March 2013

High School Proficiency Assessment

(HSPA)

Criterion-Based Holistic Scoring:

A Writing Handbook

September 2013

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March 2013
HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT (HSPA)

CRITERION-BASED HOLISTIC SCORING: A WRITING HANDBOOK

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CRITERION-BASED HOLISTIC SCORING

New Jersey has been assessing students' ability to write standard English since 1984. From 1985–86 through 1989–90, this assessment was conducted with ninth-grade students as a component of the Grade 9 High School Proficiency Test (HSPT9). In 1993–94, the HSPT9 was replaced with the Grade 11 High School Proficiency Test (HSPT11) and an eighth-grade Early Warning Test (EWT). The Writing section of these two tests consisted of two components: a writing sample, which assessed students' abilities to write sustained discourse, and a multiple-choice portion, which assessed how well students were able to read critically, revise, and edit the written text of others. With the May 1996 adoption of the Core Curriculum Content Standards, new test specifications were developed to align testing with the knowledge and skills described in the language arts literacy standards. These test specifications identify the components of the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), and Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA). The GEPA and ESPA have since been replaced by the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) for students in grades three through eight. At each grade level, the assessment elicits two samples of student writing and student responses to reading passages. Students taking the HSPA write original texts in two modes of discourse (expository and persuasive). The Revising/Editing task, which asked students to orchestrate authentic revisions of a text written by another student, was not part of the 2013 test administration.

This handbook focuses on the writing samples resulting from the March 2013 administration of the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). It presents the scoring method and criteria used to evaluate student writing and offers suggestions for using New Jersey's scoring rubrics and student test data to improve classroom instruction. Additionally, the handbook includes the New Jersey Revising/Editing Guide (R/ESG) and instructional suggestions for using that guide to assess students' knowledge and skills within the classroom. Although the Revising/Editing task was not part of the 2013 test administration due to the high cost of scoring open-ended responses, the task remains an essential source of information because it focuses on students' abilities to orchestrate authentic revisions of a text and reveals what students are able to recognize as strengths and weaknesses in a given written text. Discussion of the Revising/Editing task and use of the scoring rubric is included in this document to support further instruction in this critical aspect of the writing process.

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

Criterion-Based Holistic Scoring: An Operational Definition

Criterion-based holistic scoring brings uniformity to the evaluation of writing across contents and settings by specifying salient features of writing quality and levels of writing proficiency. The RHSR

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

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

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

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

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

Criterion-based scoring does not rely upon the readers inferring performance criteria from exemplars or anchor papers. Rather, the method defines consistent criteria for judging writing quality independent of the sample of responses. Training and qualifying sets of student papers are used to illustrate how the scoring criteria are applied across the range of possible score points. The samples and accompanying

annotations included in Appendices C and E of this document are examples of student performance with respect to the features of written language targeted by the RHSR.

In summary, a criterion-based scoring method:

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

Appropriateness of Criterion-Based Holistic Scoring

- Criterion-based scoring rubrics anchor consistent features of writing independent of purpose and audience from year to year. This consistency is necessary because a different population sits for the test at each administration, and different writing tasks are administered each time. To assure the same meaning of score points from one test administration to the next (same level of student writing), the scoring method focuses upon invariant criteria of good writing. Although a task can elicit a variety of responses written in a variety of rhetorical modes (narrative, persuasive, etc.), a paper's rating is based on the student's facility with the identified features. That facility is registered by a point on the score scale that describes the student's command of written language.

- The established criteria allow the anchoring of the features consistently from year to year and therefore eliminate scoring procedures that are strictly normative or based on differing evaluation criteria. That is, a paper receiving a "4" one year could conceivably receive a "2" the following year if it were scored with reference to the sample of student skills or to varying scoring criteria. Scored according to New Jersey's criterion-based method, however, a paper receiving a "4" one year will more consistently receive a "4" the next year.

- Because the criteria for scoring are set forth at each score point as descriptive features, scorer reliability can be maintained. The descriptive statements of each feature at each score point describe the quality of writing assigned that score.

- The distribution of scores based on criterion-based methods permits evaluation of districts' instructional programs because the uniform scoring criteria are published and disseminated for inclusion in these programs.

- Reader bias (a personal preference for scoring based on form/number of paragraphs, flavor or style, etc.) is diminished because the criteria are established prior to the actual scoring of the students' responses. In addition, the criteria are essential factors within the training and qualifying papers used to select readers who can consistently and reliably apply the scoring criteria of the score scale.

- New Jersey's criterion-based scoring rubrics emphasize writing as a higher-order thinking skill as measured by the HSPA. Writing requires knowledge of one's topic (content) and a cogent application of that knowledge (organization); use of the English language according to a recognized standard (usage); the structuring of words and sentences to present a complete thought or message to the intended audience(s) (sentence construction); and the application of the conventions of the English language that serve to clarify the author's intended message (mechanics).

- The two scoring rubrics permit an analysis of students' strengths and needs when writing on demand in a timed setting. This benefits educators by providing feedback on the effectiveness of instructional strategies with respect to the evaluation criteria expressed by the two rubrics.

CRITERION-BASED HOLISTIC SCORING: 2013

Scoring with the Criteria

During April and May of 20123, approximately 86,000 New Jersey grade-eleven student writing responses were scored by two independent readers each in Durham, North Carolina, at Measurement Incorporated (MI), the HSPA test contractor. In addition to scoring the HSPA writing tasks, MI also handscored student responses to constructed-response reading and mathematics test items.

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

Scoring Personnel and Procedures

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Summary

Scorers using the criteria of the Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric must first focus their attention on the content and organization of the student's writing as it addresses the topic and then adjust their 1 (lowest) to 6 (highest) score point based on the effect of three other criteria: usage, sentence construction, and mechanics. Only one score point is assigned by each of the two independent readers, and the final score represents either the average of the two scores (for the expository prompt) or the sum of the two scores (for the persuasive prompt). Student expository responses are reported on a scale of 1 to 6; student persuasive essays are reported on a scale of 2 to 12.

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

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

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

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

Content/Organization

- What organizational patterns have been chosen by the writers? Can they all establish a focus for their papers? Do they have beginnings? Do they have endings? Are the papers cluttered with irrelevant information? Do they progress logically from beginning to end? Are transitions appropriate and varied?

- How many of the students appear to be able to express themselves on a given task? How many seem to find it difficult to write on a given task? For a given purpose? For a given audience?

- Are key ideas developed with appropriate and varied details? Are responses highly effective and vivid?

Usage

- Do students use words that are grammatically correct?

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

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

Sentence Construction

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

Mechanics

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

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

- Do students work with existing text, or do they attempt to compose an entirely new response?

- Do they attend only to surface features? Do they address ambiguous, confusing, or contradictory statements?

- Is their attention to errors and to development consistent throughout?

- Do students introduce new errors? Do the new errors reflect carelessness or lack of knowledge about written language?

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

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

Student-Teacher Analysis of HSPA Responses

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Before introducing the RHSR, the teacher should pass out three papers that represent a range of writing scores. Sample papers may be obtained from Appendix C (expository responses) or Appendix E (persuasive essays) or from writing handbooks distributed with sample papers from 1994 through 2012. If papers are selected from any of these sources, the teacher may use sample responses that received a "2," "4," or "6." The papers should have the scores and annotations removed before they are distributed

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Before introducing the R/ESG, the teacher should use an overhead projector to display a student writing sample that received a "3," indicating a partial command of written language. Sample papers may be obtained from Appendix C (expository responses) or Appendix E (persuasive essays) of this handbook, or from writing handbooks distributed with sample papers from 1994 through 2012. Alternatively, the teacher may select a sample demonstrating a comparable level of proficiency from a previous classroom assignment. All trace of scores, annotations, or comments should be removed from the paper selected for use in this activity. Teachers may find it easier to type the sample paper—errors and all—leaving ample space between the lines to accommodate edited text and short revisions.

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

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

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

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

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

Multiple Uses of the Author's Self-Reporting Form

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

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

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

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

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

Summary

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

To this end, the following practices are recommended:

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

APPENDIX A

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

RUBRICS FOR SCORING STUDENT WRITING

New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric

New Jersey Revising/Editing Scoring Guide

NEW JERSEY REGISTERED HOLISTIC SCORING RUBRIC

In scoring, consider the grid of written language	Inadequate Command	Limited Command	Partial Command	Adequate Command	Strong Command	Superior Command
Score	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Content and Organization	• May lack opening and/or closing	• May lack opening and/or closing	• May lack opening and/or closing	• Generally has opening and/or closing	• Opening and closing	• Opening and closing
	• Minimal response to topic; uncertain focus	• Attempts to focus • May drift or shift focus	• Usually has single focus	• Single focus	• Single focus • Sense of unity and coherence • Key ideas developed	• Single, distinct focus • Unified and coherent • Well-developed
	• No planning evident; disorganized	• Attempts organization • Few, if any, transitions between ideas	• Some lapses or flaws in organization • May lack some transitions between ideas	• Ideas loosely connected • Transitions evident	• Logical progression of ideas • Moderately fluent • Attempts compositional risks	• Logical progression of ideas • Fluent, cohesive • Compositional risks successful
	• Details random, inappropriate, or barely apparent	• Details lack elaboration, i.e., highlight paper	• Repetitious details • Several unelaborated details	• Uneven development of details	• Details appropriate and varied	• Details effective, vivid, explicit, and/or pertinent
Usage	• No apparent control • Severe/numerous errors	• Numerous errors	• Errors/patterns of errors may be evident	• Some errors that do not interfere with meaning	• Few errors	• Very few, if any, errors
Sentence Construction	• Assortment of incomplete and/or incorrect sentences	• Excessive monotony/same structure • Numerous errors	• Little variety in syntax • Some errors	• Some variety • Generally correct	• Variety in syntax appropriate and effective • Few errors	• Precision and/or sophistication • Very few, if any, errors
Mechanics	• Errors so severe they detract from meaning	• Numerous serious errors	• Patterns of errors evident	• No consistent pattern of errors • Some errors that do not interfere with meaning	• Few errors	• Very few, if any, errors

NON-SCORABLE RESPONSES		
	FR =Fragment	Student wrote too little to allow a reliable judgment of his/her writing.
	OT = Off Topic/ Off Task	Student did not write on the assigned topic/task.
	NE = Not English	Student wrote in a language other than English.
	NR = No Response	Blank

Content/Organization	Usage	Sentence Construction	Mechanics
• Communicates intended message to intended audience • Relates to topic • Opening and closing • Focused • Logical progression of ideas • Transitions • Appropriate details and information	• Tense formation • Subject-verb agreement • Pronoun usage/agreement • Word choice/meaning • Proper Modifiers	• Variety of type, structure, and length • Correct construction	• Spelling • Capitalization • Punctuation

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

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NEW JERSEY REVISING/EDITING SCORING GUIDE

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

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APPENDIX B

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

TEST ADMINISTRATION MATERIALS
FOR WRITING AN EXPOSITORY ESSAY

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
DIRECTIONS – PART 1

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

You will have 30 minutes to complete the first writing task. Take a few minutes to think about the task and to plan what you want to say before you begin to write. You may use the prewriting/planning space on pages 24–25 in your test booklet to plan your text, but your prewriting will not be scored. Only your writing on pages 11–12 in your answer folder will be scored. Do your best to make your writing clear and well organized. Keep your purpose in mind as you write and use your checklist.

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

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1 – PART 1

EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK

Tobias Wolff says, "We are made to persist. That's how we find out who we are." How does persistence reveal who we are? Using an example from literature, history, science, film, or your own experience or observation, write an essay analyzing how we discover who we are through our determination.

PREWRITING/PLANNING SPACE

When you finish your planning, turn to page 11 in your answer folder.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE. ➡

PREWRITING/PLANNING SPACE (continued)

END OF PART 1
Be sure to write your draft on pages 11–12 in your answer folder. You may check your work on this part only. DO NOT GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

STOP

NEW JERSEY
HIGH SCHOOL
PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

Writer's Checklist

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

CONTENT/ORGANIZATION

_____ 1. Focus on your purpose for writing and your audience.

_____ 2. Develop a clear topic or central idea.

_____ 3. Support your ideas with details, explanations, and examples.

_____ 4. Put your ideas in the order that best communicates what you are trying to say.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

_____ 5. Use clear and varied sentences.

USAGE

_____ 6. Use words correctly.

_____ 7. Use varied and vivid vocabulary.

MECHANICS

_____ 8. Capitalize, spell, and punctuate correctly.

_____ 9. Write neatly.

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GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

APPENDIX C

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPOSITORY TASK AND SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES

Description of Task

The responses selected to appear in this handbook were written by eleventh-grade students who took the expository writing section of the March 2013 High School Proficiency Assessment. The responses appear as the students wrote them; no corrections have been made other than the deletion of specific names that appear to identify the student or the student's school district. A typed version of each response appears before the handwritten response.

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

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

Score Scale Point 1

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

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION	• may not have an opening and/or closing. These papers are on topic and demonstrate at least a minimal attempt to respond to the topic by stating a subject or giving a list of subjects. Some of the lengthier papers are disorganized, making them consistently difficult to follow. In these papers the reader has to infer what the focus is. The overriding characteristic of many of these papers is a lack of control with no sense of planning. Details may be random, inappropriate, or barely apparent.
USAGE	• may display severe/numerous errors in usage. This includes problems in tense formation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun usage and agreement, word choice, and use of proper modifiers.
SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	• may demonstrate an assortment of grammatically incorrect/incomplete sentences and/or incorrect rhetorical modes. Statements may be either incoherent or unintelligible.
MECHANICS	• may display errors in mechanics so severe as to detract from the meaning of the response.

Tobias Wolff says, “We are made to persist. That’s how we find out who we are.” How does persistence reveal who we are? Persistence can reveal who we are in the future. Your can says persistence is tike the Movie the Blind seet the guy was a footboll because he always stay force case.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

Tobias Wolff says, "We are made to persist. That's how we find out who we are." How does persistence reveal who we are? Persistence can reveal who we are in the future. Your can says persistence is tike the movie the Blind seet the guy was a footboll because he aways stay force case.

Score Point: 1

Although the writer begins by simply restating part of the prompt, enough bare detail is apparent in this response to demonstrate a minimal attempt to address the topic [*Persistence can reveal who we are in the future*]. However, the next idea, which is riddled with numerous and severe errors in sentence construction, usage, and mechanics [*Your can says persistence is tike the movie the Blind seet the guy was a footboll because he aways stay force case*], is incoherent and indicative of an inadequate command of written language.

my sister when She wAs little She AlWAYS talked About thAt She wAnted to own. her own thing She would ALWAYS hAve like A picture in her head how She is going to Set it UP. But AS She WAS going up She would SAVe All her money just for She could open her own Salon. So She WAS sAving money And going to School And She wAited her time. now She is older enough And hAve her own thing open. my Sister is An exAmple of persistence reveAl becAuse She never chAnged her mind She ALWAYS Stick to he plAn And future. PeoPle thAt persistence they ALWAYS Sacrifice thing for when they older they could be good And not Stressing.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

my Sister when She WAS little She ALWAYS talked
About that She WAnted to own. her own thing
She would ALWAYS hAve like A picture in her
head how She is going to Set it UP. But AS She
WAS going up She would SAve All her money
JUST for She could open her own Salon. So She
WAS SAving money And going to School And She
WAited her time. now She is older enough And
hAve her own thing open. my Sister is An exAmple
of persistence reveAl becAuse She never ChAnged
her mind She ALWAYS Stick to he PlAn And
future. People thAt persistence they ALWAYS
SAcrifice thing for when they older they could
be good And not Stressing.

Score Point: 1

This writer develops a response that relates to the topic, presenting an example of sister's persistence [*She wanted to own. her own thing*]. Although the response provides a series of connected ideas, it does not address discovery of "who we are through our determination," indicating that the writer does not truly understand the prompt. In addition, numerous and severe errors in sentence construction, usage, and mechanics detract from the meaning [*PeoPle thAt persistence they AlWAYS Sacrifice thing for when they older they could be good And not Stressing*], demonstrating an inadequate command of written language.

Tobias Wolff says, “We are made to persist. That’s how we find out who we are.” Persistence does reveal who we are by sometimes movies can help us determine who we are on the inside. In “Thank You, Ma’am,” Mrs. Bates helps the young boy into choosing the right path. Persistence can be seen everywhere—in literature, history, science, film, or from my own experience or observation.

Persistence also reveals who we are by it helps us make the right choices in life away from the bad choices. During historical times, the people back then often persist into being involved with the war.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

Tobias Wolff says, "We are made to persist. That's how we find out who we are". Persistence does reveal who we are by sometimes movies can help us determine who we are on the inside. In "Thank You, Ma'am", Mrs. Bates helps the young boy into choosing the right path. Persistence can be seen everywhere - in literature, history, science, film, or from my own experience or observation.

Persistence also reveals who we are by it helps us make the right choices in life away from the bad choices. During historical times, the people back then often persist into being involved with the war.

Score Point: 1

Although this writer attempts a response to the prompt, the details are barely apparent, and the reader has to infer how each example relates to the topic. With the focus of the writing uncertain, it is difficult to tell whether the writer understands persistence or is merely trying to cite instances when a character chose "the right path." Without further development of the ideas, the details are random and difficult to follow, demonstrating a lack of control and an inadequate command of written language.

Score Scale Point 2

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

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION	• may not have an opening and/or closing. These responses will exhibit an attempt at organization. In other words, there will be some evidence the writer attempted to control the details. The responses relate to the topic, but in some papers, the writer drifts away from the primary focus or abruptly shifts focus. In other papers, there is a single focus, but there are few, if any, transitions, making it difficult to move from idea to idea. Details are presented with little, if any, elaboration—highlight papers.
USAGE	• may have numerous problems with usage, but they are not totally out of control.
SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	• may demonstrate excessive monotony in syntax and/or rhetorical modes. There may be numerous errors in sentence construction.
MECHANICS	• may display numerous severe errors in mechanics.

It is sometimes difficult to discover who we are and what we can accomplish. However, it can be possible if you are persistant, if you continue to push towards your goals you can discover who you really are. Through your determination of completing a goal you can discover what you can achieve if you just kept trying. By pushing ourselves to achieve a certain goal we discover what we are capable of doing with our certain set of skills which allows us to achieve many of our goals. Through many years of playing soccer I strived to become a better player. I thought I would never be able to achieve my goal because I wasn't as good as the other players. But I found that I didn't need to be as good as my teammates, I needed to be the best player that I could be. By doing that I achieved my goal of becoming a better soccer player and a better teammate. By being persistant you can discover who you are and what you can achieve.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

It is sometimes difficult to discover who we are and what we can accomplish. However, it can be possible if you are persistant, if you continue to push towards your goals you can discover who you really are. Through your determination of completing a goal you can discover what you can achieve if you just kept trying. By pushing ourselves to achieve a certain goal we discover what we are capable of doing with our certain set of skills which allows us to achieve many of our goals. Through many years of playing soccer I strived to become a better player. I thought I would never be able to achieve my goal because I wasn't as good as the other players. But I found that I didn't need to be as good as my teammates, I needed to be the best player that I could be. By doing that I achieved my goal of becoming a better soccer player and a better teammate. By being persistant you can discover who you are and what you can achieve.

Score Point: 2

This response relates to the topic by addressing the discovery of "who we are" through persistence. The writer attempts to organize the ideas, with the first half of the response serving to introduce the topic, but the information is highly repetitive and general, basically stating that through persistence "you can discover who you are" and achieve your goals. The second half of the response provides an appropriate but brief example that serves as a "highlight" of persistence leading to self-discovery [*I found that I didn't need to be as good as my teammates, I needed to be the best player that I could be. By doing that I achieved my goal of becoming a better soccer player and a better teammate*]. Overall, the writer's attempt to focus on the topic and organize the ideas demonstrates a limited command of written language.

We are made to persist. Thats how we find out who we are. The way mankind is compared from generation to generation. Respect, responsebility, respect and many different other characteristics show what kind of person you are. People look at others in different ways especially when they are not from around the same district, but others aren't so quick to judge. Most good characteristics in a person are not shown as much now compared to a decade ago. There has always been discrimination and racism going on along with feminism.

From look at past expirenced situations, actions or words could tell a lot about a person. Things are said quicker and spread faster because of the internet plus all these social medias. Same goes for action, cameras are bigger than ever, especially by the fact there are cameras everywhere. Someone is always seeing every move you make and exposed on social medias because it's the fastest way for anything to spread. It always starts with one then two then four then eight and so on in a matter of minutes.

The more advanced technology gets the more better and worst it gets for everyone. There will always be pros and cons for everything because nothing in this world that is perfect but everything will always be something close to it. Look at yourself before assuming or judging others. Never act like a superior unless you are compared to someone

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

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The more advanced technology gets the more better and worst it gets for everyone. There will always be pros and cons for everything because nothing in this world is perfect but everything will always be something close to it. Look at yourself before assuming or judging others. Never act like a superior unless you are compared to someone

Score Point: 2

After restating the quotation, this writer develops a response that focuses on the judgments people make about others based on appearance, lack of familiarity, or social media exposure. Although the writer's failure to address persistence or determination makes it difficult for the reader to make connections to the topic, the response does attempt to address "who we really are," indicating an attempt to focus, if only on one part of the prompt. In addition, the details in the examples are unelaborated and presented as highlights, and errors in sentence construction, usage, and mechanics result in some lack of clarity [*There will always be pros and cons for everything because nothing in this world that is perfect but everything will always be something close to it*]. The drift away from the primary focus of the prompt and lack of elaboration indicate overall a limited command of written language.

Pure Persistence

Persistence displays and shows your true self. Tobias Wolf says, “We are made to persist. That’s how we find out who we are.” These words are entirely true. Do you hold on to what you believe in and keep reaching for your goals even if it is hard? The persistence of your goals and belief show who you truely are.

Persistence of becoming the best shows character. In the civil rights era, Martin Lurther king continued reaching for his goal of equality. No matter what we in his way, he would fight and struggle for his belief. Through his struggles he showed everyone how great he was.

I was determined to reach my goal in making the baseball team in tenth grade. No matter the challenges that faced me, I continued to work hard and pratice. like MLK, this show everyone who I truely was a person. It displaye that I was hard working. Persistence revealed who I truely was.

Inclusion, we persist and go through struggles. When we persist, it shows who we truely are to ourselves and people around you. Our determination measures how far we will go. Persistence is a great revealer of who we are as a human being.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

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Inclusion, we persist and go through struggles. When we persist, it shows who we truely are to ourselves and people around you. Our determination measures how far we will go. Persistence is a great revealer of who we are as a human being.

Score Point: 2

In this response, the writer displays an understanding of the topic [*The persistence of your goals and belief show who you truely are*; *When we persist, it shows who we truely are to ourselves and people around you*] and provides two examples to illustrate this idea. Use of several general details [*In the civil rights era, Martin Lurther king continued reaching for his goal of equality*; *he would fight and struggle for his belief*; *I was determined to reach my goal in making the baseball team in tenth grade*; *I continued to work hard and pratice. like MLK*], with some attempt to organize and control them, provides a focus for the reader. However, without further and more specific development, the details are simply highlights, indicating a limited command of written language.

Score Scale Point 3

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

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION	• may not have an opening and/or closing. These responses relate to the topic and usually have a single focus. Some of these papers may drift from the focus or abruptly shift focus; however, in these papers, at least one of the subjects focused on clearly meets the criteria for a "3." For example, some "3" papers are sparse—they have several details with a little elaboration, but they are organized and controlled; some "3" papers will ramble somewhat, repeating ideas resulting in a lengthy response that would otherwise be sparse; and other "3" papers have elaborated ideas and details, but the writing sample is interrupted by organizational flaws/lapses or by a lack of transition between ideas or between clusters of ideas.
USAGE	• may display (a) pattern(s) of errors in usage.
SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	• may demonstrate little variety in syntax structure and/or rhetorical modes. There may be errors in sentence construction.
MECHANICS	• may display (a) pattern(s) of errors in mechanics.

Tobias Wolff says, “We are made to persists. That’s how we find out who we are.” Persistence reveal who we are because if we never think things through we will never know the outcome. We should always learn to keep going whelther no one thinks you should. I believe people should open to new doors and see if what they look forward to is what they really wanted.

In the book of Hamlet in Act 2 it explains where Polinus spead an rumor about his son and wanted to see the reactions of others. Polinus didn’t want to speak to his son because he had felt he can go far with the rumor. At the end of the story Polinus finally find out that the rumor was false and made himself look bad. Polinus thought the outcome of it was to yell at his son for the wrong doings.

As a freshmen in high school it is such an overwhelming feeling because it is a different atomsphere. I began to open new doors, such as T.V production and Drama. I became a Drama buff, and decided to do the musicals. Next thing you know I became a lead part for my freshmen year. Everything I tired I’ve never regret.

I believe Tobias Wolff quote was true because people do reveal themselves. Persistence should be in everyone blood. In hamlet Polinus discover he was very immature and should of talk to his son to make the situation more different. When I was a freshmen if I’ve never tired the musicals I would never became a senor into Drama. We all look at things differently and it makes us who we are by the way we think.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

Tobias Wolff says, "We are made to persists. That's how we find out who we are." Persistence reveal who we are because if we never think things through we will never know the outcome. We should always learn to keep going whether no one thinks you should. I believe people should open to new doors and see if what they look forward to is what they really wanted.

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EXPOSITORY WRITING (continued)

tired the musicals I would never became
a senor into Drama. We all look at
things differently and it makes us who
we are by the way we think.

Score Point: 3

In this sparsely developed response, the writer attempts to sustain a single focus on the prompt [*people should open to new doors and see if what they look forward to is what they really wanted*] and provides two examples to illustrate this idea. Drawing on the character Polonius from *Hamlet*, the writer offers plot details that serve as a weak example of persistence, and without the benefit of any real analysis, the reader has to infer the connection to the prompt [*Polinus finally find out that the rumor was false and made himself look bad*]. For the second example, in an abrupt shift without any transition, the writer then describes a personal pursuit in high school that was self-defining [*When I was a freshmen if I've never tired the musicals I would never became a senor into Drama*] and offers an explanation that again requires the reader to infer the connection to the prompt [*We all look at things differently and it makes us who we are by the way we think*]. The lapses in the development of these examples and the absence of a clear transition between them are organizational flaws, which along with the pattern of errors in sentence construction, usage, and mechanics demonstrate a partial command of written language.

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Persistence is a very key action that we as humans do. As Tobias Wolff says, “we are made to persist. That’s how we find out who we are.” Persistence reveals who we are because it shows that you don’t give up, you will get what you want, and you are strong willed. I think that Tobias Wolff is definatly correct in this quote and I couldn’t agree more.

First, when you are persistant it shows that you won’t give up. That is such a great quality and it will always be a benefit. If you never give up, eventually, you will get something out of it. You might not get what you wanted, but it won’t go for nothing. Not giving up is an action that thrives through the minds of everyone. Nobody wants to be considered a quiter. So if you are persistant enough, and don’t give up, there is a good chance you will get what you want and prove yourself.

Next, if you are very persistant and don’t stop, you will end up getting what you wanted. You may have to negotiate to get something. But being persistant is a nail biter for some people. A lot of people won’t want to argue, so they’ll just give you what your being so persistant over. Being persistant in a way can be a skill. If you do it enough, you can just get what you want. All in all, if you are very persistant on not giving up, you’ll get what you want and be quite satisfied.

Lastly, if you are persistant it shows that you are strong willed. If you are strong willed, you can do so many things in life because it is such a big advantage. You can tell yourself to be strong, don’t give up, be persistant. Then you could pretty much do anything. nothing would really get in your way. No person could stop you because your strong willed and will keep being persistant. No obsticle will stop you because you will find a way to get around it. Being strong will really shows who you are as a person because in your mind your telling yourself you can acomplish anything. That is pretty much the most amount of persistence anyone could have.

In the end, the ways that persistence reveals who we are is that we don’t give up, we will end will some sort of reward, and we have strong will. All throughout history, persistance has brought us to where we are today. If Einstein didn’t persist on making electricity, we may not of had the light bulb for some time. Its because of persistance that we are where we are today. Even in my own life, there are examples of persistant. I kept pushing my dad to go get a car with me, and eventually he said yes. So since I didn’t give up and stayed strong willed, I got what I wanted and persistence was very helpful in the end.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

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EXPOSITORY WRITING (continued)

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Score Point: 3

Although the writer introduces the topic by stating that "Persistence reveals who we are because it shows that you don't give up, you will get what you want, and you are strong willed," the body of the text primarily addresses the benefits gained by being persistent [*you will get what you want and prove yourself*; *you'll get what you want and be quite satisfied*; *in your mind your telling yourself you can accomplish anything*]. The key ideas in each of the three body paragraphs seem to overlap, and most of the details that support how an individual demonstrates persistence are general and rely on rather repetitive language [*if you are persistant enough, and don't give up*; *if you are very persistant on not giving up*; *persistance has brought us to where we are today*; *Its because of persistance that we are where we are today*]. This overlap and repetition result in a sense of sparse development and indicate a partial command of written language.

Life is a fight. It's a struggle, for some more than others. One can fight to survive. One can fight for equality. One can fight within themselves. In the end, it's all the same thing: still a fight. Humans are engineered for success, so it's not always (but maybe occasionally) surprising when someone wins. Yet, these fights or struggles come define a person's life. If success or failure does not define a person, then what does? The persistence to succeed in the struggle is what reveals a person. This persistence reveals a person's character based on what they are fighting for and what they will do to win.

It can take a long time for a person to realize what they are fighting for. Sometimes, a person never truly finds what it is. When a man goes off to war, why does he do it? For his loved ones? For Liberty? For patriotism? Maybe he does it because he simply likes to fight. But it is there, at war that boys become men, and men become stronger men. When someone walks the line between life and death, it gives them a chance to realize why they are fighting. This is how a man defines himself. Just like in the movie Talledega Knights, Ricky Bobby could not fight until he realized he was competing for himself, not for anyone else's acceptance, but because he wanted pride, liked being loved, and loved to win, and would do anything to get there.

The most astonishing part of a struggle is not when a person succeeds or fails, but when they give up. One would easily question the logic behind this statement, but the answer would be simple. Success is only worth it if someone struggled for it and triumphed over all other opposing forces and their own fears.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

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EXPOSITORY WRITING (continued)

One could easily question the logic behind this statement, but the answer would be simple. Success is only worth it if someone struggled for it and triumphed over all other opposing forces and their own fears.

Score Point: 3

In this response, the writer attempts to address how "who you are" is revealed in the persistent struggle to succeed. This thesis is clearly set up in the introduction [*This persistence reveals a person's character based on what they are fighting for and what they will do to win*], but it is not adequately supported in the body of the essay. The writer offers two examples intended as illustration [*When a man goes off to war, why does he do it?. . . But it is there, at war that boys become men, and men become stronger men*; *Just like in the movie Talledega Knights, Ricky Bobby could not fight until he realized he was competing for himself*], but neither example is developed with details that demonstrate "the persistence to succeed in the struggle." Failure to control these examples to support the thesis is a weakness in the organizational plan and indicates a partial command of written language.

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Score Scale Point 4

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

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION	• generally will have an opening and a closing. The responses relate to the topic. They have a single focus and are organized. There is little, if any, difficulty moving from idea to idea. Ideas may ramble somewhat, and clusters of ideas may be loosely connected; however, an overall progression is apparent. In some papers, development is uneven, consisting of elaborated ideas interspersed with bare, unelaborated details.
USAGE	• may display some errors in usage, but no consistent pattern is apparent.
SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	• may demonstrate a generally correct sense of syntax. They avoid excessive monotony in syntax and/or rhetorical modes. There may be a few errors in sentence construction.
MECHANICS	• may display some errors in mechanics, but these errors will not constitute a consistent pattern, nor do they interfere with the meaning of the response.

“We are made to persist. That’s how we find out who we are,” said Tobias Wolff. Determination and persistence reveal numerous aspects about the character of a person. Determination shows a strong will and backbone. Similarly, persistence demonstrates motivation to never give up on striving for a goal. This quote means that each person is designed to accomplish something; how far one is willing to push themselves shows their true character. This idea of determination and persistence can be seen in both my life and the story The Catcher in the Rye.

Persistence is a character trait that runs very deeply in my family. My uncle Joe demonstrates this in many ways. About a year ago, he was diagnosed with cancer and was told he had about 5 months to live. The entire family was a mess after hearing the news, but to our surprise, Joe remained composed and kept his head. Instead of giving up hope, he kept fighting for everyday to be alive. He showed both determination and persistence in his fight. Joe gave the whole family faith that everything would be okay even though he knew it wouldn’t, and that is how he showed who he truly was. He was a real inspiration to everyone.

In addition to persistence and determination being evident in my family, it can also be seen in the character Holden in Catcher in the Rye. In the story, Holden was kicked out of his school for doing the wrong things. Within a very short time period, he discovers that everybody has struggles in their lives that they are dealing with. Instead of giving up and accepting his fate as a bum, he persists to try and do better for himself. Holden discovered a lot about himself just by persisting like Tobias Wolff said.

Determination and persistence reveal a lot about who someone is as a person. This idea of determination and persistence can be seen in both my life and in the story The Catcher in the Rye. In both examples, someone is faced with a challenge that requires determination. Persistence was necessary to make Joe and Holden who they are. Without persistence, we are nothing.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

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EXPOSITORY WRITING (continued)

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Score Point: 4

This organized response has a single focus addressing how persistence shows the true character of an individual. The writer clearly indicates an understanding of persistence and uses the introduction to establish that two examples, one personal and one literary, illustrate the idea that "how far one is willing to push themselves shows their true character." The first example is adequately developed with details that explain the uncle's battle with cancer, as well as the legacy that resulted from his determination and persistence [*Joe gave the whole family faith that everything would be okay even though he knew it wouldn't*]. The second example from *The Catcher in the Rye* is not as clearly developed. The writer provides details to describe Holden's persistence, but there is no real analysis to explain what Holden discovers about himself or the legacy that results from his persistence. Lacking this analysis, the development of the second example is uneven. In spite of this unevenness, the response displays a clear progression of ideas and an overall control of sentence construction, usage, and mechanics, indicating an adequate command of written language.

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People discover who they are through their determination. One of the greatest examples of this idea being proven is Michael Jordan. Jordan is known for his sucess in the National basketball association, but his story has a lot more behind it. Jordan had a love for the game of basketball ever since he could remember. He alwas planned on making it to the NBA. Jordan was persistant, and determined. While Jordan is now considered to be the greatest basketball player of all time, in his freshman year of highschool he hit a brick wall. Not a literal brickwall, but an obsticle he had to get past. To this day jordan swears that this one experience shaped him into who he is today. Freshman year Jordan was cut from his school's basketball team. He was put down and embarrassed. His Coach told him he was not skilled enough, too weak, and not tall enough. Instead of giving up, jordan took this criticism and used it as motivation. Jordan persisted and worked on his game. He spent countless hours in the gym, and some nights even slept in the gym. Jordan came back the next year bigger, stronger, and more skilled. He made the highschool basketball team and played for the same coach who told him he was not good enough. For the next three years Jordan led the league in statistics, receiving a Scholarship to university of North Carolina to play basketball. After his time at university of North Carolina he was drafted number one in the NBA draft. Later becoming the greatest basketball player of all time. Michaell Jordan discovered who he was directly through his persistence and determination.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

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Score Point: 4

Interpreting the quotation in the prompt to mean the legacy of the individual who demonstrates persistence, this writer presents a response focused on biographical details that illustrate Michael Jordan's career goals and determination. The ideas in the response are organized in an overall progression that is easy to follow and that clearly articulates Jordan's persistence [*He always planned on making it to the NBA*; *Freshman year Jordan was cut from his school's basketball team. He was put down and embarrassed. His coach told him he was not skilled enough, too weak, and not tall enough. Instead of giving up, Jordan took his criticism and used it as motivation. Jordan persisted and worked on his game. He spent countless hours in the gym, and some nights even slept in the gym*]. Although the writer incorporates a detail intended to show that Jordan discovered who he was through his persistence [*To this day Jordan swears that this one experience shaped him into who he is today*], the idea is merely asserted and not developed through additional information. Without further elaboration, the response displays an unevenness in addressing the prompt and demonstrates an adequate command of written language.

When Tobias Wolff made his statement that “we are made to persist. That’s how we find out who we are”, he was speaking the truth. Throughout history, be we ballerinas or astrophysicists, our persistence has made us who we will become. But how then, does our persistence reveal who we are? Perstince reveals many things, but above all, it shows us our own levels of dedication and where those dedications lie.

A 72 year old woman proved her persistence on a bus in Montogomery, Alabama, close to 50 years ago. When asked by a white man to move from the front of the bus to the rear, the small black woman declared simply; “My feets is tired.” In the era of Jim Crow laws and mass segregation against blacks in America, this “crime” was punishable by imprisonment, and to prison that woman went, standing up for herself the whole way. That woman was Rosa Parks, a prominent member of the SCLC and Civil rights advocate. Her persistence to stand up for her rights have immortalized her in today’s society. That persistence revealed one prominent thing—her dedication to her civil rights cause.

Persistence reigned supreme in Menlo Park, many years before Mrs. Parks took her seat on the bus that fateful day. An obssesed inventor and businessman, inspired by Nikolai Tesla, intended to create a device the likes of which the world had never seen. That man was Thomas Alba Edison, and in his efforts to create the lightbulb, he declared that he had not “failed 10,000 times,” that he had, insteead, “found 10,000 ways that don’t work”. This represented Edison’s dedication to his work, and his persistence as well. It wasn’t long before that persistence led to Edison’s invention of the lightbulb.

It is clear that persistence reveals strength to a cause and dedication among us. Persistence defines what we can accomplish, and we are defined by our accomplishments. Rosa Parks, Thomas Edison, among others, have achieved great things and are widely recognized for their accomplishments. However, were it not for persistence, these accomplishments would not belong to the fertility of reality. Like a bottle unopened, sinking to its dark nihilism, these accomplishments would be lost to the oceans of time without the persistence that made them real. All in all, people discover, through determination and persistence, how dedicated they are to their cause, and how willing they are to make history through accomplishments, fueled by persistence, which have yet to be born.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

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EXPOSITORY WRITING (continued)

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Score Point: 4

Focusing on how persistence proves the level of dedication of an individual, this organized response provides two examples of individuals who left a legacy due to their persistence: Rosa Parks and Thomas Edison. Each example is adequately developed with details that explain how each persisted [*In the era of Jim Crow laws and mass segregation against blacks in America, this "crime" was punishable by imprisonment, and to prison that woman went, standing up for herself the whole way*; *in his efforts to create the lightbulb, he declared that he had not "failed 10,000 times," that he had insteead, "found 10,000 ways that don't work"*], as well as the legacy that resulted from their dedication and persistence. In the conclusion, the writer states that both individuals are widely recognized for the great achievements that resulted from their persistence, which instills some unity in the response. While sophistication is present in the use of varied sentence structures, some expression introduces ambiguity [*However, were it not for persistence, these accomplishments would not belong to the fertility of reality. Like a bottle unopened, sinking to its dark nihilism, these accomplishments would be lost to the oceans of time without the persistence that made them real*] and creates an unevenness in the response. This unevenness prevents the essay from achieving a higher score and indicates an adequate command of written language.

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Score Scale Point 5

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

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION	• have an opening and a closing. The responses relate to the topic and have a single focus. They are organized and progress logically from beginning to end. The key ideas are developed with appropriate and varied details. Clusters of ideas are strongly connected. Some writers take compositional risks and are, for the most part, successful. Although these papers are flawed, they have a sense of completeness and unity.
USAGE	• have few errors in usage.
SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	• demonstrate syntactic and verbal sophistication through an effective variety of sentences and/or rhetorical modes. There are few, if any, errors in sentence construction.
MECHANICS	• have few errors in mechanics.

Actions speak louder than words. Anyone can talk, but it is how one walks that they are defined. Tobias Wolff noted the particular significance of persistence's ability to speak to a person's character. Persistence is the backbone of character. If one is unable to show dedication and is instead willing to step down or conform to a different personality, they clearly are not only weak-willed, but perhaps also fake or even selfish if their change is made for personal gain.

Inversely, persistence is a show of passion and truth. One would not put one's full body and soul into a struggle or a philosophy which one is not committed to. Persistence shows legitimate care for one's causes and reflects the strength of a person, especially under extreme circumstances.

Strong leaders and heroes are born from dire straits, and it is their persistence in difficult times that makes them memorable. Julia Alvarez documented the stories of the Dominican Mirabel sisters, persistent leaders in a harsh revolution, in her realistic fiction book In the Time of the Butterflies. The three martyr Mirabels, Minerva Mirabel especially, were heroes in their time and remain revered today. Despite a terrifying dictatorship watching and thwarting their bold revolution, the "Mariposas" continued their fight with wills of steel.

They did not personally assassinate the dictator, but are painted as strong, courageous, caring heroes by their persistence no matter the dangers they faced. A notable protest by Minerva Mirabel was her refusal to bow to the regime and accept an early prison release. The temptation truly tested her principles and passion for her cause, and with persistence she passed with flying colors. By remaining in prison and toughing out her brutal sentence, she showed that she would not back down. Also importantly, and intended, was the positive image of her reflected by the act. She did not want to turn her back on the Dominican people, and her persistence was key to maintaining her image, an image that would ignite fires of hope and revolution in her people.

On an even grander scale of action, this was only one of several instances in which she had persistently defied the regime, not an isolated incident. The persistence of her persistent nature and the consistency of her character demonstrate her character and establish the extent of her values. It truly takes a special caliber of courage and morality to act as Minerva had without condition.

The unconditional nature of persistence is its values-projector. Whether one is considering the extraordinary impact of the Mirabel sisters or simply looking at stubborn every day people, it is how a person performs under pressure which provides a true testament to who that person is. The consistency between talking and walking is an indicator of character which can outweigh the actual talking and walking, for persistence is the only test of truth and will.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

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The unconditional nature of persistence is its values-projector. Whether one is considering the extraordinary impact of the Mirabel sisters or simply looking at stubborn everyday people, it is how a person performs under pressure which provides a true testament to who that person is. The consistency between talking and walking is an indicator of character which can outweigh the actual talking and walking, for persistence is the only test of truth and will.

Score Point: 5

This response is singly focused on the persistence of the martyred Mirabel sisters in their struggles against the harsh Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo. Drawing on the experience of Minerva Mirabel in particular, the writer provides an analysis of persistence "born from dire straits" [*shows legitimate care for one's causes and reflects the strengths of a person*] that is elaborated with clear support [*her refusal to bow to the regime and accept an early prison release*; *By remaining in prison and toughing out her brutal sentence, she showed that she would not back down*]. While the key ideas progress logically with appropriate and varied details, the response would benefit from the tightening of some repetitive language [*The persistence of her persistent nature and the consistency of her character demonstrate her character and establish the extent of her values*], which would result in a stronger progression overall. As it is, the writing is moderately fluent, with a mix of complex and simpler sentence structures; and the clusters of ideas throughout the analysis are strongly connected. This connection and fluency instill a sense of completeness and unity in the essay and indicate a strong command of written language.

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Tobias Wolff once said that “We [people] are made to persist. That’s how we find out who we are.” The truth of the statement is evident, both literally and figuratively, for it can be taken both ways. Literally, in that we search for a last name or family or anything else of that designation to learn who we are—be it a Smith, a Rodriguez, or any other last name. Figuratively, in the sense that people attempt to understand who they are as a human being. In either case, discovering the answers we seek is through perseverance.

Take the tale of Clark Kent as an example. In the literal sense, he has absolutely no idea who or what he is. The revelation that he was adopted by the Kent’s is a staggering one for him. Not to mention that he has powers many people couldn’t even dream of . It takes Clark years before he discovers the fact that he is from the planet Krypton and the House of El. Not only does this give him a new name (Kal-El), but it also gives him knowledge of the family and legacy he was a part of, and who exactly he was.

Moreover, Clark Kent is not the only name for this young man – he is also known as Superman. This required an entirely different journey of discovery for Clark. The path to Superman was fraught with obstacles, such as the lies he told to keep his secret, to kill or not to kill his enemies, or even whether or not to keep being Superman. But, through determination, Clark was able to discover who he was as a person—a complete do-gooder at heart, a Big Blue Boyscout. In other words, he realized that he was a hero. If Clark Kent had given up because of hardship, there would never have been a Superman to save the day.

The conclusion to the tale of Superman’s rise to superhero status is this: determination is what allowed for this journey to even begin. If Superman hadn’t persevered to defeat enemies such as Bizarro, or been determined to master his powers, or he wasn’t focused on learning his history, Clark Kent’s road to life would have made a left turn into nowheresville. And it was because of his persistance that he discovered who he was—both literally and figuritively.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

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EXPOSITORY WRITING (continued)

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Score Point: 5

Focusing on the fictional hero Clark Kent, this concise response supports the thesis that we can discover who we are both literally and figuratively through perseverance. The writer presents an organized discussion of this idea, progressing from an overview of Kent's search for information about his birth family to an explanation of his journey of self-discovery. Control of syntax and meaning is evident in the variety of sentence structures [*In either case, discovering the answers we seek is through perseverance*; *The path to Superman was fraught with obstacles*], the efficient use of unpretentious language to develop details [*a complete do-gooder at heart, a Big Blue Boyscout*], and the use of precise words to convey ideas [*designation*; *revelation*; *staggering*; *legacy*]. Although the response would be enhanced with further elaboration, the clarity and progression of the ideas provide the reader with a sense of completeness and unity, demonstrating a strong command of written language.

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Persistence is one of the great human abilities. Through persistence, people can learn many things about themselves from their motivations to their limits. The need to persist is an essential part of the human condition that manifests itself throughout society.

In the nonfiction book Born to Run, many feats of persistence are depicted. Each brings different lessons for the people involved. The author, for example, is determined to find a Mexican tribe of Native Americans that are supposedly able to run up to the two hundred miles at once. Later, he wants to run in a race with them and distinguished runners from America, despite knowing that he could never win. The author trains vigorously, commiting to a new diet and regular long runs. Although he dislikes the diet and, at first, the running, he learns that his goals are strong enough to guide him. When he finally finishes the race, he is exhausted and has not gained anything material, but realizes the true amount of character it required to finish.

Born to Run also tells the story of a small tribe in Africa of persistence hunters. This method of hunting requires huge amounts of stamina as the prey is literally chased to death. An American who wanted to learn about African tribes went to one of these hunts and was able to appreciate the full range of human abilities for the first time. He lacked many of the tracking skills necessary, but in his determination to see the end of the hunt was able to witness them in action. He also discovered a new depth of teamwork as those who could not continue passed their water to those still running before dropping back. Persistence hunting gave everyone involved the chance to appreciate both individual limits and overall group strength.

Persistence is a tool that, by its very nature, reveals limits that may have otherwise gone untested. People who show great persistance, like those in Born to Run, learn not only about their physical limits, but also about their character and basic human nature. The human drive to succeed forces people to persist so that they will recognize not human nature, but their own, even if only in comparison to others who are equally persistent.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 3 – EXPOSITORY WRITING

BEGIN YOUR EXPOSITORY WRITING PROMPT RESPONSE ON THE LINES BELOW.

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Score Point: 5

In this cohesive and coherent response, the writer maintains that "People who show great persistence … learn not only about their physical limits, but also about their character and basic human nature." Drawing on two distinct examples from the nonfiction text *Born to Run*, the writer effectively discusses how the perseverance of either the individual or the group affords the opportunity to appreciate both personal limits and strengths. The key ideas for this thesis are developed in a logical progression with appropriate and varied details that illustrate the stamina and determination needed (the individual commits to a new diet that he dislikes and regular long runs that exhaust him) although the discussion of the teamwork involved in persistence hunting could be more explicitly connected to the thesis. Overall, however, the ideas are elaborated, and the writing displays syntactic and verbal control through a variety of sentence structures and word choice [*Persistence is a tool that, by its very nature, reveals limits that may have otherwise gone untested*]. These strengths along with the coherent progression of the ideas result in a unified response and indicate a strong command of written language.

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Score Scale Point 6

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

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

Persistence is the key to truth. Determination pulls the veil away and brings out the inner being hidden within. “we are made to persist. That’s how we find out who we are.” –Tobias Wolff. When a man is not challenged, is without hurdles to overcome, he is anyone. With no selective pressure he is able to be whoever, whenever, and still survive. When faced with pressure though, persistence is key. For it is not persistence alone that brings out the inner self—it is persistence in the face of adversity. In order to defeat the challenge presented, inner power and true being must be acknowledged and used to the full extent. My experience as a runner and Stephen Hawking’s experience as a brilliant man with a debillitating disease display this philosophy.

Persistence in spite of difficulty defines those who endure it, and my life as a long distance runner reflects this. I ended my freshmen year of highschool overweight and unsure of my beliefs, passions, and self. Over the summer though, I made a change. I decided to run, and everyday that summer I ran. Everyday I wanted to quit, to sit and watch tv with a bowl of chips in my lap, and every day I persisted. I gained character, endurance, confidence, but most of all, a sense of self. I defined myself as a man who would not quit in the face of a challenge. I revealed myself as an athlete, not content with the unfulfilling life of an undefined entity. I overcame a personal difficulty, much like Stephen Hawking has overcome his.

Stephen Hawking is the Einstein of the modern era, though without persistence he wouldn’t be. Towards the end of his college career at Oxford, he started to notice tremors, and difficulty controlling his movements. Soon he was diagnosed with ALS, a debillitating and often deadly disease that robs the victim of their most basic functions. He was told he would die within a few years, and that all hope was lost. And yet, he is still here. What happened? What gave him the will, the strength to continue? The answer is perseverance. Perseverance, persistence, determination, unwillingness to give in. Hawking found a way to continue life, not just to a bare minimum, but to a glorious extreme. He defined himself as a man not content to live within the shackles of a disease. His mind was still free, and his character strong and defined. By following through, and living with the mind and spirit of a giant among men, Stephen Hawking persisted. And through that act of persistence, definition occured. Definition of self, of character, of legacy. Definition as the man who overcame ALS, as the kind man with the brilliant mind, and as the genius who revolutionized astrophysics with his theories on black holes. Hawking stands as a defiant pillar of definition through persistence, even though he himself cannot stand at all.

Character and inner definition are products of persistence. Persisting through adversity sets one into a different class. A class of leaders, of those who looked in the face of defeat and scoffed as they continued on their path to revelation and definition. Persistence serves as the key to the class, as those who trip and fall and never get up rarely end up as leaders. They are not defined enough, not purified enough. Persistence hasn’t stripped away the excess to reveal the inner being. One cannot lead others if they do not know who they are. One cannot lead without living first. And the key to revelation, success, determination, leadership, character, and much, much more, is persistence: The defining force of character in the face of adversity.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 – EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

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EXPOSITORY WRITING (continued)

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Score Point: 6

This coherent and cohesive response has as its focus the idea that it is persistence in the face of adversity that defines the self. The writer develops this thesis using his own experience and Stephen Hawking's medical battle as examples and provides explicit details that illustrate the challenges to be overcome [*I decided to run, and every day that summer I ran. Everyday I wanted to quit, to sit and watch tv with a bowl of chips in my lap*; *Soon he was diagnosed with ALS, a debillitating and often deadly disease that robs the victim of their most basic functions*]. The writing displays sustained control over syntax, demonstrating sophistication both in the construction and in the meaning of the ideas expressed [*He defined himself as a man not content to live within the shackles of a disease*], and the skillful use of strategies such as the rhetorical questions contributes to the logical progression of the ideas [*He was told he would die within a few years, and that all hope was lost. And yet, he is still here. What happened?*]. The writer's use of specific details that are interspersed with pertinent analysis and crafted with effective word choice throughout [*Hawking stands as a defiant pillar of definition through persistence, even though he cannot stand at* all] clearly demonstrate a superior command of written language.

Often, the easy way out is chosen—this may entail less obstacles, a faster route, or less effort. But in doing so, self-discovery is compromised. How can one formulate self-revelations without pushing the limits of his or her comfort zone? Without tenacity, one sacrifices the possibility of revealing a person within that was previously hidden. It is in hard times when the human capacity for perseverence truly shows, which subsequently unveils a bold character that one may have thought to have been out of reach. The heroes and heroines of literature are evidence of perseverence, whether it be from Puritan times or from a fictional magical world. Hester Prynne, in The Scarlett Letter lives through taunts of her community for her adultery, but grows into a miraculously strong woman. Harry Potter, in J.K. Rowling's famous series, goes through tribulations—fantastical and realistic—that show how diligence molds a brave man. In order to have even a semblance of true identity, one cannot approach matters in a passive manner, but rather with unwavering perseverence.

The Scarlett Letter is known for its dearth of symbolism and criticism of the Puritan community; above all else, the novel is perhaps most famous for its protagonist who was well ahead of her time. Condemned by her community for adultery and conceiving a child with a man who was not her husband, Hester Prynne was forced to embelish a scarlett "A" upon her clothing. As she walked throughout town, men, women, and children would murmur insults that would have made the most self-confident woman weep. Not Hester. Hester found that the taunts could physically do nothing. Revenge came when her daughter, Pearl, became successful, and most of the community forgot about Hester's sin. But this does not mean that the taunts did not faze her. Hester simply realized that growth was more of a necessity than acceptance. She focused on raising a child well and is one of the most diligent characters in all of literature.

Harry Potter—the "Boy who Lived"—is practically synonymous with perseverence. Time and time again, this young man had to face death from his time as a newborn until he was seventeen years old. It could have been easy for Harry to let Voldemort win. But to do so would mean the unjustified deaths of millions and a world where everyone lived in constant fear. Harry knew it was his duty to protect those he loved as well as wizards and muggles (non-magical folk) alike. In doing so, Harry truly became of age. He learned how strong love is, how to become an effective and revered leader, and, ultimately, a fantastic father, even though he never had one himself. Had Harry not been forced to conquer Voldemort's dark forces, he never would have lived up to his highly-regarded title. And even though he is fictional, the virtues he embodies is representative of everyone.

To persevere is to grow—it is to come into one's own and unveil the truth behind who we are, who we think we are, and who we have yet to discover. In hard times, one is forced to make decisions that leaves no room for ambivalence. One must push his or her boundaries in order to discover his or her own strength and capabilities.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

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EXPOSITORY WRITING (continued)

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Score Point: 6

In this cohesive and organized response, the writer discusses the value of tenacity in unveiling "a bold character that one may have thought to have been out of reach." Two fictional characters, Hester Prynne and Harry Potter, serve as examples of individuals who persevered in the face of adversity and in doing so discovered their strengths and capabilities. The writer's analysis of each character proceeds in a logical progression of ideas, leading the reader through the details not only of their adverse circumstances [*Condemned by her community for adultery and conceiving a child with a man who was not her husband*; *this young man had to face death from his time as a newborn until he was seventeen years old*] but also of their challenges and resolve [*men, women, and children would murmur insults that would have made the most self-confident woman weep*; *It could have been easy for Harry to let Voldemort win. But to do so would mean the unjustified deaths of millions and a world where everyone lived in constant fear*]. Although there are a couple of errors in word choice, the sequenced elaboration for each example along with the control of varied sentence structures provide unity and coherence in the response and indicate a superior command of written language.

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Society often talks of "discovering oneself," espousing the belief that there is an ideal self in everyone of us, if only we can get in touch with it. But in reality, who "you" really are is not a fixed personality type, but a constantly changing identity. Only by one's own persistence can one discover—or rather get in touch with—one's true self. Instead of acting like we are predetermined beings, we can use determination to plumb the depths of both our best and worst traits, and in the process realize our capacity for change—which is all anyone ever really "is."

How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe, by Charles Yu, exemplifies how persistence enables people to truly know and understand themselves. The novel is set in a future where time travel has been commercialized, and it is narrated by the son of the inventor of time travel, who now works as a time-machine repairman. HTLSIASFU centers around the nameless narrator's quest to find and come to terms with his missing father, who "disappeared from time" after a lifetime of disappointment. Although the novel deals with other themes such as temporality and the nonlinear capabilities of language, at its heart HTLSIASFU is about redemption. On his journey through time and "science fictional" space, the narrator encounters many worlds with many different versions of his family. Ultimately, he does find his father—but only after realizing that his ideal self doesn't exist. He realizes that it is the failed childhood experiments with his father, his crazy spatiotemporal quest to find said father, and his own determination to find closure, that make his life worthwhile. Through his persistence, the narrator discovers who he truly is by seeing all the people he could have been. Failure, loneliness, and finding happiness in spite of that are what he truly is, and the narrator finally realizes this by persisting on his quest to find his father.

Personally, I can very much relate to the Tobias Wolff quote. As a junior, I can attest that 11th grade so far has been a whirlwind of stress and fears, all wrapped up in a litany of "Oh god how am I ever supposed to survive this" But people do, year after year, and now I can say that my own persistence has opened my eyes to what I can be, in terms of academics but also interpersonal relationships. Staying up until 2 am for homework or youth symphony rehearsals, and being determined to still do my best in both, has made me realize my own capacities. We need exhaustion & persistence to find our own limits. First we hit the glass ceiling. Then we pause, regroup, and shatter it.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 1
PART 1 — EXPOSITORY WRITING

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE EXPOSITORY WRITING TASK.

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STOP. — DO NOT WRITE BEYOND THIS PAGE.

Score Point: 6

This succinct but organized and cohesive response has as its focus the idea that "who 'you' really are is not a fixed personality type, but a constantly changing identity." The writer develops this thesis using the novel, *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe* (*HTLSIASFU*), to explore how the persistent quest to find and come to terms with his missing father allows the "nameless narrator" to encounter through time travel many versions of both himself and his family and ultimately to understand himself through his sheer perseverance. The key ideas, which are elaborated in a logical progression of pertinent details and analysis of the nameless narrator's transformative experiences, lead to a parallel but real-life example in the conclusion. The writer uses this personal testimony to underscore the true value of perseverance, which is to "realize our capacity for change—which is all anyone ever really 'is'." The dramatic closing lines [*We need exhaustion & persistence to find our limits. First we hit the glass ceiling. Then we pause, regroup, and shatter it*] as well as the precise word choice [*plumb the depths of both our best and worst traits*; *temporality and the nonlinear capabilities*; *redemption*; *whirlwind of stress and fears*] and varied syntax throughout the response contribute to the coherence and sophistication of this analytical essay, and thus demonstrate a superior command of written language.

APPENDIX D

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

TEST ADMINISTRATION MATERIALS FOR WRITING A PERSUASIVE ESSAY

High School Proficiency Assessment

MARCH 7, 2013

STUDENT NAME _____

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2 – PART 4

Regular Persuasive Writing Task Folder

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
DIRECTIONS – PART 4

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

You will have 60 minutes to complete this writing task. Take a few minutes to think about the task and to plan what you want to say before you begin to write. You may use the prewriting/planning space on pages 3 and 4 in your Writing Task Folder to plan your text, but your prewriting will not be scored. Only your writing on pages 23 – 26 in your answer folder will be scored. Do your best to make your writing clear and well organized. Keep your audience and purpose in mind as you write and use your checklist.

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

HSPA PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK FOLDER SECURITY STATEMENT

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

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FOR USE ON MARCH 7, 2013, ONLY

PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK

Writing Situation

Recognizing the need to add career education to the curriculum, your school board is considering a plan that would require an additional year of high school before graduation. This has caused a controversy in your school.

You decide to write a letter to the school board expressing your opinion on this proposed plan.

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to your school board either supporting or opposing the plan to require an additional year of high school. Use reasons, facts, examples, and other evidence to support your position.

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PREWRITING/PLANNING

Directions

You will have 60 minutes to complete this writing task. Take a few minutes to think about the task and to plan what you want to say before you begin to write. You may use the prewriting/planning space on pages 3 and 4 in your Writing Task Folder to plan your text, but your prewriting will not be scored. Only your writing on pages 23–26 in your answer folder will be scored. Do your best to make your writing clear and well organized. Keep your audience and purpose in mind as you write and use your checklist.

PREWRITING/PLANNING SPACE

(More space on next page)

NEW JERSEY
HIGH SCHOOL
PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

Writer's Checklist

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

CONTENT/ORGANIZATION

_____ 1. Focus on your purpose for writing and your audience.

_____ 2. Develop a clear topic or central idea.

_____ 3. Support your ideas with details, explanations, and examples.

_____ 4. Put your ideas in the order that best communicates what you are trying to say.

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

_____ 5. Use clear and varied sentences.

USAGE

_____ 6. Use words correctly.

_____ 7. Use varied and vivid vocabulary.

MECHANICS

_____ 8. Capitalize, spell, and punctuate correctly.

_____ 9. Write neatly.

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

New Jersey Department of Education
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APPENDIX E

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PERSUASIVE TASK AND SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES

Description of Task

The responses selected to appear in this handbook were written by eleventh-grade students who took the persuasive writing section of the March 2013 High School Proficiency Assessment. The responses appear as the students wrote them; no corrections have been made other than the deletion of specific names of teachers, administrators, students, schools, and districts. A typed version of each response appears before the handwritten response.

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

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

Score Scale Point 1

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

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION	• may not have an opening and/or closing. These papers are on topic and demonstrate at least a minimal attempt to respond to the topic by stating a subject or giving a list of subjects. Some of the lengthier papers are disorganized, making them consistently difficult to follow. In these papers the reader has to infer what the focus is. The overriding characteristic of many of these papers is a lack of control with no sense of planning. Details may be random, inappropriate, or barely apparent.
USAGE	• may display severe/numerous errors in usage. This includes problems in tense formation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun usage and agreement, word choice, and use of proper modifiers.
SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	• may demonstrate an assortment of grammatically incorrect/incomplete sentences and/or incorrect rhetorical modes. Statements may be either incoherent or unintelligible.
MECHANICS	• may display errors in mechanics so severe as to detract from the meaning of the response.

DeAR to Schoolboard, I suppoRt this idea because Young teens get out of high school to young like sixteen and fiveteen, they should wAit until eightteen or seventeen, to congRAtion dAy this might work well on some young teenageR who hAs some probelms but just helPing them to leaRn some job tRAdes in woRk foRce and get a tRAde with them.

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear to Schoolboard, I support this idea because young teens get out of high school to young like Sixteen and Fiveteen, they should wait unil eightteen or seventeen, to congration day this might work well on some young teenager who has some probelms but just helping them to learn some job trades in work force and get a trade with them.

Score Point: 1

This response represents a minimal attempt to address the topic. The writer takes a position in support of a fifth year of high school and presents two reasons [*young teens get out of high school to young like sixteen and fiveteen*; *might work well on some young teenageR who hAs some probelms*]. However, severe errors in usage, sentence construction, and mechanics make the ideas in this brief response difficult to follow and demonstrate an inadequate command of written language.

Dear’School Board

I dont agree with the school boArd because when we come to school we get teach good And leArn A lot in school. And everybody in the School hAve enough creidit

- my first reAson thAt I dont agree with you is thAt we wAs ALWAYS told About four YeArs in high school.

- my second reAson thAt I dont agree is thAt people in School Are Almost older And they hAve to grAduAte.

- my third reAson thAt I dont Agree is thAt everybody hAve A future they cAn’t stAy in School for five yeArs becAuse we wAnt to go to collage.

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear School Board

I dont agree with the school board because when we come to School we get teach good And leArn A lot in School. And everybody in the School hAve enough creidit

• my first reason that I dont agree with you is that we WAS AlWAYS told About four YeArs in high School.

• my Second reASon that I dont agree is that People in School Are Almost older And they hAve to graduAte.

• my third reASon that I dont Agree is that everybody hAve A future they CAn't StAY in School for five YeArs becAuse we WAnt to go to collage.

Score Point: 1

In this response, the writer opposes the plan to add an additional year to high school and attempts to provide an organizational structure with an introductory paragraph and a list of three reasons for opposing the plan. Although the introduction suggests one set of reasons [*we get teach good And leArn A lot*; *everybody in the School hAve enough creidit*], the list provides a different set of reasons [*we wAs AlWAYS told About four YeArs*; *people in School Are Almost older And they hAve to graduate*; *everybody hAve A future they cAn't stAy in School for five yeArs becAuse we wAnt to go to collage*]. Without a clear connection between any of the ideas, the writing indicates a lack of control with no sense of planning and an inadequate command of written language.

Dear School board,

I persanoly think is not a good idea so we can have a 6th year of highschool because we get to figuer out our career in college. In high school just give us an idea in college we get to choose what we want to do with our life. I can make a servai so that the kid can sign and we can find out what they think as well. I personally think i would get the hole school to sign. We would like to take a risk and tell you is not good that is all the college's job. Think about thit really good.

Sincearly _____

★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

★★★★

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear School board,
I persanoly think is not a good idea so we can have a 6th year of highschool because we get to figuer out our career in college. In high school just give us an idea in college we get to choose what we want to do with our life. I can make a servei so that the kid can sign and we can find out what they think as well. I personally think I would get the hole school to sign. We would like to take a risk and tell you is not good that is all the college's job. Think about thit really good.
Sincearly

Score Point: 1

This response represents a minimal attempt to respond to the topic. The writer takes a stance in opposition to the proposed plan, provides a simple explanation for the opposition [*we get to figuer out our career in college*], repeats that idea, suggests that a survey of students would elicit similar sentiments from the "hole school," and then repeats the idea that career education is "the college's job." Although the response serves as evidence that the student is attempting to focus, the heavy reliance on a single repeated idea as well as an assortment of severe errors in usage, sentence construction, and mechanics makes some ideas difficult to follow. Without more control over the writing, this response indicates an inadequate command of written language.

Score Scale Point 2

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

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION	• may not have an opening and/or a closing. These responses will exhibit an attempt at organization. In other words, there will be some evidence the writer attempted to control the details. The responses relate to the topic, but in some papers, the writer drifts away from the primary focus or abruptly shifts focus. In other papers, there is a single focus, but there are few, if any, transitions, making it difficult to move from idea to idea. Details are presented with little, if any, elaboration—highlight papers.
USAGE	• may have numerous problems with usage, but they are not totally out of control.
SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	• may demonstrate excessive monotony in syntax and/or rhetorical modes. There may be numerous errors in sentence construction.
MECHANICS	• may display numerous severe errors in mechanics.

Dear school board:

I understand that there's a huge controversy with adding an additional year of high school before graduation. In my opinion I think that is not just for the some students that have been working very hard four years, to then add another year of high school. However I believe that that extra year should be for the ones that are taking education as a joke and are bothering the ones who really take it seriously. Futhermore the students that have good grades seence 9th grade should graduate at 12th grade, that would be more just for them. Well I hope that my opinion could serve for something. I estimate that you took your time to read this.

Thank you!

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear school board:

I understand that there's a huge controversy with adding an additional year of high school before graduation. In my opinion I think that is not just for the some students that have been working very hard four years, to then add another year of high school. However I believe that that extra year should be for the ones that are taking education as a joke and are bothering the ones who really take it seriously. Futhermore the students that have good grades seence 9th grade should graduate at 12th grade, that would be more just for them. Well I hope that my opinion could serve for something. I estimate that you took your time to read this.

Thank you!

Score Point: 2

In this brief response, the writer attempts to focus on what is just, or fair, opposing the proposed plan of adding a fifth year for students who "have been working very hard for four years" and supporting the proposed plan for students who "are taking education as a joke." By contrasting these two types of students and using transitions [*However*; *Futhermore*], the writer demonstrates an attempt to organize the ideas, but the lack of specificity and elaboration results in highlights, which indicates a limited command of written language.

Dear, School Board

I agree For the career education to the curriculum in High School. I think if we Have this in High school students would have Great Jobs After Graduation.

My First Reason why I think it would Be Good is if they Have the Career education to the curriculum in High School Hafe of the studend would not want to Be on the street Fighting to make a Living By selling Drugs, Doing thing they are not suppost to Be Doing.

My second Reason is if they Have this career thing in school Because it would Help them after Graduation For Some of the Great Jobs say if there's a student in School that's looking to Be a nurse the School Board could put a class like that in school and By the time it's time to Graduat that student would no What to Do once He/she is ready to go to college so they can Be a nurse.

My Last Reason I think they should Have this class/Program in school so when the next GenarAtion come it would not Be like today Genartion with the Kids do crazy stuff like Drinking, Drugs and other thing I can't Put Down. So this is why I think the School Board should Have the Career Curriculum For the High Schools.

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear, School Board

I agree For the Career education to the curriculum in High School. I think if We Have this in High School Students Would Have Great Jobs After Graduation.

My First Reason Why I think it Would Be Good is if they Have the Career education to the curriculum in High School Hafe of the studend would not Want to Be on the street Fighting to make a Living By Selling Drugs, Doing thing they are not suppost to Be Doing.

My Second Reason is if they Have this Career thing in School Because it would Help them after Graduation For Some of the Great Jobs Say if there's a student in School that's looking to Be a nurse the School Board could Put a class like that in School and By the time it's time to Gradiat that student would no What to Do once He/she is ready to go to college So they can Be a nurse.

My Last Reason I think they Should Have this class/Program in School So When the next Genaration Come it would not Be like today Genartion With the Kids do crazy

★★★★ **PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)** ★★★★

Stuff like Drinking, Drugs and
Other thing I can't Put Down.
So this is Why I think the
School Board should Have the
Career Curriculum For the High Schools.

Score Point: 2

This writer takes a position in favor of the additional year of high school and supports the position with three reasons [*studend would not want to Be on the street Fighting to make a Living*; *it would Help them after Graduation For Some of the Great Jobs*; *when the next GenarAtion come it would not Be like today Genartion*]. The response is organized in the five-paragraph format, with appropriate but basic transitions that help the reader move from one idea to another. Although the writer attempts to provide some elaboration *[if there's a student in School that's looking to Be a nurse the School Board could put a class like that in school and By the time it's time to Graduat that student would no What to Do*], the development of details is minimal overall; and the display of numerous and serious errors in sentence construction, usage, and mechanics indicates a limited command of written language.

Dear school board,

Recognizing the need to add career education to the curriculum, school board is considering a plan that would require an additional year of high school before graduation. I am not agree with that plan because all students do not want study the same career, students might cut their classes, must of the students only come to school for fight.

I am not agree with the plan to require an additional year of high school because all the students do not want study the same career. Each student have different ways to think and pick differents careers. For example adding an additional year of high school will be more years to finish our education. We do not want to finish our careers and work only for few years. We want to finish our careers and work long time for make money.

Adding an additional year of high school might make students cut their classes because now that we have four year of high school students cut their classes with the excuse of “I am tired of the same every day”, “I do not need this class for my career”, and a lot of things. We want that all students have a good education.

Adding an additional year of high school is not a good idea because must of the students only come to school for fight. That would be a reason for those students that do not like school. And the only thing that they like to do is fight and always be in problems. Come to school for one more year would be an excuse to continue fighting at school. Bad students might do bullying to the students that like school and do their work.

In conclusion add an additional year of high school might have a lot of problems because of bad students, students that do not want study the same career, students would cut their classes. School board do not want students cut classes, students fighting at school. School board wants that all students finish their high school and then that students finish their careers.

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear school board,

Recognizing the need to add career education to the curriculum, school board is considering a plan that would require an additional year of high school before graduation. I am not agree with that plan because all students do not want study the same career, students might cut their classes, must of the students only come to school for fight.

I am not agree with the plan to require an additional year of high school because all the students do not want study the same career. Each student have different ways to think and pick differents careers. For example adding an additional year of high school will be more years to finish our education. We do not want to finish our careers and work only for few years. We want to finish our careers and work long time for make money.

Adding an additional year of high school might make students cut their classes because now that we have four year of high school students cut their classes with the excuse of "I am tired of the same every day", "I do not need this class for my career", and a lot of things. We want that all students have a good education.

Adding an additional year of high school is not a good idea because must of the students only come to school for

fight. That would be a reason for those students that do not like school. And the only thing that they like to do is fight and always be in problems. Come to school for one more year would be an excuse to continue fighting at school. Bad students might do bullying to the students that like school and do their work.

In conclusion add an additional year of high school might have a lot of problems because of bad students, students that do not want study the same career students would cut their classes. School board do not want students cut classes, students fighting at school. School board wants that all students finish their high school and then that students finish their careers.

Score Point: 2

This writer opposes the plan to add an additional year for career education and attempts to organize ideas with an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The student presents three reasons for opposing the proposed plan [1. *all students do not want study the same career*; 2. *students might cut their classes*; 3. *must of the students only come to school for fight*] and attempts to elaborate on each of these ideas. However, the writer provides details that do not support two of the reasons [*For example adding an additional year of high school will be more years to finish our education*; *We want that all students have a good education*], creating shifts that interfere with the development of ideas. These shifts, along with serious errors in usage, sentence construction, and mechanics, indicate a limited command of written language.

Score Scale Point 3

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

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION	• may not have an opening and/or closing. These responses relate to the topic and usually have a single focus. Some of these papers may drift from the focus or abruptly shift focus; however, in these papers, at least one of the subjects focused on clearly meets the criteria for a "3." For example, some "3" papers are sparse—they have several details with a little elaboration, but they are organized and controlled; some "3" papers will ramble somewhat, repeating ideas resulting in a lengthy response that would otherwise be sparse; and other "3" papers have elaborated ideas and details, but the writing sample is interrupted by organizational flaws/lapses or by a lack of transition between ideas or between clusters of ideas.
USAGE	• may display (a) pattern(s) of errors in usage.
SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	• may demonstrate little variety in syntax structure and/or rhetorical modes. There may be errors in sentence construction.
MECHANICS	• may display (a) pattern(s) of errors in mechanics.

Dear School Board,

I am writing to you about the plan to add an extra year of highschool to add career education to the curriculum. I do not think it would be such a great idea. I have prepared a few reasons as to why it is not a good idea.

It is honestly just unnecessary to add a whole extra year of highschool over one class. I don't see the point. You could just change up the scheduals and current curriculum to fit the class in and keep highschool at four years long. Most importantly it would be a lot easier on the students.

Speaking of the students, they wouldn't want an extra year of highschool. An extra year of highschool means an extra year of drama and stress. Students who deal with big amounts of stress may end up dropping out. Students who dropped out will most likely end up having a bad career, oh the irony. Their parents will end up being unhappy with the school.

Something else that may upset parents could be that their kids could come close to graduating and then have to wait an extra year until they graduate. It isn't right.

I hope this helps convince you about adding an extra year of highschool. It may have its positive affects, but it has negative affects as well.

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear School Board,

I am writing to you about the plan to add an extra year of highschool to add career education to the curriculum. I do not think it would be such a great idea. I have prepared a few reasons as to why it is not a good idea.

It is honestly just unnecessary to add a whole extra year of highschool over one class. I don't see the point. You could just change up the scheduals and current curriculum to fit the class in and keep highschool at four years long. Most importantly it would be a lot easier on the students.

Speaking of the students, they wouldn't want an extra year of highschool. An extra year of highschool means an extra year of drama and stress. Students who deal with big amounts of stress may end up dropping out. Students who dropped out will most likely end up having a bad career, oh the irony. Their parents will end up being unhappy with the school.

Something else that may upset parents could be that their kids could come close to graduating and then have to wait an extra year until they graduate. It isn't right.

I hope this helps convince you about adding an extra year of high school. It may have its positive affects, but it has negative affects as well.

Score Point: 3

This writer takes a stance opposing the plan to add an extra year of high school in order to include career education in the curriculum. The response, which is organized in the five-paragraph format, offers three reasons as support. Although the last reason—that parents would be upset if their kids have to wait an extra year to graduate—remains at the highlight level, the other two reasons are sufficiently elaborated to move beyond highlights; and the sequence of details provides a simple but clear transition from one reason to the next [*Their parents will end up being unhappy—Something else that may upset parents*]. Additionally, the student recognizes the irony in the fact that adding an extra year for career education might cause students to drop out of school and "end up having a bad career," a detail that contributes to the elaboration and further demonstrates a partial command of written language.

Dear School board,

Recently, I have heard that you feel the need to add career education to the cirriculum. For you to do such a thing, you have decided a plan which requires an additional year of high school. Since the news of this has gone out, it has caused a controvery in my school, and frankly, I do not agree with it. This plan would not benefit because students would get furious if they had to stay in school a whole nother year, secondly, what could they possibly learn more about that they couldn't learn in their four years, and lastly, career education is the reason why students go to college.

In high school, everyone knows that after four years you graduate, which excites everyone. If students were to hear the news that they had to stay in school another year, they'd be furious. No student would want to stay in high school for an entire extra year. Also, if there were to be another year of high school, students wouldn't take it seriously.

Also, what more could students possibly learn about in five years instead of four? If you truley want students to learn about career education, why not just make a mandetory class instead of keeping students for another year. Honestly, it would just be a waste of year. I'm sure that if students took a class every year, for four years in high school for career education, there would be a better outcome.

Lastly, career education is mostly for college. Why would you want to keep students for another hear to teach them career education, then have them go to college and learn the exact same thing? The whole point of paying for college is to learn the exact kind of career education that would need for the career they want. Having students stay in school for another year for this would just be a waste of time for everybody. The class may not even keep the students attention due to what they wish to be when they're older. This whole idea would be a huge waste.

As you can see, I believe that in order for students to learn career education they must attend high school for another year is a horrid idea. Not only does this effect students, but it effects the teachers. For this extra year, new teachers would have to be hired, thus having to cut the orginal teachers' pay checks. This also effects parents with having to pay even more taxes and then pay for college. The whole idea is a mess and should not happen. Nothing positive will come from this.

Sincerley,
Me

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear School board,

Recently, I have heard that you feel the need to add career education to the cirriculum. For you to do such a thing, you have decided a plan which requires an additional year of high school. Since the news of this has gone out, it has caused a controvery in my school, and frankly, I do not agree with it. This plan would not benefit because students would get furious if they had to stay in school a whole nother year, secondly, what could they possibly learn more about that they couldn't learn in their four years, and lastly, career education is the reason why students go to college.

In high school, everyone knows that after four years you graduate, which excites everyone. If students were to hear the news that they had to stay in school another year, they'd be furious. No student would want to stay in high school for an entire extra year. Also, if there were to be another year of high school, students wouldn't take it seriously.

Also, what more could students possibly learn about in five years instead of four? If you truley want students to learn about career education, why not just make a mandetory class instead of keeping students for another year. Honestly, it would just be a waste of year. I'm sure that if students took a class every year, for four years in high school for career education, there would be a better outcome.

★★★★ **PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)** ★★★★

Lastly, career education is mostly for college. Why would you want to keep students for another year to teach them career education, then have them go to college and learn the exact same thing? The whole point of paying for college is to learn the exact kind of career education that would need for the career they want. Having students stay in school for another year for this would just be a waste of time for everybody. The class may not even keep the students attention due to what they wish to be when they're older. This whole idea would be a huge waste.

As you can see, I believe that in order for students to learn career education they must attend high school for another year is a horrid idea. Not only does this effect students, but it effects the teachers. for this extra year, new teachers would have to be hired, thus having to cut the orginal teachers' pay checks. This also effects parents with having to pay even more taxes and then pay for college. The whole idea is a mess and should not happen. Nothing positive will come from this.

Sincerley,
Me

Score Point: 3

This response, focused in opposition to the proposed plan to add a fifth year for career education, demonstrates some organization and control by providing an introduction, three reasons for opposing the plan (students would be furious if they had to spend an additional year in high school, students can learn everything they need to within the current four-year curriculum, and the purpose of college is to prepare students for their careers), and a conclusion. The writer uses transitions to introduce each of the three clusters of ideas and to develop the details that support each idea presented. However, toward the end of the response, the writer begins to add new but undeveloped details [*The class may not even keep the students attention due to what they wish to be when they're older*; *Not only does this effect students, but it effects teachers*] that weaken the progression of ideas. Additionally, the errors in usage, sentence construction, and mechanics, while not impeding the meaning, do constitute a pattern and keep the response from achieving a higher score.

Dear Board of Education,

Upon asking senior graduates what their major will be, the common answer is “undecided.” Choosing one major is a tough, arduous process that most students have trouble with. The decision of choosing a major will influence one’s four years in college, and most importantly the remainder of his life. To ensure that students are well-prepared to make this life-changing decision, an additional year of high school is a necessity. Having an additional year of high school will fully prepare college-bound students for their future. Numerous benefits parallel this additional year. To illustrate, an extra year of high school will broader students knowledge, enhance college education, and enable mature adults to make this vital decision.

The most common reason for colleg-bound students to be “undecided” is because students are secluded to only the electives their school offers. These electives are limited to cooking, computer design, and business. What if I want to be a doctor? If I wanted to become a doctor, I would have to go beyond what the school offers. However, if an additional year is put in place than students will gain a broader knowledge of what careers are available. This additional year of high school will be useful beyond measure because students will be able to self-analyze and gain insight on careers never spoken of before. Students will be exposed to various multitudes of majors. This additional year will ensure that seniors will graduate with a broader horizon that is offered in college and the workforce.

Additionally, this additional year in high school will make the four years at college more purposeful. Students will not have to waste time in college by repeatedly changing majors. About 2/3 of all college students changed their major at least one time. Thus, thousands of dollars are wasted by hard-working parents. College students waste their time studying useless material. An extra year of high school can simply save thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours. Consequently, students will have an enhanced college experience by studying solely their major for the entire four years. The mean years it takes to graduate is now four and a half to five years. College students will now be able to jump start their careers and ultimeately their future.

Furthermore, in high school, students begin the college search as early as sophomore year. Most sophomores are 15 and 16 years old. At these ages students are inexperienced and immature. When students apply and declare their major, they are 17 years of age. In other words, 17 year olds have to choose what they want to do at age 17. This notion is unrealistic. With an additional year of high school, students will be more mature to make a decision that will affect their entire life. When these students are older, they will become more mature and preparation for the workforce will be instilled. This addition to high school will prepare adults, rather than immature teenagers for college. Adults will be making this essential decision.

No longer will students walk into college blind-folded. Rather, a broader sense of majors available and existant career choices. Students will be able to put forth all their energy to their future, instead of studying classes that are insignificant to their course of study. Parents will no longer have to send their child uneducated about the real world. But, with great confidence send their child to college more knowledgeable and more prepared. It is essential that an additional year be in place for it will improve every student’s journey on attaining a degree. So, if I want to be a doctor, I can simply do research within my school. I will be informed with an additional year of high school.

Sincerely,

_____

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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students will be able to self-analyze and gain insight on careers never spoken of before. Students will be exposed to varias multitudes of majors. This additional year will ensure that seniors will graduate with a broader horizon that is offered in college and the workforce.

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★★★★ **PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)** ★★★★

want to do at age 17. This notion is unrealistic. With an additional year of high school, students will be more mature to make a decision that will affect their entire life. When these students are older, they will become more mature and preparation for the workforce will be instilled. This addition to high school will prepare adults, rather then immature teenagers for college. Adults will be making this essential decision.

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Sincerely,

Score Point: 3

In this lengthier response, the writer opposes the plan to add an additional year of high school and develops the argument with three key ideas: the additional year will broaden students' knowledge of potential careers, make their time in college more purposeful, and provide the maturity they need to select an appropriate career path. The writer's attempts to organize and control the text are demonstrated in the use of transitions and elaboration with appropriate details [*These electives are limited to cooking, computer design, and business*; *College students waste their time studying useless material*; *17 year olds have to choose what they want to do at age 17*]. However, the writing rambles somewhat, resulting in a disorganized sequence of some details [*About 2/3 of all college students changed their major at least one time . . . The mean years it takes to graduate is now four and a half to five years*], repetition [*gain a broader knowledge . . . gain insight . . . graduate with a broader horizon*; *more mature . . . rather than immature*], and redundancy [*tough, arduous*; *decision of choosing*; *various multitudes*]. In addition, the quantity of errors in usage [*parallel*; *secluded*; *than*; *instilled*] constitutes a pattern and indicates a partial command of written language.

Score Scale Point 4

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

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION	• generally will have an opening and a closing. The responses relate to the topic. They have a single focus and are organized. There is little, if any, difficulty moving from idea to idea. Ideas may ramble somewhat, and clusters of ideas may be loosely connected; however, an overall progression is apparent. In some papers, development is uneven, consisting of elaborated ideas interspersed with bare, unelaborated details.
USAGE	• may display some errors in usage, but no consistent pattern is apparent.
SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	• may demonstrate a generally correct use of syntax. They avoid excessive monotony in syntax and/or rhetorical modes. There may be a few errors in sentence construction.
MECHANICS	• may display some errors in mechanics, but these errors will not constitute a consistent pattern, nor do they interfere with the meaning of the response.

Dear Board of Education,

I strongly believe everybody in the district does not want another year of high school to graduate. Isn't four years of preparing for college enough? Most of us can't take the stress we go through everyday in school with projects, tests, homework and preparing for big tests like the SAT and ACT. If any of us need help planning a career, then we have programs to go for that or teachers and guidance consolers to go too. In this case, it should be optional to stay another year in high school.

To begin with, how would parents feel if they needed to pay extra for contructing bigger high schools to support all the students? Nobody likes their wages to lower because contruction workers need money to make schools larger to fit people in. In this case, only students who desperately need help choosing a career should stay another year in high school, but shouldn't force others as well.

However most of the students today in high school believe school is already too much to deal with. There's tests, like PSAT to prepare us for the SAT for college. There's also many other tests we have to worry about and some of us just want to get on with our lifes and start our careers. If any of us don't know what our career should be, then we can take online quizes to help us choose one for us. Another thing that can help is talking to a counsoler about what they would recommend, so just because some people need help figuring out their future career, doesn't mean everybody else should stay another year more.

Finally, adding another additional year to our high school curriculum can interfer with our lifes in many ways. Most of the students in their senior year are already living on their own and have a job to attend too. If we are required to stay another year of high school, we won't be able to attend our jobs because we will have to miss days, this can result in people losing their jobs. If young adults loose their jobs they will have to move back in with their parents because we will need someone to support us while we go to school for another year.

All in all, I believe most of the student's life's will change if we are required to attend another year of high school. I don't believe it's fair for the rest of the people who already want to begin with their lifes. For these reasons I believe we shouldn't be required to attend another additional year of high school just to graduate because we already should have enough help to be independent. Now that most of us in high school are turning into adults, we should be treated like adults.

Sincerely,

_____

★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

★★★★

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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★★★★ **PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)** ★★★★

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Sincerely,

Score Point: 4

Opposing the plan to add a fifth year of high school, this writer uses a variety of strategies to argue that the plan is unnecessary: rhetorical questions [*Isn't four years of preparing for college enough? how would parents feel if they needed to pay extra*]; emotional appeals [*Most of us can't take the stress we go through everyday*; *school is already too much to deal with*]; analysis [*If we are required . . . , we won't be able . . . If young adults loose their jobs they will have to . . .*]; and a counter proposal [*it should be optional to stay another year*]. The writing is focused and organized with simple but useful transitions, and the elaboration of ideas is clearly enhanced with the assertive tone of the response [*most of us in high school are turning into adults, we should be treated like adults*]. Although the text displays some errors in usage [*everyday*; *wages to lower*; *life's*], sentence construction [*only students who desperately need help choosing a career should stay another year in high school, but shouldn't force others*], and mechanics [*consolers*; *interfere*], the use of varied strategies, the progression of ideas, and the sustained tone are sufficient to demonstrate an adequate command of written language.

Dear School Board,

Students have been informed of a plan that proposes adding an additional school year to high school. Understandably, this news was almost immediately put down in my mind. Now I write to you as a student at this school, having weighed the pros and cons, and this plan still sounds like a horrible idea. Not only is career education not needed in the slightest as a class, the extra year tacked onto high school is a groan-inducing idea in and of itself. Plus, that year is time taken away from actually starting our careers in the first place. So, no, the proposed curriculum does not strike me as one that I could get behind in any capacity.

It has been related to the students that part of the reason this plan might be implemented is that some people believe there is a need for career education to be taught in the school. This is not the case. Career education, while helpful to a few in the long run, would not be conducive to actually helping students's careers. Multiple times guidance counselors, teachers, and other adult figures have attempted to lecture me and teach me about future careers. All the attempts have been shut down, for the fact remains that I am a teenager. For most people my age, real world lessons will not sink in until personally experienced. Moreover, the information imparted to me did not actually give me any inclination towards one career or the other. What makes you think classes would be any different?

Another point to be made is that an extra year would most likely increase the number of high school dropouts in the area. Not only would the number of dropouts increase, the plan would also serve to aggravate both the model students and the unruly students; The model students because the probability that the students have a plan that would be messed up with an extra year, and the unruly kids would become more restless and difficult to control. In either case, the additional year adds additional problems.

Thirdly, a year in school is a year taken away from actually starting our careers. Students can't learn everything from the safety of their school. We need real world experience, not lessons on the real world that would end up not even involving us. After all, situations are rarely the same, and only so many can be covered in a classroom. The only way for us to decide on careers is to experience careers, and this plan prohibits that.

The long and short of the matter is that the high school curriculum is just fine the way it is. An extra year is a waste of time and experience. More importantly, this plan is not likely to be given favor by many students. It would mess with the foundations for school and life for many students, and this does not sit well with me.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

_____

P.S. To be quite frank, this is just a ridiculous notion period. No good can come of it (and I did make a pros and cons list, so I should know).

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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★★★★ **PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)** ★★★★

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★★★★ **PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)** ★★★★

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

P.S. To be quite frank, this is just a ridiculous notion period. No good can come of it (and I did make a pros and cons list, so I should know).

Score Point: 4

Written in opposition to the proposed additional year of high school, this response is focused and organized with some syntactic variety and an overall progression of ideas. The writer provides some effective phrasing [*a groan-inducing idea*; *Career education, while helpful to a few in the long run, would not be conducive*; *the plan would also serve to aggravate both the model students and the unruly students*; *The only way for us to decide on careers is to experience careers, and this plan prohibits that*] but also includes some awkward wording [*this news was almost immediately put down in my mind*; *All the attempts have been shut down*; *did not actually give me any inclination towards one career*; *this plan is not likely to be given favor by many students*] that detracts from the fluency of the response. While most ideas within a cluster are adequately elaborated, the awkward expression introduces some ambiguity [*not lessons on the real world that could end up not even involving us*] and indicates uneven development. This unevenness, along with a few errors in sentence construction, demonstrates an adequate command of written language.

School Board—

I am totally against the idea of adding another year of high school before graduation. Just the thought of this plan is absolutely ridiculous. What's next? Another year of college added? Employees will have to work one more year till retirement? As expected, this idea of another year of high school has sparked a huge controversy, but one that is not necessary. It is very clear that there should not be a required additional year of high school before graduation.

First, there are plenty of reasons why this idea is ridiculous, but I'd like to talk about the students first. Educators should not do this because the kids in their fifth year of high school will be 19 or 20 years old. That means they would be attending school with 14 and 15 year old kids. That is a bad mix and just asking for trouble. Also, an extra year of high school would hold a lot of students back. Successful students, in and out of the classroom, are ready to move onto bigger and better things, such as college. This additional year would prevent these hard working students from reaching their full potential. These are some major reasons I oppose the requirement of an additional year of high school before graduation.

The second argument I have has to do with statistics. There are tons and tons of facts I could use in this argument. One, 8 out of 10 current high school students said they'd rather drop out and work than attend another year of high school. Another recent poll showed 85% of high school students would choose college over another year of high school. The last statistics I will use involve parents. 76% of high school students' parents believe their child is ready for college after four years of high school. Most parents would also surprisingly force their child to drop out and work over a fifth year of high school. The numbers say it all, an additional year of high school is a bad idea.

Finally, my own personal feelings have led me to choosing against this idea. As a junior, I believe after next year I will be ready to go out and be successful in the world. Over these past couple years I have learned a lot and taken everything I possibly could have out of high school, but that is all it can offer me and I know a fifth year of high school would do nothing for me. High school has been the best years of my life and they will always be up there, but it is clearly time to move on. This is why I oppose this additional year of high school proposition.

Statistics, reason, and personal feelings all prove how the requirement of an additional year of high school before graduation is a bad idea. It would cause a lot of problems and hold students back. High school is a great time, but four years is enough. I hope you think about my input and this helps settle the controversy. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Concerned Student

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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★★★★ **PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)** ★★★★

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Sincerely,
Concerned Student

Score Point: 4

At the outset of this response, the writer clearly establishes opposition to an additional year of high school and offers rhetorical questions in an attempt to dismiss the proposed plan as "absolutely ridiculous." Although the writer provides three body paragraphs to argue against the plan, the clusters of ideas are only loosely connected to the main point of each paragraph (e.g., difficulties arising from the age of students in that fifth year, statistics indicating that a fifth year would result in increased drop-out rates, and personal feelings expressing the need to move on), which results from the use of elaborated ideas interspersed with unelaborated ideas and the lack of transitions within the paragraphs to make the connections more explicit. In spite of this uneven development, however, the writing displays the focus and progression that are needed for this score point. In addition, the response is strengthened by the conclusion in which the writer avoids mere repetition of previously stated details and focuses instead on a simple but appropriate concluding idea, ". . . an additional year of high school before graduation is a bad idea. It would cause a lot of problems and hold students back. High school is a great time, but four years is enough." Overall, this response displays an adequate command of written language.

Score Scale Point 5

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

CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION	• have an opening and a closing. The responses relate to the topic and have a single focus. They are organized and progress logically from beginning to end. The key ideas are developed with appropriate and varied details. Clusters of ideas are strongly connected. Some writers take compositional risks and are, for the most part, successful. Although these papers are flawed, they have a sense of completeness and unity.
USAGE	• have few errors in usage.
SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	• demonstrate syntactic and verbal sophistication through an effective variety of sentences and/or rhetorical modes. There are few, if any, errors in sentence construction.
MECHANICS	• have few errors in mechanics.

Dear School Board Representatives,

How would you feel if you had gotten to your senior year and then you were told you had one more year of highschool to go? No one would be pleased with that. Highschool is a pirate ship filled with rowdy crew members; we only signed on for a four year voyage. If this plan is put into action then many people will be upset and try to act against it. The same goal could be achieved with a series of optional after school courses, which students would be more in favor of than a fifth year. There would be riots if this plan was put into action; riots.

Firstly, a variety of after school courses would be easier to orchestrate. Volunteers could sign up to teach eager students about their passions and professions. If there is a wide variety of courses, that cycles throughout the year, more students would be interested, and would be able to make time to attend the courses. If the courses catered to a wide variety of interests, it would provide students with the opportunity to learn about a myriad of jobs and hobbies. Overall, this could lead to more well rounded individuals at the school.

Secondly, along with the threat of a dreaded firth year, students would have a lot to say. Their desire to speak out against the plan could escalate quickly and get out of hand, as things tend to do when it comes to teenagers. Teens, or even parents that are anti-fifth-year, could end up starting a protest or a riot. Not even the mighty school Board can conquer an angry community.

Alternatively, say we did follow the plan, how might it work out? Every student would have no choice but to attend, unless they rebel and decide to stay home. It is quite possible that students may learn something from the extra year, or at least decide on a proffession they might like to go into, in the future. However, there is no way to predict whether or not the students will take the fifth year seriously, and if they will walk away having learned anything.

In conclusion, a fifth year of high school would be a waste of everyone's time. You can't force teenagers into doing something they don't want to do, it will not end well. Presenting them with a choice will provide the best end result. If this plan is put into action, then students will do what it takes to end it. These pirates don't want to deal with another year aboard a crowded ship with rowdy crew mates and a grumpy captain.

Sincerely,

_____

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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★★★★ **PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)** ★★★★

of interests, it would provide students with the opportunity to learn about a myrical of jobs and hobbies. Overall, this could lead to more well rounded individuals at the school.

Secondly, along with the threat of a dreaded fifth year, students would have a lot to say. Their desire to speak out against the plan could escalate quickly and get out of hand, as things tend to do when it comes to teenagers. Teens, or even parents that are anti-fifth-year, could end up starting a protest or a riot. Not even the mighty school Board can conquer and subdue community.

Alternatively, say we did follow the plan, how might it work out? Every student would have no choice but to attend, unless they rebel and decide to stay home. It is quite possible that students may learn something from the extra year, or at least decide on a profession they might like to go into, in the future. However, there is no way to predict whether or not the students will take the fifth year seriously, and if they will walk away having learned anything.

★★★★ **PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)** ★★★★

In conclusion, a fifth year of high school would be a waste of everyone's time. You can't force teenagers into doing something they don't want to do, it will not end well. Presenting them with a choice will provide the best end result. If this plan is put into action, then students will do what it takes to end it. These pirates don't want to deal with another year aboard a crowded ship with rowdy crew mates and a grumpy captain.

Sincerely,

Score Point: 5

This writer has attempted a compositional risk by beginning and ending the response with an apt analogy comparing high school to a "pirate ship" and warning of the potential for "riots" (a form of mutiny) if the proposed plan for an additional year of high school were implemented. Noting that high schoolers "only signed on for a four year voyage," the writer proceeds to outline an alternative in which students could avail themselves of optional after-school courses, a plan that "would be easier to orchestrate" and that would avoid the anger of students and the community. Although the ideas progress logically, some of the elaboration lacks specificity [*their passions and professions*; *wide variety of interests*; *myriad of jobs and hobbies*], and the clear focus of the response stems from some controlled but rather general statements [*Their desire to speak out against the plan could escalate quickly and get out of hand, as things tend to do when it comes to teenagers*]. Overall, however, the ideas are strongly connected, and the writing displays syntactic variety and sophisticated word choice [*rowdy; orchestrate*; *catered*; *escalate*; *conquer*]. By returning to the pirate analogy at the end, moreover, the writer brings the argument to a strong conclusion that provides a sense of unity and completeness and indicates a strong command of written language.

Dear School Board Member,

Hello, my name is _____ and I am a junior in high school. My purpose for composing this letter stems from the recently proposed plan under consideration by the board as to whether or not high school should be extended an additional year. I believe that new and innovative proposals should always be, at the least, thoughtfully considered before a decision is reached in favor of or against. One will find both positive and negative elements in this proposal, however I find that the benefits tremendously outweigh the disadvantages, and would urge all members of the school board to vote affirmatively in favor of extending high school an additional year. By extending high school one more year, students will have another year to prepare for college or a vocational career, an additional year to participate in high school athletics, and an additional year to take courses he or she may have wished to take, but simply could not fit into an inflexible schedule.

To initiate, by making high school five years total in length, students will gain another crucial year to prepare for advanced studies or further their learning in a vocation. Many college-bound students will agree that high school truly does seem to pass by rapidly. The ammount of activities one can participate in, both in school and out of school for example, is limited. By adding another year, a student could volunteer several more hours at a shelter or join a church youth group, develop an active role, and still be able to document these activities on a college application. Vocational students can add an extra year of learning under their belt, and possibly begin a year-long internship in their fifth year.

Further, elongating a student's athletic career in high school can be extremely beneficial. An extra year of high school can allow an athlete to further develop his or her skills, perhaps so much so that the athlete earns a scholarship in the fifth year. Also, as unfortunate as it is, many student-athletes experience injuries in their careers, and may lose an entire season as a result. If high school is extended, that student will have an extra year and opportunity to return to the sport and hopefully bounce back to previous form before the injury occurred.

Additionally, lengthening high school from four to five years will allow students to take more courses, perhaps many of which he or she would never have been provided with the opportunity to take without an added year. For instance, a student interested in history may never have the opportunity to take a fifth year of the subject as graduation requirements and/or other courses of study may limit one's schedule flexibility. Some courses are only taught during one particular period, so scheduling conflicts often prevent students from capitalizing on their interests in a subject. Students who take multiple AP courses, for example, are negatively impacted the greatest by the system as it stands. Also, students who struggle in certain areas of study can benefit from this extra year. They can re-take courses they struggled in, using the given year to improve. Student-athletes who are gifted on the gridiron or baseball diamond but struggle in the classroom can also maximize another year to its fullest, raising their GPAs so that they might earn an athletic scholarship.

In summation, I strongly urge the school board to approve the proposal for an additional year of high school. It has been successful in private high schools that offer an extra post-graduation year, and can be highly successful in public school districts across the state. An additive year of high school will allow ambitious college-bound students and vocational students to prepare for advanced learning, allow athletes an extra year to participate in athletics, and allow students to take more courses in a fifth year, otherwise impossible without. I hope the board will thoughtfully consider my thoughts and concerns regarding this matter and implement change in the near future.

Best regards,

_____

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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Best regards,

Score Point: 5

This moderately fluent response in favor of the proposed additional year of high school begins with an introduction that establishes the focus of the essay and the key ideas that the writer will use to develop the argument: with another year of high school, students will be better prepared for college or a vocational career; students will have an additional year to participate in athletics; and students will have the opportunity to take courses that they had not been able to fit into their traditional four-year schedule. The writer provides elaboration for each of these ideas in a controlled and logical progression that is enhanced by attempts to incorporate a variety of benefits for each key issue. The development of these appropriate and varied details, along with the syntactic variety, verbal sophistication [*students who are gifted on the gridiron or baseball diamond but struggle in the classroom*], and effective word choice [*affirmatively*; *flexibility*; *capitalizing*; *maximize*] contribute to an overall sense of unity, coherence, and completeness. The clear organization and progression of the ideas and details, as well as few errors in the writing, indicate a strong command of written language.

Dear School Board Members,

I am a student at _____, and I can positively tell you that I do not always want to come to school. In fact, most days I would much rather be doing anything else. However, the truth of it is that school is a necessity, if not by law then by means of survival. Young children and teens must be educated in order to fill the needs of our national labor force. And this starts right here in high school. The purpose of high school is to provide the necessary knowledge to go to college, and the purpose of college is to prepare oneself to find a job and give oneself the best resumé possible for their career choice. That is why it must be a highschool's job to educate its students about possible career choices and help to determine the student's path in college. The Board needs to approve the notion to extend high school by 1 year and add career education to the curriculum because students need this education for college and their lives and because it would be constructive to give another year for students to mature.

Many people, from students to parents to even teachers, believe that decisions that a student makes in high school are not permanent. While this may theoretically be true, in reality these decisions are incredibly hard to negate. Many students decide to go into college as an "undecided major" student or go into college with one major and come out with another. This really hurts their career possibilities. Even classes that a student takes in high school may affect their career paths. This is why students need to be educated about careers in high school. If a student could decide what they wanted to do as an adult at an early age, they would have the ability to shape their high school and college academic experiences in order to prepare themselves for work in the field of their choice. Seeing as it is one of the main purposes of high school to prepare students for further education, this board would be neglecting its responsibilities if it does not find a way to incorporate career education into the system, and if this must be through another year of high school then so be it.

keeping students in the high school for another year would not be a detrimental aspect of the students overall career either. Many people say "Youth is wasted on the young" because the youthful do not truly value their advantages in life. Another year in high school would give them a year to realize these advantages before it is too late. Many students want to go to college for the fun "college experience" and therefore drop out when they receive the unprecedented amount of work that is inevitably doled out to each university student. This extra year in high school would help the students to decide whether they truly want to attend a University and would in, the long run, save numerous families a great deal of money and frustration. This board will be recieving a great many letters attempting to convince you that another year of highschool is superfluous towards the child's education. On the contrary, it is an extremely vital part of a student's life to determine where all their years of schooling will take them. While others may think that this extra year will be a wasted year, they must not have considered the possibility of the student wasting his entire education if they cannot appropriately prepare themselves for a career they have yet to choose. While many will try to convince you that this is a waste of taxpayer money, I tell you that the true waste of money would be paying for the education of a student who fails to use it in the real world.

In conclusion, it is this board's responsibility and dire necessity to include career education in the curriculum via an extra year of high school. Career education courses provide students with extremely important education. The extra year of high school will provide the students with time to make mistakes, be a teen, and go into college clear-headed. Although there will be emotional oppositions to this proposal, they are not based in reason and those suggestions must be rejected. It is your duty to prepare these students for the life ahead of them. Do Not neglect it!

Sincerely,

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear School Board Members,

I am a student at , and I can positively tell you that I do not always want to come to school. In fact, most days I would much rather be doing anything else. However, the truth of it is that school is a necessity, if not by law then by means of survival. Young children and teens must be educated in order to fill the needs of our national labor force. And this starts right here in high school. The purpose of high school is to provide the necessary knowledge to go to college, and the purpose of college is to prepare oneself to find a job and give oneself the best resumé possible for their career choice. That is why it must be a highschool's job to educate its students about possible career choices and help to determine the student's path in college. The Board needs to approove the notion to extend high school by 1 year and add career education to the curriculum because students need this education for college and their lives and because it would be constructive to give another year for students to mature.

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★★★★ **PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)** ★★★★

be educated about careers in high school. If a student could decide what they wanted to do as an adult at an early age they would have the ability to shape their high school and college academic experiences in order to best prepare themselves for work in the field of their choice. Seeing as it is one of the main purposes of high school to prepare students for further education, this board would be neglecting its responsibilities if it does not find a way to incorporate career education into the system, and if this must be through another year of high school then so be it.

Keeping students in the high school for another year would not be a detrimental aspect of the students overall career either. Many people say "Youth is wasted on the young" because the youthful do not truly value their advantages in life. Another year in high school would give them a year to realize these advantages before it is too late. Many students want to go to college for the fun "college experience" and therefore drop out when they recieve the unprecedented amount of work that is inevitably doled out to each university student. This extra year in high school would help the students to decide whether they truly want to attend a University and would in, the long run, save numerous families a great deal of money and frustration.

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★★★★ **PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)** ★★★★

year, they must not have considered the possibility of the student wasting his entire education if they cannot appropriately prepare themselves for a career they have yet to choose. While many will try to convince you that this is a waste of tax-payer money, I tell you that the true waste of money would be paying for the education of a student who fails to use it in the real world.

In conclusion, it is this board's responsibility and due necessity to include career education in the curriculum via an extra year of high school. Career education courses provide students with extremely important education. The extra year of high school will provide the students with time to make mistakes, be a teen, and go into college clear-headed. Although there will be emotional oppositions to this proposal, they are not based in reason and those suggestions must be rejected. It is your duty to prepare these students for the life ahead of them. Do Not neglect it!

Sincerely,

Score Point: 5

In this response, the writer uses a five-paragraph format to argue why the proposed career education program is important. Each paragraph is focused on a key idea that is developed logically with appropriate details that build on each other through the effective use of cohesive devices [*That is why*; *On the contrary*] and cause-and-effect explanations [*this board would be neglecting its responsibilities if it does not find a way to incorporate career education into the system, and if this must be through another year of high school then so be it*]. Additionally, while the writing displays syntactic variety and strong word choice [*theoretically*; *detrimental*; *doled*; *superfluous*; *dire*], the response also achieves a persuasive tone [*the truth of it is that school is a necessity, if not by law then by means of survival*; *the true waste of money would be paying for the education of a student who fails to use it in the real world*] that is particularly evident in the conclusion. The final two sentences [*It is your duty to prepare these students for the life ahead of them. Do not neglect it!*] serve to bring closure to the argument and provide a sense of unity and completeness to the response as a whole, indicating a strong command of written language.

Score Scale Point 6

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

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

Dear School Board,

As you may already know, your proposal of requiring an additional year of high school has caused a controversy in our school. Although this additional year would incorporate career education into the curriculum, it would also take things away from the students, as well as the teachers and our community. In order to extend high school time, additional funding would be needed for our school, which is one of the major flaws of your proposal, along with students slacking off, forcing students to take a class that they do not need, and wasting everyone's time over an unnecessary requirement.

If you want to add a year of career education to the curriculum, you will also have to subtract some money from the community, which eventually leads to your paychecks. There is no way around this. To teach career education, you would need some more teachers. Who is going to pay them? Also, our school is crowded enough as it is. What is going to happen if you add another grade of students to this already-existing chaos? Additional and larger classrooms will be needed, not to mention convoluted schedules. Your proposal will only lead to a huge mess if it is put into action.

Everyone knows that senior year is the time to slack off. After three years of hard work, we deserve a break! It may not be the best idea, but there is nothing we can do about it. Studies show that 82% of seniors remiss during the second semester of senior year. With chances this large, why should we add another year to high school after that? If the percentage of slacking off is 82% during senior year, think of what it will be the year after that!

In our school, most students believe that the curriculum is fine. I took the liberty of passing around a survey, and 73% of the seniors believe that they are ready to enter the real world with the knowledge they have acquired over these past four years. If these many seniors are prepared for what may lie ahead, that is good enough! We do not need to change the entire curriculum and go through all of this trouble just for the remaining 27%. These students can feel free to take additional courses on their own time. Our school already offers after-school and summer courses. If career evaluation is so vital, it should be taught only to those who really need it or choose to take it. That way, it will not affect anyone else.

Adding career education to the curriculum seems counterproductive. Instead of allowing students to see what kind of careers are out there for themselves, they are being forced to experience this task vicariously. In addition to that, for the overwhelming majority of students that feel as if they already know enough to make decisions regarding their careers, they will be forced to waste a year of their futures. Instead, they could be in college learning exactly what they need to get started on their careers. Evidently, although you are trying to help students, you are actually hurting them instead.

Unquestionably, your proposal of adding career education to the curriculum and requiring an additional year of high school before graduation is absurd! Students do not need to be taught how to plan for their careers. They should be given the opportunity to figure it out for themselves. High school has already prepared them enough to step out into the real world. Furthermore, requiring students to spend a fifth year in high school will also require more funding from our taxes, hurt the students who tend to slack off during senior year, limit the students who already have sufficient knowledge about career education, and prevent students from getting started on their careers sooner. Overall, you have already done an excellent job in preparing high school students for reality. Now, instead of more learning, it is time for them to live it.

Sincerely,
A Concerned Student

★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

★★★★

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

Dear School Board,

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★★★★ **PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)** ★★★★

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Sincerely,
A Concerned Student

Score Point: 6

This coherent and cohesive response offers an argument against the proposed fifth year of high school based on four key points: the need for additional funding; the likelihood of an increased number of students "slacking off"; the sufficient career education provided by the current curriculum; and an unnecessary delay for students who are ready to start the next phase of their lives. The writer develops each point with relevant and vivid details [*which eventually leads to your paychecks*; *although you are trying to help students, you are actually hurting them instead*] and uses a variety of rhetorical strategies [*What is going to happen if you add another grade of students to this already-existing chaos? . . . think of what it will be the year after that!*] to organize the ideas in a logical progression. Transitions between the key points are strong, not only introducing each new idea but also providing pertinent information that contributes effectively to the argument [*Everyone knows that senior year is the time to slack off*; *In our school, most students believe that the curriculum is fine*] and fosters a sense of unity. In addition to the syntactic variety, which aids the fluency of the response, the control of the topic and the sustained tone [*Instead of allowing students to see what kind of careers are out there for themselves, they are being forced to experience this task vicariously*] are indicative of a superior command of written language.

The proposition to add an extra year of high school prior to graduation is not only outrageous but also highly unnecessary. An extra year of high school might possibly aid in educating students about careers, but there is no guarantee. It is true that a large majority of high schoolers are ambivalent or even aloof regarding the most detested question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" But will the addition of another grueling year of high school mitigate the uncertainty that students feel when thinking about careers? Our district already has in place a plethora of electives that help students explore various fields of practice which they might feel well-suited for. Furthermore, college is the right time when students get to explore even more, and the primary purpose of high school is to prepare students for college—not necessarily binding career paths. And ultimately, high schoolers are just not ready yet to be primarily concerned with careers when the college process is already filled with enough anxiety. I implore you to consider my reasoning and reject the idea to implement an extra year that is unnecessary, places college as a later priority, and does nothing for students than provide extra stress.

The graduating class of 2014—my class—is required to take certain electives in order to graduate. This mandate came out of a realization that students were not exploring enough fields, particularly those that teach life lessons rather than those that might be an "easy A." With a myriad of electives that provide students with an ample amount of information and guidance, an extra year of high school is completely unnecessary. Requirements, such as taking a financial literacy course, often encompasses information about careers. An extra year would seem redundant. Furthermore, what else would be taught during that extra year besides career education? Our district should not compromise career education for necessary core curriculum subjects. Many seniors are prepared to do nothing but fill their schedules with electives and an extra year—that would be their college year—would further dissuade them from academic pursuit in high school. That time should be spent in college, not in the same district that would focus more on career training than collegiate studies.

The college process is ridden with anticipation and stress. From acquiring teacher recommendations to applying to prestigious schools to the waiting period for an envelope in the mail. The last year of high school is spent in preparation for college, when students truly explore the myriad of career paths the world has to offer. True, many college students are ignorant when it comes to what to major in, let alone their career paths, but an extra year of high school prior to graduation would not alleviate this issue. How can administrators be certain that teachers are qualified to instruct students on career education? College is a time for students to learn from the professionals who are, in some cases, possibly overly-qualified. Having students think so far ahead is daunting when they already have to worry about whether or not they are accepted into college. This also reiterates the open question about core academic classes. Would that extra year be solely focused on careers? Would colleges be completely understanding as to why you were in high school for five years instead of the orthodox four? And there is the fact that seems to lack sound corroboration but is entirely justified: high schoolers are just not ready to be solely concerned with what they choose to be for the rest of their lives.

Time and time again, I am told that it is never too early to start thinking about the future. I whole-heartedly agree, but the addition of another year of high school is far too extreme. To be blunt, many American high schoolers are ignorant, especially those confined to the bubble of suburbia. I understand why a year focused on career education might aid this epidemic, but it has adverse effects as well. Having students only focus on career training may severely limit career possibilities as schools tell them to only choose the most fiscally sound occupation instead of pursuing a dream job that provides happiness as well as a stable income. As young adults, we have no idea what we want. Many

adults do not even know what they want. The mere prospect of having to be dead set on a certain career might scare some students away from pursuing other options.

The argument for why our district should require an extra year for career education has sound reasoning, but is not without faults. Our district already has electives that guide students not only about careers, but further life lessons. The requirement of certain types of electives has already helped to answer questions about careers and there is no need to add on another year of this training. An extra year of high school might also inhibit intellectual growth as scholars' focus is forcibly shifted from the world of academia to the "real" world of careers. High school is a time to discover general fields of interest before delving into the "dog-eat-dog" world of the professional world, which is one of the primary purposes of college. Students will no longer be encouraged to pursue, say, a field in the medical field, but to pursue a career that provides monetary advantages as recommended by high school instructors who might not be sufficiently qualified to guide students on this matter. Furthermore, with so many students who have a lifetime of work ahead of them, requiring an extra year that could be spent as a college freshman not only produces spite, but young people who feel that they need to only adhere to what high school taught them. In summation, the proposition to add an extra year of high school is an extreme that is redundant and unnecessary, takes time away from collegiate pursuits, and severely limits the procces of life for a young adult.

Please take my argument into consideration

Sincerely,

_____

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

The proposition to add an extra year of high school prior to graduation is not only outrageous but also highly unnecessary. An extra year of high school might possibly aid in educating students about careers, but there is no guarantee. It is true that a large majority of high schoolers are ambivalent or even aloof regarding the most detested question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" But will the addition of another grueling year of high school mitigate the uncertainty that students feel when thinking about careers? Our district already has in place a plethora of electives that help students explore various fields of practice which they might feel well-suited for. Furthermore, college is the right time when students get to explore even more, and the primary purpose of high school is to prepare students for college - not necessarily binding career paths. And ultimately, high schoolers are just not ready yet to be primarily concerned with careers when the college process is already filled with enough anxiety. I implore you to consider my reasoning and reject the idea to implement an extra year that is unnecessary, places college as a later priority, and does nothing for students than provide extra stress.

The graduating class of 2014 - my class - is required to take certain electives in order to graduate. This mandate came out of a realization that students were not exploring enough fields, particularly those that teach life lessons rather than those that might be an "easy A". With a myriad of electives that provide students with an ample amount of information and guidance, an extra year of high school is completely unnecessary. Requirements, such as taking a financial literacy course, often encompasses information about careers. An extra year would seem redundant. Furthermore, what else would be taught during that extra year besides career education? Our district should not compromise career education for necessary core curriculum subjects. Many seniors are prepared to do nothing but fill their schedules with electives and an extra year that would be their college year - would further dissuade them from academic pursuit in high

school. That time should be spent in college, not in the same district that would focus more on career training than collegiate studies.

The college process is ridden with anticipation and stress. From acquiring teacher recommendations to applying to prestigious schools to the waiting period for an envelope in the mail. The last year of high school is spent in preparation for college, when students truly explore the myriad of career paths the world has to offer. True, many college students are ignorant when it comes to what to major in, let alone their career paths, but an extra year of high school prior to graduation would not alleviate this issue. How can administrators be certain that teachers are qualified to instruct students on career education? College is a time for students to learn from the professionals who are, in some cases, possibly overly-qualified. Having students think so far ahead is daunting when they already have to worry about whether or not they are accepted into college. This also reiterates the open question about core academic classes. Would that extra year be solely focused on careers? Would colleges be completely understanding as to why you were in high school for five years instead of the orthodox four? And there is the fact that seems to lack sound corroboration but is entirely justified: high schoolers are just not ready to be solely concerned with what they choose to be for the rest of their lives.

Time and time again, I am told that it is never too early to start thinking about the future. I whole-heartedly agree, but the addition of another year of high school is far too extreme. To be blunt, many American high schoolers are ignorant, especially those confined to the bubble of suburbia. I understand why a year focused on career education might aid this epidemic, but it has adverse effects as well. Having students only focus on career training may severely limit career possibilities as schools tell them to only choose the most fiscally sound occupation instead of pursuing a dream job that provides happiness as well as a stable income. As young adults, we have no idea what we want. Many adults do not even know what they want. The mere prospect of having to be dead set on a certain career might scare some students away from pursuing other options.

★★★★ **PERSUASIVE WRITING (continued)** ★★★★

The argument for why our district should require an extra year for career education has sound reasoning, but is not without faults. Our district already has electives that guide students not only about careers, but further life lessons. The requirement of certain types of electives has already helped to answer questions about careers and there is no need to add on another year of this training. An extra year of high school might also inhibit intellectual growth as scholars' focus is forcibly shifted from the world of academia to the "real" world of careers. High school is a time to discover general fields of interest before delving into the "dog-eat-dog" world of the professional world, which is one of the primary purposes of college. Students will no longer be encouraged to pursue, say, a field in the medical field, but to pursue a career that provides monetary advantages as recommended by high school instructors who might not be sufficiently qualified to guide students on this matter. Furthermore, with so many students who have a life time of work ahead of them, requiring an extra year that could be spent as a college freshman not only produces spite, but young people who feel that they need to only adhere to what high school taught them. In summation, the proposition to add an extra year of high school is an extreme that is redundant and unnecessary, takes time away from collegiate pursuits, and severely limits the process of life for a young adult.

Please take my argument into consideration

Sincerely,

Score Point: 6

In this fluent response, the writer presents a well-constructed argument in opposition to the proposed career education program and supports this position with reasons that are thoroughly developed. The ideas progress logically, building on each other and outlining how the extra year would be "redundant and unnecessary," deflect students from authentic academic pursuits, and severely distort or curtail the process of exploration needed by young adults. The writer uses a variety of rhetorical strategies to lead the reader [*what else would be taught during that extra year besides career education?*] and then goes on to develop details that render the proposal of an additional year of high school futile and even counterproductive [*Many seniors are prepared to do nothing but fill their schedules with electives and an extra year—that would be their college year—would further dissuade them from academic pursuits in high school*]. The conclusion [*An extra year of high school might also inhibit intellectual growth as scholars' focus is forcibly shifted from the world of academia to the "real" world of careers*] sustains this theme and contributes to the sense of unity and completeness of the response. This cohesion, along with the sophisticated syntax and precise word choice, are indicative of a superior command of written language.

An additional year of high school would certainly be beneficial for students if said year were to be dedicated to the pursuit of pure learning. Alas, the proposed addition is to be focused on "career education." Although this change might aid some students in preparing for their future jobs, it is ultimately impractical and even harmful. First, this extra year shifts the focus of school away from intellectual pursuits and places greater emphasis on potential money-making. Second, students will be so preoccupied with planning ahead that they will fail to seize the day. Youth is fleeting, and high school is a time of exploration. Students serious about their careers could go onto college, vocational schools, or apprenticeships. Obviously, college is expensive and out of the cards for some students, but college is not the only place for career preparation. Meanwhile, high school is not such a place. Third, career education suggests that the students will begin to hone their skills in preparation for a certain job. But few students actually know which profession they wish to take on. The majority of students are not quite sure yet, and that is what high school is about—trying out all fields and learning not just to fill society's needs but learning about the beautiful, complex world we live in.

Education is the process of broadening the mind while career education is the process of refining and, in a sense, limiting that intelletual freedom. Thoreau once wrote, "I went to the woods to live deliberately." This wise Transcendentalist shed the layers of societal expectation in pursuit of truths. Students too seek this truth. In English, Math, History, Science and more, students accept, understand, and question in a continuous cycle. But career planning is not about a higher knowledge; it is about learning how to fit into a system. Education is living deliberately. Career planning is living dependently—dependently on the rules of society. Money becomes the most important object. Career planning shifts the student's way of thinking and, in turn, changes his or her life.

As career planning marks the end of intellectual pursuits, it also turns life into a thing of the future rather than of the present. Students morph their lives to accomodate career requirements; a similar phenomenon occurs in the college application process. In my own life, I have seen my friends change their interests and identities to meet the needs of a college . . . just to get in. The same thing happens with career choice. School becomes focused on certain requirements. The highest level courses at my school and many in the area are "AP" Advanced Placement courses. Isn't it strange that the most rigorous and enlightening courses are all about getting a 5 on the final test? Why aren't these top courses about true learning? All the stress of careers force students to focus on the future rather than the present. Before they know it, high school has flown by and now it is really time to take on responsibility. Career planning steals youth and identity away.

Third and most vital, dedicating oneself to a single future is too great a commitment for a high school student, the majority of which are undecided. Career planning would simply be a waste because many students would end up changing professions anyway. High school allows students time to taste every possible future—a much more efficient and practical use of time. So why tack on another year of career education? Such a course would apply to only a few students who would be better served with a traditional four-year education, for they would be able to go right out into the world of college and jobs instead of being delayed by a fifth year. Overall, a fifth year is impractical.

Indeed, though career education in the high school would benefit some students, it would inhibit the majority, for this change would alter the philosophy and purpose of high school education and prove itself to be pointless. What about learning? Real learnig? What happened to the idea of nurturing inquisitive, well-rounded human beings? Career planning changes these ideals and seeks to manufacture commodities capable of fulfilling positions within society. Truly, education is the ultimate freedom while career planning is the greatest restraint. A fifth year of learning? Why, of course! A fifth year consisting of career training? No!

Members of the board, I implore you to see reason in this matter and think of how you wish your children to grow up. Don’t you desire to give them every opportunity to unleash their imagination, and discover who they trully are? Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

_____

★★★★ ★★★★

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY DAY 2
PART 4 — PERSUASIVE WRITING

Regular ●
Make-up ○

USE THE LINES BELOW FOR THE PERSUASIVE WRITING TASK.

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more, students accept, understand, and question in a continuous cycle. But career planning is not about a higher knowledge; it is about learning how to fit into a system. Education is living deliberately. Career planning is living dependently - dependently on the rules of society. Money becomes the most important object. Career planning shifts the student's way of thinking and, in turn, changes his or her life.

As career planning marks the end of intellectual pursuits, it also turns life into a thing of the future rather than of the present. Students morph their lives to accomodate career requirements; a similar phenomenon occurs in the college application process. In my own life, I have seen my friends change their interests and identities to meet the needs of a college... just to get in. The same thing happens with career choice. School becomes focused on certain requirements. The highest level courses at my school and many in the area are "AP" advanced Placement courses. Isn't it strange that the most rigorous and enlightening courses are all about getting a 5 on the final test? Why aren't these top courses about true learning? All the stress of careers force students to focus on the future rather than the present. Before they know it, high school has flown by and now it is really time to take on responsibility. Career planning steals youth and identity away.

Third and most vital, deplicating oneself to a single future is too great a commitment for a high school student, the majority of which are undecided. Career planning would simply be a waste because many students would end up changing professions anyway. High school allows students time to taste every possible future - a much more efficient

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Indeed, though career education in the high school would benefit some students, it would inhibit the majority, for this change would alter the philosophy and purpose of high school education and prove itself to be pointless. What about learning? Real learning? What happened to the idea of nurturing inquisitive, well-rounded human beings? Career planning changes these ideals and seeks to manufacture commodities capable of fulfilling positions within society. Truly, education is the ultimate freedom while career planning is the greatest restraint. A fifth year of learning? Yes, of course! A fifth year consisting of career training? No!

Members of the board, I implore you to see reason in this matter and think of how you wish your children to grow up. Don't you desire to give them every opportunity (A) Thank you for your time.

(A) to unleash their imagination, and discover who they truly are?

Sincerely,

Score Point: 6

This fluent and remarkably controlled response argues against the proposed additional year of high school using well-developed, rhetorically sophisticated ideas that progress logically from beginning to end. The writer draws effectively from the ideas at the end of each paragraph to develop the transition introducing each key idea in the subsequent paragraph [*trying out all fields and learning not just to fill society's needs but learning about the beautiful, complex world we live in. Education is the process of broadening the mind*] without simply repeating the words. Instead, each paragraph begins with an extension of that idea, contributing to the cohesion of the argument overall. While varied sentence structures and sophisticated vocabulary [*hone*; *layers of societal expectation*; *inquisitive*; *commodities*] foster a sense of coherence, the clear articulation of abstract philosophical concepts [*career planning is not about a higher knowledge; it is about learning how to fit into a system. Education is living deliberately. Career planning is living dependently—dependently on the rules of society*], cast in language that is unpretentious yet precise and vivid [*Truly, education is the ultimate freedom while career planning is the greatest restraint*], instills unity and a sense of completeness in the response, indicating a superior command of written language.

APPENDIX F

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

AUTHOR'S SELF-REPORTING FORM

AUTHOR'S

Student: _____

RHSM Score: _____ Date:_____

RHSM

RHSM FEATURES	OVERVIEW	DESCRIPTIVE CRITERIA
CONTENT/ ORGANIZATION	Extent to which the response is: • focused on task, purpose, and audience • supported by relevant and elaborated details • clearly and logically ordered	1. Opening and closing
		2. Single, clear focus
		3. Sense of unity; completeness
		4. Even development of key ideas
		5. Logical progression of ideas
		6. Appropriate and varied details
		7. Clear transitions
		8. Coherence and fluency
		9. Controlled compositional risks (if applicable)
USAGE	Extent to which the response is written in standard written English	10. Correct tense formation
		11. Subject-verb agreement
		12. Correct pronoun usage and agreement
		13. Effective and varied word choice
		14. Use of proper modifiers
SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	Extent to which the response includes complete and controlled sentences	15. Correct sentence construction (syntax)
		16. Variety in length and structure
		17. Controlled use of words and phrasing
MECHANICS	Extent to which the response is technically correct	18. Few errors in spelling
		19. Few errors in capitalization
		20. Few errors in punctuation

SELF-REPORTING FORM

CONFERENCE LOG

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

ANNOTATION GUIDE

STRENGTHS +	NEEDS –	COMMENTS ABOUT WRITING STRENGTHS AND NEEDS