

Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination

Released Item Book

Writing Assessment

Grades

4, 8, & 10



Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent



**Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination
Writing Assessment
Grades 4, 8 & 10
Released Item Book**

This publication is available from:
The Office of Educational Accountability
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 South Webster Street
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
<http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/publications.html>

September 2007

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, creed, age, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital status or parental status, sexual orientation, or disability.

Contents

Introduction	1
What is the Wisconsin Writing Assessment?	1
What is the Writing Rubrics and Annotated Samples Book?	1
How do I Use This Book?.....	2
Can this document be used for test preparation?	2
Standards	3
How does the WKCE writing assessment connect to the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards?	3
Rubrics	5
Composing and Conventions	5
Relationship of the Impromptu Essay Score to the WKCE Language Arts Score	5
Zero Scores, Unscorable Writing Samples, and Condition Codes.....	5
Special Note on 10 th Grade Rubrics and Anchor Papers.....	6
Grade 4	7
Rubric.....	11
Prompt 1 – Snowy Day	13
Samples	15
Prompt 2 – Favorite Season	37
Samples	39
Prompt 3 – Favorite Meal	49
Samples	51
Grade 8	67
Rubric.....	71
Prompt 1 – TV Advertisement	75
Samples	77
Prompt 2 – School Newspaper.....	99
Samples	101
Prompt 3 – Grading Scale	119
Samples	121
Grade 10	133
Rubric.....	137
Prompt – Time Capsule	139
Samples	141

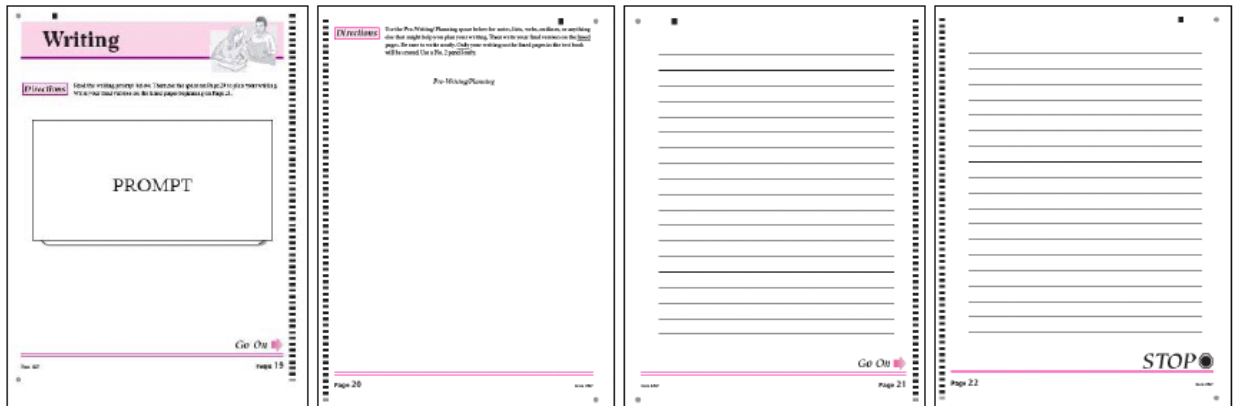
Introduction

What is the Wisconsin Writing Assessment?

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has developed a customized writing assessment that is administered at grades 4, 8, and 10 as part of the enhanced *Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE)*.

This customized writing assessment includes rubrics based on the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in English Language Arts as well as writing prompts developed, reviewed, and field-tested in Wisconsin.

In the writing portion of the WKCE, students plan, write, and edit a composition on a specific topic (prompt) within a specified time frame. The time limit (30 minutes) of the test has been established to allow for planning time. Pages within the test booklet are also reserved for planning. (See sample test pages below.) Students' essays are scored using two holistic rubrics which takes into account both the composition and the conventions of the student response. Scorers use anchor and training papers written by Wisconsin students under standardized testing conditions to guide the scoring process. These exemplar papers take into account the draft and impromptu nature of the writing situation.



The writing prompts that may be used on the *WKCE* include the following purposes and modes: expressive writing (narrative or descriptive); informative or expository writing; persuasive writing.

What is the Writing Rubrics and Annotated Samples Book?

The items in this book are actual items from prior *WKCE* state writing assessments from grades 4, 8 and 10. These items will not be used again on the state assessment and may, therefore, be used in Wisconsin for professional development, improving instruction, and student practice. The items in this book illustrate the formats and kinds of items that students will encounter on the *WKCE* writing assessment.

This book includes actual student responses to the released prompts as well as the scored rubric and comments that accompany each response. The student responses included were chosen to illustrate a range of composition and convention levels.

How do I use this book?

Professional Development

Released items are useful as educators engage in conversations about what students are expected to know and be able to do to demonstrate proficiency on the state assessments relative to the state model academic standards. Released items can inform discussions about state and local standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Improving Instruction

Teachers may use released items in classroom activities that help students understand how to:

- plan, write and edit a composition under a specified time limit
- use and understand a writing rubric
- respond to constructed response items with complete, thoughtful answers
- approach long and/or multi-step tasks
- use good test-taking strategies.

Student Practice

Students may perform better and with less anxiety if they are familiar with the format of the test and with the types of items they will be required to answer. It is also important to instruct students on time management for the writing test. Students should pace themselves to assure they have enough time to complete the writing sample. Note that a student's score on the practice test cannot be converted to a scale score, used to predict performance on the operational WKCE, or used to make inferences about the student's learning.

Can this document be used for test preparation?

While using the writing exemplar booklet for test preparation practice, care should be taken that this is done in a balanced manner and one that helps to enhance student knowledge of subject matter as well as test performance.

Please note that test preparation is only useful to the extent that it is also teaching content area knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Therefore, the use of this resource for test preparation is of limited value to students due to the narrow opportunity for content learning. It is very important to ensure that teachers are teaching to the curriculum and not to the test as teaching to the test narrows the focus of instruction to only that content covered by the test.

Standards

How does the WKCE writing assessment connect to the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards?

Wisconsin's customized writing assessment is grounded in the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards. The Content Standard for Writing states that *students will write clearly and effectively to share information and knowledge, to influence and persuade, to create and entertain*. More specifically, the Performance Standards for Writing expect that students will:

- *Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes*
- *Plan, revise, edit, and publish clear and effective writing*
- *Understand the function of various forms, structures and punctuation marks of standard American English and use them appropriately in written communication*

While the writing assessment represents a single writing experience within a larger balanced writing program, it does support the standards and expectations for writing held for all Wisconsin students.

Additionally, the standards themselves are reflections of the Wisconsin Communication Model, which asserts that the most important feature of an act of communication (e.g., writing) is purpose or aim. The model describes a variety of purposes for communication, including expressive, formulaic, literary, informative and persuasive. Wisconsin's writing assessment will ask students to develop a writing sample that accomplishes one of the above purposes. You may refer to the DPI publication *Planning Curriculum in English Language Arts* for more information regarding the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for Writing as well as the Wisconsin Communication Model.

Rubrics

Composing and Conventions Rubrics

Each student's writing sample at grades 4, 8, and 10 is scored using two holistic rubrics: a 6-point composing rubric that measures students ability to write purposeful, focused, organized prose directed clearly and effectively to an audience, and a 3-point conventions rubric that measures students ability to control the conventions of standard written English appropriate to grade level.

Rubrics for all grades tested are provided on the following pages. The “Composing Rubric Clarification for Scorers” document should provide additional support for teachers working with the composing rubric in a classroom setting.

Relationship of the Impromptu Essay Score to the WKCE Language Arts Score

The maximum number of score points that can be earned on the WKCE writing prompt administered at grades 4, 8, and 10 is nine (six points for composition and three points for conventions.) For grade 10 only, the points that a student obtains on the writing sample are a part of his/her Language Arts score. For grades 4 and 8, writing score points are recorded separately from the Language Arts score.

Zero Scores, Unscorable Writing Samples, and Condition Codes

In grades 4, 8, and 10 essays are awarded a score between zero and nine points, based on two separate rubrics:

Conventions: Writing samples are scored in terms of how well the student used the conventions of standard written English (grammar, spelling, etc.). Scores range from one to three. A score of zero also is also possible for unscorable papers. (See condition codes below.)

Composition: Writing samples are judged in terms of how well the student composes purposeful, focused, and organized prose directed clearly and effectively to the audience. Scores range from one to six. A score of zero is also possible for unscorable papers. (See condition codes below.)

Unscorable writing samples are assigned a condition code. Each condition code explains the reason the sample was unscorable:

Conventions Condition Codes for Unscorable Writing Samples –

- A. No response or no attempt
- B. Illegible
- C. Another Language
- D. Off-Topic

Composing Condition Codes for Unscorable Writing Samples –

- A. No Response
- B. Illegible Handwriting
- C. Another Language

As noted above, the extended writing sample at grade 10 is part of the student’s Language Arts score. Unscorable writing samples at 10th grade are assigned an appropriate condition code (see condition codes

above), which appears on the “Individual Profile Report” and the “School Record Sheet.” The “Extended Writing Sample by Student Group” reports unscorable writing samples as “unscorable” just as they are at grades 4 and 8. These are not included in calculating “Average Points” on this latter report.

Special Note on 10th Grade Rubrics and Anchor Papers

While the conventions rubric at grade 10 reflects the 12th grade nature of the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards, the prompts and rubrics were pilot-tested with second semester 10th graders in February 2000. While the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards describe expectations at 12th grade, the design and implementation of the rubrics and supporting anchor papers reflect expectations of student performance at the 10th grade level.

Grade 4

Each student's paper will be scored using two holistic rubrics:

- A 6-point composing rubric that measures students ability to write purposeful, focused, organized prose directed clearly and effectively to an audience.
- A 3-point conventions rubric that measures students ability to control the conventions of standard written English appropriate to grade level.

Composing Rubric Clarification for Scorers

Keep in mind that a paper need not meet all the criteria at a given score point to meet that score. A “5” paper, for instance, may contain some characteristics of a “6” and some characteristics of a “4,” but on balance will most closely match the criteria for a “5.”

6 Points

This paper demonstrates exemplary control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. An appropriate sense of audience is evident throughout, guiding the writer’s word choice and selection, arrangement, and development of content.

- The introduction and conclusion skillfully frame and clarify the writer’s purpose and address the needs of the audience.
- The writer’s focus or thesis is either explicitly stated or strongly implied and consistently guides the paper’s development.
- The writer’s organizational strategy is clear and effectively carried out.
- Coherence is consistently very well controlled: connections among sentences, ideas, and paragraphs are consistently clear. Transitional strategies are effective and varied.
- Content is thoughtful, insightful, and unusually well developed and supported.
- Syntax is very well controlled, resulting in a fluid, varied, and effective writing style.
- Word choice is unusually skilled (discriminating, precise, apt, habitually concrete) and guided by the writer’s sense of purpose and audience.

5 Points

This paper demonstrates advanced control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence, and development. An appropriate sense of audience is evident throughout, guiding the writer’s word choice and selection, arrangement, and development of content.

- The introduction and conclusion create a logical context for the body of the paper but may be more formulaic and less effective for audience than the exemplary response.
- The writer’s focus or thesis is either explicitly stated or strongly implied. Overall, the student’s focus is clearly evident, though the response may contain a paragraph or section where focus is briefly lost.
- The writer’s organizational strategy is clear and effectively carried out.
- Coherence is generally well controlled: connections among sentences, ideas, and paragraphs are usually clear. Transitional strategies are used to aid readers.
- Content is solidly developed and supported, but elaboration is less consistently specific and insightful than the 6.
- Syntax is consistently clear and effective.
- Overall, word choice is very effective and guided by the writer’s sense of purpose and audience.

4 Points

This paper demonstrates proficient control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. Audience awareness is generally evident.

- The introduction and conclusion create a logical context for the body of the paper but may be more formulaic and less effective for audience than exemplary and advanced responses.
- The writer's focus or thesis is either explicitly stated or strongly implied. Overall, the student's focus is clearly evident, though the response may contain a paragraph or section where coherence is briefly lost.
- The writer's organizational strategy is clear and effectively carried out.
- Coherence is generally controlled: connections among central ideas are clear. Transitional strategies are present but may be less smoothly handled than exemplary and advanced responses.
- Content is developed and supported. Elaboration is typically more general than exemplary and advanced responses.
- Syntax is generally clear and provides no barrier to understanding.
- Overall, word choice is clear and appropriate but tends to be less precise and effective than the exemplary and advanced responses.

3 Points

This paper demonstrates adequate control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. The sense of real communication with an audience is often lacking, resulting in weaknesses in several skill areas.

- An introduction and conclusion frame the discussion but tend to be ineffective for audience.
- The writer's focus or thesis is stated or implied but may be general or overly vague; the focus may only partially guide the paper's development. Readers may sense the writer's lack of clear purpose.
- The writer's overall organizational plan is carried out.
- Coherence is generally adequately controlled: connections among central ideas are fairly clear. Transitional strategies are usually present between paragraphs, but they may tend to be highly formulaic and ineffective for audience.
- Content is underdeveloped, often or habitually general, vague, repetitious, weak. Readers may sense the writer has one or two generic ideas that are repeated over and over in lieu of development. Wandering from the point may cover the writer's inability to develop his or her purpose. The writer often seems to lack a sense of communication with an audience.
- Syntax can range from generally clear to frequently awkward or choppy and monotonous.
- Word choice tends to be vague, general, or cliched.

2 Points

This paper demonstrates basic control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. Audience awareness/real communicative purpose is lacking or absent.

- An introduction and conclusion may be present but are very underdeveloped and inattentive to the needs of an audience.
- The writer makes an attempt to create a focus or thesis in response to the prompt. Focus and purpose may only partially guide the paper's development.
- The writer makes a discernable attempt to organize the response.
- Coherence is often lacking. Connections among central ideas are frequently unclear. Little or no attempt is made to create transitional strategies to aid readers.
- Content is very vague and underdeveloped, though the writer makes an attempt to sustain a response to the prompt.
- Syntax is frequently awkward and uncontrolled.
- Word choice is frequently vague, awkward and inadequate to the task.

1 Point

This paper demonstrates minimal control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. Audience awareness/real communicative purpose is lacking or absent.

The writer states something relevant to the prompt but makes no attempt to sustain it's development.

4th Grade Composing Rubric

Wisconsin Writing Rubric 6-Point Scoring Guide					
Elements of Rubric	Purpose & Focus	Organization & Coherence	Development of Content	Sentence Fluency	Word Choice
<i>Element Description</i>	Consistently focuses on the topic and maintains a unified purpose Demonstrates understanding of the requirements of the assigned task	Uses a logical plan of development with an effective beginning, middle, and end Keeps relationships among ideas clear Paragraphs logically and uses appropriate transitional devices	Expands and supports main ideas with specific details, examples, and/or reasons that are 1) clearly related to the topic and purpose, and 2) effective for audience	Uses varied sentence structures, creating a fluent, effective, and readable style	Controls word choice with respect to both denotation and connotation Demonstrates attention to context (audience, purpose, situation, tone) Evidences some control over figurative language for rhetorical effect (e.g. metaphors, similes)
<i>Positive Descriptors</i>	Focused, unified, controlled, relevant	Well organized, integrated, smooth, controlled, coherent	Thorough, specific, well-developed, well-supported, well-illustrated, insightful, convincing	Fluid, varied, controlled, effective	Vivid, precise, concrete, concise
<i>Negative Descriptors</i>	Rambling, loosely related, redundant, irrelevant, lacks purpose	Disorganized, hard to follow, mechanical, illogical shifts, incoherent	Vague, general, simplistic, superficial, incomplete, illogical, inadequately supported, lacks illustration	Choppy, simple, repetitive, garbled, ineffective, awkward	Awkward, imprecise, vague Wordy, repetitive

Rubric Holistic Scoring Scale							
Scores	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Description</i>	Exemplary control of the domain	Advanced control of the domain	Proficient control of the domain	Adequate control of the domain	Basic control of the domain	Minimal control of the domain	Off topic

Conventions of Written English – 4th Grade

3 points: Advanced Control

The response demonstrates advanced control of a wide range of conventions identified in the 4th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in English Language Arts:

- Uses parts of speech effectively, including nouns, pronouns, and adjectives
- Uses adverbials effectively, including words and phrases
- Employs principles of agreement related to number, gender, and case
- Capitalizes proper nouns, titles, and initial words of sentences
- Uses punctuation marks and conjunctions, as appropriate, to separate sentences and connect independent clauses
- Uses commas correctly to punctuate appositives and lists
- Spells correctly in general and even on more difficult words
- Uses word order and punctuation marks to distinguish statements, questions, exclamations, and commands
- Errors are infrequent and minor

2 points: Proficient Control

The response demonstrates proficient control of the essential conventions identified in the 4th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in English Language Arts:

- Generally controls grammar and usage (principles of agreement, noun and verb forms, superlative and comparative forms)
- Capitalizes proper nouns, titles, and initial words of sentences
- Uses end-stop punctuation correctly most of the time; internal punctuation (commas, apostrophes) is sometimes missing or wrong.
- Generally uses correct spelling with common words but more difficult words are problematic
- Errors are typical of those commonly found in a rough draft; errors do not significantly distort meaning

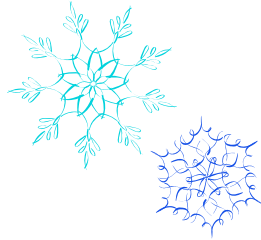
1 point: Minimal Control

The response demonstrates minimal control of the essential conventions identified in the 4th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in English Language Arts:

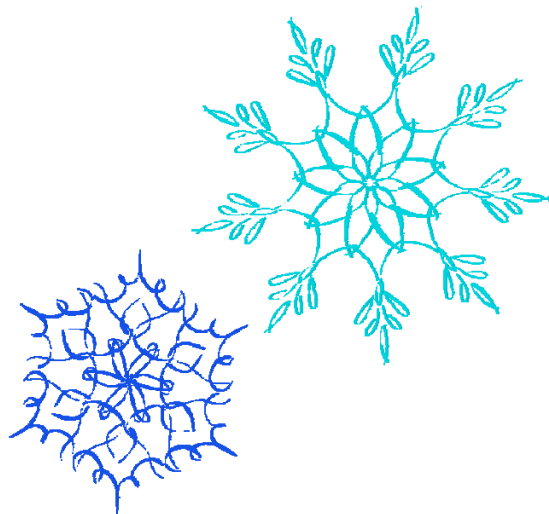
- Contains numerous serious end-stop punctuation errors, resulting in fragments, comma splices, run-ons
- Shows poor control of subject/verb agreement, possessive forms, capitalization, superlatives and comparatives
- Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words
- Errors are frequent, varied, and distracting

0 points: Off Topic

Grade 4 – Prompt a: Descriptive



Imagine that you are walking
outdoors on a snowy day.
Describe the day in a way that
shows your readers whether you
DO or DO NOT like snowy days.



Sample Essay 1a:

If you have never walked outside on a snowy day you are missing a lot. There are so many things you can do.

Look around you. The trees are usually all dressed up in white coats and hats with a little bit of green hair and there. Sometimes you can see pieces of nuts that squirrels left behind in their mad rush to get ready for winter.

Winter is beautiful and the taste is delicious. Always bring hot maple syrup along when you go outside in winter. Pour the maple syrup on the snow. When it's frozen you've got maple syrup candy! Plain cold snow is always a treat too!

Don't forget to use your nose! The thick smell of pine needles always enchants me. Kneel close to the ground and you can smell the snow. The colder it is the better it is.

Your ears are definitely not chopped liver! You can hear the soft light sound of the snow falling. The bird's chirping telling one another how cold it is is music to the ears. The wind sounds soft too. It seems to come in small "whooses".

When you come in from your walk make some hot chocolate. It makes you warm after you've been in that cold and snappy winter air.

So next time you go outside in winter I suggest you do the things I mentioned. Even if you live in Hawaii now you've got an idea of what a snowy day may be like and what to do on that snowy day of yours.

Sample Essay 1a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	6
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	8

Purpose/Focus

- This writer demonstrates exemplary control of purpose and focus.
- The writer’s synthesis of focus, purpose, and audience effectively and consistently guides the paper’s development.
- The imperative point of view established in the first sentence is highly appropriate for the task and is consistently controlled throughout the paper.
- This writer is exceptionally skilled in the purposeful use of point of view to create a unifying persona that is both commanding and intimate: “The thick smell of pine needles always enchants me. Kneel close to the ground and you can smell the snow. The colder it is, the better it is.”

Organization/Coherence

- The essay is very well organized, demonstrating the writer’s ability to invent, or apply, an effective structure of development for the topic, purpose, and audience.
- The writer’s decision to devote a separate paragraph to each sense impression creates an organizational strategy that also aids in the selection and development of content.
- A very strong sense of beginning, middle, and end is created by the writer’s skillful introductory and concluding strategies which also demonstrate excellent attention to an imagined audience.
- Coherence is exceptionally well controlled.
- The writer shows exemplary skill in the creation of parallel and varied transitional strategies that not only clarify but also compel the reader to engage enthusiastically in the imagined experience.

Development of Content

- The writer does an exemplary job of developing the description of a snowy day, with highly specific and imaginative details, images, and commentary that efficiently nail the essence of the experience, establishing tone and atmosphere.
- This writer has strongly internalized the habit of elaborating for readers.

Sentence Fluency

- Syntax is exceptionally well controlled, resulting in a fluid, varied, and effective writing style.
- Not only is sentence structure habitually clear, but the writer’s style often achieves grace, balance, and demonstrates an ear for rhetorical effect: “Look around you. The trees are usually all dressed up in white coats and hats with a little bit of green hair and there.” The alternation between short, energetic and longer, more fluid sentences with embedded modifiers is very skillfully done. Sentences such as these are intentionally fashioned with both sound and sense in mind.

Word Choice

- Word choice is unusually skilled and guided by the writer’s sense of purpose and audience.

- The fifth paragraph showcases the writer’s ability to select **language that is concrete, vivid, and discriminating**: “You can hear the soft, light, sound of the snow falling. The bird’s, chirping, telling one another how cold it is is music to the ears. The wind sounds soft, too. It seems to come in small ‘whooses’.”
- **The writer demonstrates skill with figurative language as well**: trees that are “all dressed up in white coats and hats.”

Conventions

- The writer demonstrates **proficient control of writing conventions identified in the 4th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards**.
- **End-of-sentence punctuation is consistently correct.**
- **Capitalization rules are followed.**
- Punctuation marks and conjunctions are used appropriately to separate sentences and connect clauses.
- **Commas are used correctly** after introductory adverbial clauses, to separate multiple modifiers before a noun, and to set off parenthetical expressions.
- **The errors that exist are typical of those found in a rough draft: several spelling errors of grade-level words, some homonym and apostrophe errors.**

Sample Essay 2a:

The snow is blowing in gusts. Everything is as white as a bleached white shirt. It is very quiet but loud at the same time. I come out of the house and realize that my dad is shoveling the walk. I fall down in the snow. I bet I look like a black lump moving across the lawn.

Suddenly, I jump up, grab a pre-made snowball and throw it at my dad. Not that long after my dad gets out the snow blower while I run beside it (getting covered in snow also!). After that we went inside. Dad makes hot cocoa while I turn on the weather. The weather forecast for tomorrow is going to be another 2 inches. During the winter, the days are supposed to get shorter. Whoever said that, I have to agree with them! As the day ends, it keeps snowing. My dad gets a fire started, and we sit on the couch and read our books.

All night it snows, and the fire dies down into little embers. When it snows, it's nice to know that you have a family and a warm home to live in.

Sample Essay 2a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	5
Conventions:	3
Total Score:	8

Purpose/Focus

- **This writer’s control of purpose and focus is advanced.**
- For the most part, the writer **focuses effectively on the topic, inventing descriptive details that clearly convey the writer’s point of view to readers.** The single exception is the **digression in the second paragraph:** “During the winter the days are supposed to get shorter. Whoever said that, I have to agree with them!” **This detail, as presented, appears unrelated** to the specific purpose and focus of the rest of the paper. If the writer had an implicit connection in mind, in this case, he did not make it explicit.

Organization/Coherence

- **The writer demonstrates advanced control of organization, building from a series of specific descriptive details and events to a general closing statement:** “When it snows, it’s nice to know that you have a family and a warm home to live in.”
- **The writer’s decision to arrange content inductively suggests knowledge of a variety of organizational strategies as well as the ability to select and arrange material with an audience in mind.**
- **The introduction and conclusion are very well handled, creating a highly effective frame for the essay.** The first sentence produces a sense of immediacy and energy, pulling the reader into the experience; the final paragraph paints a restful, intimate scene, a homey end for this writer’s topic and purpose.
- **Coherence is generally well controlled:** connections among sentences, ideas, and paragraphs are clear with the exception of the brief loss of focus in the second paragraph.
- **The writer’s control of present tense is unusual for grade level and further demonstrates skill in engaging an audience;** only one tense shift occurs throughout the essay: “After that we went inside.”
- **Transitions among paragraphs are skillfully executed.**

Development of Content

- **The essay is well developed.**
- **The writer imagines and selects a series of events, creating a descriptive narrative that usually solidly and effectively supports purpose.** Readers may sense, however, that the **narrative details provided in the second paragraph begin to distract the writer from his purpose** and seem to be there as much to fill space as anything else: “The weather forecast for tomorrow is going to be another 2 inches....”
- **The quality and thoroughness of elaboration in this essay are not quite as consistent or as thoughtful as that in the exemplary response.** For an impromptu essay written by a fourth grader, however, this is impressive work.

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is consistently clear and effective.**
- The writer **skillfully varies sentence structure and sentence beginnings** throughout the essay.
- **Occasionally, the writer’s style demonstrates grace, balance, and an ear for the prose**

rhythms of story: “As the day ends, it keeps snowing. My dad gets a fire started, and we sit down on the couch and read our books. All night it snows, and the fire dies down into little embers.”

Word Choice

- **Word choice is clear, effective, and guided by the writer’s sense of purpose and audience.**
- Although not quite as verbally sophisticated as the exemplary response, **this writer demonstrates advanced skill in selecting language that is vivid and concrete.**
- **The use of figurative language to evoke imagery for the reader is also well done:** “The snow is blowing in gusts. Everything is as white as a bleached white shirt. It is very quiet but loud at the same time.”

Conventions

- **The writer demonstrates advanced control of a wide range of conventions identified in the 4th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- Control of end-stop and internal punctuation, capitalization, spelling, grammar and usage is very strong.

Sample Essay 3a:

Snowy days are great. Today I was walking to school and there was a thick blanket of snow on the ground. There was lots of snow falling. There was snow everywhere. It was in the trees and bushes on the roads and sidewalks and in the sky. My nose was cold but I was warm in my gloves jacket snowpants head band and boots. Suddenly I had an impulse to just jump into the cold white snow. That's just what I did. Before I know it I'm making snowballs snowforts and snowmen. I even start a snowball fight. Snow is flying everywhere some hits my face. The snow is very cold on my face. Then I heard a bell and kids screaming too. I find out the teachers are calling so I have to go in. Snowy days are lots of fun.

Sample Essay 3a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	4
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	6

Purpose/Focus

- **This writer demonstrates proficient control of purpose and focus.**
- The essay effectively addresses the assigned task.
- The writer elaborates with descriptive and narrative details clearly selected with both audience and purpose in mind.

Organization/Coherence

- **The writer’s organizational strategy is clear and effectively carried out.**
- The essay **demonstrates a sense of beginning, middle, and end.** The introductory and concluding statements do create a logical context for the body of the paper but are very general, resulting in a **less effective frame for audience than that found in the exemplary and advanced papers.**
- **Paragraphing skills need improvement.**
- **Coherence is generally controlled:** connections among ideas are consistently clear.
- **The writer has difficulty controlling verb tense** in the second half of the paper, **shifting back and forth awkwardly from past tense to present:** “That’s just what I **did**. Before I **know** it I’m **making** snowballs, snowforts and snowmen. I even **start** a snowball fight. Snow **is flying** everywhere, some **hits** my face. The snow **is** very cold on my face. Then I **heard** a bell, and kids screaming too. I **find out** the teachers **are calling** so I **have** to go in.”

Development of Content

- **The essay is effectively developed: a variety of details** help the reader imagine the scene.
- The writer **often demonstrates awareness that general statements need to be further elaborated with more concrete details:** “There was snow everywhere. It was in the trees and bushes, on the roads and sidewalks and in the sky.”
- **The writer’s awareness of audience is evident in the selection of detail that appeals to the sense of touch as well as sight:** “The snow is very cold on my face.” However, **this essay is not as skillfully or thoroughly developed** as are the exemplary and advanced papers.

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is generally clear and presents no barrier to understanding.** In addition, the writer **demonstrates proficiency** in stylistic matters, **usually varying sentence structures and sentence openings** to create an essay that is generally readable and occasionally quite effective.
- There is a nice contrast and use of parallel structure, for example in “My nose was cold but I was warm....”
- **In comparison with exemplary and advanced papers, however, this writer’s style is not consistently as fluid, varied, or effective.**

Word Choice

- **The writer’s control of word choice is proficient.**
- The writer **consistently selects language that is clear and appropriate** with respect to denotation and connotation.

- **Attention to audience and purpose is also generally evident:** “there was a thick blanket of snow on the ground.”
- **Word choice in this essay, however, is not as consistently vivid, concrete, or evocative as that in higher scoring papers.** Images are more general and predictable as a result. Compare the advanced paper’s “Everything is as white as a bleached white shirt” to the proficient paper’s: “There was lots of snow falling. There was snow everywhere.”

Conventions

- **This writer demonstrates proficient control of conventions as defined by the 4th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- Capitalization and spelling are well managed.
- End-stop punctuation is usually correct with the exception of the comma splice between these independent clauses: “Snow is flying everywhere, some hits my face.”
- The writer misses the apostrophe in the contraction *that’s*. Control of commas as internal punctuation needs some work.

Sample Essay 4a:

It is nice but not sunny. The snow is coming down hard like the leaves fall. On snowy days I like to go sleiding on a big hill. Well snowy days are ok but I like it when there is alot of snow. Like 7 to 10 inches. I like snowy days sometimes on Christmas Eve because it is beautiful with sparckals. I like snowy days when you get to play outside with some of your friends. That's the only time I like to play outside in the snow. But otherwise I like snowy days. When I see a cople of ice cickles I grab them and eat them all. But I really really like snowy days.

Sample Essay 4a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	3
Conventions:	2 (low)
Total Score:	5

Purpose/Focus

- **This writer demonstrates adequate control of purpose and focus.**
- The essay **consistently addresses the topic and provides commentary and descriptive details to tell and show an audience** how she feels about the experience.
- The writer’s struggle, however, to develop an essay focused purposefully to an audience without **rambling or ineffective repetition** indicates that **control of this skill is partial and emerging rather than proficient**. Had the writer devoted a few minutes to planning time, she may have hit on a more effective unifying approach to the topic.

Organization/Coherence

- **The essay is neither well organized nor coherent.**
- Although the writer **creates some sense of a beginning, middle, and end, she does not follow a logical plan of development**. Both the introductory and concluding strategies suggest that the writer wants to engage the reader. The introduction is designed to set a scene, and the concluding statement is emphatic though repetitive.
- Throughout the essay, however, **the writer moves haltingly from point to point and seems ambivalent** about the discussion she is developing. **Coherence breaks down**.
- Connections among central ideas are not always clear. The writer shifts awkwardly from first to second person. **Transitions are not used to aid readers**.
- **Paragraphing skills are weak. The essay is hard to follow.**

Development of Content

- **The essay is adequately developed.**
- The writer **makes an effort to expand and illustrate her essay with descriptive details and several examples**. Two illustrative details indicate that this writer might have been able to write a proficiently developed essay if she had found an effective way to focus and organize her thoughts: “The snow is coming down hard like the leaves fall.” “When I see a couple of ice circles I grab them and eat them all.” **Wandering from point to point, however, indicates that the writer is unable to develop her purpose**: “On snowy days I like to go sleiding on a big hill. Well snowy days are ok but I like it when there is alot of snow.”

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is adequately controlled, presenting no barrier to understanding.**
- Sentence beginnings are varied enough to avoid monotony. **However, the writer tends to rely on simple sentence patterns that are occasionally awkward.**
- This writer’s **control of syntax and fluency in this essay is a bit below grade level**. Compare these two selections, the first from the proficient essay, the second from this writer. Proficient: “My nose was cold but I was warm in my gloves, jacket, snowpants, head band and boots. Suddenly, I had an impulse to just jump into the cold white snow.” Adequate: “I like snowy days when you get to play outside with some of your friends. That’s the only time I like to play outside in the snow. But otherwise I like snowy days.”
- There is **a choppy, simplistic, repetitive quality to this writer’s style**.

Word Choice

- **Word choice is clear and presents no barrier to understanding but is consistently general rather than concrete.**
- **Range of vocabulary is limited.** The writer’s use of simile in the second sentence to create a visual image is a good attempt to craft the language of the essay, but the comparison is not quite apt or logical: “The snow is coming down hard like the leaves fall.”

Conventions

- **The writer demonstrates proficient control of conventions as defined in the 4th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- A variety of errors exist: difficulty spelling grade level words, an awkward sentence fragment, lack of internal punctuation. **Taken in total, the errors do distract the reader from time to time but not so much that reading is significantly slowed.**

Sample Essay 5a:

One day I was walking outside I looked down I saw snow. I had to smell the freshniss of the snow it smelt good. Then I felt its smoothness it was smooth and cold I love snow and it's whiteness. The trees were blowing the cars were sliding.

Sample Essay 5a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	2
Conventions:	1
Total Score:	3

Purpose/Focus

- **The writer demonstrates basic control of purpose and focus.**
- The writer **keeps to the assigned task, selecting descriptive details that show the audience how he feels about the experience.**
- Demonstration of proficiency in this skill strand requires, however, that purpose and focus be sustained through a more adequately elaborated discussion.

Organization/Coherence

- **The essay demonstrates a weak sense of beginning and paragraph structure but no sense of closure.** The initial sentence reveals literal dependence on the prompt and provides **an abrupt rather than sufficient introduction to the paper** that is inattentive to audience.
- The writer makes a **discernable attempt to organize the response**, moving from a “topic sentence” to supporting details. The narrative marker, *then*, functions as a basic transition.

Development of Content

- **Content is very underdeveloped, though the writer makes an attempt to sustain a response to the prompt.**
- The writer **does demonstrate some basic understanding of how the topic might be developed** but creates a quick sketch rather than an essay.
- Some elaboration is provided for the senses of sight, smell, and touch, suggesting that the writer deliberately uses this strategy to help generate ideas for development. However brief, the inclusion of the “trees were blowing the cars were sliding” suggests that **some foundational skills have been internalized.**

Sentence Fluency

- **The writer relies exclusively on basic, simple sentences.**
- Syntactically, this essay demonstrates a lack of ability to control a variety of sentence structures appropriate to grade level.

Word Choice

- **Word choice presents no barrier to understanding, but vocabulary range is very restricted.**

Conventions

- **The writer demonstrates minimal control of conventions defined in the 4th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- The misspelling of *freshness* and the confusion between *it's* and *its* are minor errors, but the writer **fails to demonstrate control of basic end-stop punctuation.** Most of the essay is built on a series of run on sentences.

Sample Essay 6a:

I of course like snowy days because I can make snowmen snow balls and snow Forts From first thing in the morning until it's time to go to bed. When it's summer Forget that.

Sample Essay 6a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	1
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	3

Purpose/Focus

- **The writer states something relevant to the prompt but makes no attempt to sustain its development.**
- No evidence is provided that the writer can sustain focus or address an audience effectively.

Organization/Coherence

- Since this writer does not sustain a response to the prompt, there is **no evidence of skill in organizing a coherent discussion.**

Development of Content

- The writer **makes almost no attempt to develop the point raised.**

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is well controlled and fluid.**
- This writer could probably have developed, at least, a proficient essay if he had been motivated to do so.

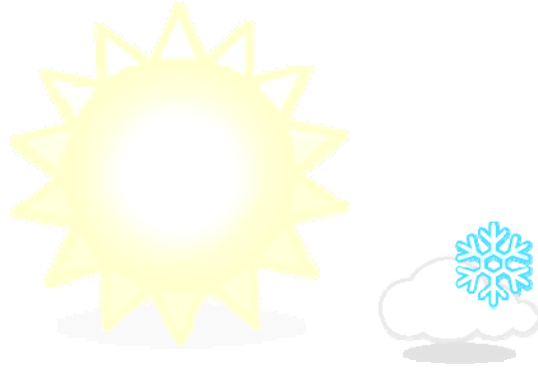
Word Choice

- **Word choice is clear and appropriate.**

Conventions

- **This writer demonstrates proficient control of conventions defined in the 4th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- Although we have only two sentences to go on, **the writer controls end-stop punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and apostrophe use.** Had the writer sustained this level of control throughout a developed essay, he would have earned a “3” in this skill category.

Grade 4 – Prompt b: Descriptive



Think of your favorite season of the year.
Describe this season in a way that shows
your readers why it is your favorite.



Sample Essay 1b:

My favorite season is summer. My first reason is because baseball starts and I love baseball. Also because I love swimming in the nice cool water of a pool. Another reason is because I love playing street hockey after eating hot dogs at Webster Park. I like staying up all night eating pizza and drinking coke at parties too. I totally like breaking the sound barrier after a trip to Walgreens, or just starting a bike ride, on my bike. One of my favorite things to do is eat those gooey, chocolatey, marshmallowy, fire roasted, s'mores. All those things are fun but my absolutely positively favorite thing is that there is no school. The reason why no school is my favorite because there is no more teachers to boss me around, I get fresh air, and no more homework! The only thing that I don't like about summer is tornados.

Sample Essay 1b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	5
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	7

Purpose/Focus

- Consistently focuses on a unified purpose and demonstrates control, “my favorite season is summer...”

Organization/Coherence

- Uses a logical plan of development with an effective beginning, middle, and end.
- The conclusion is abrupt but does finalize paper. “The only thing that I don’t like about summer is tornados.”

Development of Content

- Expands and supports main idea with specific details. “I love swimming in the nice cool water... I love eating hot dogs at Webster Park.”

Sentence Fluency

- Uses varied sentence structures, creating a fluent, readable style. “I totally like breaking the sound barrier after a trip to Walgreons...”

Word Choice

- Vivid word choice, “gooey, chocolatey, marshmellowy, fire roasted s’mores.”

Conventions

- Errors are typical of those commonly found in a rough draft but do not significantly distort meaning.
- Spelling errors – “becase” “tornados” “paties” “postivly” “barrier.”
- Principles of Agreement – “...there is no more teachers to boss me around.”

Sample Essay 2b:

My favorite season is fall because you can do a lot of different things with leaves. For instance you can see a lot of cool colors like green, red, orange, and yellow. You can also watch leaves change colors, like seeing green turn to yellow and red and many other colors. Another thing you can do is do a lot of really cool experiments with big leaves like take a piece of paper put a big leaf on top and keep it out in the warm sun then wait a couple of days then you take the leaf off of the paper then you should have a marking of the leaf. Also if you like to do arts and crafts then you can do a lot of leaf tracing with different sizes and different shapes of leaves. So if you are an artist you could do that. Another thing you can do if you like to run and jump is you can make piles of leaf and jump into it. That is one of my favorite things but my favorite thing is to make leaf forts. Those are all the reasons why I like Fall

The End

Sample Essay 2b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	4
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	6

Purpose/Focus

- Consistently focuses on a unified purpose and demonstrates control, “my favorite season is fall...”

Organization/Coherence

- Uses a logical plan of development with an effective beginning, middle, and end.
- Focus remains clear and coherent.

Development of Content

- Expands and supports main idea with general details... “watch leaves change colors” “...mark the leave on paper” or “make a pile of leaves and jump into it.”

Sentence Fluency

- Sentences are simple and repetitive.

Word Choice

- Repetitive

Conventions

- Errors are typical of those commonly found in a rough draft but do not significantly distort meaning.
- Spelling errors – “instence” “expiraments” “peace” “faveorite” “leave”
- Missing end stop punctuation at the end of the essay.

Sample Essay 3b:

My favorite season is summer because we get to go swimming and rollerballing. I like going swimming because we get to go to Jefferson school and go of the diving bord and go down the slide and just swim. I like going around the block with my roller ballles on. Summer is also a good season because we don't to go to school. We go for a bike ride in summer a lot and camping to and sometimes a fair. When we go camping we bring our bikes and roller ballles. I like going to a fair because I like going on the rides like the zipper. The best part of summer is not going to school.

Sample Essay 3b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	3
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	5

Purpose/Focus

- Adequate control of topic, “my favorite season is sammer.”

Organization/Coherence

- Ideas are very “listy”.
- Ideas may be rambling and do not tie together well.
- Response lacks a clear sense of purpose.

Development of Content

- Response is very general and lacks development. “I like to go swimming... rollerballding... biking...”

Sentence Fluency

- Sentences are repetitive. “I like, I like, I like...”

Word Choice

- Repetitive

Conventions

- Errors are typical of those commonly found in a rough draft but do not significantly distort meaning.
- Spelling errors – “sammer” “rollerballding” “rollerballdes” “bord”

Sample Essay 4b:

My favorite season is July because it is my birthday and its nice out in July and because its in the summer. That I go up north to our cabin and to my Grand partents house too.

Sample Essay 4b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	2
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	4

Purpose/Focus

- Loosely related focus on topic, “my favorite season is July.”

Organization/Coherence

- Brief response offers 2 quick ideas with minimal introductions and lacks a conclusion.

Development of Content

- Content is very general... “my birthday... our cabin... my Grand partent’s house...”

Sentence Fluency

- Sentences are awkward and lack proper capitalization, “that” after summer should be capitalized as the beginning of a new sentence.

Word Choice

- Vague

Conventions

- Errors are typical of those commonly found in a rough draft but do not significantly distort meaning.
- Spelling errors – “brithday” “Grand partents”

Sample Essay 5b:

Cis mis

I like to git plans and cars. I hat win my dog koko eas my toys and cande. I was like to get cas, plans, games and sitoms. I vary vary vary like my xbox and PS2.

Sample Essay 5b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	3
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	5

Purpose/Focus

- Minimal control and lack of purpose on topic, “I like to git plans and cars.”

Organization/Coherence

- Response is disorganized and hard to follow...”cars, dog, candy...”

Development of Content

- Vague

Sentence Fluency

- Awkward

Word Choice

- Awkward

Conventions

- Errors are typical of those commonly found in a rough draft but do not significantly distort meaning.
 - Spelling errors – “git” “plans” “win” “cande” “vary”
-

Grade 4 – Prompt c: Descriptive

Imagine your favorite meal.
Describe this meal in a way
that will make your readers wish
they were eating it this very minute.



Sample Essay 1c:

The smell of my favorite meal came through the crack in my door. I was doing my homework one Friday after school and the smell of porkchops, patatos, carrots, salads, and any thing else I could remember came right through the crack in my door straight to my nose. I could hear the bubbling of the porkchops that my dad was grilling out from the soeren of my window, and the chopping of the saldads, and the sizzling of the patatos in the microwave. It seemed to good to be true! I opened my window to take a wife of that delicious smell of porkchops bubbling on the grill. Then I heard it...the most wonderful sound saying "suppers ready come and eat!" Good thing I was done with my homework I piled all of my books and papers into a pile and practiceley through them into my back pack. I ran down to the dinning room the candiler shimmering with the sight of all my favorite foods. My family was already there my mom, dad, and two sisters Heather and Melanie. We said our prayer and sat dow to eat we piled up our plates with everything that could fit on them. I piled mine with fruits, veggis, meat, and a huge help of salad with lots of French dressing. I had no clue where to start digging in. I had practiceley three whole meals to eat right there on my plate. I started to eat the fruit then my veggis and every thing that came after that. And let me tell you I was one little stuffed piggy after that. But now I think I have a new favorit meal but I don't have time for it now. T-T-F-N-Tah-Tah-For-Now!!!!!!

Sample Essay 1c: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	5
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	7

Purpose/Focus

- Student describes her favorite dinner, which consisted of porkchops, potatoes, carrots, and salads.

Organization/Coherence

- Effective introduction
- Trite and formulaic conclusion (Tah-Tah-For-Now!!!!!!)
- Essay retells in chronological order the creation and consumption of the meal – the smells and sounds of preparation, the gathering of family, the serving, and the eating.
- Effective use of transitional strategies.

Development of Content

- The sequence of events leading up to the meal are solidly developed and supported with vivid and apt descriptions – “came right through the crack in my door straight to my nose...opened my window to take a wife of that delicious small of porkchops...” The meal itself, however, is lacking development.

Sentence Fluency

- Well controlled; mostly fluid and varied – “I opened my window...Then I heard it...Good thing I was done with my homework...I ran down to the dining room...My family was already there...And let me tell you I was one little stuffed piggy...”

Word Choice

- Effective and vivid – “bubbling of the porkchops”, “sizzling of the potatoes”, “delicious smell”, “chandelier shimmering”, “no clue where to dig in”.

Conventions

- Errors are typical of those commonly found in a rough draft but do not significantly distort meaning.
- Spelling errors – but most are the result of using more difficult words - “scren” “wife” (for “whiff”) “practicley” “candiler” “shimerling” “precicley” “favorit”

Sample Essay 2c:

My favorite meal is made out of white rice, Chicken Noodle Soup, pork, candy carrots, and mashed potatoes. I'll tell you why this is such a delicious meal. The white rice is the best because it's a nice pearl white, it has such good taste, and it's even healthy for you!

Chicken Noodle Soup is tasty with all those tiny chunks of delicious meat, and all those yummy noodles that you can slurp.

Pork is grand because when salted, it slowly melts away and leaves a great taste!

Candy carrots aren't really candy! People just add sugar and consider it a type of candy. It's so sweet and tasty, I'd eat it for the rest of my life if I had to!

Mashed potatoes with gravy is divine! I love them so much, I'd even have them for breakfast! Mashed potatoes wouldn't taste so divine without the gravy!

Sorry, I guess I ran out of favorite foods to tell you about. Well, see you till next time!

Sample Essay 2c: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	4
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	6

Purpose/Focus

- Student describes her favorite meal, which is “white rice, chicken noodle soup, pork, candy carrots, and mashed potatoes.”

Organization/Coherence

- Basic, adequate introduction
- Ineffective conclusion (“Sorry, I guess I ran out of favorite foods to tell you about.”)
- Description of meal proceeds sequentially from one food to the next in a focused and clear way.

Development of Content

- Description of meal well-developed and supported with details – “Chicken Noodle Soup is tasty with all those tiny chunks of delicious meat, and all those yummy noodles that you can slurp.” “Pork ...slowly melts away and leaves a great taste.”

Sentence Fluency

- Adequately varied and controlled; not particularly fluid in the use of transitional strategies. “My favorite meal is ...I’ll tell you why this is such a luscious meal...Chicken Noodle Soup is tasty...Pork is grand...”

Word Choice

- Vivid and precise
- Demonstrates attention to audience and purpose – “a nice purl white”, “tiny chunks of delicious meat”, “yummy noodles you can slurp”, “slowly melts away”, “so sweet and tasty”, “potatoes with gravy is divine!”

Conventions

- Solid and proficient control of grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling; very few errors.

Sample Essay 3c:

Pizza is my favorite meal to eat. I like the cheese on my pizza. I like to eat my pizza when it is still hot and yummy in my tummy. I like my pizza with cheese, meat, and pepperoni. It is made out of dough and it has a crunchy crust. It smells so good you just have to get one! Pizzas make me thirsty. I got to get a drink. I save the pepperoni and I eat the cheese with the sauce. Pizzas has a good smell when you get it out of the oven. I loved the smell of pizza.

Sample Essay 3c: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	3
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	5

Purpose/Focus

- Pizza is my favorite meal to eat.

Organization/Coherence

- Weak introduction and conclusion
- Transition between ideas sometimes unclear – “I like my pizza with cheese, meat, and peperomi. It is made out of dough...”
- Focus (describing pizza in an appealing way) maintained except for one brief excursion into drinks.

Development of Content

- Content is developed but somewhat repetitious – “I like the cheese...I like my pizza with cheese...I save the peperomi and I eat the cheese with the sause.”

Sentence Fluency

- Choppy sentences with little variety in structure.

Word Choice

- Repetitive and basic – “I like cheese...I like to eat my pizza...I like my pizza...pizzas has a good smell...I loved the smell of pizza...”

Conventions

- Generally controls grammar, usage, and punctuation. Minor spelling errors – “peperomi”, “sause” – and one run-on sentence (“Pizza make me thirsty I got to get a drink.”)

Sample Essay 4c:

I like griltcheese. I like the cheese meteing in my mouth. And I like the tast of the brade and cheese in my mouth. I like the way the lettes cranch in my mouth.

Sample Essay 4c: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	2
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	4

Purpose/Focus

- Student describes his favorite meal – “griltcheese”/lettuce sandwich.

Organization/Coherence

- Brief response offers a minimal introduction but lacks a conclusion.
- Maintains focus during its short length.

Development of Content

- Content is underdeveloped and incomplete.

Sentence Fluency

- Lack of variety in sentence structure – “I like...I like...and I like...I like...” No transitional strategies.

Word Choice

- Simple, effective word choices – “cheese melting in my mouth”, taste of the bread and cheese”, “the way the lettuce crunches”.

Conventions

- Although there are many spelling errors in so short an essay, they do not impair understanding or significantly distort meaning.

Sample Essay 5c:

I like caudy. Cause it's jusice. Sometimes I like caudy, sometimes I don't. Caudy is my favriete food.

Sample Essay 5c: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	1
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	3

Purpose/Focus

- “I like candy.”

Organization/Coherence

- The briefest of an introduction/conclusion – “I like candy.”/ “Candy is my favorite food.”
- Only a small part of what comes in between is relevant – “cause it’t jusice”.
- Loses focus on third sentence.

Development of Content

- Student states something relevant to the prompt – “I like candy.” – but makes no attempt to sustain its development.

Sentence Fluency

- Choppy, simple, and ineffective

Word Choice

- Few and simple.

Conventions

- Brief paper in which errors do not significantly impede reader or distort meaning.
- Generally controls grammar, usage, and end-stop punctuation.

Sample Essay 6c:

My favrike dinner is when me mom unice vinuse justen calvin megan we had turkey ham and masted patados we talked

Sample Essay 6c: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	1
Conventions:	1
Total Score:	2

Purpose/Focus

- Student writes of a meal of turkey, ham, and mashed potatoes.

Organization/Coherence

- No introduction/conclusion or evidence of organization in this one sentence paper. Only partially coherent.

Development of Content

- No development of content beyond naming the foods.

Sentence Fluency

- Garbled and awkward.

Word Choice

- Simple words arranged ineffectively – “My favrite dinner is when...”

Conventions

- Errors are frequent and distracting.

Sample Essay 7c:

When you go home you take a bath. You eat dinner.

Sample Essay 7c: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	D
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	2

Purpose/Focus

- Unknown. Student is writing on a different topic, perhaps “What is a typical school night like for you?” This essay is off-topic.

Organization/Coherence

- Too brief to demonstrate organization.
- If we could identify the topic, it might be coherent.

Development of Content

- Content, whatever it may be, is incompletely developed.

Sentence Fluency

- Too minimal to determine.

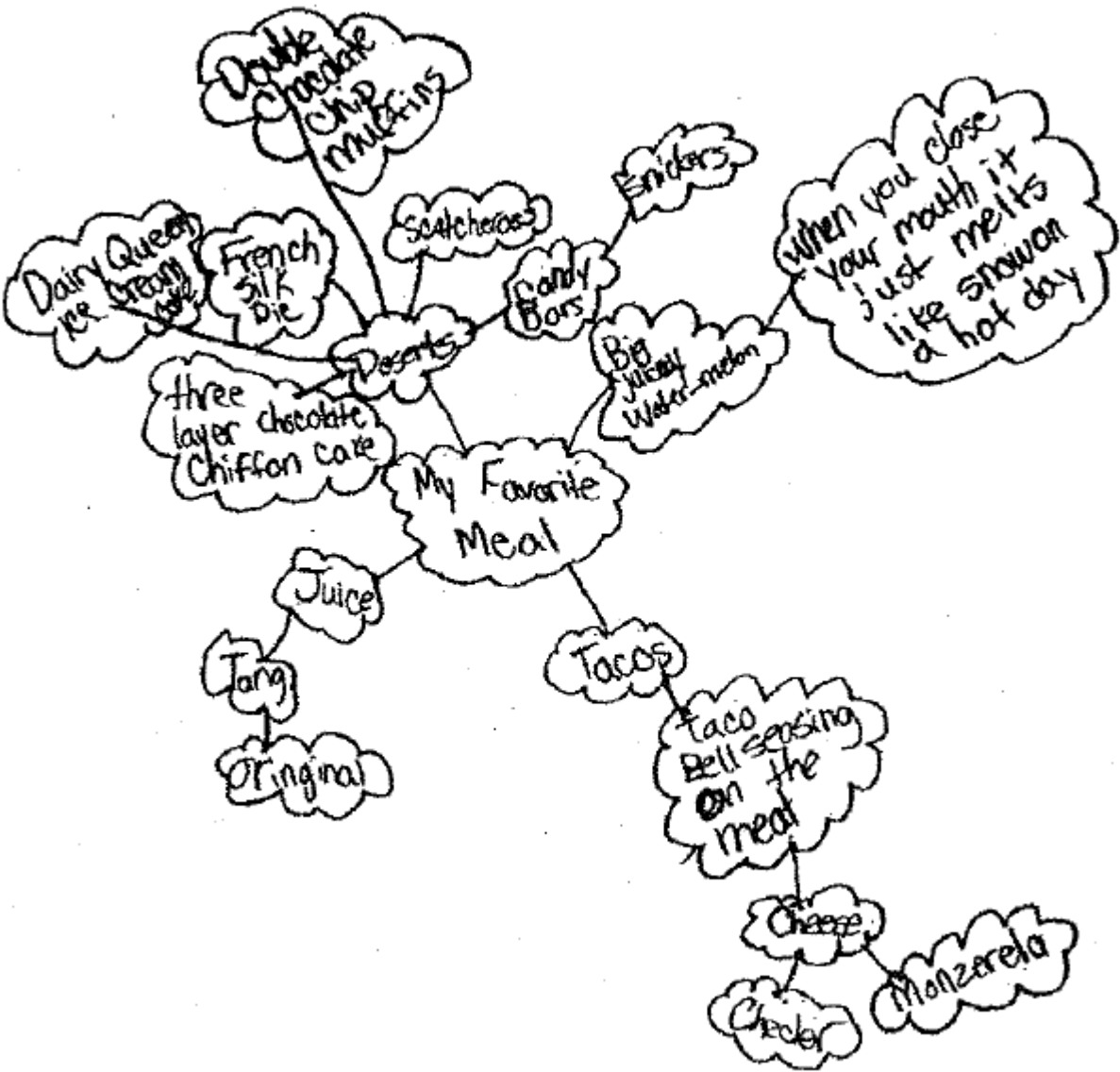
Word Choice

- Concrete, simple word choice.

Conventions

- Generally controls essential conventions – punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar, and usage.

Sample Essay 8c:



Sample Essay 8c: Scoring Breakdown

Composing: A
Conventions: A
Total Score: 0

Purpose/Focus

- None.

Organization/Coherence

- None in instructed format.

Development of Content

- None.

Sentence Fluency

- No sentences.

Word Choice

- None in instructed format.

Conventions

- A graphic organizer is, by definition, a failure to provide a connected prose response; thus, it is unscorable.
- Graphic organizers must always be Condition Coded A.

Grade 8

Each student's paper will be scored using two holistic rubrics:

- A 6-point composing rubric that measures students ability to write purposeful, focused, organized prose directed clearly and effectively to an audience.
- A 3-point conventions rubric that measures students ability to control the conventions of standard written English appropriate to grade level.

Composing Rubric Clarification for Scorers

Keep in mind that a paper need not meet all the criteria at a given score point to meet that score. A “5” paper, for instance, may contain some characteristics of a “6” and some characteristics of a “4,” but on balance will most closely match the criteria for a “5.”

6 Points

This paper demonstrates exemplary control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. An appropriate sense of audience is evident throughout, guiding the writer’s word choice and selection, arrangement, and development of content.

- The introduction and conclusion skillfully frame and clarify the writer’s purpose and address the needs of the audience.
- The writer’s focus or thesis is either explicitly stated or strongly implied and consistently guides the paper’s development.
- The writer’s organizational strategy is clear and effectively carried out.
- Coherence is consistently very well controlled: connections among sentences, ideas, and paragraphs are consistently clear. Transitional strategies are effective and varied.
- Content is thoughtful, insightful, and unusually well developed and supported.
- Syntax is very well controlled, resulting in a fluid, varied, and effective writing style.
- Word choice is unusually skilled (discriminating, precise, apt, habitually concrete) and guided by the writer’s sense of purpose and audience.

5 Points

This paper demonstrates advanced control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence, and development. An appropriate sense of audience is evident throughout, guiding the writer’s word choice and selection, arrangement, and development of content.

- The introduction and conclusion create a logical context for the body of the paper but may be more formulaic and less effective for audience than the exemplary response.
- The writer’s focus or thesis is either explicitly stated or strongly implied. Overall, the student’s focus is clearly evident, though the response may contain a paragraph or section where focus is briefly lost.
- The writer’s organizational strategy is clear and effectively carried out.
- Coherence is generally well controlled: connections among sentences, ideas, and paragraphs are usually clear. Transitional strategies are used to aid readers.
- Content is solidly developed and supported, but elaboration is less consistently specific and insightful than the 6.
- Syntax is consistently clear and effective.
- Overall, word choice is very effective and guided by the writer’s sense of purpose and audience.

4 Points

This paper demonstrates proficient control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. Audience awareness is generally evident.

- The introduction and conclusion create a logical context for the body of the paper but may be more formulaic and less effective for audience than exemplary and advanced responses.
- The writer's focus or thesis is either explicitly stated or strongly implied. Overall, the student's focus is clearly evident, though the response may contain a paragraph or section where coherence is briefly lost.
- The writer's organizational strategy is clear and effectively carried out.
- Coherence is generally controlled: connections among central ideas are clear. Transitional strategies are present but may be less smoothly handled than exemplary and advanced responses.
- Content is developed and supported. Elaboration is typically more general than exemplary and advanced responses.
- Syntax is generally clear and provides no barrier to understanding.
- Overall, word choice is clear and appropriate but tends to be less precise and effective than the exemplary and advanced responses.

3 Points

This paper demonstrates adequate control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. The sense of real communication with an audience is often lacking, resulting in weaknesses in several skill areas.

- An introduction and conclusion frame the discussion but tend to be ineffective for audience.
- The writer's focus or thesis is stated or implied but may be general or overly vague; the focus may only partially guide the paper's development. Readers may sense the writer's lack of clear purpose.
- The writer's overall organizational plan is carried out.
- Coherence is generally adequately controlled: connections among central ideas are fairly clear. Transitional strategies are usually present between paragraphs, but they may tend to be highly formulaic and ineffective for audience.
- Content is underdeveloped, often or habitually general, vague, repetitious, weak. Readers may sense the writer has one or two generic ideas that are repeated over and over in lieu of development. Wandering from the point may cover the writer's inability to develop his or her purpose. The writer often seems to lack a sense of communication with an audience.
- Syntax can range from generally clear to frequently awkward or choppy and monotonous.
- Word choice tends to be vague, general, or clichéd.

2 Points

This paper demonstrates basic control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. Audience awareness/real communicative purpose is lacking or absent.

- An introduction and conclusion may be present but are very underdeveloped and inattentive to the needs of an audience.
- The writer makes an attempt to create a focus or thesis in response to the prompt. Focus and purpose may only partially guide the paper's development.
- The writer makes a discernable attempt to organize the response.
- Coherence is often lacking. Connections among central ideas are frequently unclear. Little or no attempt is made to create transitional strategies to aid readers.
- Content is very vague and underdeveloped, though the writer makes an attempt to sustain a response to the prompt.
- Syntax is frequently awkward and uncontrolled.
- Word choice is frequently vague, awkward and inadequate to the task.

1 Point

This paper demonstrates minimal control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. Audience awareness/real communicative purpose is lacking or absent.

The writer states something relevant to the prompt but makes no attempt to sustain its development.

8th Grade Composing Rubric

Wisconsin Writing Rubric 6-Point Scoring Guide					
Elements of Rubric	Purpose & Focus	Organization & Coherence	Development of Content	Sentence Fluency	Word Choice
<i>Element Description</i>	Clearly presents and maintains a unified purpose, focus, and/or thesis Demonstrates understanding of the requirements of the assigned task	Frames the discussion with an effective introduction and conclusion Creates a logical structure of development for the topic, thesis, and purpose Uses transitional strategies (from idea to idea, paragraph to paragraph, and sentence to sentence)	Demonstrates <i>quality</i> of invented content (e.g. of explanations, arguments, rationale, ideas, details, examples, illustrations) Demonstrates <i>thoroughness</i> in the elaboration of content	Demonstrates use of varied syntactic structures including simple, compound, complex, and compound/complex sentences Evidences some control over stylistic effects (e.g. variety, readability)	Controls word choice with respect to both denotation and connotation Demonstrates attention to context (audience, purpose, situation, tone) Evidences some control over figurative language for rhetorical effect (e.g. similes, metaphors, personification)
<i>Positive Descriptors</i>	Focused, unified, controlled, relevant	Well organized, integrated, smooth, controlled, coherent	<u>Quality</u> : clear, convincing, accurate, effective, well-reasoned, insightful <u>Thoroughness</u> : specific, well-developed, well-supported, well-illustrated	Fluid, varied, controlled, effective	Apt, discriminating, vivid, precise, concrete, concise
<i>Negative Descriptors</i>	Rambling, loosely related, redundant, irrelevant, lacks purpose	Disorganized, hard to follow, mechanical, illogical shifts, incoherent	<u>Quality</u> : vague, imprecise, inaccurate, simplistic, poorly reasoned, superficial <u>Thoroughness</u> : incomplete, general, inadequately developed, inadequately supported, lacks illustration	Choppy, monotonous, garbled, ineffective, awkward	Inappropriate, cliched, awkward, imprecise, vague wordy

Rubric Holistic Scoring Scale							
Scores	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Description</i>	Exemplary control of the domain	Advanced control of the domain	Proficient control of the domain	Adequate control of the domain	Basic control of the domain	Minimal control of the domain	Off Topic

Conventions of Written English – 8th Grade

3 points: Advanced Control

The response demonstrates advanced control of a wide range of conventions identified in the 8th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in English Language Arts:

- Uses words, phrases, and clauses effectively, including coordinate and subordinate conjunctions, relative pronouns, and comparative adjectives
- Uses correct tenses to indicate the relative order of events
- Employs principles of agreement, including subject-verb, pronoun-noun, and preposition-pronoun
- Punctuates compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences correctly
- Employs the conventions of capitalization
- Spells frequently used words correctly and uses effective strategies for spelling unfamiliar words
- Errors are infrequent and minor

2 points: Proficient Control

The response demonstrates proficient control of the conventions identified in the 8th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in English Language Arts:

- Generally controls grammar and usage (principles of agreement, noun and verb forms, pronoun reference, superlative and comparative forms)
- Generally uses phrases, dependent and independent clauses clearly and correctly
- Capitalizes most words correctly; control over more sophisticated capitalization skills may be spotty
- Uses end-stop punctuation correctly most of the time; internal punctuation (commas, apostrophes, semicolons) is sometimes missing or wrong.
- Generally uses correct spelling with grade-level words and reasonable phonetic approaches to more difficult words
- Makes errors typical of those commonly found in a rough draft; errors do not seriously distract the reader

1 point: Minimal Control

The response demonstrates minimal control of the conventions identified in the 8th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in English Language Arts:

- Contains numerous serious end-stop or internal punctuation errors, resulting in fragments, comma splices, run-ons
- Shows poor control of grammar and usage (principles of agreement, verb and/or noun forms including possessives, pronoun reference, superlative and comparative forms, appropriate use of phrases/independent, dependent clauses, capitalization)
- Frequently misspells words, even those on grade-level
- Makes errors that are frequent, varied, and distracting

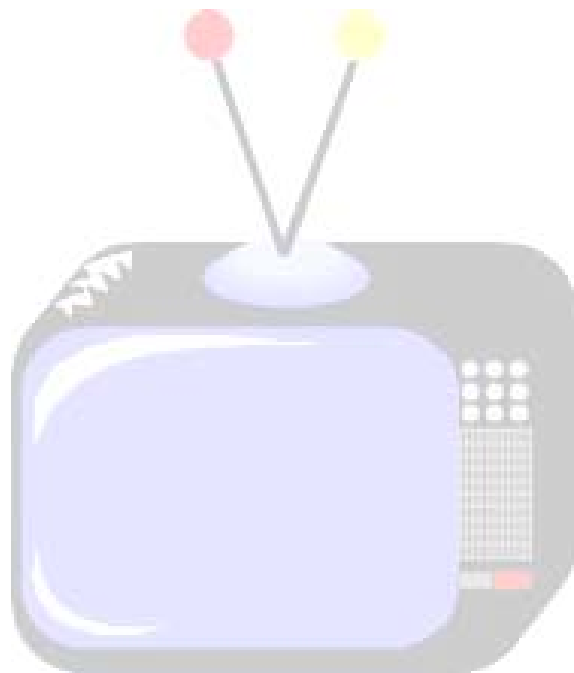
0 points: Off topic

Grade 8 – Prompt a: Persuasive

The Television Advertisers Association is sponsoring an essay contest for students. Students are invited to submit essays that discuss ONE thing about television advertising they believe should be changed. Write an essay for the contest identifying the change that should be made and persuading your reader why this change is important.

Be sure to use:

- A clear organizational structure, including an introduction, a clear focus, transitions, and a conclusion
- Specific reasons and details to support your conclusion
- Effective and appropriate word choice
- Correct grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization



Sample Essay 1a:

Demographics, demographics, and more demographics! I know that is what people who make television commercials must think about in order to appeal to an ever more broad audience, sell more, and make more money. There is nothing wrong with trying to improve that bottom line! However, appealing to the majority seems sometimes to mock, discriminate against, or shun the minority. This writer feels that television commercials almost always depict families of "traditional" structure, rarely depicting single parent families, members of racial minorities or interracial couples, or families who live in inner cities. I think that commercials should follow in the footsteps of television programs that have come a long way in showing more diversity in American family lives.

In television commercials, what does one see when he or she sees a family? A married mother and father, usually with at least one son and one daughter. They are "normal" people. They are appealing to "normal people." However, with 50% of marriages ending in divorce and 30% of the population single, how "normal" are they? Almost never is a family shown with a single parent! It is important for advertisers to remember that "nontraditional" families buy products too, and they would more likely buy products if advertisements tried harder to appeal to their needs. Think how important microwave dinners are to that single mom with three kids!

Even though commercials and t.v. programs have both been improving in the area of race, advertisements still lag behind. T.V. programs show Asian Americans, Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, etc., but the impression left by about ninety percent of television commercials is that being an American means being white. Yet we all know the population has changed a great deal over time! It is true that we do see more black families in commercials, but what about all the other races that share our shores? So, even though some members of racial minorities are in TV commercials, and are shown in a positive, non-stereotypical light, advertisements have a long way to go to catch up with reality. Very few times in my 13.5 years of life have I seen TV commercials with interracial couples!

Finally, if we believed what we saw on television commercials, we would think that all those "normal" families all lived in the suburbs. Never is an inner city home depicted! Are we to believe that inner city families don't eat at McDonalds, shop for cars, or buy clothes for their kids? This, too, must change.

Overall, despite our progress in combating stereotypes and discrimination on commercials, we have a long way to go. The more people your advertisements appeal to the better it is for your business, and the better it is for helping everyone feel a part of our society. And one more thing, remember that our television commercials are seen all over the world! Other countries think Americans are not very open to different races and beliefs. You could even help change attitudes and opinions about America and might help create a more peaceful world.

Sample Essay 1a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing Score:	6
Conventions Score:	3
Total Score:	9

Purpose/Focus

- This writer’s **control of purpose and focus is exemplary.**
- The writer explicitly states a clear, unifying, and thoughtful idea and shapes a discussion clearly intended to persuade the audience he or she has been asked to address.
- **Focus on this audience and this purpose is skillfully maintained throughout the paper.**
- The writer both demonstrates an understanding of the audience’s practical concerns and effectively challenges that audience to consider larger issues of community responsibility as well.

Organization/Coherence

- The essay is **very well organized** following not only the preview given in the thesis statement but also developing the introductory comparison between television commercials and television programming in the body of the paper.
- **Coherence is very well controlled**, each idea leading naturally and logically to the next from the first sentence to the last.
- **Transitional strategies are effective and varied**, creating a highly readable essay.
- **The introduction and conclusion skillfully frame the essay**, providing a logical context for the points discussed in the body of the paper and creating motivation for the imagined audience.

Development of Content

- **The discussion is exceptionally well developed.** Support is consistently thorough, precise, insightful, and directed to audience.
- The writer acknowledges, for example, that television advertisers have made real progress in more fairly representing some minority groups as well as creating specific examples to illustrate how much more effectively advertisements could reflect and reach its diverse audiences.
- **This writer’s awareness of the intended communication situation effectively controls the selection and development of content.**

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is generally very well controlled, resulting in a fluid, varied and effective writing style.**
- The writer demonstrates ability with fragments clearly used for effect, short simple sentences created to add punch, as well as the capacity to control compound/complex sentences with embedded phrases and clauses. Sentence beginnings are also varied and effective.

Word Choice

- **Word choice is unusually skilled and guided by the writer’s sense of purpose and audience.**
- The writer demonstrates access to **a rich range of vocabulary** (“appealing to the majority seems sometimes to mock, discriminate against, or shun the minority”) which allows the writer to develop ideas with discrimination, insight and depth.
- The writer **consistently chooses language to achieve clarity, demonstrate conviction, and create a memorable argument** (e.g., people from diverse backgrounds “share our shores”).

Conventions

- The writer demonstrates **advanced control of a wide range of writing conventions identified in the 8th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- Except for the occasional effective sentence fragment, end-of-sentence punctuation is consistently correct as is internal punctuation.
- Spelling of both grade-level and above grade-level words is correct with the exception of “interacial.” Most capitalization rules are consistently and correctly followed.
- Grammar and usage are very well controlled.
- This is a nearly flawless essay.

Sample Essay 2a:

When girls begin to grow up and become teenagers, most begin to care a lot more about their self-image. To find the ideal image of a perfect body most girls turn to the media. Many advertisements however use super thin and even digitally fixed models to act in their commercials. If there is one thing that needs to change in T.V. advertising it needs to be that advertisers use girls of all shapes and sizes in their commercials.

When we look back throughout history, we know that girls have done all kinds of things to their bodies to make them look more "beautiful." These practices prevented normal growth in all areas of women's bodies. These rituals seem disgusting to us today, and we think we know better than to bind up a young girl's feet or encourage her to deform herself in any other way.

But do we really know better? Today girls still harm themselves physically and mentally because society has told them it will make them more attractive. The television advertisements that they see everyday support an unrealistic image in their minds. Many of their attitudes change greatly and their minds keep them going with these pictures of models who are most likely unhealthy. To reach this unrealistic image very young girls often begin to over-exercise and under-eat. Some of these girls go on to develop serious disorders like anorexia or bulimia and may even develop such distorted body images that they die.

Advertisements need to change so less young minds become corrupted and less people become hospitalized. Everybody needs to know that the people on television are not normal and that some fat is good!

The media projects millions of beauty images into young girl's heads as they watch T.V. These images of skinny models can lead them to harm themselves in unimageinable ways. T.V. advertisers need to use more models of many more shapes and sizes.

Sample Essay 2a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	5
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	7

Purpose/Focus

- **This writer’s control of purpose and focus is advanced.**
- The essay **focuses consistently and effectively on the assigned task**, demonstrating clearly the potentially serious effect media images can have on girls health.
- The writer **maintains a persuasive purpose throughout** although the approach to audience here is less sophisticated than in the exemplary paper.
- This writer’s focus could be improved by balancing the discussion of the harmful effects of overly slim supermodels with more specific discussion about the beneficial effects that would result from using “girls of all shapes and sizes” in commercials.

Organization/Coherence

- The essay is **well organized**, containing an effective introduction and logical, though somewhat repetitious, conclusion. **The arrangement of the second and third body paragraphs demonstrates this writer’s ability to use comparison** as a dramatic means of driving home an insightful and persuasive point.
- The writer **uses a variety of transitional devices throughout the essay**, including a very effective rhetorical question at the beginning of the third paragraph, creating **a generally coherent discussion** in which sentences, paragraphs, and ideas flow logically.
- **Stronger transitions among sentences in the introduction and between the third and fourth and fourth and fifth paragraphs would improve the essay.**

Development of Content

- The writer **effectively develops and supports the central idea**, demonstrating clearly that the problem he or she addresses has very serious consequences for many girls.
- Pointing out the hypocrisy underlying this society’s acceptance of its own unnatural standards of beauty while condemning the rituals and practices of other cultures is an insightful and powerful strategy.
- The writer **elaborates specifically and persuasively** to show the cause and effect relationship between media standards and girls body images.
- **Elaboration in this essay, however, is less consistently thorough than in the exemplary response.** Most significantly, the writer repeats but does not directly or specifically support the central claim that showing girls of “all shapes and sizes” would make a real difference.

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is consistently clear.**
- The writer effectively varies sentence structure and sentence beginnings throughout the essay.
- **Occasionally, the writer creates a highly effective phrase or clause** (e.g., “we think we know better than to bind up a young girl’s feet”; “Some of these girls go on to develop serious disorders like anorexia or bulimia and may even develop such distorted body images that they die.”)

Word Choice

- **Overall, word choice is clear, effective, and guided by the writer’s sense of purpose and audience.**
- Occasionally, the writer demonstrates an ability to select language that is particularly precise and apt (e.g. “digitally fixed models,” “deform,” “distorted body images”).
- Word choice, however, is more often general than in the exemplary response (e.g., “all kinds of things,” “all shapes and sizes,”) and is sometimes awkward (e.g., “support an unrealistic image in their minds”).

Conventions

- **The writer demonstrates proficient control of writing conventions defined in the 8th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- End-of-sentence punctuation is consistently controlled. Grammar and usage are generally correct with the exception of “less” young minds.
- **The writer makes a few minor errors typical of those found in a rough draft:** omission of commas either after introductory elements or around parenthetical ones, spelling and apostrophe errors.

Sample Essay 3a:

Oh look isn't she beautiful I've had friends ask me while we're watching T.V. Advertisers use beautiful women for commercials all the time to catch ones eye.

I think that should be changed because a girl looks at that model then at themselves and feel small and ugly. There's alot of presures these days for teenage girls to be beautiful and the ways they do it aren't always the best. They see a skinny model and almost instantly feel fat. So they go skip a meal. Or, they throw away all their dreams for a fake gleaming chance to become that model in skimpy clothes on T.V.

What advertisers are putting out there on T.V. isn't always the best thing for growing girls to see. Being a model looks easy, glamorous and popular, but lots of models have to starve themselves and run long hours to stay thin.

The clothing worn isn't always appropriate either. What kind of standards are being put up for today's feminine youth?

That's why I think they should cut back or quit altogether with the beautiful girls on T.V. Who needs T.V. any way, get outside, do something, and stay healthy.

Sample Essay 3a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing Score:	4
Conventions Score:	2 (low)
Total Score:	6

Purpose/Focus

- **This writer demonstrates proficient control of purpose and focus.**
- **The writer’s unifying idea**, that advertisements too often use beautiful women “to catch ones eye,” **is clearly stated and usually guides the development** of the paper.
- **The writer selects supporting points that have some persuasive force for an audience**, for example, that girls feel small and ugly when they compare themselves to the models on television; however, **the writer makes no attempt to appeal to the specific audience** identified in the prompt.
- The essay’s **concluding remark is irrelevant** to the topic and thesis.

Organization/Coherence

- **The writer usually organizes ideas logically, creating a sense of beginning, middle, and end.**
- **Reasonable control over paragraph structure is evident**: each paragraph addresses a single topic. Ideas are usually addressed in a logical, clear order.
- **The introduction is catchy but underdeveloped; the conclusion is weak.**
- The writer **often uses transitional strategies to connect ideas**, but the **transitions are sometimes rough** and colloquial (e.g., “so,” “or,” “that’s why”).

Development of Content

- **The central idea is developed and supported.**
- The writer provides two clear objections to the media’s emphasis on beautiful women: 1) that girls feel ugly in comparison and become obsessed with their looks, and 2) that models pay a heavy price to remain sufficiently slender for television. **Each point receives some elaboration, but development is more general, less thorough than the advanced or exemplary responses.**
- **The third point is both underdeveloped and insufficiently connected** to the rest of the paper.

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is generally clear and presents no barrier to understanding.**
- Although the writer has difficulty smoothly integrating a direct quote into her sentence structure at the outset of the essay, she **does demonstrate some ability to effectively vary sentence structure and to communicate clearly.**
- **Stylistically, the essay sometimes relies too heavily on the patterns of spoken English rather than demonstrating control of written syntax**: “Who needs T.V. any way, get outside, do something, and stay healthy.” **Other sentences do demonstrate developing proficiency**: “Being a model looks easy, glamorous and popular, but lots of models have to starve themselves and run long hours to stay thin.”

Word Choice

- **The writer’s choice of words is clear and presents no barrier to understanding.**
- Although the writer **usually uses ordinary vocabulary**, choosing words that are predictable, colloquial, and common, she **does demonstrate the ability to turn an effective phrase** that

rings with conviction: “They see a skinny model and almost instantly feel fat. So they go skip a meal. Or, they throw away all their dreams for a fake gleaming chance to become that model in skimpy clothes on T.V.” The awkward use of a self-consciously formal expression, “today’s feminine youth,” may suggest that this writer is working to develop more range in her word choice.

Conventions

- **The writer just demonstrates proficient control of writing conventions identified in the 8th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- Although this essay contains a variety of errors that detract from the writing, **the errors are not so distracting as to seriously impede communication.**
- The essay contains comma splices, errors in subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement (“a girl looks at that model then at themselves and feel small and ugly”; “What kind of standards are...”), numerous spelling errors with grade-level words, and omits the possessive apostrophe in *one’s*.

Sample Essay 4a:

I believe that violence in television advertisements should be stopped. Our society is becoming more and more violent every day. Many young children watch all of these violent ads and are never taught that violence is not the way to solve all of your problems. We need to be able to make ways of marketing products on television without incorporating violence in the ads.

If all of this violence on television continues, one day our society will be so full of violence that there will be no way out. We need to stop all of the violence before it is too late to change society's views on the issue. This problem can be stopped and we should start by removing violence from our television ads.

Sample Essay 4a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing Score:	3
Conventions Score:	2
Total Score:	5

Purpose/Focus

- **This writer demonstrates adequate control of focus and purpose.**
- The essay **addresses the requirements of the task, specifying one thing** about television advertising that should be changed and **addressing that change as significant.**
- In addition, **the writer clearly attempts to persuade the audience** that television advertising desensitizes society to violence.

Organization/Coherence

- **The essay is organized, creating a sense of beginning, middle, and end, and demonstrates adequate control of paragraph structure.**
- Rather than constructing a full essay, however, the writer addresses each of the two topic directions in a single paragraph.
- The writer **does not demonstrate proficiency in framing the discussion** with an effective introduction or conclusion.
- The **discussion is coherent**; sentences are arranged in a logical order.

Development of Content

- **The writer does not demonstrate proficiency in the development of content.** Although the points raised are worthy of elaboration, **the writer merely asserts rather than supporting his ideas.**
- **No specific examples** of violence in television advertising or society are provided.
- **No attempt is made to support** the assertion that violence in television advertising leads to actual violence.
- Rather than elaborating, **the writer repeats general statements in general terms.**
- The lack of development in this essay is its greatest weakness.

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is clear and presents no barrier to understanding.**
- The writer avoids awkward structures; however, **in comparison with higher scoring papers, this writer does not demonstrate control over varied sentence structures and beginnings.**

Word Choice

- **Word choice is clear and presents no barrier to understanding but is consistently general rather than concrete.**
- This writer deals exclusively in generalities: “becoming more and more violent every day,” “all of these violent ads,” “to solve all of your problems,” “stop all of the violence.”

Conventions

- **The writer demonstrates proficient control of writing conventions defined in the 8th grade Wisconsin Model Academic standards.**
- The writer produces enough text to determine that the essential elements of end-stop punctuation, internal punctuation, grammar and usage, capitalization conventions are

sufficiently under control. The misspellings of *incorporating* and *violence* are minor.

- Although the writer avoids common homonym errors and uses apostrophes correctly (a good sign), **achieving advanced control requires demonstration of a wider variety of sentence structures and conventions as defined in the standards.**

Sample Essay 5a:

One thing about tv advertising I think should be changed is how fake they are.

I hate it when t.v advertising makes things seem so fake. On this one commercial they had this thing that supposedly makes your teeth clean like that! When they showed the commercial, the guy had yellow teeth not just a little but alot. Also with toys, when I was little I wanted this Barbie, and on the commercial it said she really skates. I thought she really skated by herself, but when I got her home she wouldn't skate. I had to push her around.

Sample Essay 5a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	2
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	4

Purpose/Focus

- **The writer demonstrates basic control of purpose and focus.**
- The writer **keeps to the assigned topic but does not fully address the requirements of the task.** One specific issue is identified, but the writer does not adequately demonstrate its significance.
- **Little effort is made to move beyond assertion to persuasion.**
- **Audience awareness is significantly lacking.** The essay is me-centered throughout.
- This writer’s **control of purpose and focus is several years below grade level.**

Organization/Coherence

- **The essay reveals a weak sense of beginnings and paragraph structure but no sense of closure.**
- The writer does not engage in an introductory strategy but begins with a simple assertion. The single body paragraph does include specific examples which shows the writer’s awareness that development with specifics is required.
- The writer does not bother with a conclusion.
- The writer uses **simple transitional strategies** and creates **an understandable flow of ideas.**

Development of Content

- **The writer does not adequately develop the central claim.**
- Other than providing two examples of “fake” advertising claims, the essay does not adequately explore, develop, or elaborate on the topic.
- Grade level treatment of this idea should demonstrate an ability to analyze more effectively, involving discussion, for example, of misleading or exaggerated advertising claims and more thoughtful treatment of the significance of their effects.

Sentence Fluency

- **Control of syntax is very weak.**
- This writer **has not made a transition from the patterns of speech to the structures of written discourse.**
- Sentence beginnings are ungrammatical and awkward. Syntax derails as a result: “On this one commercial they had this thing that supposedly makes your teeth clean like that!”

Word Choice

- **Word choice is simplistic and limited throughout.**

Conventions

- The writer **just demonstrates proficient control of the conventions identified in the 8th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- End-of-sentence and internal punctuation, spelling, and capitalization are generally correct.
- A pronoun/antecedent agreement error occurs in the first sentence; *alot* is a common and minor misspelling.

- This writing sample is so brief and the range of syntactic structures used is so narrow. However, had a major agreement error, verb form error, or end-stop error occurred, the essay would have received a “1” for writing conventions.

Sample Essay 6a:

my change for the television advertising is stop useing some diskusting things on tv pills to stop bloteing and stuff like that for instins

Sample Essay 6a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	1
Conventions:	1
Total Score:	2

Purpose/Focus

- **This writer states something relevant to the prompt but makes no attempt to sustain its development.**
- No evidence is provided that the writer can sustain focus or address an audience effectively.

Organization/Coherence

- Since this writer does not sustain a response to the prompt, there is **no evidence of skill in organizing a coherent discussion.**

Development of Content

- The writer **makes almost no attempt to develop** the point raised.

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is very poorly controlled** and indicates difficulty with English word order and sentence structure.

Word Choice

- **Word choice is simplistic and significantly below grade level.**

Conventions

- This writer **demonstrates minimal control of writing conventions identified in the 8th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- This very brief writing sample contains numerous, obvious errors.

Grade 8 – Prompt b: Persuasive

The school newspaper has asked students to submit suggestions about how to improve the school. Think of ONE problem that you would like to see solved to make life at school better for you and others. Write a letter to the school newspaper, convincing your readers that this problem is significant and that your solution will work.

Be sure to use:

- Specific reasons and details to support your discussion
- A clear organizational structure, including an introduction, a clear focus, transitions, and a conclusion
- Effective and appropriate word choice
- Correct grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization



Sample Essay 1b:

Many students have been complaining about the school lunch recently. They agree that the prices are too high, the quantity is too low, the selection is bad, and that the food that is considered healthy is probably far less nutritious than the chips and cookies that are also sold.

Is \$1.25 too expensive for bottled water? What about \$0.75 for a rather small bag of chips or some ice cream. It is arguable, but many students have been complaining about the high prices of school lunch food. The food is very highly priced, and not always even worth the price! Of course, it's a matter of opinion, but most would agree that the prices are simply too high. Fifty cents may seem cheap for a cookie, but when you buy two or three others things the price adds up, and if you plan on having any sort of a "healthy" lunch, it's going to cost you (probably about \$3.00 - \$5.00). The food should at least be worth the price, right? And that isn't even true to some people. The prices of the food for school lunch should be lowered due to the quality of the food and the opinions of most-students. The quality of the food is another controversial matter, but again, a large number of students agree that the food is not good. Sure, they have chip, cookies, and ice cream, one kind of pizza and one "healthy" selection, but after a while this gets boring, most kids don't even eat the "healthy" food because the chicken just doesn't taste like chicken. And then again, arises the question, is the food worth the price?

Perhaps another way to make the food better would be to give us more for our money. Seventy-five cents may be reasonable price for chips if they actually give us enough of them to keep us from going hungry. Oftentimes, food will be in short supply, too, and they could have run out

of pizza before you even get to the front of that long line. It would also help if we were given more selection. For example, if they sold different kinds of food. There aren't that many options, and everyone would love a change once in a while. So to further improved the school lunches we should get more for our money, so to speak.

Right now, a lot of students would be happier if the school lunches were better. After all, aren't we supposed to look forward to lunch during the school day? Therefore, to improve the lunches, and thereof the well-being of the students, the prices, quality, and quantity should be improved.

Sample Essay 1b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	6
Conventions:	3
Total Score:	9

Purpose/Focus

- “The price, quality, and quantity of the school lunch food should be improved to help make the school better.”

Organization/Coherence

- Solid introduction explaining the problems and suggesting solutions.
- Conclusion briefly and smoothly summarizes the essay.
- Paper is well organized and logically structured, addressing, in turn, all elements of the thesis, i.e., price, quality, and quantity of the food. Transitional strategies from element to element are particularly effective.

Development of Content

- Thorough development of rationale.
- Arguments are clear and convincing – “most kids don’t even eat the ‘healthy’ food because the chicken doesn’t taste like chicken.” “Oftentimes, food will be in short supply, too, and they could have run out of pizza before you even get to the front of that long line.”

Sentence Fluency

- Fluid, effective writing with considerable variety of syntactic structures – “It should at least be worth the price, right?” “of course, it’s a matter of opinion, but most would agree that the prices are simply too high.” “Perhaps another way to make the food better would be to give us more for our money.” “There aren’t that many options, and everyone would love a change once in a while, so to further improve school lunches, we should get more for our money...”

Word Choice

- Controlled word choice demonstrating attention to purpose and audience – “Many students have been complaining about school lunches recently.” “Fifty cents may seem cheap for a cookie, but when you buy two or three others things the price adds up...”
- Vivid, discriminating use of language – “Sure, they have chips, cookies, and ice cream, one kind of pizza and one ‘healthy’ selection, but after a while this gets boring.”

Conventions

- Advanced control of a wide range of conventions – particularly in the effective use of words, phrases, and clauses – with only infrequent and minor errors.

Sample Essay 2b:

Dear School Newspaper,

By the fourth quarter, grades tend to drop. This occurs because of lack of motivation in the students by the end of the school year. Students are so sick of school in the Fourth quarter that they tend to slack off and finish the school year with lower grades than they are capable of. If there were less school days and more work put into one school day, students would be less tired of school and would be forced to do their school work to the best of their abilities. Having Wednesdays off is the perfect solution.

Having a break in the middle of the school week would help students improve their grades. After weekends, students come back to school rested, and ready to learn. This is because they have had some time to have fun and spend time with family and friends. Having Wednesdays off would have a similar effect. Students would come back to school after enjoying themselves. This would cause students morale to take a large step up, along with students grades.

Some people might object to having Wednesdays being school-free saying "They won't learn as much with less school days!" and "After getting Wednesday off, they'll want all of their days off!" The solution to these problems are simple: Teach more in one day and don't be unrealistic—they aren't going to get rid of school altogether.

Having Wednesdays off and expecting more out of students in one day's time is sure to make grades improve.

Sincerely,

A student who is sick of school

Sample Essay 2b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	5
Conventions:	3
Total Score:	8

Purpose/Focus

- To solve the problem of students receiving lower grades in the fourth quarter because of their flagging motivation, student proposes a mid-week break from school on Wednesdays and an increased work load the remaining week days.

Organization/Coherence

- Strong and effective introduction
- Weak conclusion
- Organizational strategy is clear and effectively carried out – the problem is presented, the solution suggested, reasons in support of the solution are explained, and in conclusion, potential objections to the solution are countered.

Development of Content

- Thesis is logically and effectively developed.
- Support is somewhat limited, but specific and convincing – “After weekends, students come back...rested and ready to learn...because they have had some time to have fun...” “Having Wednesdays off would have a similar effect.”

Sentence Fluency

- Writing is effective, controlled, and varied. “After getting Wednesday off, they’ll want all their days off!” “The solution to these problems is simple. Teach more in one day and don’t be unrealistic...they aren’t going to get rid of school altogether.”

Word Choice

- Demonstrates attention to audience and purpose with vivid and apt wording – “Having a break in the middle of the school week would help students improve their grades.” “Some people might object to having Wednesdays being school-free saying ‘They won’t learn as much with less school days!’”

Conventions

- Demonstrates advanced control of a wide range of conventions.
- Errors in paper are minor and not distracting.

Sample Essay 3b:

Dear School Newspaper,

I have a suggestion on how to improve our school. As most people know, there are no school buses in our school district. This poses a real problem. Why? There are many disadvantages to not having school buses. For example, some students live too far away to walk to school. Most parents work, and can't transport their children to and from school. Although there are city buses, these are not usable for all students either. The city buses travel in a pre-determined route, which may be nowhere near the students house. These long walks from a bus stop take away study time from those students who desperately need it. Not to mention the fact that these city buses cost money, and rates seem to steadily increase. School buses are also much safer. A direct route to and from school reduces the risk of children being kidnapped on the way home from school. Also, most school systems do provide school buses. Why not us?

So in conclusion I hope that our school can get school buses. They're safer, quicker, and overall more practical.

Sample Essay 3b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	4
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	6

Purpose/Focus

- Student suggests the school district provide buses to transport the students to and from school.

Organization/Coherence

- Introduction section fails to include student’s suggested solution.
- Conclusion is very brief.
- Paper is focused and coherent
- Student explains in some detail the drawbacks associated with the problem, i.e. not having school buses – increased cost, loss in safety, loss of study time.

Development of Content

- Thesis is well developed by use of well-reasoned explanations and examples – “Although there are city buses, these are not usable for all students either. The city buses travel in a pre-determined route, which may be nowhere near the student’s house.” “School buses are also much safer. A direct route to and from school reduces the risk of children being kidnapped on the way home from school.”

Sentence Fluency

- Controlled and clear – “I have a suggestion on how to improve our school. As most people know, there are no school buses in our school district. This poses a real problem.”

Word Choice

- Words chosen are appropriate and simple.

Conventions

- Proficient control of conventions.
- Safe paper with few errors.

Sample Essay 4b:

Dear Newspaper,

Hello. The biggest problem I think at any school is that kids are bringing things and or items to school that could hurt there live's or that could hurt someone else's. The two ways I think our school could improve on kid's not bringing those thing's to school would be to maybe have a dector thing that if anyone is or look's up to no good or has something that they shouldn't it would be. Another one could be to have a camera watching the student's go in and out and the should be in the office looking at the screen and if they see anything that look's like the person shouldn't have it here in school then the someone from the office could simple go out there and ask to see there backpack or coat or whatever or wherever they saw the thing. So if you agree with me and my suggestion's please that them be heard.

Thank you...

Sample Essay 4b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	3
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	5

Purpose/Focus

- “The biggest problem I think at any school is that kids are bringing things and or item’s to school that could hurt there live’s or that could hurt someone else’s.” Student then suggests cameras or some other detecting device as solutions.

Organization/Coherence

- Weak, brief introduction and conclusion.
- Essay remains focused on problem/solution throughout, but sometimes is difficult to follow – “The two ways I think our school could improve on kid’s not bringing those thing’s to school would be to maybe have a dector thing that of anyone is or look’s up to no good or has something that they shouldn’t it would be.”

Development of Content

- Thesis is inadequately developed.
- The problem selected is referenced only in a general way - ...kid’s are bringing thing’s and or item’s...”, “...if anyone is or look’s up to no good...” – with no examples cited.

Sentence Fluency

- Sentences are hindered by their excessive length and imprecise wording – “Another one could be to have a camera watching the student’s go in and out and the should be in the office looking at the screen and if they see anything that look’s like the person shouldn’t have it here in school then the someone from the office could simple go out there and ask to see there backpack or coat or whatever or wherever they saw the thing.”

Word Choice

- Wording is simple but imprecise – “The two ways I think our school could improve on kid’s not bringing those thing’s to school would be to maybe have a dector thing that if anyone is or look’s up to no good or has something that they shouldn’t it would be.”

Conventions

- Somewhat awkward paper with frequent internal punctuation (apostrophes) errors- “look’s”, “live’s”, “suggestions’s”.
- Errors usually do not seriously distract the reader.

Sample Essay 5b:

I think you should be aloud to have hardy candy when ever you want and chew gum also but in order to do this we will have to be respectful and not stick it to desks or chairs or even the floors. I we can follow these guide lines we might be able to do this without having teachers get mad at us.

Sample Essay 5b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	2
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	4

Purpose/Focus

- Student has hinted at the problem, i.e., the existing prohibitions against chewing gum and candy, and suggested the compromise solution of behaving more responsibly – “...we will have to be respectful and not stick it to desks or chairs or even the floors.”

Organization/Coherence

- Introduction and conclusion are missing. Paper is coherent, focused, and logical but too minimal to demonstrate organizational skills.

Development of Content

- There is no discussion of the problem, including why it might be significant. A solution is suggested, however, along with the examples of how to make it work and why it might be successful – “...but in order to do this we will have to be respectful and not stick it to desks or chairs or even floors. I we can follow these guide lines we might be able to do this without having teachers get mad at us.”

Sentence Fluency

- Paper is limited to two sentences, which are sufficiently controlled to relay their meaning.

Word Choice

- Wording is simple and demonstrates attention to audience and purpose – “I think you should be aloud to have hardy candy when ever you want and chew gum also...but we will have to be respectful...”

Conventions

- Generally controls grammar and usage.
- Spelling errors are numerous for such a short paper – “aloud”, “hardy”, “respectful” – but do not seriously distract the reader.

Sample Essay 6b:

Dear Newspaper

I would like the school to be better for the younger kid when the kid came to this and make them be well come to this school and Don't give home work out every Day or on the weekends

Sample Essay 6b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	1
Conventions:	1
Total Score:	2

Purpose/Focus

- Student suggests the school make younger students feel more welcome.

Organization/Coherence

- Paper has no logical structure of development; neither does it have an introduction nor conclusion.
- It is more a listing than an essay.

Development of Content

- The “problem” vaguely referred to, i.e., the unpleasant shock young, new students receive upon entering this school, is not developed. The suggested solution – “make them be well come to this school and Don’t give home work out every Day or on the weekends” – is stated, but not developed.

Sentence Fluency

- One sentence essay that is awkward and ineffective.

Word Choice

- Awkward and imprecise – “I would like the school to be better for the younger kid when the kid came to this and make them be well come...”

Conventions

- Very brief paper with frequent, varied, and distracting errors.

Sample Essay 7b:

The L.A. Lakers have a great team, and should be on NBC everyday. The Lakers should take up any program that was there, and more because they are so dominant. They have won the NBA Playoffs 2 years in a row and they are going for a 3-peat. That has only been done by Michael Jordan, and the Bulls. Kobe Bryant and MVP (possible) O'Neal should, and could make history. I believe that they should be put on NBC, so I can see them make history.

The Lakers have so good of a chemistry when it comes to the Playoffs. They are awesome. They have probably the best 1, 2 combination (Shaq Kobe) in the world. I hope someone gets this one day and realize why I want L.A. on NBC every game next season.

Sample Essay 7b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	D
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	2

Purpose/Focus

- Thesis is Off Topic – “The L.A. Lakers have a great team, and should be on NBC everyday.”

Organization/Coherence

- Awkward introduction – “The Lakers should take up any program that was there, and more because they are so dominant” – and weak conclusion.
- Logical structure but lack of transitional strategies.

Development of Content

- Thorough development of a limited thesis – “...won the NBA Playoffs 2 years in a row...Kobe Bryant and MVP (possible) O’Neal should, and could make history...have probably the best 1, 2 combination (Shaq, Kobe) in the World.”

Sentence Fluency

- Adequate sentence fluency; control with some variation – “They are awesome. They have probably the best 1, 2 combinations...I hope someone gets this one day...”

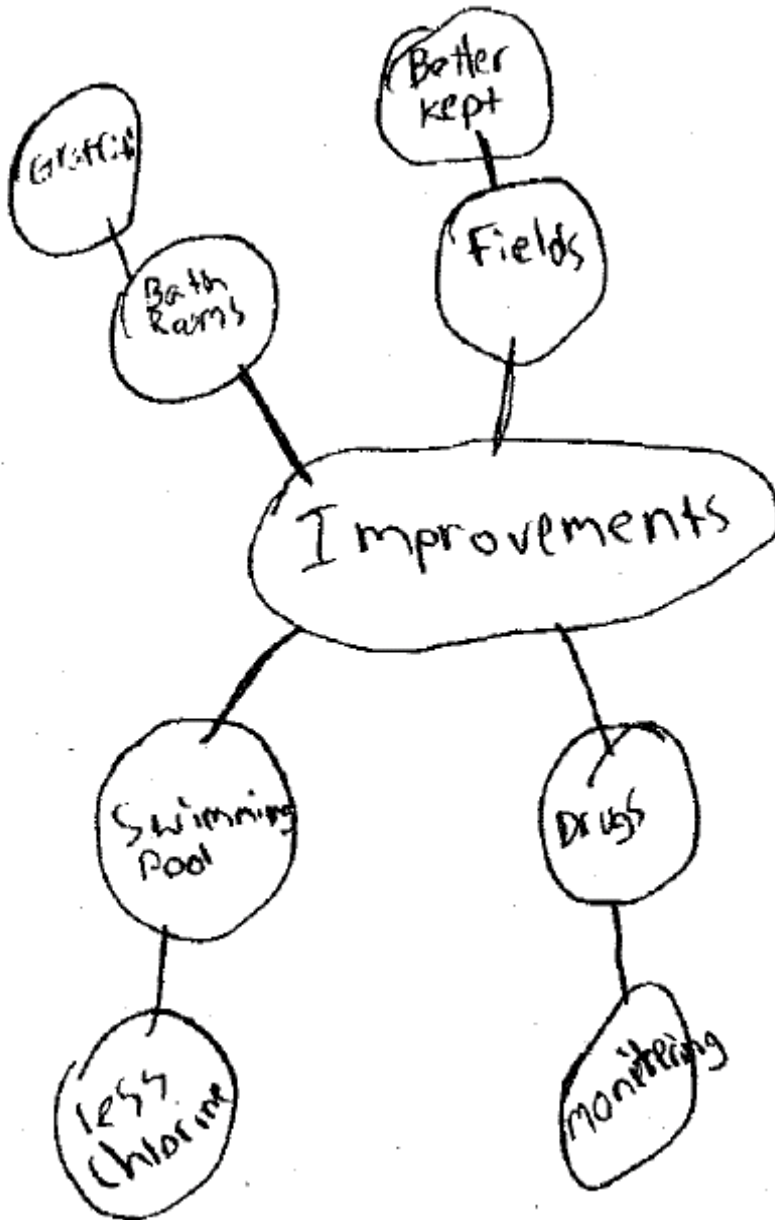
Word Choice

- Simplistic, precise – “The have won the NBA Playoffs 2 in a row and they are going for a 3-peat” – but sometimes awkward – “The Laker’s have so good of a chemistry when it comes to the Playoffs.”

Conventions

- Generally controls grammar and usage, punctuation and spelling.

Sample Essay 8b:



Sample Essay 8b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing: A
Conventions: A
Total Score: 0

Purpose/Focus

- None

Organization/Coherence

- None in instructed format

Development of Content

- None

Sentence Fluency

- No sentences

Word Choice

- None in instructed format

Conventions

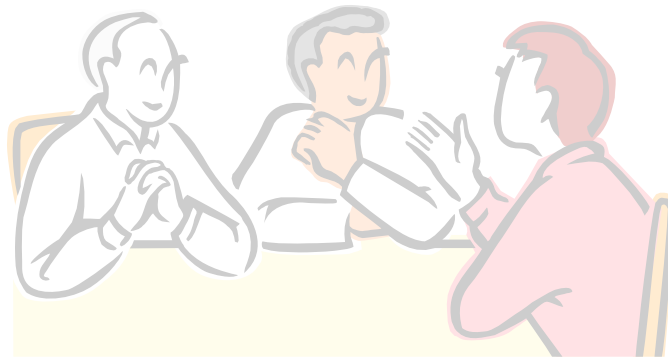
- A graphic organizer is, by definition, a failure to provide a connected prose response; thus it is unscorable.
- Graphic organizers must always be condition coded A.

Grade 8 – Prompt c: Persuasive

Your school is considering changing its grading system from traditional letter grades A, B, C, D, F to a simple pass/fail method for all assignments. This proposal will be discussed at the next meeting of the PTA (Parent/Teacher Association). Write an essay to the PTA arguing FOR or AGAINST the proposed grading change.

Be sure to use:

- Specific reasons and details to support your conclusion
- A clear organizational structure, including an introduction, a clear focus, transitions, and a conclusion
- Effective and appropriate word choice
- Correct grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization



Sample Essay 1c:

To diminish the traditional letter grades to a fail/pass system would have negative results. What would happen to those students who tried as hard as they could to get an A? Their passion to strive to excel would dissolve and they would not work as hard. To preserve the qualities, the PTA should vote not to change the grading system. It would result in a massive mistake.

First of all, when the fail/pass system would become affective, it will enable more students to pass without trying. Since they would not try, they would not learn as much as they could have. Those people who always worked their hardest would have nothing to show as the fruits of their labors. Then, the students who already had average or below average grades would keep doing exactly what they do and not strive to try harder. Changing the system will dissolve the drive student share to succeed.

Secondly, colleges would begin accepting all passing students because there is no way to distinguish who has grades exceeding the average level. If everyone was accepted, the spirits of

those who tried would become into a spirit who coasts. If these colleges kept the traditional grading system, the students with the new system, would not succeed.

Lastly, once the students have gone through college, they will have to somehow support themselves. They would be used to doing an average amount of work and would not go far in their job.

Though maybe the fail/pass system may have seemed like a good idea, it really isn't. It is a system that will cause the drive in students to disappear completely and dash their hopes of exceeding the expectations in school and in the world. Diminishing traditional letter grades would not result in a good system.

Sample Essay 1c: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	6
Conventions:	3
Total Score:	9

Purpose/Focus

- “To diminish the traditional letter grades to fail /pass would have negative results.”

Organization/Coherence

- Exemplary control of focus, purpose and organization.
- Effective introduction which clarifies purpose and addresses needs of audience.
- Conclusion is less skillful but satisfactorily summarizes the writer’s thesis.
- Organization is clear and points are arranged in logical sequence.

Development of Content

- Content is thoughtful, insightful, and well-developed.
- Support is provided by examples.

Sentence Fluency

- Syntax is very well controlled.
- Writing is smooth and effective.

Word Choice

- Unusually skilled (“diminish traditional letter grade,” “passion to strive to excel”).

Conventions

- Advanced control of a wide range of conventions – particularly in the effective use of words, phrases, and clauses effectively (i.e. “Because there is no way to distinguish...”, “Though maybe it may have seemed like a good idea...”)
- Tenses, principles of agreement, punctuation, spelling, capitalization are consistently correct; errors are infrequent and minor.

Sample Essay 2c:

Our school has been considering a change in the grading system that I believe, if approved would have a horrible effect on the school as well as the students. Changing the current grading system of A's, b's, c's, d's and f's to simple pass/fail grades would make this easier for teachers, but would damage the school as a whole.

If the change was made, and all students simply received a pass or fail grade, students and parents would never know how well they really are doing. This is because with a pass, the student could really be doing work worthy of a D-. Therefore, a student doing A+ work would get the same grade and reward as one getting a D-.

If A+ and D- worthy work gets a student the same grade, who wants to work harder to get the A? What student would continue to strive for, and work hard for that A when they could just slack off and get the same "pass" as a grade?

When one gets an A, it makes them feel happy and proud. If this was taken away, no student could feel pride in their work when they can't tell if it is worth an A, or a D. Students would no longer have that self pride, and would stop working as hard, because to pass on only needs a D. In conclusion any person can see how badly this new grading system would affect our school. We would not just be getting rid of a grading system, but also of pride and hardwork in our students.

Sample Essay 2c: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	6
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	8

Purpose/Focus

- Clearly evident “Changing the current grading system of A’s, b’s, c’s, d’s and f’s to simple pass/fail grades would make this easier for teachers, but would damage the school as a whole.”

Organization/Coherence

- Advanced control of focus, purpose, organization, and coherence.
- Organization – logical and well maintained.

Development of Content

- Introduction and conclusion are effective (introduction more so.)
- Overall very effective and clear, but lacking the insightful elaboration characteristic of an exemplary paper.

Sentence Fluency

- Transitions simple but effective.
- Frequent tense changes.

Word Choice

- Effective and Clear

Conventions

- Generally controls grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling and capitalization.
- Some errors and inconsistencies typical of a first draft, but none seriously distract the reader.

Sample Essay 3c:

The traditional grading score of A, B, C, D, F has been around for a long time and has proved to be appropriate for grading purposes. A, B, C, D and F grades push kids to do their best in school because students always try to get an A. If a pass/fail method was introduced, the challenge to get good grades would no longer exist.

Competing with grades for scholarships and admission to certain colleges has been a motivator for kids to get high grade point averages. If there were only pass/fail grades a lot of students would get a passing mark for every subject but this does not mean that they go all A's. Colleges would no longer have a clear view of how the students did in highschool with just pass or fail grades.

I believe that using the traditional A, B, C, D, F grading scale is the best path to take. This scale pushes students to do well in school and it truly shows how they are doing in a certain class. The A, B, C, D, F scale has worked in the past and will work in the future.

Sample Essay 3c: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	4
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	6

Purpose/Focus

- Focus and purpose are clear and well maintained throughout. Student believes the current letter grade system is better than pass/fail as a motivator for students and a clear view of ability.

Organization/Coherence

- Introduction and conclusion are present.
- Creates a logical context and demonstrates audience awareness.

Development of Content

- Adequately developed and supported but somewhat repetitious.
- Elaboration is scant.

Sentence Fluency

- Formulaic and repetitive.

Word Choice

- Effective and clear.

Conventions

- Generally controls grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling and capitalization.
- Some errors and inconsistencies typical of a first draft, but none seriously distract the reader.

Sample Essay 4c:

PTA,

This letter is regarding the school's decision to change the school grading system. The school would like to change from the standard A, B, C, D, F to just a pass or failing grade.

In my opinion you should not make this change. I feel this way because with a simple pass or fail you don't see if the student passed just barely or passed higher up on the grading scale. Parents and students should be able to see more exactly how well or poor they are doing than just passing or failing.

Sample Essay 4c: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	3
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	5

Purpose/Focus

- “The current grading system of A, B, C, D, F to pass/fail grades would be bad for parents and students.”

Organization/Coherence

- Focus is stated and maintained.
- Transitions are present.
- Syntax is generally correct.

Development of Content

- Content development consists of one idea with minimal supporting arguments.

Sentence Fluency

- Simple sentences.
- Paper reads more like a telegram.

Word Choice

- Effective and clear.

Conventions

- Generally correct but with more errors than the length of the paper warrants
- Adequate control for grade level
- Changes from 3rd to 2nd person more than once.
- Some errors and inconsistencies typical of a first draft, but none seriously distract the reader.

Sample Essay 5c:

I think that it should be pass or fail. This way you know how you are doing. If you get a fail you are failing but if you get a pass your passing. If you have two passes and one fail your doing good. It is alot easier for students to understand that way then figuring out A-F's.

Sample Essay 5c: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	2
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	4

Purpose/Focus

- “Pass or Fail would be easier to understand.”

Organization/Coherence

- Logical sequencing of ideas.
- No introduction or conclusion.

Development of Content

- Vague and underdeveloped.

Sentence Fluency

- Simple but correct.

Word Choice

- Effective and clear.

Conventions

- Generally controls grammar and punctuation.
- Simple words are misspelled/misused.

Grade 10

Each student's paper will be scored using two holistic rubrics:

- A 6-point composing rubric that measures students ability to write purposeful, focused, organized prose directed clearly and effectively to an audience.
- A 3-point conventions rubric that measures students ability to control the conventions of standard written English appropriate to grade level.

Composing Rubric Clarification for Scorers

Keep in mind that a paper need not meet all the criteria at a given score point to meet that score. A “5” paper, for instance, may contain some characteristics of a “6” and some characteristics of a “4,” but on balance will most closely match the criteria for a “5.”

6 Points

This paper demonstrates exemplary control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. An appropriate sense of audience is evident throughout, guiding the writer’s word choice and selection, arrangement, and development of content.

- The introduction and conclusion skillfully frame and clarify the writer’s purpose and address the needs of the audience.
- The writer’s focus or thesis is either explicitly stated or strongly implied and consistently guides the paper’s development.
- The writer’s organizational strategy is clear and effectively carried out.
- Coherence is consistently very well controlled: connections among sentences, ideas, and paragraphs are consistently clear. Transitional strategies are effective and varied.
- Content is thoughtful, insightful, and unusually well developed and supported.
- Syntax is very well controlled, resulting in a fluid, varied, and effective writing style.
- Word choice is unusually skilled (discriminating, precise, apt, habitually concrete) and guided by the writer’s sense of purpose and audience.

5 Points

This paper demonstrates advanced control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence, and development. An appropriate sense of audience is evident throughout, guiding the writer’s word choice and selection, arrangement, and development of content.

- The introduction and conclusion create a logical context for the body of the paper but may be more formulaic and less effective for audience than the exemplary response.
- The writer’s focus or thesis is either explicitly stated or strongly implied. Overall, the student’s focus is clearly evident, though the response may contain a paragraph or section where focus is briefly lost.
- The writer’s organizational strategy is clear and effectively carried out.
- Coherence is generally well controlled: connections among sentences, ideas, and paragraphs are usually clear. Transitional strategies are used to aid readers.
- Content is solidly developed and supported, but elaboration is less consistently specific and insightful than the 6.
- Syntax is consistently clear and effective.
- Overall, word choice is very effective and guided by the writer’s sense of purpose and audience.

4 Points

This paper demonstrates proficient control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. Audience awareness is generally evident.

- The introduction and conclusion create a logical context for the body of the paper but may be more formulaic and less effective for an audience than exemplary and advanced responses.
- The writer's focus or thesis is either explicitly stated or strongly implied. Overall, the student's focus is clearly evident, though the response may contain a paragraph or section where coherence is briefly lost.
- The writer's organizational strategy is clear and effectively carried out.
- Coherence is generally controlled: connections among central ideas are clear. Transitional strategies are present but may be less smoothly handled than exemplary and advanced responses.
- Content is developed and supported. Elaboration is typically more general than exemplary and advanced responses.
- Syntax is generally clear and provides no barrier to understanding.
- Overall, word choice is clear and appropriate but tends to be less precise and effective than the exemplary and advanced responses.

3 Points

This paper demonstrates adequate control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. The sense of real communication with an audience is often lacking, resulting in weaknesses in several skill areas.

- An introduction and conclusion frame the discussion but tend to be ineffective for audience.
- The writer's focus or thesis is stated or implied but may be general or overly vague; the focus may only partially guide the paper's development. Readers may sense the writer's lack of clear purpose.
- The writer's overall organizational plan is carried out.
- Coherence is generally adequately controlled: connections among central ideas are fairly clear. Transitional strategies are usually present between paragraphs, but they may tend to be highly formulaic and ineffective for an audience.
- Content is underdeveloped, often or habitually general, vague, repetitious, weak. Readers may sense the writer has one or two generic ideas that are repeated over and over in lieu of development. Wandering from the point may cover the writer's inability to develop his or her purpose. The writer often seems to lack a sense of communication with an audience.
- Syntax can range from generally clear to frequently awkward or choppy and monotonous.
- Word choice tends to be vague, general, or cliched.

2 Points

This paper demonstrates basic control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. Audience awareness/real communicative purpose is lacking or absent.

- An introduction and conclusion may be present but are very underdeveloped and inattentive to the needs of an audience.
- The writer makes an attempt to create a focus or thesis in response to the prompt. Focus and purpose may only partially guide the paper's development.
- The writer makes a discernable attempt to organize the response.
- Coherence is often lacking. Connections among central ideas are frequently unclear. Little or no attempt is made to create transitional strategies to aid readers.
- Content is very vague and underdeveloped, though the writer makes an attempt to sustain a response to the prompt.
- Syntax is frequently awkward and uncontrolled.
- Word choice is frequently vague, awkward and inadequate to the task.

1 Point

This paper demonstrates minimal control of focus, purpose, organization, coherence and development. Audience awareness/real communicative purpose is lacking or absent.

The writer states something relevant to the prompt but makes no attempt to sustain its development.

10th Grade Composing Rubric

Wisconsin Writing Rubric 6-Point Scoring Guide					
Elements of Rubric	Purpose & Focus	Organization & Coherence	Development of Content	Sentence Fluency	Word Choice
<i>Element Description</i>	Explicitly states, or strongly implies, a thesis or unifying purpose which firmly guides the paper Demonstrates understanding of the requirements of the assigned task	Frames the discussion with an effective introduction and conclusion Creates a logical structure of development for the topic, thesis, and purpose Uses effective and varied transitional strategies (from idea to idea, paragraph to paragraph, and sentence to sentence)	Demonstrates <i>quality</i> of invented content (e.g. of explanations, arguments, rationale, ideas, details, examples, illustrations) Demonstrates <i>thoroughness</i> in the elaboration of content	Demonstrates syntactic control of simple, compound, complex, and compound/complex sentences Evidences some control over stylistic effects (e.g. flow, cadence, parallelism, variety, readability, judicious use of active and passive voice, effective repetition)	Controls word choice with respect to both denotation and connotation Demonstrates attention to context (audience, purpose, situation, tone) Evidences some control over figurative language for rhetorical effect (e.g. metaphors, similes, hyperbole, analogies)
<i>Positive Descriptors</i>	Focused, unified, controlled, relevant	Well organized, integrated, smooth, controlled, coherent	<u>Quality</u> : clear, precise, accurate, effective, well-reasoned, insightful <u>Thoroughness</u> : complete, specific, well-developed, well-supported, well-illustrated	Fluid, varied, controlled, effective, skilled	Apt, discriminating, vivid, precise, concrete, concise
<i>Negative Descriptors</i>	Rambling, loosely related, redundant, irrelevant, lacks purpose	Disorganized, hard to follow, mechanical, illogical shifts, incoherent	<u>Quality</u> : vague, imprecise, inaccurate, simplistic, poorly reasoned, superficial <u>Thoroughness</u> : incomplete, general, inadequately developed, inadequately supported, lacks illustration	Choppy, monotonous, garbled, ineffective, awkward	Inappropriate, cliched, awkward, imprecise, vague wordy

Rubric Holistic Scoring Scale							
Scores	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Description</i>	Exemplary control of the domain	Advanced control of the domain	Proficient control of the domain	Adequate control of the domain	Basic control of the domain	Minimal control of the domain	Off topic; no response; illegible; another language

Conventions of Written English--10 Grade

3 points **Advanced Control**

The response demonstrates advanced control of a wide range of conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in English Language Arts:

- Uses words, phrases, and clauses effectively, including interrelated clauses in complex sentences
- Uses correct tenses, including conditionals, to indicate the relative order and relationship of events
- Employs principles of agreement, including subject-verb, pronoun-noun, and preposition-pronoun
- Punctuates compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences correctly, including appropriate use of colons, hyphens, dashes, ellipses, and italics; punctuates dialogue correctly; follows citation conventions
- Employs the conventions of capitalization
- Generally uses correct spelling with grade-level words and reasonable phonetic approaches to more difficult words
- Makes errors typical of those commonly found in a rough draft; errors do not seriously distract the reader

2 points **Proficient Control**

The response demonstrates proficient control of essential conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in English Language Arts

- Generally controls grammar and usage (principles of agreement, noun and verb forms, pronoun references, superlative and comparative forms)
- Generally uses phrases, dependent and independent clauses clearly and correctly
- Uses end-stop punctuation correctly most of the time; internal punctuation (commas, apostrophes, semicolons, colons) is sometimes missing or wrong; sometimes fails to punctuate dialogue correctly or to accurately follow citation conventions
- Employs the conventions of capitalization
- Generally uses correct spelling with grade-level words and reasonable phonetic approaches to more difficult words
- Makes errors typical of those commonly found in a rough draft; errors do not seriously distract the reader

1 point **Minimal Control**

The response demonstrates minimal control of essential conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in English Language Arts

- Contains numerous serious end-stop or internal punctuation errors, resulting in fragments, comma splices, run-ons
- Shows poor control of grammar and usage (principles of agreement; verb and/or noun forms; pronoun reference; superlative and comparative forms)
- Shows poor control of spelling, even on grade-level words
- Makes errors that are frequent, varied, and distracting

0 points **Off Topic, No Response, Another Language, Illegible**

Grade 10 – Prompt a: Persuasive

Imagine that your student council has decided to prepare a time capsule for your high school class this year, to be opened at your 20th class reunion. All students in your class have been invited to make suggestions about what they think should be included.

Write an essay to your student council suggesting three objects or documents that should be included and explaining why you think they are particularly significant.

Be sure to use:

- specific reasons and details to support your suggestion
- a clear organizational structure, including an introduction, a thesis, transitions, and a conclusion
- effective and appropriate word choice
- correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization



Sample Essay 1a:

Obviously, there are many items that could be included in this time capsule we plan to construct. So many things have happened this year in the world, and also just in our school, that choosing just three objects or documents is a daunting task. When we do open the time capsule, we will want it to contain more than just trivia from our high school days. My suggestion is to include objects that help represent our shared past, our dreams for the future, as well as preserving memories from the high points of our senior year.

The first item that I suggest should be included is a kindergarten yearbook for our class. Imagine us at our twentieth reunion, thirty-eight years young, gathered about a faded, dusty, crisp yearbook with yellowed pages, examining pictures of ourselves in 1987. Looking at these pictures now is amusing, but I think in twenty years, we will see these pictures in a different light. Many of us have known each other ever since we first shared crayons and fingerprint in Mrs. Smith's kindergarten class. It will be touching to look back together to the very first year that we started our education. The past is something we should keep with us.

I also think it would be a good idea to include a document where each of us records predictions of the future both for us as individuals and for where we think the country will be in twenty years. I believe it would be fascinating to review these stories, to find out who achieved what they set out to achieve as well as to discover whose dreams changed in twenty years. Our predictions about the future direction of the country will remind us that teenagers do think about helping to build a better nation and community. For example, I would like to predict that following the very close Gore/Bush presidential election voter apathy among young people will decline. These predictions symbolize our concerns about the future.

The third and final item that I propose should help us celebrate the high points of senior year. I would like to see included some of the trophies we have gathered in both athletic and academic fields. First, these trophies will be great conversation starters, reminding us of funny or heartwarming anecdotes. Symbolizing struggles past and obstacles overcome, these trophies will also remind us that meeting the present challenges we face is possible.

For some of us, high school is the most important time of our lives; for others, it is merely a stepping stone on the way to a life full of rich accomplishments. I feel that the items I have selected for placement in the time capsule will cater nicely to the differing beliefs of these two schools of thought. When we have drifted far apart, they will bring us closer together as we reunite to celebrate past memories, present challenges, and future dreams.

Sample Essay 1a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	6
Conventions:	3
Total Score:	9

Purpose/Focus

- This writer’s **control of purpose and focus is exemplary**, moving beyond a formulaic list of objects to a **thoughtful, persuasive, and explicit unifying idea**.
- The writer’s thesis **consistently guides the paper’s development** and is **shaped with a specific audience in mind**.

Organization/Coherence

- The essay is **very well organized** and demonstrates the writer’s ability to create a **logical structure of development for the topic, thesis, and purpose**.
- The **selection of objects representing the past, future, and present adds interest to the ready organizational strategy invited by the prompt**. In addition, **awareness of audience and purpose are reflected in the writer’s choice to break up a strictly chronological approach to the body paragraphs**.
- **Coherence is exceptionally well controlled**; the writer consistently moves smoothly from idea to idea, sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph resulting in an essay that **makes reading effortless**.
- **Transitional strategies are effective and varied**, making use of several cohesive devices including clear pronoun referents, effective repetition and parallel structures.
- The well-developed **introduction and conclusion skillfully frame and clarify the writer’s purpose** and **demonstrate skill in writing to be read**.
- The writer’s approach to **point of view is consistent** throughout.

Development of Content

- The writer demonstrates **exemplary skill in the selection and development of content**.
- Ideas raised and details provided clearly show that the writer has **strongly internalized the habit of specifically and thoroughly elaborating the points raised**.
- Development is not merely formulaic; rather this writer **chooses material relevant, persuasive, and engaging for the imagined audience**.

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is very well controlled, resulting in a fluid, varied, and effective writing style**.
- Not only is sentence structure habitually clear, but there are several instances in which **the writer’s style achieves grace, balance, and demonstrates a developing ear for rhetorical effect**, eg.: “Symbolizing struggles past and obstacles overcome, these trophies will also remind us that meeting the present challenges we face is possible.”

Word Choice

- **Word choice is unusually skilled and guided by the writer’s sense of purpose and audience**.
- The illustrative sentence in the second paragraph showcases the writer’s ability to select **language that is vivid and concrete**: “Many of us have known each other ever since we first shared crayons and fingerprint in Mrs. Smith’s kindergarten class.”
- In addition, this writer’s **expression is habitually precise, apt, and discriminating**: “daunting

task,” faded, dusty, crisp yearbook,” “will cater nicely to the differing beliefs of these two schools of thought.”

Conventions

- The writer demonstrates **advanced control of a wide range of standard writing conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- End-of-sentence punctuation is consistently correct as is internal punctuation.
- Spelling of both grade-level and above grade-level words is consistently correct.
- Principles of agreement are exceptionally well observed: “a document where **each** of us records....”

Sample Essay 2a:

The items we choose for the time capsule should represent the trends, ideas, likes and dislikes of the current American culture. These items should show, directly or indirectly, not only what kids like, but also social and political happenings of the time. Even simple things can convey a lot about teen culture in America today.

It might seem odd, but we need to include a can of Mountain Dew because it is so typical of today's staple diet of fast food and potato chips. Mountain Dew advertisements portray the carefree, energetic, take-a-risk attitude of so many teenagers in the last few years. The high sugar "buzz" that teenagers get from that can of Mountain Dew gives us a lift from the boring, lazy patterns American teenage life has taken up for the past 20 years. Since there are no protests, wars or civil rights movements to shake the country, all of our energy is directed towards friends, school, and sports.

Participation in sports, for example, has become so important it's practically tedious. After school activities such as swimming and basketball, football and gymnastics can take up so much time that they become overly routinized. The feelings of accomplishment and stimulation seem to slack off over time. That's why advertisers promote their products so that teens feel energized by what they're doing. So I propose that the time capsule include a popular shoe—Nike, perhaps, with its "Just do it" battle cry. Kids these days need a motto.

Music provides so many of the philosophies of teenagers today. Musicians cry their hearts out into a microphone and send out their ideas to a world hungry for each new thought. For bored kids of today, I think a CD would do well. It must have many

artists and many styles because everyone needs something just a little different to put meaning in life.

There are many, many things that could be included in this time capsule. But I believe that the items I have chosen are great in their simplicity and, therefore, should be included. They are symbolic, and I think they would represent our generation well.

Sample Essay 2a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	5
Conventions:	3
Total Score:	8

Purpose/Focus

- This writer’s **control of purpose and focus is advanced**.
- Both the **opening and closing sentences clearly and effectively establish this essay’s central point**.
- The writer’s **thoughtful principal of selection guides the development of the essay and helps to engage and persuade readers**.

Organization/Coherence

- This essay’s **organizational strategy is clear and effectively carried out**.
- **Coherence is usually well controlled**. The writer **generally moves logically from idea to idea, employing varied transitional strategies to guide readers**, although coherence slips between paragraphs four and five.
- The **introduction and conclusion create a logical context for the body of the paper** but are less well developed and effective for audience than the exemplary response.

Development of Content

- The **development and support provided for the central idea of the essay are solid**.
- The writer **anticipates readers’ reactions** and provides **supporting ideas that are provocative, thoughtful, and engaging for the intended audience**.
- **Main points are clearly explained and quite well developed** given the timed nature of the task.
- The **discussion becomes more general, less fully developed at the end**.

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is consistently clear and frequently notably effective**.
- Although this writer’s style is **less even than the exemplary response, sentence structure is varied**.
- In addition, the writer often demonstrates **a knack for turning an effective phrase, adding energy and punch**: “These items should show, directly or indirectly, not only what kids like, but also social and political happenings of the time”, “Since there are no protests, wars or civil rights movements to shake the country”, “So I propose that the time capsule include a popular shoe—Nike, perhaps, with its “Just do it” battle cry. Kids these days need a motto.”, “the items I have chosen are great in their simplicity”

Word Choice

- **Overall, word choice is very effective and guided by the writer’s sense of purpose and audience**.
- Word choice is **often precise, apt, vivid**: “convey,” “tedious,” “staple diet of fast food and potato chips,” “carefree, energetic, take-a-risk attitude,” “cry their hearts out.”
- **Infrequently, the writer’s word choice becomes overly general** (“everyone needs something just a little different to put meaning in life”) **or slightly awkward** (“feelings...slack off over time”).

Conventions

- The writer demonstrates **advanced control of a range of standard writing conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- End-of-sentence punctuation is consistently correct as is internal punctuation.
- Spelling of both grade-level and above grade-level words is correct with the exception of *accomplishment*.
- Principles of agreement are well observed.

Sample Essay 3a:

A time capsule can be a very enjoyable and educational experience. It is enjoyable because you can see and remember things that may have been funny, or embarrassing. It is educational from the standpoint that you are looking back into history to a time that you perhaps had forgotten. You see and remember the emotions that you felt at that point in history. That is why it is very important to choose items for the time capsule that you can easily relate to, and that the majority of the people were feeling at the time.

As my first choice of an object to place in a time capsule, I would choose a compact disc with songs that had been downloaded from Napster. Napster has grown to become a large part of our social lives, and the music that we listen to does not die over the years. We still remember the music from the past in our society, so when I would hear that music in 20 years after we had opened the time capsule, I am sure that I would feel the emotions of the music as we listened.

The next item to be placed in the time capsule would be a yearbook from our senior year in high school. Yearbooks are a great way to remember the past, with pictures that show us what clothing, hair, car, and movies were like as a senior in high school. We might look back at these times and think how goofy we were, which is how most people remember their high school years 20 years after living through them. I think that a yearbook would be an excellent reminder of the past.

As my final choice, also an excellent reminder of the past, I would put a dozen Titleist Professional 100 golf balls, which are the brand of choice on the PGA tour. This would be a personal memento for the time capsule. Golf is a game that has been around for hundreds of years, and I would be surprised if it will end. These balls would

remind me of all the great times that I have had on the golf course, and, as an added bonus, I could open the box up and play more golf.

In conclusion, from CD's to golf balls, anything that can create the emotions and the memories from the past that you had lived through, can go into a time capsule. You may move on to bigger and better things in life, but you will always have the emotions and feelings of your previous experience.

Sample Essay 3a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	4 (mid range)
Conventions:	3
Total Score:	7

Purpose/Focus

- This writer demonstrates **proficient control of focus and purpose**.
- **The unifying idea which finally guides the development of the essay is clear, relevant, and explicitly stated in the concluding paragraph:** “In conclusion, from CD’s to golf balls, anything that can create the emotions and the memories from the past that you had lived through, can go into a time capsule.”
- The essay’s **focusing strategy is more general and simplistic than the exemplary or advanced response**.

Organization/Coherence

- **The writer’s organizational strategy is clear and effectively carried out.**
- The **introduction and conclusion create a logical context** for the body of the paper.
- The essay is **generally coherent and integrated**; however, **the final suggestion has narrow appeal and does not satisfy the criterion stated** in the first paragraph: “it is very important to choose items for the time capsule...that the majority of people were feeling at the time.”
- **The writer takes a risk with audience in shifting to a slightly humorous tone in the fourth paragraph.**
- **Point of view is not consistently controlled**; the writer **shifts ineffectively from first to second person** throughout the essay.
- For the most part, the writer **moves smoothly from sentence to sentence, employing varied transitional strategies and cohesive devices to guide readers**.
- This is a **readable essay**.

Development of Content

- The writer demonstrates **competence in the selection and development of content**.
- **Each main point is developed and supported.**
- Although **elaboration is consistently general, formulaic and less thoughtful than the exemplary and advanced responses**, the writer **usually provides support and rationale the audience would find reasonable:** “We still remember the music from the past...so when I would hear that music...I am sure that I would feel the emotions of the music as we listened.”

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is consistently clear and provides no barrier to understanding.**
- In addition, the writer **competently uses a variety of sentence structures**.
- The writer also **occasionally uses parallel structure and effective repetition as stylistic and cohesive devices:** “It is enjoyable because you can see and remember things.... It is educational from the standpoint....”, “In conclusion, from CD’s to golf balls....”, “I think that a yearbook would be an excellent reminder of the past. As my final choice, also an excellent reminder of the past....”

Word Choice

- Overall, **word choice is clear and appropriate.**
- However, it is **consistently less precise and effective than the exemplary and advanced responses**: “A time capsule can be a very enjoyable and educational experience...”, “Napster has grown to become a large part of our social lives...”, “You may move on to bigger and better things in life...”

Conventions

- The writer demonstrates **proficient control of a range of standard writing conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- **While using a variety of sentence structures, the writer demonstrates control of punctuation and agreement. End-of-sentence punctuation is consistently correct.**
- Except for the **minor error of an occasional superfluous comma, internal punctuation is correct.**
- **Spelling of grade level words is consistently correct.**

Sample Essay 4a:

As a member of the student body, I believe that the year Two Thousand time capsule should represent the year in a way we'd remember. One object that should be put in the capsule is footage from the ball dropping in Times Square bringing in the year Two Thousand. A second object would be campaign posters from the 2000 election. A third object would be a two thousand yearbook. I believe that all three of these objects are significant to the year Two Thousand.

The first item in the time capsule should be footage of the ball dropping in Times Square bringing in the New Year. The year Two Thousand held a lot of promises. Particularly to our generation. It promised a new beginning, and many other technological advancements. We will never forget how we stayed glued to the television all eyes on New York waiting to watch the ball drop so the year Two Thousand could officially begin. I believe this item would be one we could remember and cherish.

A second item should be campaign posters from the year Two Thousand election. Although we were too young to vote, we supported our candidates. While some of us supported Al Gore, others of us supported George W. Bush. We will never forget the constant debating over platforms and the sadness and joys that followed once the outcome was announced. I definitely think this would be a great item to include in the time capsule.

A third item I would put in the time capsule would be a yearbook from the year two thousand. How great it will be in twenty years to look back at who we were back in high school. We'll be able to look back with each other and reminisce about who we were.

I hope you take all three of these items into consideration while making the time capsule. I think all three of the objects represent who we were and what we stood for. It will be great fun to open it up and see the items twenty years later. I also think they do a great job at representing the year Two Thousand.

Sample Essay 4a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	4 (Low end)
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	6

Purpose/Focus

- This writer demonstrates **proficient control of purpose and focus**.
- The writer’s **unifying idea**, that the items selected should be “significant to the year Two Thousand,” is **clear, logical, and persuasive**.
- The **stated focus consistently guides the essay’s development**.

Organization/Coherence

- **The writer’s organizational strategy is clear and consistently carried out.**
- **The introduction and conclusion create a logical context for the body of the paper. However, the introduction, essentially a list of the writer’s three suggestions, is formulaic and ineffective for audience.**
- **For the most part, the writer moves logically from sentence to sentence, employing transitional strategies to guide readers.**
- **This is essentially a coherent essay.**

Development of Content

- The writer demonstrates **competence in the selection and development of content**.
- **Each main point is developed and supported.**
- Although **elaboration is consistently rather general and occasionally repetitious** the writer **usually provides support and rationale the audience would find reasonable and insightful**: “The year Two Thousand held a lot of promises. Particularly to our generation. It promised a new beginning, and many other technological advancements.”, “We will never forget the constant debating over platforms and the sadness and joys that followed once the outcome was announced.”

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is generally clear and provides no barrier to understanding.**
- Although **the writer occasionally varies sentence structure** by beginning with a subordinate clause, **more sentence variety would improve this writer’s ability to engage an audience.**

Word Choice

- **Overall, word choice is clear and appropriate but tends to be more general and repetitious than the exemplary and advanced responses: “should represent the year in a way we’d remember”, “the objects represent who we were and what we stood for...”,** The writer infrequently demonstrates developing ability to select vivid, precise language: “...we stayed glued to the television all eyes on New York...”

Conventions

- The writer demonstrates **proficient control of standard writing conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards**.
- This paper **contains a variety of common errors typically found in a first draft**. The errors are **somewhat distracting but do not obscure meaning**.

- **End-of-sentence punctuation is correct with the exception of a single fragment:** “Particularly to our generation.” **Several misspellings of grade-level vocabulary** occur: alot, to for too, definatly, advancments.
- **Capitalization rules are not correctly nor consistently followed.**
- **Conditional forms are incorrectly used:** “A second object *would be...*”
- **Since this writer’s syntax is rather unvaried, there is insufficient demonstration of control of a wide range of conventions.**

Sample Essay 5a:

If we forget our past, we are condemned to repeat it—
Paraphrased from the famous saying

A time capsule is a very important idea that is very practical and helpful. If we make sure we do not forget our past, we can have a better understanding and prosperous future. People tend to move ahead in life too quick without reflecting on their past. If a time capsule is to be sealed it should contain three very important things: a computer, a cd player with a collection of favorite cds, and a history textbook.

A computer is a critical element in our history. We base night and day off our computer. We live by the computer. The computer can tell a great deal about our lives. It is very important that we include a computer in the capsule. If in 20 years we have advanced so much that we have forgotten about computers we can reflect on how they affected our lives. People need a time period to reflect on their history and past time.

A cd player is an important element that should be included. By remembering the music of our age the feelings and emotions of many of the artists at that time can be understood. Also by putting in some of our favorite songs we can remember what some of us were feeling. People need this time for remembrance on past emotion.

↳ history textbook is the most important element that should be included in the capsule. If by chance something does happen to earth and the human race in the next twenty years. The future people can uncover this and understand the human past.

↳ time capsule is a great idea and should include a computer, cd player, and a history textbook. If we can understand and remember our past we will have a better time living out our future lives. If people can remember their past they will live out a more fulfilling life.

Sample Essay 5a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	3
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	5

Purpose/Focus

- **This writer demonstrates adequate control of focus and purpose.**
- The writer's **unifying idea**, that it is important to reflect on and understand the past, is **relevant and persuasive**.
- **Readers, however, sense a lack of narrowed focus as the writer attempts to explain why reflecting on the past is important.**
- Although **the writer raises several ideas, none of them guides development.** For example, **the maxim that begins the essay has no explicit connection to any point in the discussion which follows.**
- **The writer comments that understanding the past will lead to prosperity but loses that focus while developing.**
- **The suggestion that "the most important element" to include is a history textbook could have illustrated the writer's focus, but the writer is unable to make the connection logical, explicit, or persuasive.**

Organization/Coherence

- **The writer's overall organizational plan is adequately carried out.**
- **The writer relies solely on a highly predictable and formulaic pattern of development.**
- **The introduction and conclusion create a logical context for the body of the paper. However, both the introduction and conclusion essentially list the writer's three suggestions, a technique too formulaic and repetitious for audience.**
- **Although connections among central ideas are fairly clear, very few transitional strategies are employed from sentence-to-sentence, idea-to-idea, paragraph-to-paragraph, resulting in a disjointed essay.**
- **Readers have to work to follow connections among ideas in this essay.**

Development of Content

- **Content is underdeveloped, habitually general, vague, and repetitious.**
- **There is little sense of audience awareness.**
- **The discussion of the final point is illogical and confusing.**

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax ranges from generally clear ("People tend to move ahead in life to quick without reflecting on their past") to frequently awkward, choppy, and monotonous: "A computer is a critical element in our history. We base night and day off our computer. We live by the computer."**
- **This writing needs more variation in sentence length, structure, and beginnings to add clarity and audience appeal.**

Word Choice

- **Word choice tends to be vague, awkward, general, repetitious or imprecise:** “very practical and helpful,” “very important,” “base night and day off our computer,” “The future people.”

Conventions

- The writer demonstrates **proficient control of standard writing conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- This paper **contains several errors which are somewhat distracting but do not obscure meaning.**
- **A very awkward sentence fragment occurs in the fourth paragraph:** “If by chance something does happen to earth and the human race in the next twenty years.”
- **An awkward dangling modifier occurs in the third paragraph.**
- **Several misspellings of grade-level vocabulary occur:** “famouse, prosperouse, capsul, to for too.”
- **In the second paragraph, the writer confuses past with present perfect:** “*had* forgotten” rather than *have forgotten*.
- On the other hand, **the writer does demonstrate some proficiency in the use of internal punctuation, colon use, and spelling.**

Sample Essay 6a:

Three things that I would put into a time capsule for school.

The first thing that I would put in the capsule would be a newspaper on the presidential election to show the year and what was going on when we buried the capsule.

The second thing would be a list of all the accomplishments that our class has done. Like sports or school achievements. This would show what things we have done as a class those years in high school.

The final thing that I would put in the capsule would be a piece of paper signed by every student in my class. This would remind us who was apart of this adventure.

These are some of my explains to put in the time capsule for our class.

Sample Essay 6a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	2
Conventions:	1
Total Score:	3

Purpose/Focus

- This writer demonstrates **basic control of focus and purpose**.
- The essay is “me-centered” throughout with **no attempt to address or persuade an audience**.
- **A brief list substitutes for thesis.**

Organization/Coherence

- **The writer makes a discernable attempt to organize the response.**
- **Basic knowledge of essay and paragraph structure is evident.**
- **An introduction and conclusion are present but are very underdeveloped and inattentive to the needs of an audience.**
- The writer **demonstrates basic understanding of transitional strategies.**
- **Formulaic transitions** occur between major points.
- The writer also **uses pronouns *this* and *these* as basic cohesive devices.**

Development of Content

- The writer **makes an attempt to sustain a response to the prompt** by justifying each suggestion with a single assertion about its relevance.
- **Content remains vague and underdeveloped throughout.**

Sentence Fluency

- The writer demonstrates basic control of syntax.
- Sentence structure is **generally fairly clear but overly simple and unvaried for grade level.**

Word Choice

- **Word choice is overly simplistic for grade level and purpose.**

Conventions

- This writer demonstrates **minimal control of standard writing conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- **Although the writer generates very few sentences, there are two errors in end-stop punctuation.**
- **Several misspellings of grade-level vocabulary occur:** peice, acheivements, accomplishments, apart. The writer’s **confusion between “explains” and “explanations” suggests significant difficulty with standard spoken, as well as written, English** as does the phrase “accomplishments that our class has done.”

Sample Essay 7a:

Dear Student Council:

The three things that I think should be put into the time capsule are some food and papers and some other stuff I think that in 13 years I will come back and try some of that food and look at the papers and have a good time.

Thank you

Sample Essay 7a: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	1
Conventions:	1
Total Score:	2

Purpose/Focus

- This writer **states something relevant to the prompt but makes no attempt to sustain it's development.**
- **No evidence is provided that the writer can sustain focus.**
- **Real communicative purpose is absent.**

Organization/Coherence

- Since this writer does not sustain a response to the prompt, **there is no evidence of skill in organizing a coherent discussion.**

Development of Content

- The writer makes **no attempt to develop** the points raised.

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is highly simplistic.**

Word Choice

- **Word choice is simplistic and significantly below grade level.**

Conventions

- This writer **demonstrates minimal control of standard writing conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- Since the writer's syntax and word choice are very simple, **the writer does not demonstrate competent control of a range of conventions.**
- In fact, the **writer is unable to control end-stop punctuation** in the two independent clauses generated.

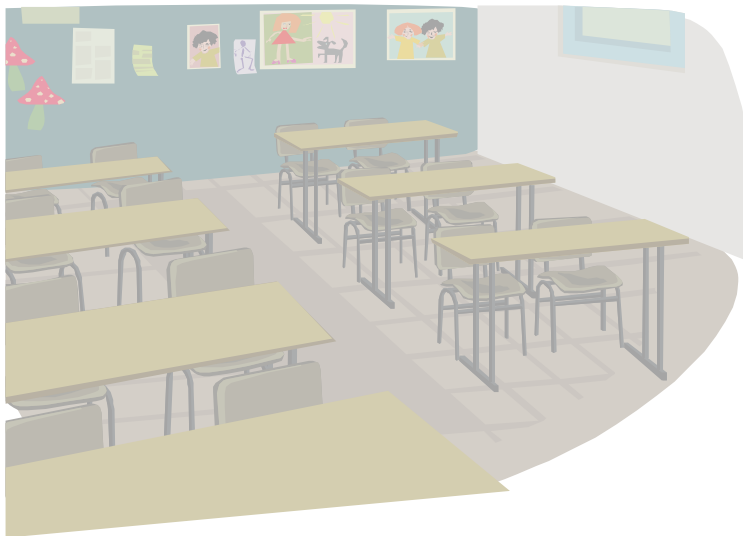
Grade 10 – Prompt b: Persuasive

Imagine that business owners in your community have asked your high school to add several optional week-long courses to your high school's curriculum. They have suggested that these classes focus on practical skills such as choosing a dependable used car, renting an apartment, writing a resume, finding a good part-time job, or using a credit card responsibly.

The school board has asked students which classes they would like to see added to the curriculum. Write a letter to the school board in which you urge them to choose one of these week-long courses or suggest one of your own. Explain why you think this class would be both useful and popular with your peers.

Be sure to use:

- specific reasons and details to support your suggestion
- a clear organizational structure, including an introduction, a thesis, transitions, and a conclusion
- effective and appropriate word choice
- correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization



Sample Essay 1b:

Esteemed School Board Members:

Before you now is the option to add classes to the high school curriculum at the request of the business community. The possible topics presented by them are indeed very useful in our lives, but if they want a well-prepared workforce of tomorrow, I feel that there are other options that should be looked at first.

Everyone needs to be able to find a good place to live and adequate transportation. Knowing how to find and get that dream job is important as well. Everyone needs to know fiscal responsibility. All of these would be good choices to have as classes, but with our society becoming a society where knowledge truly is power, the best choice would be to create a class that teaches and tests our ability to think.

The ability to think well on your feet will become a must in the jobs of tomorrow, and it would be wise for the schools to teach it to us, lest we fall behind. There are many ways to do this, and is applicable to many fields. Mock trials are an excellent example. Further, scenarios involving space exploration could be used. The ability to think well is so prevalent in working, that a year-long class could be devoted to it; the list of possibility goes on.

Not only would this class prepare us for the future, but would most likely be very popular. This is a "living" class, which can easily be modified to each class' unique needs and interests. I feel that many would be interested in a class that is virtually tailored to them.

The reasons to institute such a class are numerous, and reasons against it elude me. It is apparent that teaching students how to refine their thinking is the only way to go. Decide how you wish, but the rewards gained by informing our future is a hard thing to argue against.

Sincerely,

Sample Essay 1b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	6
Conventions:	3
Total Score:	9

Purpose/Focus

- This writer’s **control of purpose and focus is exemplary**, moving beyond a formulaic list of objects to **a thoughtful, persuasive, and explicit unifying idea**.
- The writer’s thesis **demonstrates understanding of the requirements of the assigned task**.

Organization/Coherence

- Effective two paragraph introduction that blends the paper into a functioning whole.
- Logical structure with a satisfying conclusion.

Development of Content

- Demonstrates quality of invented content – “the ability to think well on your feet,” “Not only would this class prepare us for the future, but would most likely be very popular.”
- Ideas are well developed with support, “mock trials,” “space exploration,” “living class.”

Sentence Fluency

- **Fluid writing, controlled and varied.**
- **Demonstrates control of simple, compound, and complex sentence structure.**
- Use of active voice.

Word Choice

- **Word choice is vivid and precise.**
- Demonstrates attention to audience.

Conventions

- The writer demonstrates **advanced control of a wide range of standard writing conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards**.
- Uses words, phrases and clauses effectively, including interrelated clauses in complex sentences.

Sample Essay 2b:

Dear School Board Members,

In the last few years of high school, students become independent and want to break away from their parents. The first thing a person thinks of after high school is their own place, where they don't have to follow their parents' rules. However, I've seen many older friends and cousins going about getting an apartment and sharing it with friends all wrong. A lot of them have lost their apartment and are either in a dorm or back living at home.

For these reasons I feel that we should have a week long class on renting an apartment. The class would teach us how to pick an affordable apartment in a good neighborhood, and how to pick responsible roommates. They could also teach us why renting with a friend isn't always the best thing to do. I think it will give us an extra boost in independence, because if we know what we're doing and looking for then we are less likely to quit before trying. For all the above reasons I urge you to consider the renting an apartment class.

Before you close, think about your own children. Wouldn't you want to give them this knowledge before they go out to live on their own?

Sample Essay 2b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	5
Conventions:	3
Total Score:	8

Purpose/Focus

- Strong purpose and focus.

Organization/Coherence

- Extremely well developed introduction and nice set-up for what follows.
- Logical structure of development – teach us to pick an apartment, pick roommates, and it would be a valuable class.
- Effective **conclusion** with a voice and awareness of audience.

Development of Content

- **Development of topic using details and rationale.**
- Brief but well thought out and focused.

Sentence Fluency

- **Strong control and varied structure – “In the last few years of high school, students become independent and want to breakaway from their parents”**
- Use of active voice – “I’ve seen many older friends...”

Word Choice

- **Overall, word choice is very effective**
- Word choice is **often precise, and vivid**: “independent,” “valuable,” “costly,” “consider,” “knowledge.”
- **Infrequently, the writer’s word choice becomes overly general** (“everyone needs something just a little different to put meaning in life”) **or slightly awkward** (“feelings...slack off over time”).

Conventions

- Complex sentences used effectively.
- Uses punctuation for style – “Before you chose, think about your own children.” “Also, I think it will give us an extra boost in...”

Sample Essay 3b:

As people approach adulthood in high school, they must learn many new skills on how to live independently. High school prepares us for many of these skills but not all of them. Since transportation has a major role in our lives, I think that it would be beneficial to many high school students if our school board would set up a week-long course to learn about cars and how they operate.

A course that teaches people about cars would be very useful because many people don't know how to take proper care of their car, or how to do simple things like changing the oil. In other words there are many people who would greatly benefit from a class about cars. First, a course about cars would be useful because it could teach people how to change oil, lubricate brakes, and know how to detect an engine problem. This would save people money, time, and it would help keep their cars in better shape. The class could also teach people about how to get better gas mileage and how to keep their cars running longer. Therefore, I think a course learning about cars and how to take care of them would be very beneficial to students.

Next, I think that high schools should offer a course on cars because many students would like to learn about it. Since almost everybody of the ages 16 or above has or drives a car, the course would involve many people. First, at the age of 15 or greater, people get very excited about being able to drive and having a car. A course on cars could teach them useful practices to keep their car in good shape and make it more safe for these drivers. Also, not many students can learn about this anywhere else. Therefore, I feel that many students would be interested in a course on cars.

In conclusion, I feel that there are many reasons why a course on cars would greatly benefit high school students who are learning to be independent. I hope that you will support my reasons and give high school students the opportunity to learn about cars and be more independent.

Sample Essay 3b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	4
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	6

Purpose/Focus

- Good focus and purpose

Organization/Coherence

- Effective introduction “As people approach adulthood...”
- Logical structure of development with a proficient conclusion

Development of Content

- Thorough development of the second paragraph topic.
- Third paragraph is underdeveloped and becomes repetitious of paragraph two, “useful practices to keep their car in good shape...”

Sentence Fluency

- **Fluid and effective but somewhat repetitive – “a course that teaches,” “The class could teach.”**

Word Choice

- Demonstrates attention to audience. “approach, independently, beneficial, operate, proper, benefit.”

Conventions

- The writer demonstrates **proficient control of a range of standard writing conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- Safe paper with a few errors.
- Random capitalization.
- Word agreement problems – “more safe,” “offer a course on cars because students would like to learn about it.”

Sample Essay 4b:

In the high school's curriculum, there are many useful classes, but like all things, it could be better. Adding a class for writing resumes would be helpful for the student's futures, as well as being appealing because of this.

A writing of resumes class would be a good class to add to the curriculum due to the fact that students would use it throughout their lives. In almost all jobs, a resume is required, and it would also help college bound individuals ready themselves for writing college resumes.

A resume writing class would be popular because the students would need to use this skill in their futures. Many students would wish to take this class to ready themselves for the future.

In conclusion, adding a resume writing class to the high school's curriculum would be a helpful class for all student's.

Sample Essay 4b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	3
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	5

Purpose/Focus

- The **stated focus consistently guides the essay’s development.**

Organization/Coherence

- **Generic introduction and conclusion.**
- **Logical structure with simple transitions.**

Development of Content

- **Ideas are simplistic and repeated.** Lack of ideas and examples.
- The second paragraph has **more development with several examples** of the usefulness of a resume – “jobs and college.”
- **The third paragraph is skeletal** with only the idea of “popular” and the “future.”

Sentence Fluency

- **Adequate sentence development.** “Adding a class for writing resumes would be helpful for students futures, as well as being appealing because of this.”
- **Control with variation**

Word Choice

- **Simplistic yet precise** “throughout, required, ready themselves for the future, individuals.”

Conventions

- The writer demonstrates **proficient control of standard writing conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- Not a wide range of conventions illustrated.

Sample Essay 5b:

To whom this may concern,

I'm writing you today to take a chance on spending the time to take the opportunity to read this letter. I have been interested in having a week long course on applying for colleges. A lot of seniors will leave my High school, not knowing what they are going to do. They have been prepared for eighteen years for the future, and some students are scared. They don't know what to do? Get a job at the local McDonalds or go to school?

I feel if this were to be offered as a course many will learn about what to do. Helpful ways to get a good start on life when they hit adulthood. Practice tests, writing resumes, and practicing for college interviews.

This course could teach students how to balance their money at college, and still keep their heads high. I thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,
Jane Doe

Sample Essay 5b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	2
Conventions:	2
Total Score:	4

Purpose/Focus

- **This writer loses focus at times** between the course and students becoming adults.

Organization/Coherence

- **Introduction is not coherent.**
- **Opening sentence is awkward.**
- **Illogical shifts** between students knowing what to do in the future and a class on applying for college.
- Conclusion is tacked onto the last paragraph and is one sentence long. “I thank you for taking the time to read this.”

Development of Content

- **General ideas for the college course are spread throughout the paper and not tied together.**
- **Development is loosely related and disorganized.**

Sentence Fluency

- **Awkward** “I am writing you today to take a chance on spending the time to take the opportunity to read this letter.”

Word Choice

- **Word choice simple and generic.** “Concern, interested, prepared, practicing”

Conventions

- **Misspellings** “collages, writting, inerested, oppartunity, inierviewes, balence.”
- Run-on sentences and fragments.
- Generally controls grammar and usage and used end-stop punctuation most of the time.
- Employs the conventions of capitalization

Sample Essay 6b:

I think that we should have different games in Gym. A game called haky sack Because everyone (all most everyone) will participate and it is a good exercise and and eye and body curwardinec.

Sample Essay 6b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	1
Conventions:	1
Total Score:	2

Purpose/Focus

- This writer demonstrates **basic control of focus and purpose.**

Organization/Coherence

- **Paper is too minimal to demonstrate organization skills.**
- **No introduction and conclusion are present**

Development of Content

- **Incomplete, inadequately supported, lacks illustration.** “Hacky Sack - everyone will participate, exercise, and good eye and body coordination.”

Sentence Fluency

- One simplistic opening sentence and one run on sentence.

Word Choice

- **Few.**

Conventions

- This writer demonstrates **minimal control of standard writing conventions identified in the 12th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.**
- Run on sentence.
- Very brief paper with frequent errors.
- Shows poor control of spelling.

Sample Essay 7b:

I think the week long courses would help. I don't know anymore. Stop asking me!

Sample Essay 7b: Scoring Breakdown

Composing:	0
Conventions:	0
Total Score:	0

Purpose/Focus

- No attempt

Organization/Coherence

- Since this writer does not sustain a response to the prompt, **there is no evidence of skill in organizing a coherent discussion.**

Development of Content

- “Courses would help.” What course?

Sentence Fluency

- **Syntax is highly simplistic.**

Word Choice

- **Word choice is simplistic and significantly below grade level.**

Conventions

- Inappropriate response

