

HiSET® Language Arts – Writing Test

Writing Response Scoring Guide

Score Explanation

1

Essays at this score point demonstrate weak command over writing an argument on a given substantive topic using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- The response has little or no development of a central position or claim(s). No correct and/or understandable context of the topic is provided for the discussion. The writer's own position on the issue or claim(s) may not be clear. A few ideas may be provided but these lack explanation of ideas, only repeat ideas, or ideas are derived entirely from provided texts.
- The response lacks an introduction and/or conclusion, and fails to demonstrate any understanding of paragraphing. Transitions are not used or may be used incorrectly.
- Language control is minimal. Word choice and sentence structure are simple. The response lacks formal style and an objective tone.
- Minimal or no command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage is demonstrated. Errors in capitalization, punctuation and spelling frequently appear.

2

Essays at this score point demonstrate limited command over writing an argument on a given substantive topic using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- The response demonstrates limited development of a central position or claim(s). A context of the topic that is only somewhat correct or understandable is provided for the discussion. The writer's own position on the issue or claim(s) may be somewhat unclear or confusing. A few ideas are provided but the explanation is thin and/or superficial and parts of the explanation may be repetitious or derived too heavily from provided texts without interpretation.
- The introduction and conclusion are minimally developed. Some related ideas are grouped together though paragraphing may not be used. Few transitions are used.
- Beginning skill in language is demonstrated. Word choice is general and repetitive. The response has repetitive sentence structure and/or long, uncontrolled sentences. The response lacks formal style and/or an objective tone.
- Limited command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage is demonstrated. Numerous errors in capitalization, punctuation and spelling appear and may interfere with understanding.

3

Essays at this score point demonstrate partial command over writing an argument on a given substantive topic using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- The response demonstrates partial development of a central position or claim(s). A brief context of the topic is provided for the discussion, including introduction of alternate claims and/or counterclaims. The writer's own position on the issue or claim(s) is evident. Several ideas with limited or uneven explanation are provided; few or only general examples and/or details support ideas. The response uses evidence drawn from provided texts but this is limited or overused, poorly chosen or misrepresented.
- The response has an introduction and conclusion, though one or both of these may be underdeveloped. Ideas are grouped together in paragraphs, though the relationship among ideas may at times be unclear. Transitions are simple and used inconsistently.
- Some developing skill in language is demonstrated. Word choice is general and the response demonstrates a little variety in sentence structure, although a few long, uncontrolled sentences may be used. The response attempts to maintain formal style and an objective tone but may fail to sustain these throughout discussion.
- Partial command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage is demonstrated. Errors in capitalization, punctuation and spelling are regularly present throughout the response and may sometimes interfere with understanding.

Score Explanation

Essays at this score point demonstrate adequate command over writing an argument on a given substantive topic using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

4

- The response demonstrates adequate development of a central position or claim(s). A context of the topic is provided for the discussion, including some discussion of alternate claims and/or counterclaims. The writer's own position on the issue or claim(s) is clear. Several ideas with adequate explanation are provided; some specific and relevant examples and/or details support ideas, including relevant evidence drawn selectively from provided texts and appropriately integrated.
- A clear, functional introduction and conclusion are provided. Relationships between ideas are clarified by organization: transitions are consistently used, though they may be simple, and some evidence of logical sequencing of ideas is demonstrated. The response uses appropriate paragraphing.
- Adequate skill in language use is demonstrated. Word choice is mostly specific and somewhat varied. The response demonstrates control of sentences with some variety in length and structure. A formal style is established and an objective tone maintained throughout the discussion.
- Adequate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage is demonstrated. Some errors in capitalization, punctuation and spelling appear but do not interfere with understanding.

Essays at this score point demonstrate strong command over writing an argument on a given substantive topic using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

5

- The response demonstrates competent development of a central position or claim(s). A context of the topic is provided for the discussion, including balanced discussion of alternate claims and/or counterclaims. The writer's own position on the issue or claim(s) is clear and considered. Several ideas with complete explanation are provided; specific, relevant and somewhat elaborated reasons, examples and/or details support ideas, including clear and relevant evidence drawn from provided texts and skillfully integrated.
- The introduction and conclusion are clear and sufficient. Clear and appropriate paragraphing is used. Varied transitions and logical sequencing of ideas are used throughout to link major sections of text, create cohesion and clarify relationships between ideas.
- The response demonstrates competent skill in language. Word choice is usually precise and varied. The response uses well-controlled sentences that are varied in length and complexity. A formal style is established and an objective tone maintained throughout. Counterclaims are discussed fairly, without bias.
- Able command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage is demonstrated. Few errors in capitalization, punctuation and spelling appear, and most are superficial.

Essays at this score point demonstrate superior command over writing an argument on a given substantive topic using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

6

- The response demonstrates expert development of a central position or claim(s). A context of the topic is provided for the discussion, including balanced discussion of the strengths and limitations of alternate claims and/or counterclaims. The writer's own position on the issue or claim(s) is clear, considered and nuanced. Several ideas with effective and thorough explanation are provided; relevant and fully elaborated reasons, examples and/or details support ideas, including compelling evidence drawn from provided texts and effectively integrated.
- The response has an effective introduction and conclusion. Clear and appropriate paragraphing is used, creating a coherent whole. Effective transitions and logical sequencing of ideas are used throughout to link major sections of text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- The response demonstrates proficient skill in language. Word choice is precise, varied and engaging. The response effectively varies sentence length and complexity. A formal style is established and an objective tone that enhances the effectiveness of the response maintained. Counterclaims are discussed fairly, without bias.
- Expert command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage is demonstrated, and the response demonstrates sophisticated use of grammar, usage and mechanics. Few or no errors in capitalization, punctuation and spelling appear.