



Conquering the Essay Test!



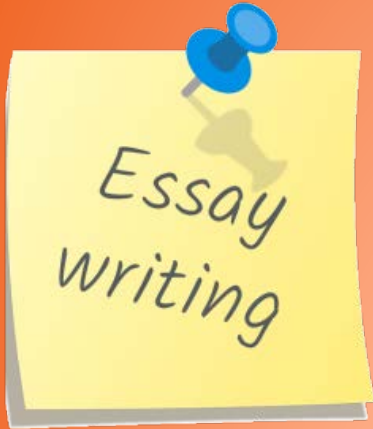
Building Student Success on Timed Writing Exams

Caryn Panec, MS, Glendale Community College





Effective writers are effective readers and speakers.



Course design should instruct students how to

- **IDENTIFY** parts of an essay
- **ANALYZE** the arguments and evidence
- **COMMUNICATE** the analysis
- **UNDERSTAND** the prompt
- **PLAN** how to write the essay
- **WRITE** the essay
- **PRACTICE TIMED** writing

What to Expect from the Essay Test

Source Material

Read and analyze passages

Prompt

Identify key words

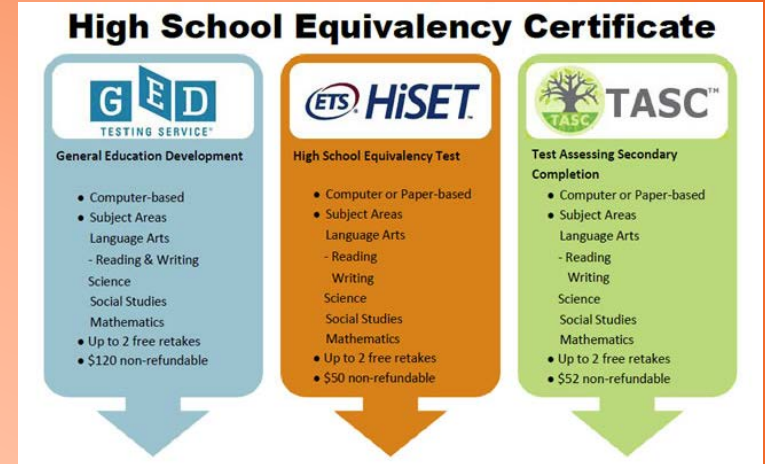
Rewrite question as thesis

Scoring Rubrics

Identify criteria for essay

Sample Essays

Evaluate components of passing essays



Course Design

Find Text Source Material

Test publisher's practice materials

GED

HiSet

News Sources

Op/ Ed

In-depth articles Online Databases

Opposing Viewpoint in Context

CQ Researcher

Opposing Viewpoints in Context

Popular

Pro and con articles about controversial issues.

Includes topic overview, primary source

documents and statistics.



Sample Extended Response Passages and Prompts for Classroom Practice - RLA

Help your students get ready for the extended responses on the GED® test – Reasoning Through Language Arts test by practicing with these sample prompts and source materials in the classroom.

Fully answering an ER prompt often requires 4 to 7 paragraphs of 3 to 7 sentences each – that can quickly add up to 300 to 500 words of writing! A response that is significantly shorter could put your students in danger of scoring a 0 just for not showing enough of their writing skills.

Passage #1 - Are Tweens Ready for Cell Phones?

Extended Response Stimulus Materials:

Source Material #1

Speech: "Tweens" Are Ready for Cell Phones by Deborah Pendergast
"Safer Kids Summit"

Thank you for inviting me to the first "Safer Kids Summit." We are here to discuss ways to keep our children safe in an increasingly complex world. Today's focus is on technology—specifically on the ideal age to give kids their own cell phones. As a representative of a large telecommunications company, I receive many inquiries from parents on this topic, and this is what I tell them: It depends on the child, of course, but in general, age 10 is just about right.

A 2012 survey by the National Consumers League backs me up. The survey found that almost 60 percent of children ages 8 to 12 already have cell phones. These "tweens" can contact their parents at any time, and vice versa, giving the kids a sense of empowerment and their parents a feeling of security. Caroline Knorr, of the group Common Sense Media, says, "We want our kids to be independent, to be able to walk home from school and play at the playground without us. We want them to have that old-fashioned, fun experience of being on their own, and cell phones can help with that." Picture the following scenario: You told your fourth-grader that you would pick her up after school, but you are stuck in traffic. She is waiting for you ...and waiting, and waiting. But if you both have cell phones, you can call her to let her know you are delayed, and she can go back inside the school, where there are adults around. You both breathe a sigh of relief.

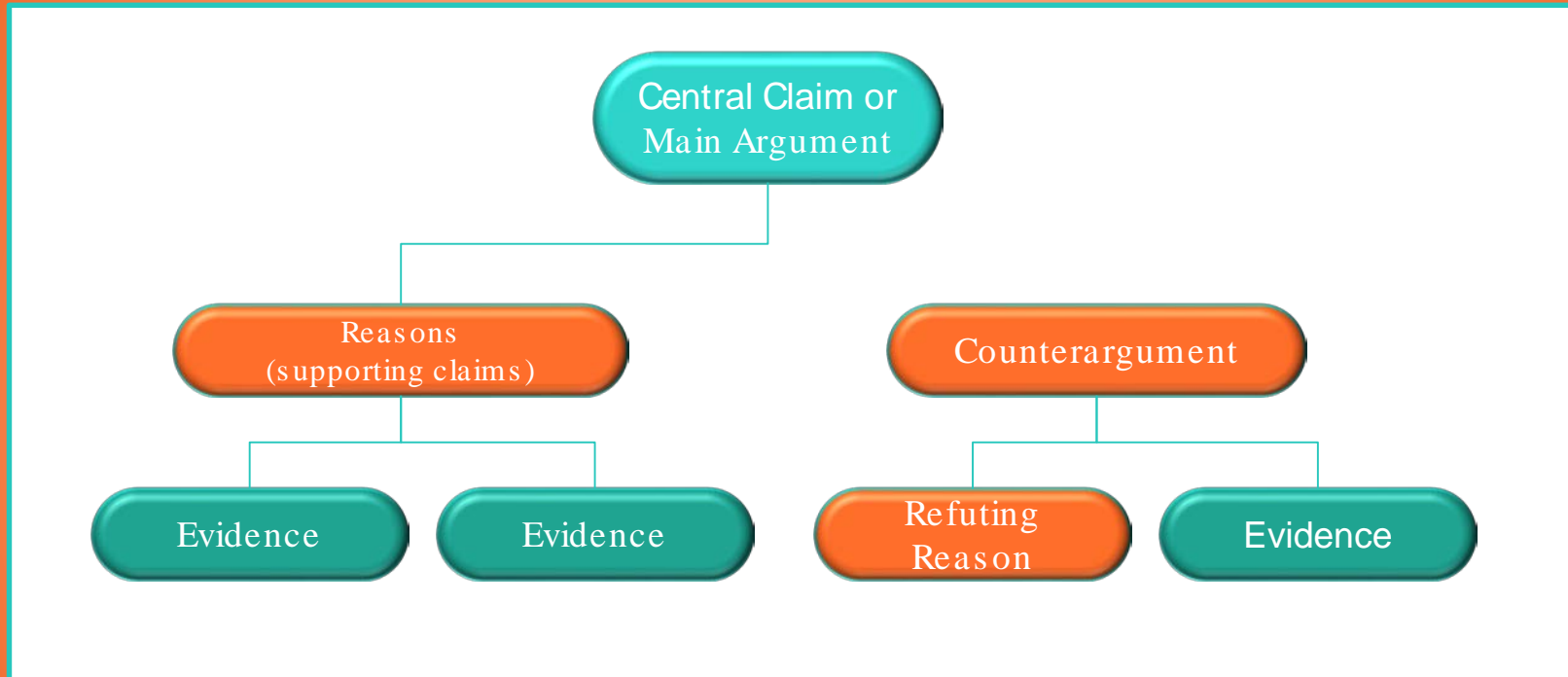
GEDTestingService.com • GED.com

GED® and GED Testing Service® are registered trademarks of the American Council on Education. They may not be used or reproduced without the express written permission of ACE or GED Testing Service. The GED® and GED Testing Service® brands are administered by GED Testing Service LLC under license from the American Council on Education. Copyright © 2015 GED Testing Service LLC. All rights reserved.

Discussion

- What feedback do you have about the sources mentioned, if you have used them?
 - What other sources do you use when looking for writing prompts?
-

Identify the Parts of an Essay



Constructed Response Format

RLA - Candidate Name Question 12 of 12

Answer [Explanation](#) Flag for Review

page 1 page 2 page 3 page 4

An Analysis of Daylight Saving Time

- 1 Twice a year, most Americans adjust their clocks before bedtime to prepare for Daylight Saving Time (DST). Every spring, clocks are moved ahead one hour. In the fall, they are moved back one hour, and all to maximize the benefits of the sun. DST was first implemented in the United States in 1918 to conserve resources for the war effort, though proponents encouraged its adoption long before then. Benjamin Franklin, for example, touted the idea of DST to citizens of France way back in 1784!
- DST in America**
- 2 For years following DST's U.S. debut, cities could choose if and when they wanted to participate. However, by the 1960s, the open choice resulted in various cities throughout the United States using different times. These varying times created confusion, particularly for entertainment and transportation schedules. Imagine traveling across several states, each adhering to its own little time zone!
- 3 In order to remedy the confusing situation, Congress established a start and stop date for DST when it passed the Uniform Time Act of 1966. Although this act helped clarify when DST went into effect around the country, cities were not required to use DST. To this day, parts of Arizona and all of Hawaii, for example, do not use DST.

The article presents arguments from both supporters and critics of Daylight Saving Time who disagree about the practice's impact on energy consumption and safety.

In your response, analyze both positions presented in the article to determine which one is best supported. Use relevant and specific evidence from the article to support your response.

+ Cut Copy Paste Undo Redo

Review Screen Previous



Quick Tip!
Practice identifying the parts of an essay to build speed and read effectively

Read and Annotate the Text

What is it?

In other words, what is the text about? What point(s) is the author(s) trying to express through the text?

Where is it?

Note the page and paragraph # to find it later.

Who says?

Whose and what ideas or theories is the writer using to make and back up the argument?

So what?

What is important about the text?



Scaffolding:

Guide students toward independent mastery:

Modeling

- Annotating text
- Taking notes
- Identifying structures, reasoning, evidence.

Graphic Organizers

- Collect citations
- Organize ideas

Analysis Talk

- Guided analysis
- Think/ pair/ share

Name: _____ Date: _____

Topic: _____

Reason 1: _____

Reason 2: _____

Fact/Example: _____

Fact/Example: _____

Fact/Example: _____

Fact/Example: _____

©Creativewriting-prompts.com Persuasion Map 2 Reasons 2 Facts

Analyze Arguments and Evidence

Strong Arguments Are

Logical

Accurate

Identify faulty reasoning

Specific

Relevant

Directly support the claim

Valid Evidence Is

Accurate

Is it from a reliable source?

Is it unbiased?

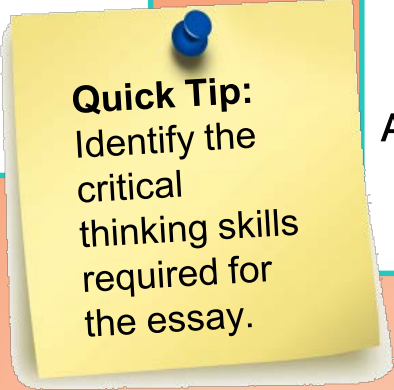
Appropriate

Is it relevant?

Does it directly support the claim?

Adequate

Is there sufficient evidence to support the claim?



Quick Tip:
Identify the critical thinking skills required for the essay.

Discussion

- What critical thinking skills do you want your students to employ?
 - What scaffolding helps your students engage with the text or prepare for the essay?
-

Plan for Essay Writing

Reasoning Through Language Arts Extended Response Scoring Guide	
<p>Trait 1: Creation of Arguments and Use of Evidence (maximum 2 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generates text-based argument(s) and establishes a purpose that is connected to the prompt Cites relevant and specific evidence from source text(s) to support argument (may include few irrelevant pieces of evidence or unsupported claims) Analyzes the issue and/or evaluates the validity of the argumentation within the source texts (e.g., distinguishes between supported and unsupported claims, makes reasonable inferences about underlying premises or assumptions, identifies fallacious reasoning, evaluates the credibility of sources, etc.)
<p>Trait 2: Development of Ideas and Organizational Structure (maximum 2 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains ideas that are well developed and generally logical; most ideas are elaborated upon Contains a sensible progression of ideas with clear connections between details and main points Establishes an organizational structure that conveys the message and purpose of the response; applies transitional devices appropriately Establishes and maintains a formal style and appropriate tone that demonstrate awareness of the audience and purpose of the task Chooses specific words to express ideas clearly
<p>Trait 3: Clarity and Command of Standard English Conventions (maximum 2 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates largely correct sentence structure and a general fluency that enhances clarity with specific regard to the following skills: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Varied sentence structure within a paragraph or paragraphs Correct subordination, coordination and parallelism Avoidance of wordiness and awkward sentence structures Usage of transitional words, conjunctive adverbs and other words that support and clarity Avoidance of run-on sentences, fused sentences, or sentence fragments Demonstrates competent application of conventions with specific regard to skills: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Frequently confused words and homonyms, including contractions Subject-verb agreement Pronoun usage, including pronoun antecedent agreement, unclear pronoun and pronoun case Placement of modifiers and correct word order Capitalization (e.g., proper nouns, titles, and beginnings of sentences) Use of apostrophes with possessive nouns Use of punctuation (e.g., commas in a series or in appositives and other non-essential elements, end marks, and appropriate punctuation for clause separation) May contain some errors in mechanics and conventions, but they do not interfere with comprehension; overall, standard usage is at a level appropriate for on-demand writing.



Quick Tip!
Use the essay scoring rubric to develop an outline for organizational structure.

GED RLA Extended Response Essay Format / Hi-Set Essay Format

- ❖ Introduction
 - Identify the controversy.
 - Briefly tell about both sides of the issue.
 - What is the argument in favor of the issue?
 - What is the argument opposed to the issue?
 - Use the title and/or author's name here.
 - Thesis statement
 - Tell which passage has a stronger or better supported argument.
 - Answer the prompt.
 - This is your main argument and controlling idea.
 - *Hi-Set only: Tell your opinion on the issue.*
- ❖ Body Paragraph 1
 - Topic Sentence
 - Tell how one article is not the better supported and why (faulty logic or poor evidence).
 - Introduce the evidence.
 - Cite the article and author to lead into the evidence.
 - Quote or paraphrase from the article.
 - Include examples of faulty logic or poor evidence.
 - Explanation
 - Analyze the evidence: How was it inaccurate, inappropriate, or inadequate?
 - Tell how the arguments used faulty logic.
- ❖ Body Paragraph 2
 - Topic Sentence
 - Tell why the other argument is better supported.
 - Introduce the evidence
 - Cite the author and quote or paraphrase from the article.
 - Include examples of logical reasons or strong evidence.
 - Explanation
 - Analyze the evidence: How was it accurate, appropriate, and adequate?
 - Tell how the arguments used sound reasoning or logic.
- *Body Paragraph 3 (Hi-Set only)*
 - *Tell your reasons for your opinion on the issue.*
 - *Support your reasons with examples, personal experience or observations.*
- Conclusion GED- Convince your reader and close your essay.
 - Restate your thesis with stronger words.
 - Restate the strongest points of your essay in a different way.

Maximum score: 6 points

Guided Writing



- Start with writing frames
- Use notes from graphic organizer
- Model writing
- Think/ pair/ share
- Create class model essay using student responses

The argument in favor of the benefits of DST is not well-supported by _____ because _____

_____. In paragraph four, the author cites, " _____"
_____."

This evidence is invalid because _____
_____. This argument would be stronger if it included _____
_____.

Activity

- **Examine the writing prompt:**

Analyze the arguments in favor of and opposed to hosting the Olympics in your city. Write an essay in which you explain which argument is better supported by sound reasoning and evidence.

- **Create a writing frame to help students make a thesis statement that could answer the prompt.**

- **Share your ideas with us!**

Guided Writing: Use Sentence Starters



Quick Tip!

Students develop their own vocabulary lists and sentence starters by working with sample essays.

Introducing a piece of evidence:

The article cites research from...

The author includes statistics from...

The author quotes an expert who states that...

The example cites as evidence...

Analysis and Explanation of evidence:

This claim is supported by evidence that demonstrates...

The evidence is/ is not accurate/ valid credible/ unbiased...

The evidence is/ is not appropriate/ relevant because...

The evidence is/ is not adequate/ sufficient to prove...

The article uses faulty reasoning when it states...



Practice!

Build speed by adding time limits as students gain proficiency.

- Break essay into manageable parts
- Specific peer feedback tasks
 - Vocabulary usage
 - Organization
 - Sentence structure/ usage
- Instructor feedback
 - Use scoring rubric
- Create timed test simulations

Thank You!



Caryn Panec, cpanec@glendale.edu

