<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1** | **INADEQUATE COMPETENCE**  
*Essays at this score point demonstrate inadequate competence in writing an argument on a given topic.*  

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:  
- provides little or no evidence of understanding the topic  
- may present a position on the topic but provides little evidence of the ability to develop or organize a response  
- copies and/or paraphrases all ideas from the provided texts  
- has severe problems in language and sentence structure that persistently interfere with meaning  
- contains pervasive errors in grammar, usage or mechanics that result in incoherence |
| **2** | **LIMITED COMPETENCE**  
*Essays at this score point demonstrate limited competence in writing an argument on a given topic. Their positions may be unclear, and they may develop their positions with little relevant reasoning or support.*  

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:  
- is unclear or seriously limited in presenting or developing a position on the topic  
- provides few relevant reasons or examples in support of its claims and/or may rely too heavily on the texts without integrating or interpreting the text information  
- is poorly focused and/or poorly organized  
- has serious problems in language and sentence structure that can interfere with meaning  
- contains serious errors in grammar, usage or mechanics that may obscure meaning |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3     | **SOME COMPETENCE**  
*Essays at this score point demonstrate some competence in writing an argument on a given topic and develop their positions with reasoning that may lack clarity and with support that may lack development or that is vague.*  
A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:  
• has an evident position on the topic, but it may be vague  
• presents generalizations without specific support or reasons simplistically when developing a position; may use examples from the provided texts, but fails to integrate or misconstrues the meaning of some of them  
• may lack focus and/or clear organization in places or may lack connections or transitions between ideas  
• has problems in language and sentence structure that result in a lack of clarity  
• contains occasional major errors or frequent minor errors in grammar, usage or mechanics that can interfere with meaning |
| 4     | **COMPETENT**  
*Essays at this score point demonstrate competence in writing an argument on a given topic and develop their positions with generally clear reasoning and relevant support.*  
A typical response in this category largely accomplishes all of the following:  
• presents a generally clear position on the topic  
• develops a position using some relevant reasons or examples from the provided texts and/or personal experience, although some support may be uneven  
• maintains adequate focus and organization, although transitions may be simple  
• demonstrates satisfactory control of language, conveying ideas with acceptable clarity  
• generally demonstrates competent control of the conventions of standard written English but may have some errors |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5     | CLEARLY COMPETENT  
*Essays at this score point demonstrate clear competence in writing an argument on a given topic and develop their positions with valid and reasoned support.*  
A typical response in this category largely accomplishes all of the following:  
• articulates a generally clear and considered position on the topic  
• develops a position well, using generally sound reasoning or examples integrated from the provided texts and/or personal experience  
• presents a focused and generally well-organized position, connecting ideas appropriately  
• conveys ideas clearly, using appropriate vocabulary and sentence variety  
• demonstrates clear competency with the conventions of standard written English but may have minor errors |
| 6     | HIGHLY COMPETENT  
*Essays at this score point demonstrate a high degree of competence in writing an argument on a given topic and develop their positions with effective and well-reasoned support.*  
A typical response in this category largely accomplishes all of the following:  
• articulates a clear and well-considered position on the topic  
• develops a position effectively and sufficiently, using generally persuasive reasoning or examples integrated from the provided texts and/or personal experience  
• presents a coherently organized position, connecting ideas effectively  
• conveys ideas precisely, using effective vocabulary and sentence variety  
• demonstrates a high degree of competence with the conventions of standard written English (i.e., grammar, usage and mechanics) but may have minor errors |