be found in books is dispensed in class rooms for a reason. This is why we have school. By missing days your losing valuable information that you need to succeed. Because when your absent, school doesn't stop for you. you need to keep up with the school.

When you put it into prospective 10 days is a lot of days. There is about 180 days in school. In mathematical terms that looks like this $10/180$. This reduces to $1/18$ or 1 in 18. What this means you have to miss no more than 1 day out of every 18. That is not so hard to do.

I am writing you this letter as an 11th grader. For me to have gotten here would have already taken me about 11 years, and this goes for all of us as well. When you get into your last year, half of year of school you tend to slack off a bit. I say this not only about myself, but about just about every student nation wide. You have come this far, why quit now? I think it would be a crying shame for a person to not be able to graduate with the people they have went to school with for their last few years. By instituting this policy, not only will kids be more inclined to go to school, but this way when they do finish, they will have a better respect for the business world. The truth about this is, that no company wants a slacker. I do believe that if you were to call out even less than ten times in a year, you might want to consider a new job.

The school bards job is not to make the students lives miserable, but to help them sucede. I know that some students will have a probem with the new policy, but when it comes down to it, if they want an extra year of school miss as many days as you want. If you realy want to sucede then take advanage of school now. It is the only thing that to kids is truely free, & will realy pay in the long run.

I hope this letter helped persuaide you to keep with the origional plan & have it implemented next year. Thankyou and have a great day.

Sincerely

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2

PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear President of the School Board,

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When you stop & think about it, how many jobs have you ever heard of that you can just call out of more than 10 times in a year. I for one can't think of a single one. You go to school for approximately thirteen years, what school does for you is educates you with the knowledge that will hopefully some day get you a job. In that respect by enforcing this code of action will benefit students in the long run.

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With our school we also have as you, very well know, what is refered to as greaving time. This is time that someone might take to goto a funeral for a family

PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)

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●●●● PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued) ●●●●

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The school boards job is not to make the students lives miserable, but to help them succeed. I know that some students will have a problem with the new policy, but when it comes down to it, if they want an extra year of school miss as many days as you want. If you really want to succeed then take advantage of school now. It is the only thing that to kids is truly free, + will really pay in the long run.

I hope this letter helped persuade you to keep with the original plan + have it implemented next year. Thankyou and have a great day.

Sincerely

Score Point: 3

This writer argues in support of the proposed attendance policy “to help students get ready for the values of the outside work force.” Key ideas are elaborated, some specifically (e.g., the mathematical perspective) and others a bit more generally (an excused absence for illness). Although this lengthy response is organized overall, the writing is at times wordy and seems to ramble a bit [*For me to have gotten here would have already taken me about 11 years, and this goes for all of us as well*], detracting from the progression of ideas. Errors in sentence construction, usage, and mechanics, while not impeding meaning, do constitute a pattern and are further indication that this writing demonstrates a partial command of written language.

Dear President of the School Board,

The School board has been instituting a new policy. Beginning next fall, students who are absent more than 10 days will not receive credit for the school year. This new policy will bring nothing but disaster to the students & their families.

The policy of losing credit for a whole year of school due to 10 days absent is absurd. Many families take vacations during the school year and miss a whole week of school! However this is the only time their family has the opportunity to go away and be together. Everyone deserves a break and to enjoy quality time with their families. Does this policy have any exceptions to that? It doesn't look that way. If a student goes away on a vacation and misses 7 days the student only has 3 more days left! What about if this student becomes ill?

Illness is also a big issue relating to this proposal. If a student becomes sick and he or she is recommended by a doctor to stay home until the illness passes who knows how long that could be because our bodies all cope and recover from illness in different ways and at separate paces. If the student has to be out longer than 10 days however is a straight A/well rounded student are they going to lose credit for that year because of something they had absolutely no control over?! It is not the student's fault they became ill. By taking away all their credits, and failing them for a year of school you are not only taking away that year from them. You are taking away all the hard work they have put forth since first grade! If that ill student has been a hardworking good student for all their life how unfair would it be to hold them back a whole year? Even worse, it is for a sickness they have absolutely no control over. Now you have students who are going to come to school no matter how sick they are. Just so they do not have to repeat a year. Spreading germs and bacteria all around for everyone to catch. Other students will become ill now, and they too will be in danger of losing credits and will still attend. This is the ongoing vicious cycle that will occur if the 10 day absence policy becomes effective.

What about the faculty? Can the teachers be absent as much as they want but the students are only allowed ten days? Teachers being absent is more crucial to the students. When the students have a substitute they mostly do busy work and learn nothing for that day. It is probably better that the student stayed home that day if the teacher is not there. Will there be a special exception for the faculty even though the students will suffer?

There should be a policy more fair to both students and faculty. Maybe take into consideration excused absences. If the students had 10 excused absences each semester and after that only a limited amount of unexcused. Then begin some kind of taking credit action. A fairer policy will result in a more positive school atmosphere, better attitudes of students & faculty and a more educational learning environment. Who doesn't want that?

I strongly suggest that my position is taken seriously. I firmly believe in the points stated, and believe only negative, and havoc can come out of the new attendance policy. We want our community to be well educated and successful. We do not want half of our school's students sitting at home for a year because they contracted a uncontrollable illness, or spent quality time with their family on vacation. As stated before, you are not only taking away one year you are taking away the hard work and determination of many previous years.

Sincerely,

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2

PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

●●●●

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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●●●● PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued) ●●●●

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PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)



The teachers be absent as much as they want but the students are only allowed ten days? Teachers being absent is more crucial to the students. When the students have a substitute they mostly do busy work and learn nothing for that day. It is probably better that the student stayed home that day if the teacher is not there. Will there be special exception for the faculty even though the students will suffer?

There should be a policy more fair to both students and faculty, maybe take into consideration excused absences. If the students had 10 excused absences each semester and after that only a limited amount of unexcused. Then begin some kind of taking credit action. A fairer policy will result in a more positive school atmosphere, better attitudes of students + faculty and a more educational learning environment. Who doesn't want that?

I strongly suggest that my position is taken seriously. I firmly believe in the points stated, and believe only positive and honor can come out of the new attendance policy.



PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)



WE WANT OUR COMMUNITY TO BE WELL EDUCATED AND SUCCESSFUL. WE DO NOT WANT HALF OF OUR SCHOOLS STUDENTS SITTING AT HOME FOR A YEAR BECAUSE THEY CONTRACTED A UNCONTROLLABLE ILLNESS, OR SPENT QUALITY TIME WITH THEIR FAMILY ON VACATION. AS STATED BEFORE, YOU ARE NOT ONLY TAKING AWAY ONE YEAR YOU ARE TAKING AWAY THE HARD WORK AND DETERMINATION OF MANY PREVIOUS YEARS.

Sincerely

Score Point: 3

In this lengthier response, the writer opposes the new attendance policy and presents two primary reasons to justify absences (family vacations and illness) during the school year. Although the development of the second reason relies on repetitive details [*they have absolutely no control over; hard-working student; taking away all their credits; taking away that year from them*], the writer does extend the discussion with details about teacher absence and then proposes a compromise policy regarding excused absences that would be “more fare to both students and faculty.” Awkward phrasing, errors in sentence construction, and the use of repeating and often general ideas results in a rambling response that displays a partial rather than an adequate command of written language.

STOP. – DO NOT WRITE BEYOND THIS PAGE.

Score Scale Point 4

The response indicates an **ADEQUATE COMMAND** of written language. The writing samples in this category:

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION

- generally will have an opening and a closing. The responses relate to the topic. They have a single focus and are organized. There is little, if any, difficulty moving from idea to idea. Ideas may ramble somewhat, and clusters of ideas may be loosely connected; however, an overall progression is apparent. In some papers, development is uneven, consisting of elaborated ideas interspersed with bare, unelaborated details.

USAGE

- may display some errors in usage, but no consistent pattern is apparent.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

- may demonstrate a generally correct use of syntax. They avoid excessive monotony in syntax and/or rhetorical modes. There may be a few errors in sentence construction.

MECHANICS

- may display some errors in mechanics, but these errors will not constitute a consistent pattern, nor do they interfere with the meaning of the response.

Dear President of the school board

I am a current student at _____ and I've just received word on the new attendance policy. I have to say that I'm in total opposition of the policy. Its unfair and it doesnt allow for sicknesses and deaths that come with the passing of time. Also I don't think that 10 days can come close in comparison with the rest of the school year, so it doesn't seem right to disregard a whole school year for 10 absences.

I think the policy is unfair because teachers and faculty are given a set number of days that they can have in case of sickness or family emergency, students aren't. If this was to pass, would that number of days for teachers and faculty be decreased? And if teacher's and faculty went over their set amount of days, would they be fired? Probably not, further proving that if it stands for the students it should stand for the teachers and faculty and that's not so, thus making it unfair.

Second, with passing of time and diseases and things more prevalent in society, more and more people are getting sick and even more are dying. Studies show that one in every four school students will take ill during the course of a school year. That is a very high percentage of kids and if its one of those serious sicknesses (God forbid) a student will need time to let his/her body heal. For example, a person with the flu isn't going to recover over night. And neither is a person who has lost a mother or father, or some other love one. In this day and age, one can't plan for the best because so many times it is not so. Limiting days could mean limiting healing time. Limiting healing time could mean shortening somebody's life. You wouldn't want to have that lying on your conscious now would you?

Last, but certainly not least I just don't think that you can throw away someones entire school year for ten days. Thats not even a fraction of the school year. I understand that you're trying to encourage kids to attend school but how would you feel if your boss told you that because you had off ten days out of the year, you cant get a raise? That means, all of your hard work and effort you put forth all year long is going without recognition. The same goes with school. I would feel some type of way if I went to school the whole year, but because I missed 10 days was retained. It would change my whole outlook on school and seem like a waist of time. I'm sure I'm not the only one who thinks it either. Try and see the broader aspect of the picture. Ten days just doesn't compare to the rest of the school year.

So you see if you were to pass this rule a lot of people would be effected. But that doesn't necessarily mean that the idea should be thrown out the window. Maybe we could use the idea of if you miss ten days or more you have to make them up in the summer or come in on weekends and then if they don't come, they don't receive credit for the school year. Let's try to reason so that we can be sure, the school is a comfortable yet reasonable place to learn. Thank you for your time.

Yours Truly,
Concerned Student

●●●●

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2 PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear President of the School board

I am a current student at _____ and I've just received word on the new attendance policy. I have to say that I'm in total opposition of the policy. It's unfair and it doesn't allow for sicknesses and deaths that come with the passing of time. Also I don't think that 10 days can come close in comparison with the rest of the school year, so it doesn't seem right to disregard a whole school year for 10 absences.

I think the policy is unfair because teachers and faculty are given a set number of days that they can have in case of sickness or family emergency, students aren't. If this was to pass, would that number of days for teachers and faculty be decreased? And if teacher's and faculty went over their set amount of days, would they be fired? Probably not, further proving that if it stands for the students it should stand for the teachers and faculty and that's not so, thus making it unfair.

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PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)



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Last, but certainly not least I just don't think that you can throw away someones entire school year for ten days. That's not even a fraction of the school year. I understand that you're trying to encourage kids to attend school but how would you feel if your boss told you that because you had off ten days out of the year, you can't get a raise? That means all of your hard work and effort you put forth all year long is going without recognition. The same goes with school. I would feel some type of way if I went to school the whole year, but because I missed 10 days was retained. It would change my whole outlook on school and seem like a waist of time. I'm sure I'm not the only one who thinks it either. Try and see the broader aspect of the picture. Ten days just doesn't compare to the rest of the school year.

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Yours Truly,

Concerned Student

Score Point: 4

Adhering to a traditional five-paragraph structure, this response, which is an argument against the new attendance policy, raises three concerns: 1) the lack of a consistent policy for addressing faculty and student absences; 2) the unpredictability of events such as illness or death that result in absence; and 3) the excessive consequence of lost credit for missing such a small fraction of the school year. These key ideas are elaborated with a mix of both general and specific information although the first body paragraph concerning the consequences for teacher absences is not as fully developed as the other two body paragraphs. The response displays, however, sufficient development, syntactic variety, and an overall progression of ideas to indicate an adequate command of written language.

Dear school board president,

I recently heard about the new attendance policy that students with more than ten absents will not receive credit. This policy must of been added because of the bad attendance last year by many students. I realize that there are substantial evidence in the decision you want to make. I also see the substantial evidence in the decision of the new attendance policy. So, I support your decision and I hope it becomes a new policy for the upcoming school year. I support the new attendance policy because grades will improve, students will not be able to take unnecessary days off from school, and with higher attendance could mean a few extra vacation days throughout the school year.

The first reason I support the new attendance policy is because grades will improve. Grades will improve because students will be spending more time in school. By students spending more time in school they will know what is going on in each class. It is always harder to learn a lesson a day or two after the teacher already taught it to the entire class. As a high school student I know it is much harder learning a lesson a couple of days later. It is much easier learning it in the classroom with the rest of classmates. Another reason grades will improve is that teachers will spend less time backtracking. Since students will not be out that much teachers will not have to stop a lesson and go over something with a student who was out the previous day. The teacher will be able to go forward with the lessons and could probably teach the students more than he/she could teach them before. These are the major reasons on how grades will improve if the new attendance policy is decided.

As you can see the grades will improve and so will the attitude of students. With our school's old policy we were allowed to have twenty absences. I know for a fact that many students would not come to school because they did not feel like going. If the students are only allowed to be absent ten times then their attitude will change. Students will not be taking unnecessary absences because they will need the ten absences if they become very sick. The students will not even think about going over ten absences if they know that they will not receive credit if they do go over. The policy will wake them up from their laziness and focus on their grades. The policy will only allow students to be absent if they are sick. There will be no room for unnecessary absences. These are the major reasons on how the new policy will stop students from taking unnecessary absences.

Students attendance improving could help increase a few extra vacation days throughout the school year. Since students will be in school more and everyone is learning more there should be a few extra vacation days. It could be an incentive for students because of the ten absences policy. Since students will be in school more a few extra days of vacation will help. Every so often students and faculty need that extra day off and that would be more vacation days. The vacation days will not interfere with learning and could even have more students supporting this policy. The extra vacation days will help everyone relieve their brain and then fill it back up. I think the few extra vacation days and the new attendance policy will really benefit this school.

In conclusion, the new school policy will benefit the students because grades will improve, students will not be taking unnecessary absences, and there could be a few extra vacation days throughout the school year. Students will be more likely to come to school in a positive spirit and will benefit from it. I bet students and teachers will both realize the dramatic difference in the grades and spirit of students. This new attendance policy can only help us and will prove to do so. I hope the new policy will be added next year and you will see great results from it!

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear school board president,

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●●●● PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued) ●●●●

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In conclusion, the new school policy will benefit the students because grades will improve, students will not be taking unnecessary absences, and there could be a few extra vacation days throughout the school year.

PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)

Students will be more likely to come to school in a positive spirit and will benefit from it. I bet students and teachers will both realize the dramatic difference in the grades and spirit of students. This new attendance policy can only help us and will prove to do so. I hope the new policy will be added next year and you will see great results from it!

Score Point: 4

In this lengthier response, the writer, who argues in favor of the new attendance policy, develops an overall progression of ideas by including elaborating details that provide a mix of general and specific information. Although the essay is organized with a single focus, an opening and closing, and transitions, the writing displays an assortment of errors (in sentence construction and usage) and heavy reliance on repetitive phrases [*grades will improve; spending more time in school; unnecessary absences; extra vacation days*], indicating an adequate rather than a strong command of written language. Greater variety in the development of key ideas, along with greater syntactic variety, sophistication, and control, would improve the fluency of the writing which demonstrates an adequate command of written language.

Dear members of the school board,

News has reached us, the students, that you plan to put a new attendance policy into place in which students who are absent more than ten days will not receive credit for that school year. We honor your decision, and we understand the logic of wanting to discourage the cutting of classes and school by instituting this policy. We, however, would like to present some suggestions as to why this policy may not be the best for the students, especially those who are loathe to miss even one class.

First, there is the issue of sickness. Many times in the transition from fall to winter, flu strikes the school and a large percent of the students are out sick. The flu often takes a school week or more to recover from and students, who have little or no control over their illness, are already halfway towards receiving no credit that year. Although five days only constitutes half of the required days, flu or just the common cold can attack many more times throughout the school year. This quickly sends students—who should not be in school for the health of others—back a grade.

secondly, there is also the issue of long term sickness, like mononucleosis. In my grade alone, I know of two students who suffer from mono. one misses several weeks of school because of the illnesses, and the other is, oftentimes, absent for months on end because of chronic fatigue.

These students, who work hard and are very intelligent are thus punished and forced to further suffer because of school policy and their own immune systems. Perhaps, if anything, an exception could be made for them.

Thirdly, there is the issue of missing school for essential meetings with dentists, doctors and trips to the DMV to get driver's licenses. Oftentimes, students cannot foresee these trips that are sometimes essential to their health and well-being. If a student learns he has a hearing disability or a tooth growing in crookedly that needs to be pulled or even something as mundane as a check-up, the appointment cannot always be postponed until after-school hours. For example, my orthodontist is so selective in her hours that she only comes in on Tuesdays. This means her day is often heavily booked and it is a rare occasion when we can choose a date that fits our convenience. Also, the DMV has select hours and recently, many students have been absent so they can go and get their license. These dates, although few, can add up and in addition to sickness, they can constitute 10 days absent.

Lastly, there is the issue of students and how we feel about missing school. We know that even one day absent means we have tests to make up, notes to copy and extra homework to do so we can catch up. We hate this and many of us hate to miss days unless we absolutely need to. Oftentimes, after such appointments listed above, we return to school, even if with a toothache or a throbbing arm from a tetanus shot. Oftentimes, even if we are sick, even if we have a throaty cough, or a fever, we drag ourselves to school. Yes, it isn't fun, yes, we're in pain and we can't concentrate, but we try. Even without this policy in place, we make ourselves go to school.

We understand the thought behind this policy, we understand its aim, what it hopes to accomplish, but it will only end up punishing those who try their hardest. We can't control when we get sick, why we get sick or even how often we get sick. And so we, the students, ask that you rethink this policy. For us.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, it means very much to us.

Sincerely,

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2 PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

●●●●

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear members of the school board,
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secondly, there is also the issue of long term sickness, like mononucleosis. In my grade alone, I know of two students (A) - one misses several weeks of school because of the illnesses, and the other is, oftentimes, absent for months on end because of chronic fatigue. (A) who suffer from mono.

These students, who work hard and are very intelligent are thus punished and forced to further suffer because of school policy and their own

PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)

immune systems. Perhaps, if anything, an exception could be made for them.

Thirdly, there is the issue of missing school for essential meetings with dentists, doctors and trips to the DMV to get driver's licenses. Oftentimes, students cannot foresee these trips that are sometimes essential to their health and well-being.

If a student learns he has a hearing disability or a tooth growing in crookedly that needs to be pulled or even something as mundane as a check-up, the appointment cannot always be postponed until after-school hours.

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Oftentimes, after such appointments listed above, we return to school, even if with a toothache or a throbbing arm from a tetanus shot. Oftentimes, even if we are sick, even if we have a throaty cough, or a fever, we drag ourselves to school. Yes, it isn't fun, yes, we're in pain and we can't concentrate, but we try. EVEN without this policy in place, we make ourselves go to school.

We understand the thought behind this policy, we understand its aim, what it hopes to accomplish, but it

●●●● PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued) ●●●●

will only end up punishing those who try their hardest. We can't control when we get sick, why we get ^{sick} or even how often we get sick. And so we, the students, ask that you rethink this policy. For us.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, it means very much to us.
Sincerely,

Score Point: 4

In opposition to the proposed attendance policy, this relatively fluent and controlled response provides a single focus, an opening and closing, and four fairly elaborated ideas with clear transitions [*First; Second; Thirdly; Lastly*]. Specific details [*even if with a toothache or a throbbing arm from a tetanus shot*] and personal examples [*my orthodontist is so selective in her hours that she only comes in on Tuesdays*] contribute to the development of the ideas and add to the syntactic variety of the response even though the discussions of the flu outbreaks and long-term sickness are somewhat thin. In spite of this uneven development, word choice is effective [*loathe; chronic fatigue; throaty cough; mundane*], and an overall progression of ideas is apparent, indicating an adequate command of written language.

Score Scale Point 5

The response indicates a **STRONG COMMAND** of written language. The writing samples in this category:

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION

- have an opening and a closing. The responses relate to the topic and have a single focus. They are organized and progress logically from beginning to end. The key ideas are developed with appropriate and varied details. Clusters of ideas are strongly connected. Some writers take compositional risks and are, for the most part, successful. Although these papers are flawed, they have a sense of completeness and unity.

USAGE

- have few errors in usage.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

- demonstrate syntactic and verbal sophistication through an effective variety of sentences and/or rhetorical modes. There are few, if any, errors in sentence construction.

MECHANICS

- have few errors in mechanics.

Dear President,

It has recently come to my attention that the school board has proposed a new attendance policy. Under this policy, students who miss more than ten days of school will receive no credit for the school year. I would like to share with you my views on this proposal.

I do not agree with this proposed change in attendance policies. This policy was, I'm sure, designed with the interests of the students in mind; the fear of having to repeat a grade will prevent kids from "playing hooky." However, not all the kids who miss school are just skipping. Illness is a major factor in school absences. The flu, strep throat, and other viruses make it difficult to "survive" a seven-hour school day complete with physical education class, let alone completing homework for the next day. Mono alone has been known to keep students home for anywhere from one week to a month. Is it fair to punish kids who are unfortunate enough to get sick so that kids who have no interest in learning will be too afraid to skip school?

Another negative aspect of this proposal is that educational opportunities can cause a student to miss school. The National Youth Leadership Convention, for example, invites hardworking students to visit Washington, D.C., for a week-long conference on politics. The school board should encourage students to take advantage of hands-on educational opportunities such as this, but the new attendance policy would do the opposite.

Finally, the new attendance policy suggested by this proposal lacks numerical justification. A student who misses ten schooldays has been present during more than ninety-four percent of the school year. According to the school grading system, ninety-four percent is equal to a solid "A" or a 4.0 Grade Point Average. It seems almost hypocritical, when viewed in that perspective, that the same percentage that "exceeds expectations" in grading will earn a student no credit for the year because of the attendance policy.

In short, illness, hand-on educational opportunities, and a lack of numerical justification are major negative aspects of this proposal and should be heavily weighed before a decision is reached. Thank you for your time and your consideration. I hope these views help you in your decision regarding this proposal.

Sincerely,

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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In short, illness, hands-on educational opportunities, and a lack of numerical justification are major negative aspects of this proposal and should be heavily weighed before a decision is reached. Thank you for your time and your



PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)



consideration. I hope these views help you in your decision regarding this proposal.

Sincerely,

Score Point: 5

This concise response demonstrates a tightly controlled and logical progression of ideas in opposition to the proposed attendance policy. Key ideas are developed with specific elaboration and examples [*The National Youth Leadership Convention; A student who misses ten school days has been present during more than ninety-four percent of the school year*], precise word choice [*viruses make it difficult to “survive” a seven-hour school day complete with physical education class*] and varied and sophisticated syntax [*It seems almost hypocritical, when viewed in that perspective, that the same percentage that “exceeds expectations” in grading will earn a student no credit for the year because of the attendance policy*]. All these elements combine to produce a fluent, cohesive response that demonstrates a strong command of written language.

Since formal secondary education has existed, school boards have taken it upon themselves to dictate what acceptable standards are. Up until this point the school board has set forth rules and policies that are just and acceptable. However, the school boards new attendance policy is overly-strict and unnecessary for the functioning of the school. This policy will create more new problems than solve old ones and should therefore be rejected by the board. The idea of losing an entire years worth of credits from being absent for more than ten days is ludicrous. The school board should reject the new attendance proposal due to the possibility of significantly lowered graduation rates, students' personal agendas outside of school, and student initiative in making-up school work.

With this new attendance policy, many students will exceed the limit of ten days of absence. Just because the limit is lowered does not mean the students will have any less reasons for their absences. The new policy will cause a large percentage of the student population to lose a full years amount of credit for only being absent for an eighteenth of the school year. This loss of credit will result in students being required to stay back, decreasing graduation rates in the school. If students do not stay back, but enroll in summer programs to regain their credits, the school's faculty will seem incompetent. Summer programs will also cause a need for a larger budget to fund—money that could be spent on much better things for the school, like new equipment, books, and other material. All these negatives can be avoided if the school board will just rethink this new attendance policy.

When writing up the new attendance policy, the board did not consider the fact that all people, including students, have lives outside of work and school. Many personal crisis come up out of the blue, demanding time away from school. In some cases, ten days is not enough time to resolve these conflicts. The school board must take this into consideration and rewrite the policy to have more lenient content. Life, and many problems encountered in it, do not take a vacation because a student has school. It is many times impossible. If the number of days allowed for absence was raised, the new terms of the policy would best fit every students' needs.

Most students enrolled in secondary school realize the importance of doing well, in hopes of going on to higher education. The new attendance policy would inhibit those plans with students' loss of credit. Many students who are absent for extended periods of time, take it upon themselves to work extra-hard to make-up any missed tests, quizzes, and work. This extra initiative should not be punished with loss of credit for the school year. If students knew that they had lost all of their credit for the school year, student initiative would drop considerably and perhaps increase the drop-out rate in high school. The board's policy does not allow for partial credit, which would solve many problems created in the new attendance proposal.

In conclusion, the school board should reject their new attendance policy, however should also begin to draw up a new one, cherry-picking good ideas from the first. New points in the policy should include special cases, partial credit, and increasing the number of days of absence permitted. Cooperation between the school board and the student body is an integral part of making the system work. With a renewed policy, the school will begin to see their students flourish in a more lenient environment, with a more understanding policy. Graduation rates will continue to be high, students will create a happy balance between school and their personal life, and will continue to take initiative to make-up missed work.

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2 PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

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Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Since formal secondary education has existed, school boards have taken it upon themselves to dictate what acceptable standards are. Up until this point, the school board has set forth rules and policies that are just and acceptable. However, the school boards new attendance policy is overly-strict and unnecessary for the functioning of the school. This policy will create more new problems than solve old ones and should therefore be rejected by the board. The idea of losing an entire years worth of credits from being absent for more than ten days is ludicrous. The school board should reject the new attendance proposal due to the possibility of significantly lowered graduation rates, students' personal agendas outside of school, and student initiative in making-up school work.

With this new attendance policy, many students will exceed the limit of ten days of absence. Just because the limit is lowered does not mean students will have any less reasons for their absences. The new policy will cause a large percentage of the student population to lose a full years amount of credit for only being absent for an eighteenth of the school year. This loss of credit will result in students being required to stay back, decreasing graduation rates in the school. If students do not stay back, but enroll in summer programs to regain their credits, the school's faculty will seem incompetent. Summer programs will also cause a need for a larger budget to fund - money that could be spent on much better things for the schools, like new equipment, books, and other material. All these negatives can be avoided if the school board will just rethink this new attendance policy.

PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)

When writing up the new attendance policy, the board did not consider the fact that all people, including students, have lives outside of work and school. Many personal crises come up out of the blue, demanding time away from school. In some cases, ten days is not enough time to resolve these conflicts. The school board must take this into consideration and rewrite the policy to have more lenient content. Life, and many problems encountered in it, do not take a vacation because a student has school. It is many times impossible. If the number of days allowed for absence was raised, the new terms of the policy would best fit every student's needs.

Most students enrolled in secondary school realize the importance of doing well, in hopes of going on to higher education. The new attendance policy would inhibit those plans with students' loss of credit. Many students who are absent for extended periods of time, take it upon themselves to work extra-hard to make-up any missed tests, quizzes, and work. This extra initiative should not be punished with loss of credit for the school year. If students knew that they had lost all of their credit for the school year, student initiative would drop considerably and perhaps increase the drop-out rate in high school. The board's policy does not allow for partial credit, which would solve many problems created in the new attendance proposal.

In conclusion, the school board should reject their new attendance policy, however should also begin to draw up a new one, cherry-picking good ideas from the first. New points in the policy should include special cases, partial credit, and increasing the number of days of absence permitted. Cooperation between the school board and the student body is an integral part of making the school system work.



PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)



With a renewed policy, the school will begin to see their students flourish in a more lenient environment, with a more understanding policy. Graduation rates will continue to be high, students will create a happy balance between school and their personal life, and will continue to take initiative to make-up missed work.

Score Point: 5

This moderately fluent response begins with a strong opening that establishes the focus of the argument (the proposed policy will create more problems than it will solve) and the key ideas that the writer will use to develop that argument: lowered graduation rates; student obligations apart from school; and diminished student initiative. The writer presents elaboration for these ideas in a logical progression that is enhanced with sophisticated vocabulary [*ludicrous; incompetent; initiative; integral*], precise images [*Life, and many problems encountered in it, do not take a vacation because a student has school*], and vivid word choice [*cherry-picking good ideas from the first*], which contribute to an overall sense of unity and coherence. The even development of the ideas, as well as the few errors, indicate that this writing represents a strong command of written language.

Dear President of the School Board:

I understand that school board is considering instituting a stricter attendance policy. While I understand your reasons for doing this, the new policy is much too strict. Students who must miss school because of serious illness should not be punished, and neither should students who miss school for any number of valid reasons like a death in the family. By high school most students realize the importance of coming to school unless they absolutely must stay home, and such a strict attendance policy will not have too much of an effect. While the idea of having a set attendance policy is a good one, ten days is not enough and there should be loopholes for students with valid reasons for missing school.

In effect this new policy would be punishing seriously ill students. As someone with allergies and asthma, I am accustomed to frequent illness. My attendance has always been poor, yet I've always made up my work and gotten better grades than most people who have near perfect attendance. I've also known students who have missed many days of school because of car accidents, operations, or other serious illnesses. While the new policy is an attempt to discourage people from faking illness, it will end up punishing those who are truly ill. In fact, encouraging students to come to school when they are sick spreads contagious diseases and makes attendance worse overall. Also, students do not learn much when they are sick even if they are at school. The new policy does not take any of these ideas into account. The new attendance policy should allow students at least 15 days of absence and should have loopholes for seriously ill students. There is no reason to punish students for something they can't control.

Students also miss school for a variety of other valid reasons. Sometimes the only way for a student to visit family is to miss a few days of school. This is especially true when there is a death in the family, as funerals are often in different parts of the country. Many students also visit colleges during school days because the best time to visit colleges is when they are in session. Other valuable learning experiences such as sports tournaments and all-state music ensembles also cause students to miss school. Sometimes these important experiences can be more important than one or two days of school. Allowing students only 10 absences does not give them the opportunity to participate in these experiences that usually teach them more than a day of school ever could.

By the time students are in high school, they realize the importance of good attendance anyway, and a stricter attendance policy will have little effect. High school students are older and more mature than elementary school students, and are thus less likely to miss school for frivolous reasons. Students know that getting someone else's notes from class is nothing compared to actually hearing the teacher's lecture. Students rarely stay home to skip a test because making up a test is so much trouble. Finding a time when both the student and the teacher are free is a real pain, and many teachers give harder makeup tests. When students decide to stay home for frivolous reasons, they have already weighed the costs in their minds. They must be quite set on missing school, so a stricter attendance policy would not be terribly effective anyway. So in reality the new policy would not even totally accomplish its goal of discouraging students from stay home without a good reason. The only major effect would be to punish students who have valid reasons for staying home.

The new attendance policy is a bad idea because its negative effects will far outweigh its positive effects. Students who are hardly absent at all will not be affected. Students who miss school without valid reasons will most likely have better attendance, but the problem will not be totally solved. Students who miss a lot of school because they are sick will either lose credit or come to school sick and spread germs. Students who miss school because of other

valid reasons will most likely miss out on important experiences. Setting the limit at ten without exceptions basically punishes students who have good reasons to miss school. Instead, the school should adopt a policy of allowing 15 absences before they must meet with the principal. If they have been cutting class without an excuse, they should lose credit. If they have been seriously ill or have another reason, they should not lose credit. I hope my suggestions will be useful in crafting a better attendance policy.

Sincerely,

The Tooth Fairy

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2 PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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In effect this new policy would be punishing seriously ill students. As someone with allergies and asthma, I am accustomed to frequent illness. My attendance has always been poor, yet I've always made up my work and gotten better grades than most people who have near perfect attendance. I've also known students who have missed many days of school because of car accidents, operations, or other serious illnesses. While the new policy is an attempt to discourage people from faking illness, it will end up punishing those who are truly ill. In fact, encouraging students to come to school when they are sick spreads contagious diseases and makes attendance worse overall.* The new policy does not take any of these

*Also students do not learn much when they are sick even if they are at school.

●●●● PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued) ●●●●

ideas into account. The new attendance policy should allow students at least 15 days of absence and should have loopholes for seriously ill students. There is no reason to punish students for something they can't control.

Students also miss school for a variety of other valid reasons. Sometimes the only way for a student to visit family is to miss a few days of school. This is especially true when there is a death in the family, as funerals are often in different parts of the country. Many students also visit colleges during school days because the best time to visit colleges is when they are in session. Other valuable learning experiences such as sports tournaments and all-state music ensembles also cause students to miss school. Sometime these important experiences can be more important than one or two days of school. Allowing students only 10 absences does not give them the opportunity to participate in these experiences that ^{usually} teach them more than a day of school ever could.

By the time students are in high school, they realize the importance of good attendance anyway, and a stricter attendance policy will have little effect. High school students are older and more mature than elementary school students, and are thus less likely to miss school for frivolous reasons. Students know that getting someone else's notes from class is nothing compared to actually hearing the teacher's lecture. Students rarely stay home to skip a test because making up a test is so much trouble. Finding a time when both the student and the teacher are free is a real pain, and many teachers give harder makeup tests.

●●●● PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued) ●●●●

When students decide to stay home for frivolous reasons, they have already weighed the costs in their minds. They must be quite set on missing school, so a stricter attendance policy would not be terribly effective anyway. So in reality the new policy would not even totally accomplish its goal of discouraging students from staying home without a good reason. The only major effect would be to punish students who have valid reasons for staying home.

The new attendance policy is a bad idea because its negative effects will far outweigh its positive effects. Students who are hardly absent at all will not be affected. Students who miss school without valid reasons will most likely have better attendance, but the problem will not be totally solved. Students who miss a lot of school because they are sick will either lose credit or come to school sick and spread germs. Students who miss school because of other valid reasons will most likely miss out on important experiences. Setting the limit at ten without exceptions basically punishes students who have good reasons to miss school. Instead, the school should adopt a policy of allowing 15 absences before they must meet with the principal. If they have been cutting class without an excuse, they should lose credit. If they have been seriously ill or have another reason, they should not lose credit. I hope my suggestions will be useful in crafting a better attendance policy.

Sincerely,

The Tooth Fairy

Score Point: 5

This lengthy response presents a well-developed and persuasive argument against the proposed attendance policy. With the opening paragraph, the writer establishes and sustains throughout the response a clear perspective focused on the pitfalls of the plan (punishing those who are seriously ill or who have valid reasons for missing school, and failing to discourage absenteeism among those who elect to miss school). Ideas are specifically developed and strongly connected in a logical progression that argues for an alternative: increasing the number of days to 15 and providing for case-by-case assessment for those whose absences exceed the 15 days allowed. Although the essay conveys a sense of completeness and unity, the writing does not consistently display the syntactic sophistication and control needed to indicate a superior command of written language.

Score Scale Point 6

The response indicates a **SUPERIOR COMMAND** of written language. The writing samples in this category:

- CONTENT/
ORGANIZATION**
- have an opening and a closing. The responses relate to the topic and have a single distinct focus. They are well-developed, complete compositions that are organized and progress logically from beginning to end. A variety of cohesive devices are present, resulting in a fluent response. Many of these writers take compositional risks resulting in highly effective, vivid, explicit, and/or pertinent responses.
- USAGE**
- have very few, if any, errors in usage.
- SENTENCE
CONSTRUCTION**
- demonstrate syntactic and verbal sophistication through an effective variety of sentences and/or rhetorical modes. There will be very few, if any, errors in sentence construction.
- MECHANICS**
- have very few, if any, errors in mechanics.

To whom it may concern:

During Sean's junior year of high school, he came down with a terrible case of the flu and a month after that illness, he lost his grandfather to cancer. With these two circumstances combined, Sean was absent nine days. Under the new attendance policy, he had one day left—a single day with which he could be absent without losing credit. Sadly, however, Sean's grandmother died merely two months after his grandfather and had to miss three days of school. That brought his total absences to twelve. Sean then lost credit for the school year and all of his hard work was gone. This is an extreme scenario, but nonetheless realistic. Putting a limitation on the number of days a student can be absent only causes more stress and unhealthy behavior. Although the new attendance policy is backed by good intentions, it is not tangeable due to the lack of concern for personal cases.

When a student stays home from school, he must return to his place of education, bombarded with homework, tests, and projects. Taking a day off to go to the mall or because the night before was spent staying up late on the phone is not without its consequences. Students are fully aware that they must reap what they sow—this new attendance policy will only create more stress. Many a student, if not all, suffer from the stresses of school—making the varsity soccer team, getting that awesome grade point average, cultivating friendships, and so on. All the pressures in the life of a teenager can be damaging both physically and mentally. Most parents and students alike can attest to the need of a mental health day. Those occasional days when rest and relaxation is imperative for peak performance on that upcoming physics test are now gone due to the new policy. As extreme as it may sound it's the truth. Attendance is of course important to maintain status in school, but there is no need for the policy to be so strict. If a student has strep throat and needs to miss three days of school, he is no longer only met with the stress of making up work, but also the stress of concerns about future absences and how it will affect the rest of his years as a student. Health is important in order for a student to perform at his best - ten days does not allot much time for illness or reoperation. Stress and health are not the only new concerns associated with this policy—it begs the question, how important is attendance?

A student who misses an exhorbitant number of days will most likely get lower grades. But in all cases, however, this is not the truth. If student A has a 4.0 GPA and has missed eleven days of school, he should rightfully be allowed his absences. If student B, on the other hand, has also missed eleven days but his GPA has dropped from a 3.4 to a 2.6, his absence should be of concern. It is ultimately the decision of the student and his parent whether or not he can afford to miss school. Students should know their own limitations; a policy imparting such limitations on them will not help. It must be observed that number of absences does not equate to quality of school work. A student's personal situation must be considered when his attendance is inspected. If a student cares so little about his school work that he is willing to take a drop in grades because of his absences, this new policy will not be of any use. If this plan of action is not taken, a new one must be formed.

Poor grades are not always the result of excessive absences, but it some cases it may be. In order for any new policy to take hold and be effective, a student must be handled subjectively. It is unjust to compare a student who slacks and couldn't care less to a hard-working, dilligent one. A new plan is needed to create a better environment. The first objective is to raise the number of days absent to the amount of twenty. Although that might seem to be a large number, it allows enough days for illness, emergency, and mental health. Another facet should be added to the policy—interaction between school and

parent. When a student reaches the five and ten absence marks, letters should be sent home to parents. At fifteen days, a simple phone call should be made, just to make certain that the parent is aware of the policy and their child's status. If a student goes over more than twenty absences, a meeting should be set up between the student, his parent(s), and his guidance counselor. Such an interaction will allow the school to check up on the student's health and grades. Also, for each absence, a note from the parent to the school should be written, explaining the reason for absence.

Such a strict, rigid new policy on attendance will only further harm the students. Not all ideas are feasible. Prohibition during the 1920s was great in idea but poor in execution—the ban was even named the “Noble Experiment” for its valiant efforts. Just as with that experiment, not all ideas can come to be as wonderful as they may have seemed. The increased amount of stress and illness, along with a decrease in concern for students, the new policy will ultimately fail. Armed with an improved policy and an open mind, attendance can come to be a concept not worth struggling over. With a feeling of concern and a drop in stress, students will reconsider, on their own, their absences and the consequences.

Sincerely,

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2 PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK. ^{to whom it may concern:}

During Sean's junior year of high school, he came down with a terrible case of the flu and a month after that illness, he lost his grandfather to cancer. With these two circumstances combined, Sean was absent nine days. Under the new attendance policy, he had one day left - a single day with which he could be absent without losing credit. Sadly, however, Sean's grandmother died merely two months after his grandfather and had to miss three days of school, that brought his total absences to twelve. Sean then lost credit for the school year and all of his hard work was gone. This is an extreme scenario, but nonetheless realistic. Putting a limitation on the number of days a student can be absent only caused more stress and unhealthy behavior. Although the new attendance policy is backed by good intentions, it is not tenable due to the lack of concern for personal cases.

When a student stays home from school, he must return to his place of education, bombarded with homework, tests, and projects. Taking a day off to go to the mall or because the night before was spent staying up late on the phone is not without its consequences. Students are fully aware that they must reap what they sow - this new attendance policy will only create more stress. Many a student, if not all, suffer from the stresses of school - making the varsity soccer team, getting that awesome grade point average, cultivating friendships, and so on. All the pressures in the life of a teenager can be damaging both physically and mentally. Most parents and students alike can attest to the need of a mental health day. Those occasional days when rest and relaxation is imperative for peak performance on that upcoming physics test are now gone due to the new policy. As extreme as it may sound it's the truth. Attendance is of course important to maintain status in school, but there is no need for the policy to be so strict. If a student has strep throat and needs to miss three days of school, he is no longer only met with the stress of

●●●● PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued) ●●●●

making up work, but also the stress of concerns about future absences and how it will affect the rest of his years as a student. Health is important in order for a student to perform at his best - ten days does not allow much time for illness or recuperation. Stress and health are not the only new concerns associated with this policy - it begs the question, how important is attendance?

A student who misses an exorbitant number of days will most likely get lower grades. But in all cases, however, this is not the truth. If student A has a 4.0 GPA and has missed eleven days of school, he should rightfully be allowed his absences. If student B, on the other hand, has also missed eleven days but his GPA has dropped from a 3.4 to a 2.0, his absence should be of concern. It is ultimately the decision of the student and his parent whether or not he can afford to miss school. Students should know their own limitations; a policy imparting such limitations on them will not help. It must be observed that number of absences does not equate to quality of school work. A student's personal situation must be considered when his attendance is inspected. If a student cares so little about his school work that he is willing to take a drop in grades because of his absences, this new policy will not be of any use. If this plan of action is not taken, a new one must be formed.

Poor grades are not always the result of excessive absences, but in some cases it may be. In order for any new policy to take hold and be effective, a student must be handled subjectively. It is unjust to compare a student who slacks and couldn't care less to a hard-working, diligent one. A new plan is needed to create a better environment. The first objective is to raise the number of days absent to the amount of twenty. Although that might seem to be a large number, it allows enough days for illness, emergency, and mental health. Another facet should be added to the policy - interaction between school

PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)

and parent. When a student reaches the five and ten absence marks, letters should be sent home to parents. At fifteen days, a simple phone call should be made, just to make certain that the parent is aware of the policy and their child's status. If a student goes over more than twenty absences, a meeting should be set up between the student, his parent(s), and his guidance counselor. Such an interaction will allow the school to check up on the student's health and grades. Also, for each absence, a note from the parent to the school should be written, explaining the reason for absence.

Such a strict, rigid new policy on attendance will only further harm the students. Not all ideas are feasible. Prohibition during the 1920s was great in idea but poor in execution—the ban was even named the "Noble Experiment" for its valiant efforts. Just as with that experiment, not all ideas can come to be as wonderful as they may have seemed. The increased amount of stress and illness, along with a decrease in concern for students, the new policy will ultimately fail. Armed with an improved policy and an open mind, attendance can come to be a concept not worth struggling over. With a feeling of concern and a drop in stress, students will reconsider, on their own, their absences and the consequences.

Sincerely,

Score Point: 6

This writer begins with an anecdote, recounting a string of unfortunate events during Sean's junior year, to establish the basis for an argument against the proposed attendance policy. Moving from this successful compositional risk, the writer then develops a fully elaborated discussion of two key reasons why the proposed policy will ultimately fail (stress and the consequent need for occasional rest; the need to examine the impact of absences on the individual's school work) and proposes as an alternative a more lenient policy. Ideas, which are developed with specific details [*staying up late on the phone; GPA has dropped from a 3.4 to a 2.6; the analogy to Prohibition during the 1920s*], effective word choice [*scenario; bombarded; attest; exorbitant; diligent*], and varied syntax are connected with sophisticated transitions [*it begs the question, how important is attendance?*] that further enhance the fluency and coherence of the response. The writer's use of compositional risk and rhetorical devices, as well as the sophisticated language and syntax, demonstrates a superior command of written language.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

BY NOW THE ENTIRE SCHOOL SYSTEM IS AWARE OF THE SCHOOL BOARD'S NEW ATTENDENCE POLICY, THAT, IF APPROVED, WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AT THE BEGINING OF THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR. TEN DAYS TO BE ABSENT IN AN ENTIRE YEAR MIGHT SEEM LIKE A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF TIME BUT ONLY IF ONE HAS NOT CONSIDERED ALL OF THE REASONS STUDENTS ARE ABSENT, THE LEAST LIKELY OF WHICH BEING TRUENCY. SOME OF THE MANY LEGITAMATE REASONS FOR MISSING A SCHOOL DAY/DAYS INCLUDE: A DEATH IN THE FAMILY, FIELD TRIPS, SICKNESS REQUIRING SURGERY, OR FAMILY VACATIONS ONE SIMPLY CANNOT AVOID. ATTENDENCE HAS NEVER BEEN A PROBLEM IN OUR SCHOOL DISTRICT; IF STUDENTS MISS CLASS AND FALL FAR BEHIND THEN THEY WILL FAIL AND BE DENIED CREDIT REGUARDLESS, BUT WHY PUNISH DILLIGENT STUDENTS WHO ARE ABLE TO KEEP UP DESPITE ABSENCES? ADOPTING AN ATTENDENCE POLICY THAT DENYS CREDIT TO STUDENTS AFTER TEN DAYS IS NOT ONLY ILLOGICAL BUT WILL SEVERELY LOWER A CLASSES GRADUATION PERCENTILE, WHICH UTIMATELY RESULTS IN THE SCHOOL BEING PERCIEVED AS BELOW AVERAGE.

AS THE SCHOOL BOARD IS CERTAINLY AWARE OF, OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM PRIDES ITSELF IN THE FACT THAT VERY FEW STUDENTS MUST REPEAT A GRADE. WHY, THEN, WOULD ONE MAKE A CONCIOUS DECISION THAT, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, WOULD LOWER THE GRADUATION PERCENTILE? OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM IS CONSTANTLY COMPETING WITH OTHER DISTRICTS FOR A LARGER PORTION OF THE STATE'S BUDGET ALLOCATED TO SCHOOLS. IF THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS DENIED CREDIT BECAUSE OF ATTENDENCE INCREASES THAN INEVITABLY OUR SLICE OF THE BUDGET WILL DECREASE IN PROPORTION. PLAINLY THIS NEW POLICY WILL HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON EVERYONE; STUDENTS AND TEACHES ALIKE, AND EVERYONE IN SCHOOL IS QUITE AWARE OF IT

IF A STUDENT WERE TO KNOW ALL THE ILL-EFFECTS OF MISSING MORE THAN TEN SCHOOL DAYS PER YEAR ONE MIGHT WONDER, WHY NOT JUST SHOW UP TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY? BUT, ALAS ATTENDENCE IS A FAR MORE COMPLICATED ISSUE AND A POLICY THAT DOES NOT DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN TRUENCY AND FIELD TRIPS IS DOOMED TO FAILURE. A POLICY CANNOT SIMPLY STATE 'TEN DAYS PERIOD' WITH NO ROOM FOR EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES. ON AVERAGE, STUDENTS GO ON FIVE FIELD TRIPS A YEAR WHICH, OBVIOUSLY, REQUIRES THEM TO BE ABSENT. THIS LEAVES STUDENTS WITH ONLY FIVE DAYS A YEAR TO BE SICK, GO ON VACATION OR COPE WITH FAMILY AND/OR PERSONAL EMERGENCIES. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF A STUDENT HAD GONE ON FIVE OR SIX FIELD TRIPS, THEN AT THE END OF THE YEAR EXPERIENCED A DEATH IN THE FAMILY WHICH WOULD REQUIRE THAT STUDENT TO TRAVEL AND MISS MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL. YOU MUST ASK YOURSELFS, 'IS THAT FAIR?'

PLEASE TAKE INTO FULL ACCOUNT THE FORMER AND MAKE AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND THAT 10 DAYS IS FAR TO FEW IF OUR SCHOOLS GOAL IS TO KEEP UP OUR HIGH GRADUATION PERCENTILE. STUDENTS AROUND SCHOOL SHARE THE SAME BELIEF THAT IF SOME AMENDMENTS WERE MADE TO THE POLICY ALLOWING FOR FIELD TRIPS, SURGERY, FAMILY EMERGENCIES ET CETERA AND THE NUMBER OF DAYS ALLOWED WERE PERHAPS DOUBLED THAN THE POLICY WOULD YIELD MORE POSITIVE RESULTS. THOUGH, AS OF CURRENTLY, OUR ATTENDENCE POLICY IS WORKING EXCELLENTLY AND ONE SHOULD HESITATE TO TINKER WITH SOMETHING FULLFILLING ITS INTENDED PURPOSE AND DOING IT WELL. I THANK YOU

FOR REALIZING THE IMPACT OF THE NEW POLICY AND FOR TAKING THE TIME TO
UNDERSTAND ITS IMPLICATIONS FROM A STUDENT'S POINT OF VIEW
SINCERELY,

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2

PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

By now the entire school system is aware of the school board's new attendance policy, that, if approved, will be implemented at the beginning of the next school year. Ten days to be absent in an entire ~~year~~ year might seem like a reasonable amount of time but only if one has not considered all of the reasons students are absent, the least likely of which being truancy. Some of the many legitimate reasons for missing a school day/days include: a death in the family, field trips, sickness requiring surgery, or family vacations one simply cannot avoid. Attendance has never been a problem in our school district; if students miss class and fall far behind then they will fail and be denied credit regardless, but why punish diligent students who are able to keep up despite absences? Adopting an attendance policy that denies credit to students after ten days is not only illogical but will severely lower a class's graduation percentile, which ultimately results in the school being perceived as below average.

As the school board is certainly aware of, our school system prides itself in the fact that very few students must repeat a grade. Why, then, would one make a conscious decision that, in all likelihood, would lower the graduation percentile? Our school system is constantly competing with other districts for a larger portion of the state's budget allocated to schools. If the number of students denied credit because of attendance increases than inevitably our slice of the budget will decrease in proportion. Plainly this new policy will have a negative impact on everyone; students and teachers alike, and everyone in school is quite aware of it.

●●●● PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued) ●●●●

IF A STUDENT WERE TO KNOW ALL THE ILL-EFFECTS OF MISSING MORE THAN TEN SCHOOL DAYS PER YEAR ONE MIGHT WONDER, WHY NOT JUST SHOW UP TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY? BUT, ALAS ATTENDENCE IS A FAR MORE COMPLICATED ISSUE AND A POLICY THAT DOES NOT DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN TRUENCY AND FIELD TRIPS IS DOOMED TO FAILURE. A POLICY CANNOT SIMPLY STATE 'TEN DAYS PERIOD' WITH NO ROOM FOR EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES. ON AVERAGE, STUDENTS GO ON FIVE FIELD TRIPS A YEAR WHICH, OBVIOUSLY, REQUIRES THEM TO BE ABSENT. THIS LEAVES STUDENTS WITH ONLY FIVE DAYS A YEAR TO BE SICK, GO ON VACATION OR COPE WITH FAMILY AND/OR PERSONAL EMERGENCIES. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF A STUDENT HAD GONE ON FIVE OR SIX FIELD TRIPS, THEN AT THE END OF THE YEAR EXPERIENCED A DEATH IN THE FAMILY WHICH WOULD REQUIRE THAT STUDENT TO TRAVEL AND MISS MORE THAN 10 DAYS TOTAL. YOU MUST ASK YOURSELVES, 'IS THAT FAIR?'

PLEASE TAKE INTO FULL ACCOUNT THE FORMER AND MAKE AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND THAT 10 DAYS IS FAR TO FEW IF OUR SCHOOLS GOAL IS TO KEEP UP OUR HIGH GRADUATION PERCENTILE. STUDENTS AROUND SCHOOL SHARE THE SAME BELIEF THAT IF SOME AMENDMENTS WERE MADE TO THE POLICY ALLOWING FOR FIELD TRIPS, SURGERY, FAMILY EMERGENCIES ET CETERA AND THE NUMBER OF DAYS ALLOWED WERE PERHAPS DOUBLED THAN THE POLICY WOULD YIELD MORE POSITIVE RESULTS. THOUGH, AS OF CURRENTLY, OUR ATTENDENCE POLICY IS WORKING EXCELLENTLY AND ONE SHOULD HESITATE TO TINKER WITH SOMETHING FULLFILLING ITS INTENDED PURPOSE AND DOING IT WELL. I THANK YOU FOR REALIZING THE IMPACT OF THE NEW POLICY AND FOR TAKING THE TIME TO UNDERSTAND ITS IMPLICATIONS FROM A STUDENT'S POINT OF VIEW

SINCERELY,

Score Point: 6

In this essay, the writer develops a fluent and controlled rhetorical appeal designed to persuade the reader that the proposed attendance policy is likely to victimize the diligent students and jeopardize the school's touted graduation rates. The argument, which progresses logically from beginning to end, is tightly developed with pertinent details that serve as commentary [*a policy that does not differentiate between truency and field trips is doomed to failure*], as well as with cohesive devices such as rhetorical questions that help to link the ideas without encumbering the writing with wordy or repetitive phrasing. Evocative word choice [*our slice of the budget; hesitate to tinker with something fullfilling its intended purpose*], precise vocabulary [*legitamate; dilligent; inevitably; differentiate; extenuating*], and varied syntax contribute further to a sense of unity, coherence, and completeness in this response, demonstrating a superior command of written language.

Dear School Board,

The new school policy being implemented regarding absences is flawed at its very base. The fact that by missing ten days of school a student must retake the entire grade is far too harsh. Although the principles of this policy are correct, alterations must be made in order for this new rule to be most effective. Extenuating circumstances as well as adolescent's reputation of purposely disobeying rules must be taken into account when making this new policy.

Being absent for ten days does not warrant reproof if there are extenuating circumstances. Currently, the policy does not take into account problems beyond certain students' control that may lead to their absence. For example, sickness or disease can cause a student's absence for weeks or even months at a time. These students should not be punished for something beyond their control. My sister, for instance, broke her leg and her L4 vertebrae in her spinal chord. She had to miss the first two months of school because she was in a body cast recovering from her injury. Since she had no means by which to get to school and could not physically handle the day in and day out strain of school, she was forced to stay out of class. According to the current plan, my sister would have had to retake the entire year, which could have extreme emotional impacts at a time when friends and peers are most influential and vital to success. Students may also miss multiple days of school due to a family emergency. For example, a student's grandmother or other close relative may become ill or die. This illness or death cannot be controlled by the student, and hence should not be punished so severely. Cutting class or skipping school for no reason for more than ten days should not be taken lightly, and those people who have no excuse should, in fact, be forced to retake the grade.

This overly harsh policy also completely disregards the current mental state of the typical adolescent student. Normal high school students have a tendency to disobey strict policies rather than passively abide by them. Adolescents have had a long history of civil disobedience when faced with a policy as harsh as the new absence clause. Moreover, by simply missing ten days of school students may be emotionally damaged for life. If one must repeat a grade for missing school, it can be an extreme embarrassment to the student. In such a vital developmental stage in life, students must not be subjected to the immense amounts of scorn and disapproval one will surely face when one is held back. Being looked down upon and constantly being ridiculed will have incomprehensible psychological impacts on the student, and change the student's outlook forever.

In order to lessen this extremely harsh policy, our school should instead implement an "amnesty policy." If a student misses more than ten days due to a family crisis, sickness, or other reasonable excuse, the student can make up his/her missed work through an end of the year project. This project will incorporate all of the missed work by the student, and will express understanding of the subject matter at hand. Finally, the student will be graded on his/her project by a panel of teachers. If the student shows mastery of the subject, the student will be allowed to move to the next grade; if the student fails, however, he/she will have to retake the grade. By employing this "amnesty program," students have the ability to move onto the next grade without being ostracized or ridiculed by classmates. This program gives students the opportunity to make up lost work, and will provide a fair and easy transition into the next grade.

Due to its harshness and ineffectiveness, the new attendance policy should be replaced with the amnesty program. While the new policy may bolster attendance for the short term, it will damage students' psyche for years to come. Furthermore, the policy treats those who

actually cut class and those who miss class due to sickness and family emergencies on the same level. The new amnesty program allows students to learn the material and move onto the next grade without the bitter emotional side effects of being held back, while simultaneously promoting higher attendance.

Sincerely,
A concerned student

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2 PART 4 – PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)

mental state of the typical adolescent student. Normal high school students have a tendency to disobey strict policies rather than passively abide by them. Adolescents have had a long history of civil disobedience when faced with a policy as harsh as the new absence clause. Moreover, by simply missing ten days of school students may be emotionally damaged for life. If one must repeat a grade for missing school, it can be an extreme embarrassment to the student. In such a vital developmental stage in life, students must not be subjected to the immense amounts of scorn and disapproval one will surely face when one is held back. Being looked down upon and constantly being ridiculed will have incomprehensible psychological impacts on the student, and change the student's outlook forever.

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PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)



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Sincerely,

A concerned student

Score Point: 6

Using a five-paragraph format, this writer opposes the proposed attendance policy, arguing that extenuating circumstances for absences and potential psychological damage to students warrant an alternative solution. Drawing on a pertinent and vivid example (e.g., the sister's spinal cord injury and consequent inability to attend school), the writer advances an argument for an "amnesty policy" that would accommodate students with reasonable excuses for missing school. Details about the nature of adolescents and their "history of civil disobedience" contribute further to the progression of ideas and the only logical conclusion that can be drawn from this information: the need for a bifurcated approach to attendance. The ideas, which are developed with sophisticated word choice [*flawed; passively abide; vital; incomprehensible; incorporate; ostracized; bolster*] and syntactic variety, are fluent, unified, and coherent, indicating a superior command of written language.

APPENDIX F

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

AUTHOR'S SELF-REPORTING FORM

Student: _____

RHSM Score: _____

Date: _____

RHSM

RHSM FEATURES	OVERVIEW	DESCRIPTIVE CRITERIA
CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION	Extent to which the response is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focused on task, purpose, and audience • supported by relevant and elaborated details • clearly and logically ordered 	1. Opening and closing
		2. Single, clear focus
		3. Sense of unity; completeness
		4. Even development of key ideas
		5. Logical progression of ideas
		6. Appropriate and varied details
		7. Clear transitions
		8. Coherence and fluency
		9. Controlled compositional risks (if applicable)
USAGE	Extent to which the response is written in standard written English	10. Correct tense formation
		11. Subject-verb agreement
		12. Correct pronoun usage and agreement
		13. Effective and varied word choice
		14. Use of proper modifiers
SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	Extent to which the response includes complete and controlled sentences	15. Correct sentence construction (syntax)
		16. Variety in length and structure
		17. Controlled use of words and phrasing
MECHANICS	Extent to which the response is technically correct	18. Few errors in spelling
		19. Few errors in capitalization
		20. Few errors in punctuation

