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Student Work Samples for the Writing Prompt in the 2013-14 Practice Test

English Language Arts

Grade 8

Introduction

As we implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts (ELA), the spring 2014 LEAP and iLEAP tests will continue to include writing prompts that focus on a key instructional shift of the CCSS—writing grounded in textual evidence. The writing section of the 2013-14 assessments will ask students to read one or two passages and then write a composition that includes evidence from the text(s) to support the writer’s ideas. These evidence-based writing prompts ask students to read text carefully to determine what evidence is most relevant and then create an organized, well-written composition that incorporates that evidence. For more information about the writing session and other sessions of the 2013-14 assessments, please refer to the [Assessment Guidance](#) on the Louisiana Department of Education’s website.

Purpose of This Document

The Sample Student Work documents are meant to be used with the [2013-14 practice tests](#). By providing teachers with sample responses to actual prompts and annotations explaining the responses, the documents will help teachers better prepare their students to read and respond to text. Writing prompt information and samples of student work for grade 8 are included in this document, but teachers are encouraged to look at the materials at the other grade levels in order to see models of all of the types of writing assessed on the spring tests. Looking across the grade levels, teachers and parents can also see the changes in passage complexity and the increasing expectations for rigor in student work as students progress from grade 3 to grade 8.

This document includes the following:

- Grade-specific information about how writing will be assessed on the 2014 spring assessments
- The Grade 8 writing prompt from the [2013-14 practice test](#)
- The Content rubric used to score the writing prompt, followed by actual student compositions that represent each score point on the Content rubric (score points 4, 3, 2, and 1) and annotations explaining the Content scores
- The Style rubric, followed by actual student compositions that represent each score point on the Style rubric (score points 4, 3, 2, and 1) and annotations explaining the Style scores
- The Conventions rubric and actual student compositions that represent acceptable and unacceptable examples of sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling

Additional Materials:

- A key that lists the total scores for all student samples in this document
- A copy of the Writer’s Checklist students will be provided when taking the test
- Additional Notes for Scoring Conventions
- A scoring exercise to use as an extension activity for schools and districts

Scoring Information

The responses to the LEAP and /LEAP writing prompts will be scored on three dimensions: Content, Style, and Conventions, using the state’s scoring rubrics. A summary of the score points for the Writing Session is shown in the table below.

Dimensions	Maximum Possible Points
Content	4
Style	4
Conventions: Sentence Formation	1
Conventions: Usage	1
Conventions: Mechanics	1
Conventions: Spelling	1
Total Points	12

2013-14 Practice Test Writing Prompt

The writing prompt that follows is from the [2013-14 Grade 8 Practice Test](#) and appeared on the March 2012 field test. It asks students to convince someone of their position/opinion, but other writing prompts at grade 8 may ask students to write a story or develop an explanation or description.

Session 1: Writing

Read the passage about civilian space travel. As you read the passage, think about the advantages and disadvantages of civilian space travel. Then use the passage to help you write a well-organized multiparagraph composition.

Civilians in Space

Many people have looked to the stars and wondered what it would be like to take a trip into outer space. Ever since the space program began, traveling beyond Earth has been a privilege for a select few, namely, astronauts. The rest of us have had to imagine what it would be like, but that may soon change.

Those who favor expanding space exploration feel that it is time to go beyond the government-funded National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) program and to create opportunities for individuals and businesses to explore outer space. Imagine privately financed research outposts in space, missions to Mars, and mining operations on the Moon. The space frontier could indeed be the next gold rush!

Imagine what it would be like to travel in space. Those who have been lucky enough to visit space have all called it an amazing experience. The view of Earth and the stars must be spectacular, and the experience of living in "zero gravity" would be fascinating. The first American woman to visit space, Sally Ride, said that it was the greatest fun of her life. Imagine the thrill of booking a flight for a weekend stay (or longer) at a space hotel. It turns out that a space hotel would be much easier to design and build than the International Space Station; early estimates of the cost to build the hotels indicate that they would be less expensive if the orbiting hotels were built to accommodate large numbers of space travelers.

The space hotel and the other projects businesses might think up would allow people to see what is happening in space with their own eyes. That may lead to more support of NASA and its space research and greater appreciation of the funding that the space program now receives.

Those who oppose expanding space exploration argue that the costs are overwhelming and unrealistic. They point to the billions of dollars that would have to be raised through consumers or corporate sponsorship. In addition, civilian space travel is potentially dangerous, and there are many unknown risks involved. Who would determine the safety of commercial orbiting vehicles, and how would they be insured? Issues like this require time for discussion among groups from many different businesses. Companies that specialize in manufacturing, travel, marketing, insurance, law, and finance would all have to be involved.

Others believe there are simply too many unanswered questions to put civilians in space any time soon. There are also those who question investing in space exploration when there are widespread problems like poverty and disease that need to be addressed on Earth. For these people, commercial space travel will remain science fiction, at least for many years to come.

Writing Topic

Write a multiparagraph composition for your teacher that states your opinion about whether you are for or against civilian space travel and why. Clearly present your position and use details from the passage to help you persuade your teacher of your opinion.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- Be sure your composition has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- Use details from the passage and include enough information so your teacher will understand your response.
- Be sure to write clearly and to check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Content Samples

The Content dimension measures

- the focus of the student’s central idea;
- the development of that idea, including the appropriate and accurate use of information from the passage(s); and
- the organization of the student’s ideas.

As teachers continue to work with text-based prompts, considering the ideas below will be helpful, especially when reviewing the sample responses that follow and in teaching students how to incorporate evidence into their compositions:

- The assessment is not asking students to use citations the way they would in a research paper. Because there are no authors and page numbers included with the grades 3-8 passages, it would be difficult and unwise to apply formal citation rules to the transitional writing prompts.
- Students may certainly quote directly from a text when supporting their ideas; however, students need to be directed to choose evidence carefully. Students and teachers may consider this question when evaluating a composition: Is the student just copying big chunks of text, seemingly without purpose or connection to his or her ideas, or is the student selecting specific and well-chosen textual that supports the ideas developed in the composition?
- Students should be instructed to explain the evidence they include in their compositions. They need to show a clear connection between the passage information and the development of ideas.
- Students should be reminded to consider the task when citing information. For example, it would not be appropriate for a student to include a formal introduction to a quote or idea from the passage, such as “according to the passage,” for a narrative task. It might, however, be appropriate to use a more formal citation when the task is a persuasive or expository one, especially when the evidence is being used to substantiate a student’s claim. For example, the grade 5 writing prompt in last year’s practice test asked students to respond to a passage about the pros and cons of teaching handwriting. The passage quotes educators and other experts, so it would be fitting to introduce that evidence by saying, “According to Marlena Hamilton, Professor of Neurology at University of Pennsylvania,,” This kind of citation adds authority to the evidence and may strengthen the student’s argument.

CONTENT (One Passage): Central Idea, Development, and Organization

Key Questions: Does the writer stay focused and respond to all parts of the task? Does the writer's use of the text show an understanding of the passage and the writing task? Does the organizational structure strengthen the writer's ideas and make the composition easier to understand?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
CENTRAL IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focused central idea shows a complete understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear central idea shows a general understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vague central idea shows a partial understanding of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear or absent central idea shows a lack of understanding of the task
USE OF THE PASSAGE AND DEVELOPMENT	A composition without information from the passage cannot receive a score higher than a 2 in Content.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes well-chosen information from the passage to support central idea Passage information and ideas are developed thoroughly. Details are specific, relevant, and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes sufficient and appropriate information from the passage to support central idea Passage information and ideas are developed adequately (may be uneven). Details are, for the most part, relevant and accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes insufficient or no information from the passage Ideas are not developed adequately (list-like). Some information may be irrelevant or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes minimal or no information from the passage and/or the information shows a misunderstanding of the passage minimal/no development Information is irrelevant, inaccurate, minimal, confusing.
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of planning and logical order allows reader to easily move through the composition. clear beginning and ending effective linking words and phrases sense of wholeness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical order allows reader to move through the composition without confusion. has a beginning and ending some linking words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempt at organization weak beginning, ending may lack linking words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> random order no beginning or ending difficult for the reader to move through the response

Sample

1

Final Draft

Space travel is something everybody dreams about, from an early age. A big part of being a child is wanting to grow up and become an astronaut. In reality though, that zero-gravity feeling is something most people won't ever experience, which is why someone would practically roll over and beg when an opportunity comes by. Is America ready for this though? "Civilian space travel?" someone might ask. To them I respond, "Not in our near future."

We have come a long way since the first man walked on the moon, back in 1969, but I believe we are not yet efficiently equipped to send civilians into space. Who doesn't remember the death of the school teacher on her way to the moon? It was a tragedy that couldn't have been prevented in our time, because of our limited knowledge. We are incapable of sending anyone into space but professionals who are trained to respond correctly in an emergency. There are so many risks and dangers in outer space, and people would be sent to face those, just for a couple of nights in a ludicrous space hotel. An oxygen tank could leak or an outside door could be accidentally opened, and as the passage "Civilians in Space" addresses, "Who would determine the safety of commercial orbiting vehicles, and how would they be insured?" Those are questions that take time, and time is what we should graciously spend before planning something potentially dangerous.

Final Draft (continued)

Aside from how life-threatening sending civilians into space can be, we should also think of the price our nation will have to be willing to pay. According to the passage, building a space hotel will cost less than building the International Space Station did, but do we really need a hotel, and didn't we really need the Station? No and yes, respectively. Billions of dollars would still have to be spent on the hotel, the rockets that would carry people to and fro, and the repairs that would be needed. That money would have to be partially raised by consumers, but what if that's not enough? Who would be next to cover expenses? Taxpayers? ...

The idea of space travel can be exciting, but in actuality space travel is dangerous, time consuming, and expensive. We should leave it to the people who know what they're doing—at least for now. Civilians could accidentally mess things up, and all that money for what? They will be paying for their own injuries or worse, death. We are ill-equipped to start sending random people into space. So when asked about civilian space travel, my response is no, not in our near future.

Sample 1: Content 4

The response shows consistent control in the content dimension. The writer demonstrates a complete understanding of the task by presenting a sharply focused central idea that states the view that America is not yet prepared for civilians to travel in space. Ample, well-chosen passage evidence is included and well integrated; it is also expanded upon with the writer's ideas. The writer uses well-chosen details that are relevant to the central idea. The beginning, middle, and ending are tightly organized, and effective transitions move the argument from point to point—all of which contributes to a sense of wholeness.

Sample

2

Final Draft

What would you think about civilians being in space; are you for or against it? Well, there is a lot of talk about how we civilians might have a chance to go up into space and explore our spectacular galaxy. Also, people might be able to go and spend a weekend or two up in space! This new plan may have some advantages, but there are more than likely more disadvantages to it. I am against civilian space travel because of the many effects it has on humans!

One reason I am against civilian space travel is because of the funding. Those who want to allow humans into space do not realize that the cost isn't cheap. Yes, it would be nonchalance to have a hotel in space, but it would cost a boat load of money. You would have to pay for the shuttles, fuel, equipment, and space suits for everyone; this is expensive. In the passage, it states, "They point to the billions of dollars that would have to be raised through consumers or corporate sponsorship." This could damage some consumers along with the corporate sponsorships. It could possibly put these people in debt who try to fund for this new plan.

Another reason I am against civilian space travel

Final Draft (continued)

is because of the many dangers that come along with it. Because of sending people into space, it could result in a devastating way! When NASA sends astronauts into space, they are faced with complications on board the space shuttles and out, but they are trained for anything that might occur. While on the other hand, regular civilians are not trained to know what to do in space or in a shuttle. In addition to this, the passage says, "civilian space travel is potentially dangerous, and there are many unknown risks." This is true, and we civilians should not take the chance of running into one of those unknown, maybe fatal, risks. The safety of people would be obscure with the consideration of this plan; the effects may be uncall for.

In conclusion, I am against civilian space travel because of its effect on human life. It would fund for more than billions of dollars; corporate sponsorships and consumers would be in affect. Also, civilians would be put at too much risks. The new plan to put civilians in space would be spectacular, but the cost are over-whelming, and there are risks that are not worth taking!

Sample 2: Content 3

This writer demonstrates reasonable control of the content dimension and a general understanding of the task. The view against civilian space travel is stated clearly and supported with some passage evidence and developed adequately. The writer, however, tends to repeat many ideas rather than explore them thoroughly. There is a logical order to the response and a definite beginning, middle, and ending, but there is no strong sense of wholeness that is characteristic of a fully developed set of ideas.

Sample

3

Final Draft

I am for civilians in space, because we could have a opportunities to see space and that could be a once in a life, time experience. I think that ever one should get a opportunity to go outer space and NASA has made it modern, NASA program and to create opportunities for individuals and business to explore outer space. Civilians in space is a great because it some thing happens in outer space the civilians can let us know about it. I think that if people go outer it would change, because if you could imagine what the civilians see it would make you think of how our earth, sun, moon and everthing else look. If NASA need letting civilians go to outer space they should make a hotel. The hotel would not be expensive and if they build one more space travels or going to outer space.

I think that going to outer space would be awesome experience for people to visit outer space. I know if I go to outer space I would

Final Draft (continued)

feel open minded because just to see what
god made would leave me speechless.

Sample 3: Content 2

This response demonstrates inconsistent control of the content dimension and only a partial understanding of the task. There is a vague central idea and some evidence from the passage is included, but the evidence and ideas are inadequately developed. The writer plunges into the subject in the first sentence and does provide a conclusion, but there are repeated ideas, digressions, and no transitional devices, which lead to a rather disorganized composition.

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4

Final Draft

"My opinion on Space travel"

My thoughts of civilian space travel, is that I am against civilian space travel, I am against it because they don't really have experience with space travel, they might mess something up or be like the terrorist attack all, you never know what they are capable of they might hijack the spaceship or go crazy, so I am definitely against civilian space travel. The spaceship and all of the equipment is very expensive, so I think it is a bad idea.

Sample 4: Content 1

Although this writer expresses an opinion on civilian space travel, the opinion is not supported with evidence from the passage, and there is minimal development of the ideas. The writer goes off on a tangent, focusing much of the short paragraph on terrorist attacks and "go[ing] crazy," irrelevant ideas that are not mentioned in the passage. Although there is some attempt at organization with the writer stating the point in the first sentence and using "So I think it is a bad idea" to end the response, it is not enough to overcome the other weaknesses, especially when considering the expectations at this grade level.

Style Samples

The **Style** dimension evaluates the ways in which the student shapes and controls the language and the flow of the composition. Features of Style include

- word choice;
- sentence fluency, which includes sentence structure and sentence variety; and
- voice, the individual personality of the writing.

STYLE: Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Voice

Key Questions: Would you keep reading this composition if it were longer? Do the words, phrases, and sentences strengthen the content and allow the reader to move through the writing with ease?

Score Point	4 Consistent, though not necessarily perfect, control; many strengths present	3 Reasonable control; some strengths and some weaknesses	2 Inconsistent control; the weaknesses outweigh the strengths	1 Little or no control; minimal attempt
WORD CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • precise • effective • vivid words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear but less specific • includes some interesting words and phrases appropriate to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generic • limited • repetitive • overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • functional • simple (below grade level) • may be inappropriate to the task
SENTENCE FLUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fluid, very easy to follow, because of variety in length, structure, and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generally varied in length and structure • Most sentences have varied beginnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little or no variety in length and structure • Awkward sentences may affect the fluidity of the reading. • same beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple sentences • no variety • Construction makes the response difficult to read.
VOICE (individual personality of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compelling and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear, but may not be particularly compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • weak and/or inconsistent voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no voice • Response is too brief to provide an adequate example of style; minimal attempt.

Sample

5

Final Draft

Is It Worth It?

Envision yourself striding down to the lunar pool area of your hotel on the moon. The temperature of the pool changes with the Moon's phases and since tonight is a waxing gibbous, you are in store for a heated swim. You think to yourself that this is the most impeccable vacation you have ever been on. Suddenly, you hear the hotel manager over the loudspeakers say a meteor is headed in the direction of the hotel and all the escape pods were malfunctioning. Your mouth converts into the shape of the fifteenth letter of the alphabet. Something like this could possibly become reality if the government were to start allowing civilians in space too soon. I believe civilians traveling in space should be moved down on the agenda of necessities because of more weighty issues on Earth and its dangerousness.

Money is a language in which we all speak, and a vacation spot based in outer space is an illiterate newborn. The cost of the building and traveling is in the billions and is earthlings do not have the ability to spend such money. Taxpayers already complain about their money being wasted on nonsense, so why let them down even more and spend it on an ill-fated endeavor? Problems such as poverty,

Final Draft (continued)

disease, and doomed economies need to be perfected before we even think of sending the people of Earth to foreign planets that we know little of. Also, confrontation like war in space between rival countries will not make for a good look for eager civilians willing to blast off into oblivion once a government official's name is signed of the dotted line.

If we have not spoke it enough already, we all know that technology fails and cannot be depended upon. Things like the spaceship in which the civilian travel and the hotel in which they reside will have to be as flawless as a 24 karat gold wedding ring if we intend to pursue civilian space travel. Fatalities will most likely be common due to our ignorance of long term space visits. Emergencies like meteors and other objects headed for lunar hotels will have to also be avoided. Lastly, which insurance company, in their right mind, will insure civilians headed into the vacuum of space?

All in all, I support the idea of putting civilian space travel in the back of our minds because of the feasibility of disastrous events and more important matters. Who knows, maybe some sixty years from now we will be dipping our feet into heated lunar pools. But for now, I think Disneyland is okay.

Sample 5: Style 4

This response demonstrates consistent control in the style dimension. The writer engages the reader in the first paragraph with a series of vivid envision-yourself-images that end with a potentially disastrous scenario to illustrate the point that civilian space travel is not a good idea at present. With the choice of precise, effective language—"doomed economies need to be perfected" and "eager civilians willing to blast off into oblivion..."

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and “Which insurance company, in their right mind, will insure civilians headed into the vacuum of space?”— the writer shows skill in constructing fluid sentences with varied lengths, structures, and beginnings. The writer’s voice comes through as engaging and compelling from beginning to end.

Sample

6

Final Draft

I'm for civilian space travel for many reasons. If civilian space travel was possible, it would provide opportunities for individuals and businesses. Seeing earth from space would create an amazing experience, for those who don't have the privilege of being an astronaut. I can only imagine how thrilling it would be to book a flight to stay in a hotel, in space.

Most people fantasize of how amazing zero gravity life would be. Considering civilian space travel was real people could see what's happening in space with their own eyes. Businesses would thrive in space because there would be such a large tourist attraction. Building buildings wouldn't be as expensive in space as it is on earth. If people visited space NASA would also have greater research and funding.

In my opinion, traveling in space would be something on my bucket list. I would imagine it to be similar to a

Final Draft (continued)

cruiize, but in space. Having the opportunity to travel in space would be fun and educational. Learning about space would be a better experience than reading about it. If civilian space travel does come about I will purchase a flight.

Sample 6: Style 3

This response demonstrates reasonable control in the style dimension. The vocabulary is somewhat varied, and there are some interesting words and phrases, for example, "I can only imagine how thrilling it would be to book a flight to stay in a hotel in space." Sentences are generally fluid. The voice is clear, for example, "... traveling in space would be something on my bucket list."

Sample

7

Final Draft

There are a lot of trips and vacations people want to go on, but did they ever think about going to space. Well I'm with this and not against space travel because it would be fun, people should know what's going on up there, and I also think people should take classes for it.

I think space travel would be fun because when you're out of Earth's atmosphere there's no gravity so you weigh nothing so you just float around and stuff. Also, to be able to see Earth from a different view. And finally, because I like space food is good to eat.

Another thing I think about space travel is people should know what it's like up there. I mean just to be able to feel what it is like in space with no gravity just what it is like to be up there.

Final Draft (continued)

Finally, the last thing I think about space travel is I think you should have to take a class to do it. I think this because you wouldn't want just some guy going up there and not knowing what to do if something happens, or he/she is touching something that they're not suppose to touch. I think this class should be at least three days or more.

In conclusion, I think space travel would be fun, good for people to know what's going on up there, and take a three or more day class before they go up into space.

Sample 7: Style 2

The writer of this response demonstrates inconsistent control of the style dimension. Word choice is generic, and the writer sometimes resorts to the expression “and stuff” rather than thinking of more interesting ways to describe ideas. Lack of variety in sentence length and structure along with some awkward sentences affect fluidity. The expression “I think” is so frequently used that the response becomes monotonous to read. There is little evidence of the writer’s voice or personality.

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Sample

8

Final Draft

I am against civilians space travel
because traveling out of space because you can
die by going out of space and sometime
they get lost out of space and
a alien can take your brain out

so then they put your brains back
but you do not know were you at
then you have to put the flag on the moon
then they went on the dark side of
the moon with the aliens.

because they cannot stand the light
so that why they stay on the
dark side of the moon and
they will take your space ship
and that's why I am going against civilians
in space.

Sample 8: Style 1

This response represents little or no control in the style dimension. The vocabulary is simple, below grade level. Sentences are run together, making reading difficult, and they lack varied beginnings. The voice is weak.

Conventions Samples

As in the past, the responses to the LEAP writing prompt will continue to be scored for conventions. Compositions are rated as showing either “acceptable control” or “unacceptable control” in the following conventions of language:

- Sentence Formation
- Usage
- Mechanics
- Spelling

The Conventions rubric is found on the next page, followed by two examples of student work for each of the four conventions of language that are assessed on the writing prompt session of the test. The first example for each element shows acceptable control; the second example shows unacceptable control. For more specific information about each of the particular conventions elements, see the **Additional Scoring Criteria for Writing** handout, found at the back of this document.

Conventions Rubric: All Grades

Each dimension—Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling—is scored 1 point for acceptable or 0 points for unacceptable, for a total of up to 4 points. Scorers look for acceptable control based on the amount of original student writing in the response. (For example, in a response with very little original work by the student, one mistake may signal unacceptable control in a dimension. However, for a longer response, it may take several errors to demonstrate a pattern of mistakes in a dimension.) Scorers also look for correct application of grade-level skills based on the [Common Core Language Standards](#) and the grade-appropriate skills identified on the [Common Core Language Progressive Skills Chart](#).

Sentence Formation: completeness and correct construction of different types of sentences

1	The response exhibits acceptable control of sentence formation. Most sentences are correct; there are few, if any, fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, or syntax problems. Sentences show the appropriate level of complexity for the grade level.
0	The response exhibits unacceptable control of sentence formation. There are run-on sentences, fragments, and/or poorly constructed sentences that indicate that the writer does not have adequate skill in sentence formation.

Usage: correct agreement, verb tenses, and word choice

1	The response exhibits acceptable control of usage. Subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement; verb tenses; forms of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs; and word meaning are generally correct. If errors are present, they do not appear to be part of a pattern of usage errors.
0	The response exhibits unacceptable control of usage. There are errors in agreement; verb tenses; forms of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs; and/or word meaning. The pattern of errors is evidence of a lack of control of the features of usage.

Mechanics: correct punctuation and capitalization

1	The response exhibits acceptable control of mechanics. Punctuation and capitalization are generally correct. If errors are present, they do not appear to be part of a pattern of mechanics errors.
0	The response exhibits unacceptable control of mechanics. There are errors in punctuation and capitalization. The pattern of errors is evidence of a lack of control of the features of mechanics.

Spelling: correct spelling of high-frequency and grade-appropriate words

1	The response exhibits acceptable control of spelling. High-frequency words and the majority of grade-appropriate words are spelled correctly. There is no pattern of spelling errors.
0	The response exhibits unacceptable control of spelling. There are errors in spelling high-frequency and grade-appropriate words. There is a pattern of spelling errors.

In some cases, a composition may not be scorable. For example, if it is incoherent or if it includes only copied text from the given passage(s), it will not be scored in any dimension and will receive a score of zero. A paper may be off-topic and cannot be scored for Content or Style, but it may be scored for Conventions. Such a paper could receive a maximum of 4 out of 12 points.

Final Draft

Everyone says that they want to live their life to the fullest. Wouldn't traveling to the final frontier be an abnormal and even life-changing adventure? I believe that humans should, and eventually will, go to space - but without a top-secret mission from NASA. People from all over the globe could enjoy the breath-taking scenery of the planets, stars, or comets and could play in zero-gravity. That sounds like a fun time to me!

All of my vacations as a child have been to the beach, a theme park, or the mountains. They have all been fantastic and created many sweet memories, but a trip to space would be unforgettable. I can only imagine what it would be like to be with my family surrounded by the twinkling stars. Those times on previous vacations have been super, but it taking place in a hotel on the moon or something - what an idea! It's an entirely new experience that I would love to try.

Going to space could help matters on Earth as well. In America and other parts of the world, the economy is struggling. Having something in outer space would create jobs for those who need them. We also have seven billion people living here now. If some of us moved to space to work, it might help decrease the population a little bit. In other words, space could be the

Writing

Final Draft (continued)

Answers to some of our worst and hardest problems on Earth. With more people are helping you do something, the work gets done faster. It is very possible for some places in space to offer things to do to help scientists. For instance, we could mine for mines, or maybe chemically test things, or even go on hikes for things that look peculiar. It would be fun and could lead to exciting and fascinating discoveries. Who knows, maybe an eight-year-old girl on her first vacation will find the first alien.

In my eyes, there is absolutely no reason to not have space-travel for all humans. It would be exciting, economy-boosting, education, helpful for everyone. I know I would love to have a hike on Mars and mine on the moon. Space could be the key to a new life for so many people and help things on Earth, too. Sadly, I won't get to float in space any time soon, but I hope maybe one of my child's first vacations will be "out of this world."

Sample 9: Sentence Formation 1

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Sample
10

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Space traveling can be fun but civilian space traveling can be very dangerous and unknown risks involved. I am against civilian space travel because it's way too dangerous for a girl to do.

Civilian space traveling is dangerous because some people can get injured and very overwhelming, because in the passage it says, "civilian space traveling can be potentially dangerous and there are many unknown specialize in space to help. it also is unknown risks involved that means no one to help you if your hurt you'll have to be strong and careful when you do if you become a civilian space traveler.

They are a lot of people that would love to be a space traveler but... I advise women not to be one cause it is very dangerous & unsafe. I am against civilian space travel.

Sample 10: Sentence Formation 0

Sample 11

Final Draft

You can feel the motor roaring under your feet, see the countdown on the screen, and hear the voices back and forth on the radios. Zoom! You watch earth disappear as you go up at a breathtaking pace! I'd imagine that is just about what every experience is like launching into space. Many people dream of this opportunity to visit the extraordinary place. I believe that everyone should get this chance of a lifetime, which is why I am a supporter of civilian space travel.

I have thought about the idea of civilians traveling into space daily, and I concluded that there are more good than bad that it will do. It would create opportunities for individuals and businesses to explore outer space. This could lead to research outposts in space, missions to Mars, and mining operations on the Moon. I have also thought about people actually living in space. It turns out that a space hotel would be less expensive, easier to build, and design than a regular hotel. Civilian space travel would allow people to see what is happening in space for themselves. Otherwise, everything occurring in space will just seem unreal because all they get to see is pictures. I believe that an abundant orbit

Louisiana Believes

Final Draft (continued)

of good things could come out of this new type of space travel.

Of the many people that I have talked to, the majority of them have space travel on their list of things to do in life. Civilian space travel will do many good things but could also make people's dreams come true. Everyone's questions could be answered, and space will be real to them. This type of space travel could be the next step into the future of flying cars and flying.

Sample 11: Usage 1

Louisiana Believes

Sample 12

Final Draft

Have you ever went outside on a dark, windy night. And, just layed down on the grass and wonder how stars looks like in space? Or how outer space looks like? Well, I have and in fact, it looks very interesting.

To begin with, as I was walking to class I over heard the teachers talking about how NASA (National Aeronautics Space and Administration) is thinking about letting companies and bussiness to go outer space. Well, I disagree. I disagree because to begin with its not fair to the other of billions of people who would like to go. It also a very dangerous thing. For example, in the passage giving it says "... Civilian space travel is potentially dangerous, and there are many unknown risks involved". Going into space is not a game, its very serious. I also disagree.

Louisiana Believes

Final Draft (continued)

with this because it would cost billions and
billions of money. Like, where are they going
to get all that money to build hotels over
there. Or, to send rocket ships, get certain
cloths, supplies and food. They have
many objections why they shouldn't and
why they should let this happen!
And, I strongly disagree with letting
people go to outer space.

Sample 12: Usage 0

Sample
13

Final Draft

No Space for Civilians

Civilians should not be allowed to travel to and from space whenever they please. Space travel is a long, arduous, and expensive process. Civilians aren't trained properly for life in space. Humans can exploit all, if any, nonrenewable resources in space. Civilian space travel would be much too costly. Also, there would be no type of order in space. Space travel for civilians is a terrible idea.

Humans are a powerful, destructive force. Civilians can take over an area and change it for their convenience. That might not be in the space environment's best interest. Space is untainted and has natural beauty. Bringing in civilians would destroy all hope of keeping space pure. The manipulation of the Moon, Mars, and areas beyond is dangerous and unethical. Space is not the place for the next gold rush.

Civilian space travel has overwhelming costs. There has to be enough life-sustaining equipment for the people that go to outer space. Oxygen, space suits, and transportation vehicles are not free. Taxpayers' dollars would have to contribute to this extreme project. That money should not be used for frivolous space activities. It should be used to improve roads, schools, and cities.

In space, there is not a single country that rules. No government, laws, or police officers are set in play. How would people be taken care of? If someone gets seriously injured, there are no hospitals.

Final Draft (continued)

There is no way to determine how commercial orbiting vehicles could be insured and safe.

There are too many unanswered questions about civilian space travel. Many risks accompany space travel. Numerous civilians could be killed if a craft exploded. Space travel for civilians is an unnecessary waste of money. Humans are catastrophic beings that will spoil space. All in all, civilian space travel is a bad idea, and I am against it.

Louisiana Believes

Sample

14

Final Draft

"MY OPINION ON SPACE TRAVEL"

My thoughts on civilian space travel, is that I am against it because they don't really have experience with space travel. They might mess something up or believe the worst. You never know what they are capable of. They might hijack the spaceship or hijack it. So I am definitely against civilian space travel. The spaceship and all of the equipment is VPA expensive. So I think it is a bad idea.

Sample 14: Mechanics 0

Louisiana Believes

Sample
15

Final Draft

We have landed on what seems to be the moon, there's no sign of life, or gravity. When I was little I would think about how astronauts would say, "Space is the most astonishing thing you have to see," and I'll say to myself, "Wow" living in space would be so cool. Now that I'm older I know the disadvantages of living in space, and they're dreadful.

Living in space would be cold and gloomy. What if there's not enough oxygen or food, and you suffocate or starve to your demise. What if you float away with the lack of gravity, and your lost forever. These things are all true and possible living in space; you'll go crazy. If and when you want to come back to Earth, it'll be too late. You're all alone like a little lost puppy.

Living in space would be dreadful for everyday people like you and me, lets just keep the living in space to astronauts after all they are all crazy.

Sample 15: Spelling 1

Louisiana Believes

Sample

16

Final Draft

Space traveling can be fun but civilian space traveling can be very dangerous and unknown risks involved. I am against civilian space travel because it's way too dangerous for a girl to do.

Civilian space traveling is dangerous because some people can get injured and very overwhelming, because in the passage it says, "civilian space traveling can be potentially dangerous and there are many unknown specializations in space to help. It also is unknown risks involved that means no one to help you if your hurt you'll have to be strong and careful when you do if you become a civilian space traveler.

They are a lot of people that would love to be a space traveler but... I advise women not to be one cause it is very dangerous & unsafe I am against civilian space travel.

Sample 16: Spelling 0

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Scoring Key for Grade 8 Sample Papers

Sample Number	Score	Content	Style	Sentence Formation	Usage	Mechanics	Spelling
1	Content 4	4	4	1	1	1	1
2	Content 3	3	3	1	0	1	1
3	Content 2	2	2	0	0	1	1
4	Content 1	1	1	1	0	0	0
5	Style 4	4	4	1	1	1	1
6	Style 3	3	3	1	1	1	0
7	Style 2	2	2	0	0	1	1
8	Style 1	1	1	0	0	0	0
9	Sentence Formation 1	3	4	1	1	1	1
10	Sentence Formation 0	2	2	0	0	1	0
11	Usage 1	3	3	1	1	1	0
12	Usage 0	2	2	1	0	1	0
13	Mechanics 1	4	4	1	1	1	1
14	Mechanics 0	1	1	1	0	0	0
15	Spelling 1	2	3	1	1	0	1
16	Spelling 0	2	2	0	0	1	0

LEAP

GRADES 4 & 8

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITER'S CHECKLIST

As you write your composition, remember these important points.

Content:

- Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic carefully and write on all parts as directed.
- Present a clear main idea.
- Give enough details to support and develop your main idea.
- Make sure to use well-chosen details from the passage(s) to support your ideas.
- Present your ideas in a logical order and include a clear beginning, middle, and ending.

Style:

- Use words that express your meaning well.
- Use a variety of sentence types and lengths to make your writing easy to follow.

Sentence Formation:

- Write in complete sentences and use a variety of sentence patterns.

Usage:

- Write using appropriate subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, word meanings, and word endings.

Mechanics:

- Write using correct punctuation.
- Write using correct capitalization.
- Write using appropriate formatting (e.g., indentations, margins).

Spelling:

- Write using correct spelling.



Remember to print or write neatly.

DIRECTIONS FOR WRITING

Follow the steps below to help you write a successful composition.

Step 1: Planning and Drafting

- Read the directions, the passage(s), and the writing topic in your test booklet carefully.
- Think about what you will write before you begin.
- Make sure to use well-chosen details from the passage(s) to support your ideas.
- Use the space provided in your rough draft booklet for planning your composition and writing your rough draft.
- Remember that your planning notes and rough draft will not be scored.

Step 2: Revising

- Review your composition to make sure you have covered all the points on the Writer's Checklist.
- Reread your rough draft.
- Rearrange ideas or change words to make your meaning clear and improve your composition.
- Write your final draft neatly on the correct page(s) in your test booklet.
- Write your final draft in either print or cursive using a No. 2 pencil.

Step 3: Proofreading

- Read your final draft.
- Make any needed corrections.
- Erase or strike through words if necessary.



Points to Remember:

- Only the writing on the Final Draft pages in your test booklet will be scored.
- Your composition will be scored on (1) development and support of ideas including how you use the information in the passage(s), (2) expression of ideas, (3) correct sentence formation, (4) usage, (5) mechanics, and (6) spelling.

Additional Scoring Criteria for Writing: All Grades

To avoid double jeopardy during scoring, one word will constitute only one error. In situations where it is difficult to determine the dimension to which an error should be assigned, the scorer will consider context clues and error patterns that are evident in the response.

- Context clues may indicate the writer's intention.
- Error patterns already evident in the response indicate a skill weakness in that dimension.

Sentence Formation:	
If a sentence contains a run-on or a comma splice, it is a sentence formation error .	Run-on: <i>The character is looking for answers he can't seem to find them.</i> Comma splice: <i>The character feels lost, he can't find his way.</i>
A sentence fragment is a sentence formation error unless it is deliberately presented for effect.	Fragment: <i>We saw the boys at the pool. <u>Laughing and jumping into the water.</u></i> Intentional: <i>What a break!</i>
If a sentence requires the rearrangement, omission, or addition of more than one word, the error is a sentence formation error .	<i>I saw those boys fighting <u>while driving my car.</u></i>
A pattern of awkward syntax (word order) is a sentence formation error .	<i>I for you have some important news.</i>
Nonparallel structure, often in a series, is a sentence formation error .	<i>We live better lives, coping with sorrows, and how to be joyful.</i>

Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling:	
Usage and mechanics errors count each time they occur in a response. However, if the same word is misspelled repeatedly, it counts only once, even if it is misspelled in more than one way.	
Omissions, extra words, or wrong words that can be corrected by changing one word are usage errors .	<i>When <u>it</u> is no school, I play all day.</i>
If a sentence begins with a capital letter but is not preceded by a period, the error is a mechanics error .	<i>Martha went to the well and looked <u>inside Far</u> below, something was sparkling in the water.</i>
If a sentence begins with a lowercase letter but is preceded by a period, the error is a mechanics error .	<i>Teddy is the youngest in the family. <u>he</u> is my only nephew.</i>
Use of double comparatives or double negatives is a common usage error .	Double comparative: <i>I'm even <u>more better</u> at soccer than at football.</i> Double negative: <i><u>None</u> of them are <u>not</u> my friend.</i>
Use of the wrong preposition is a common usage error .	<i>He went <u>for</u> the house.</i>
Agreement errors of compound pronouns with possessives are usage errors .	<i><u>Everybody</u> situation is different.</i>
Agreement errors of collective nouns with possessives are usage errors .	<i><u>People</u> lives all take different paths.</i>
Agreement errors with collectives, phrases, and conjunctions are usage errors .	<i>Incorrect: <u>None</u> of the teachers are <u>good role models</u> or <u>a hero</u>.</i>

Louisiana Believes

Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling (continued):	
When an error may be both a usage and a spelling error, and the context clues do not help determine which dimension the error belongs to, the error should be counted in usage only .	<i>She <u>allway</u> comes to work on time.</i>
If a misused word in a sentence is a real word, it is a usage error. If it is not a real word, it is a spelling error.	Usage: <i>We all went to the skating <u>ring</u>.</i> Spelling: <i>We joined my <u>parnets</u> and were <u>reddy</u> to leave.</i>
If a homonym or a word that is so phonetically similar to another word (<i>are/our, through/though</i>) is used instead of the correct word, it is a usage error.	<i>Martin gave him a <u>peace</u> of his chocolate bar.</i> <i>I would rather have a vacation <u>then</u> a raise.</i> <i>She was late for her piano <u>listens</u>.</i>
An error may be either a spelling, mechanics, or usage error. Use either context clues or error patterns to determine which dimension would be most appropriate.	Spelling: <i>All the <u>hero's</u> aren't in the movies.</i> Mechanics: <i><u>Were</u> going to Disneyland on our vacation.</i>
In a series, a comma before <i>and</i> is optional; both ways are considered correct.	Either: <i>The pet shop was filled with birds, cats, <u>and</u> dogs.</i> Or: <i>The pet shop was filled with birds, cats <u>and</u> dogs.</i>
In some series, the placement of the comma is not optional because it affects the sense of the sentence.	<i>The pet shop was filled with birds, kenneled <u>cats and dogs</u>, and fish of every color.</i>
Direct quotations should not be preceded by <i>that</i> . Indirect quotations should be preceded by <i>that</i> . These are mechanics errors.	Direct: <i>Then Mom said <u>that</u>, "We cannot go along."</i> Indirect: <i>After we returned, she <u>said we</u> are in trouble.</i>
A word divided at the end of a line that is not broken at the end of a syllable or is broken and has only one syllable is a mechanics error.	<i>I worked at the National Fou- ndation for the Blind.</i>
<i>TV, T.V., and tv</i> are all acceptable and not mechanics errors.	
Use of <i>so they</i> instead of <i>so that they</i> is acceptable and not a usage error.	

Other Issues:	
Errors resulting from incorrect copying of information provided in the passage(s) are counted as sentence formation, usage, mechanics, or spelling errors, depending upon the type of error.	
The rules of standard written English apply and override foreign language, regional, ethnic, and colloquial speech patterns. Unless such speech is used in a direct quotation, it is considered a usage error.	<i>I'm very happy <u>y'all</u> are reading my test and I hope <u>y'all</u> pass me.</i>

Scoring Exercise for Schools/Districts

PURPOSE: to introduce evidence-based writing to teachers

OUTCOMES: To help teachers

- develop expectations for student writing that meets expectations of Common Core
- learn to use the transitional writing rubrics
- better understand how to evaluate their students' writing
- determine instructional needs for groups of students and individual students

PROCESS:

1. Administer a common text-based writing prompt:
 - Prompts in the [2013-14 Practice Tests](#)
 - 2012-13 [Released Writing Prompts](#) (grades 3-8)
 - EOC writing prompts in [Sample Test Items](#) documents (English II and III)
 - [PASS](#) prompts (click on PASS Resources and then Teacher's Room to find annotated student samples)
 - Prompts used to develop [In Common](#)
 - Original prompts created at the school/district level
2. Collect student work.
3. Score the compositions collaboratively.
 - a. Review the scoring criteria (rubrics), available in the [Assessment Guidance materials](#) and in the Sample Student Work documents. Highlight key words on the rubrics (*well-chosen, adequate, etc.*), and develop a common definition using sample papers and annotations that accompany the released and sample items, the PASS resources, or the *In Common* materials.
 - b. Create anchor papers. These are papers that all participants agree represent a 1, 2, 3, or 4 on the rubric. For an example, refer to the annotated writing prompts in the student work documents or in the Teacher's Room of [PASS](#).
 - c. Then score a few papers. As a group, discuss the scores using the rubric and the anchors. Come to a consensus on the score for the papers.
 - d. Score the remaining papers one at a time. Discuss scores that are not consistent.
4. After the compositions are scored, discuss the student papers—strengths, weaknesses, different approaches to the task, etc.—focusing on patterns (difficulty with writing introductions, conclusions, citing evidence, explaining evidence, etc.). Teachers should also consider their own students' papers and see what trends emerge.

Finally, discuss the instructional implications. How will we address the general weaknesses? How will I address my own students' weaknesses, etc.? Develop a plan to address the weaknesses and reinforce the strengths (school-wide strategies, individual, etc.).