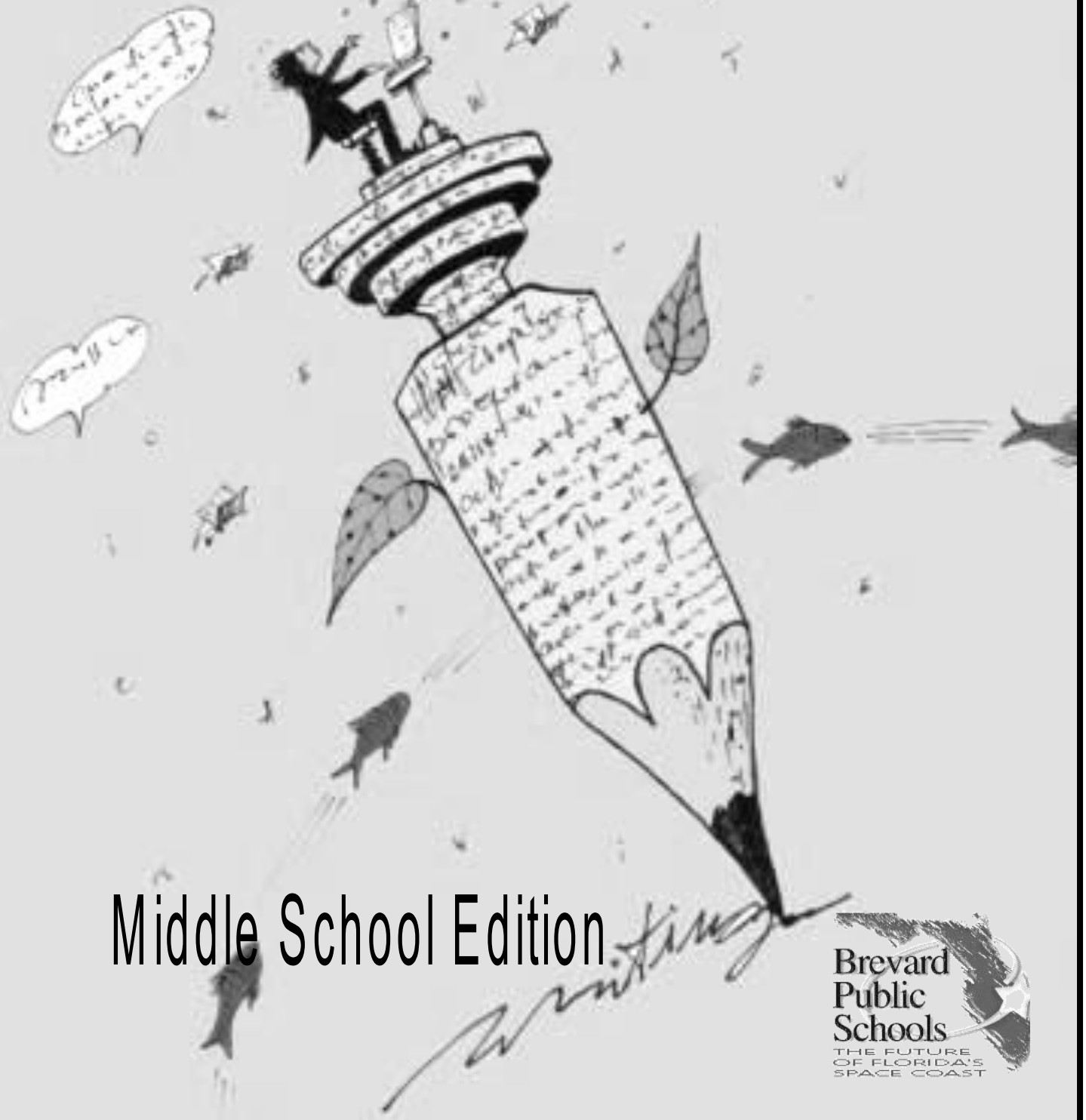


# Mastering Editing & Revising

Middle School Edition

Brevard  
Public  
Schools

THE FUTURE  
OF FLORIDA'S  
SPACE COAST



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# ***MASTERING EDITING AND REVISING***

## ***Middle School Edition***

*This booklet presents the collaborative efforts by Brevard County teachers of writing models, instructional strategies and practices, activities, and teaching tools. Both teachers and students will benefit by using this product to enhance student writing. Some selected FCAT essays, written by Brevard students from the years 2004-2007, appear with annotations to identify errors or areas for improvement. Other essays contain activities that can be adapted to suit a variety of teaching/learning needs. We hope that this book will be an asset to all English teachers and learners. The FDOE has granted permission to reprint these student papers for the purposes of training. All identifiable information from these essays has been removed or changed.*

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## How to Use This Book

Language Arts teachers will welcome *Mastering Editing and Revising* for its instructional information, teaching strategies and techniques, practices and lessons, and student FCAT essay models. This guide identifies areas that will enhance student writing and provides ideas for implementing **successful writing FCAT elements**: focus, organization, support, and conventions.

A bulleted list of **FCAT writing element problems** provides specific focus areas teachers may use as a checklist of topics for improving writing. Since all students learn differently, some may benefit from using the helpful essay writing acronyms and guides that appear on page 5 of this book.

Following the **persuasive and expository writing prompts** on pages 6 and 7, appear student FCAT essays that were scored in the 4.0-5.5 range. These models contain annotations that suggest why these student papers lacked specific elements that would have earned them a higher score. Teachers can project these pages with a document camera or make overhead transparencies for class analysis, instruction, or discussion. A clean copy of the essay follows the annotated page, allowing teachers to vary the ways they can use these products in the classroom.

The next section presents **6.0 essays** that represent the best responses produced by students at this grade level. Several **activity pages** contain essays identified by their type, topic, and score, followed by bulleted assignments that will help students improve areas of pre-writing, revision, elaboration, and analytic skills.

In the final section of this text appear both the **introduction and conclusion paragraphs** of the 6.0 essays from previous pages. Three ways teachers may use these pages follow.

1. Students list different ways each introduction and conclusion is presented and developed and discuss their merits.
2. Students mark the nouns, verbs, and or adjective phrases that are particularly weak or interestingly dynamic, and discuss why.
3. Students examine the paragraphs and then individually or in small groups, create a body portion for the essay. They discuss the products they created or compare their compositions with the original essay.

The last page serves as an excellent **FCAT scoring rubric** that can be reprinted for each student to use as a writing guide and to understand areas important to essay scorers.

### Important FCAT Writing Elements

The **introduction** presents both the topic and the approach to the topic which is why making the thesis statement part of the introduction is usual. Effective essay introductions should grab readers' interest. Some examples of good HOOKS might include, but are not limited to:

- A question
- A vivid description
- A quotation or "slice" of dialogue
- A shocking statement
- Surprising information
- Intriguing paradox
- An allusion (to history, literature, art, or personal experience)

**Conclusions** should do more than reassert the thesis (in different words).

To create a feeling of completeness, they should bring the topic full circle by returning to the image, quote, or idea used in the beginning of the essay. Some teachers identify an ending sentence as a “statement of finality” or in the case of a persuasive essay, a “call to action” statement.

**Transitions and transitional phrases and sentences** create links between ideas and paragraphs. Use transitional expressions and transitional sentences to indicate sequence, direction, contrast, and other relationships. When writers combine sensible organization, parallelism, repetition, pronoun consistency, and transitional expressions, readers will follow the development of the focal idea. Encourage students to connect what they say with words and phrases such as: obviously, as you can clearly see, fortunately, it is true, consequently, moving right along, naturally, in fact, and as a result.

**Elaboration** throughout the essay with specific details, examples, illustrations, logical idea applications, or personal anecdotes helps students to produce dynamic, developed writing products. Instruct students to develop this technique to expand their sentences and paragraphs in the following way: zero in on a focus idea (BARE); use additional information about this idea to clarify it for the reader (EXTENDED); illustrate with additional support that shows proof or examples to clarify meaning (LAYERED); and connect a personal example, an anecdote, or an allusion to life, literature, history, or art (ELABORATED).

### ***Model of an Elaborated Idea – WRITING***

- **Bare:** Many endeavors in life require good writing.
- **Extended:** Many endeavors in life require good writing. Not only must students pass writing tests for school and for college entrance, but also they must be able to write for many purposes throughout their lives.
- **Layered:** Many endeavors in life require good writing. Some students choose careers like journalism that require them to write well everyday. Their livelihood depends on their ability to use words to picture the world for their readers. People who wake up every morning to read the newspaper depend on these writers to do their jobs well.
- **Elaborated:** Many endeavors in life require good writing. People use this skill whenever they pen simple lines in lists, letters, or memos, or when they design work-related presentations or extensively researched documents. When students improve their writing, they build competency in this skill to serve them in future life experiences. For example, an estimator at an auto body shop must document parts and labor before cars can be repaired. Body shop owners must write detailed proposals to insurance companies to refer customers for business. Thus the tool of writing helps auto body professionals earn a living.

**Sentence variety** contributes to a mature management and presentation of the topic throughout the essay. Varied sentence types, lengths, and constructions produce a freshness of expression, an insight into the writing situation, a sense of the writer's voice and tone, and they demonstrate creative writing strategies. Show students how to include such significant elements as the correct use of fragments for effect, sentence combining techniques, expanded phrases (prepositional, participial, gerund, and infinitive) and clauses (adjective, adverb, and noun), questions, cause-effect, comparison-contrast, problem-solution examples, and spatial, chronological, and sequential illustrations. Encourage students to use strong and active voice verbs, hyphenated adjectives, occasional interjections, dialogue, and references to authorities related to their topic, and sensory imagery.

Essays that achieve higher scores demonstrate a mature command of language with freshness of expression (**word choice**) because they employ such elements as:

- Introductory adverb sentence starters like anytime, probably, evidently, absolutely, generally, usually, undoubtedly, surely, and frequently
- Juicy color words that paint vivid pictures for the reader like strawberry red, popsicle pink, honey-bell orange, or cauldron black
- Specificity and vivid details that result from using such elements as appositives, definition, description, and dialogue
- Figurative language that includes such techniques as similes, metaphors, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and anaphora
- Concrete nouns rather than indefinite, demonstrative, relative, and personal pronouns for which the antecedent is not always clear

## **Writing Elements Represented in the FCAT Scoring Rubric**

### **FOCUS**

Successful students stay on topic and effectively demonstrate main idea or theme; they address and interpret the assigned topic with a clearly designed thesis statement.

### **ORGANIZATION**

Successful students use a plan for writing and execute that plan with an essay that has an effective introduction, body, and conclusion.

### **SUPPORT**

Successful students use specific ideas and precise word choice to explain, clarify, or define meaning. They provide clear reasons or arguments linked to the main idea, use anecdotes appropriately, exhibit a mature command of language and vocabulary, vary sentence styles and structures, and elaborate essential ideas fully. They maintain reader awareness and directly address their audience.

### **CONVENTIONS**

Successful students show understanding and use of basic skills of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, usage, and sentence structure and syntax. **They proofread what they have written to make essential corrections and replace weak verbs.**

## FCAT Writing Element Problems

### FOCUS PROBLEMS

- Off-topic ideas
- Loosely related ideas
- Extraneous information

### ORGANIZATION PROBLEMS

- Illogical or unrelated idea format
- Inadequate or incorrect transitional devices
- Ineffective conclusions

### SUPPORT PROBLEMS

- Weak or unclear reasons linked to the main idea
- Inadequate or insufficient information or elaboration of reasons or arguments
- Lack of specificity of details
- Absence of persuasive techniques
- Inappropriate or incorrect word usage
- Unclear or incredible anecdotes or information

### CONVENTION PROBLEMS

- Incorrect use of commas, colons, semicolons, and apostrophes
- Incorrect use of quotation marks
- Incorrect capitalization
- Incorrect spelling
- Run-on sentences
- Fragments that are not purposeful
- Errors in subject/verb agreement, noun/pronoun agreement, and verb and noun forms

### GENERAL WRITING PROBLEMS

- Poorly stated thesis statements
- Paragraphs unrelated to thesis statements
- Addressing the wrong audience
- Topic sentences unclear or unrelated to the thesis statement
- Paragraph sentences undeveloped or unrelated to the topic sentence
- Sentences containing redundancy and repetition
- Unclear, formulaic, or erroneous transitional words and transition sentences
- Errors in sentence combining and parallelism
- Verb tense inconsistency
- Immature vocabulary, especially weak verbs
- Incorrect preposition usage
- Homonym confusion
- Incorrect personal and demonstrative pronoun use
- Movement from 1<sup>st</sup> person to 2<sup>nd</sup> person and 3<sup>rd</sup> person to 2<sup>nd</sup> person
- Logical fallacies



## Helpful Essay Writing Acronyms and Guides

### PERSUASIVE ESSAY WRITING

- C Choose a position
- H Hook your audience
- A Address a target audience
- P Plan and organize arguments with appropriate transitions
- S Support ideas with evidence and details, using:

- F Facts
- E Evidence
- Q Quotes
- S Statistics

End with a strong conclusion that calls the reader to action or to believe what you think.

### EXPOSITORY ESSAY WRITING

- I Inform
  - C Clarify
  - E Explain
  - D Define
- T Teach 3 things with
- D a) vivid Details
  - E b) realistic Examples
  - A c) personal Anecdotes
  - R d) solid Reasons

### PARAGRAPH ELABORATION

**P** Make your **point**.

**I** **Illustrate** your point by describing an example or using an illustration from a text.

**E** **Explain** why your illustration demonstrates your point.

**B** Bare

**E** Extension

**L** Layer

**E** Elaboration

## Eighth Grade Prompts

2004

### **Expository**

#### **Writing Situation:**

Throughout history many important things have been made or invented.

#### **Description for Writing:**

Think about an invention that has been important to people.

Now write to explain why this one invention has been important.

### **Persuasive**

#### **Writing Situation:**

Your principal has been asked to make a decision about the chewing gum rule at your school.

#### **Description for Writing:**

Think about whether students should be allowed to chew gum at school.

Now write to convince your principal to accept your opinion about whether students should be allowed to chew gum at school.

2005

### **Expository**

#### **Writing Situation:**

Most people like a certain month or time of year.

#### **Description for Writing:**

Think about what you like about a certain month or time of year.

Now write to explain why you like this month or time of year.

### **Persuasive**

#### **Writing Situation:**

A recent newspaper survey asked, "Do teens waste too much time watching television?"

#### **Description for Writing:**

Think about whether teens waste too much time watching television.

Now write to convince the editor of the newspaper whether you think teens waste too much time watching television.

2006

**Expository**

**Writing Situation:**

Most people like something in nature, such as plants, animals, or the weather.

**Description for Writing:**

Think about something in nature and why you like it.

Now write to explain why you like this thing in nature.

**Persuasive**

**Writing Situation:**

Your principal is trying to decide if students should work in groups to do all of their school work.

**Description for Writing:**

Think about whether students should work in groups to do all their school work.

Now write to convince the principal whether students should work in groups to do all of their school work.

2007

**Expository**

**Writing Situation:**

Most students learn by listening, reading or doing.

**Description for Writing:**

Think about the way you like to learn.

Now write to explain why you like to learn this way.

**Persuasive**

**Writing Situation:**

Some schools have candy and soda machines.

**Description for Writing:**

Think about whether this is a good idea for your school.

Now write to persuade your principal to accept your opinion about candy and soda machines.

## 8<sup>th</sup> 2004 Expository 5.0 Invention

Nice hook.

"You've got mail," my computer exclaims as I turn it on. The computer is an invention that has been extremely important to people. It is vital for communication, research, and just having a splendid time. Without the computer, the world would definitely not be the way it is today. This invention opens all doors to the future.

Explain how the invention opens doors to the future.

Add a supporting detail.

To begin with, the computer is ideal for communication. One can send letters, called emails, through the computer. Also one can chat with their chums and receive a message in an instant! For example, every day when I arrive home from school, I dash to the computer to get the update on how my friends are doing. The computer is an outstanding way to communicate with people, something that I thoroughly enjoy doing.

Create a visual picture and elaborate.

What types of updates do you receive?

Use a more mature transition.

Secondly, the computer is a necessity for completing that dreaded homework assignment at the last minute; one can research ideas and topics at the click of a mouse. One time, I was attempting to finish a very long report on President Rutherford B. Hayes, and the library was closed. Once again my computer saved the day! I did all of my research on that mighty piece of equipment. The computer is one's source of information needed for reports and research papers.

Name or explain a dreaded homework assignment.

Name specific websites for research.

What types of information?

Use a more mature transition

Lastly, the computer is an exceptional way to have loads of fun in one's leisure time. Whenever I am bored, my friendly computer welcomes me, and I play games for hours. It is the Rubik's cube of the future; it is an excellent source of entertainment and amusement. One can transform a rainy, gloomy day into an afternoon of fun and excitement by just sitting in front of the computer screen.

Create a visual picture.

Great metaphor.

Show what one does in front of the computer.

Clever use of an analogy.

One can determine that the computer is a brilliant invention and is as important to a human as a bone is to a dog. It is great for communication with one's pals, it is a wonderful way to research information, and it is a great source of fun. The computer makes life a lot easier for people of all ages and genders. How could one not own one of these spectacular inventions!

Rather than restate your ideas; create an insightful thought.

## 8th 2004 Expository 5.0 Invention

“You’ve got mail,” my computer exclaims as I turn it on. The computer is an invention that has been extremely important to people. It is vital for communication, research, and just having a splendid time. Without the computer, the world would definitely not be the way it is today. This invention opens all doors to the future.

To begin with, the computer is ideal for communication. One can send letters, called emails, through the computer. Also one can chat with their chums and receive a message in an instant! For example, every day when I arrive home from school, I dash to the computer to get the update on how my friends are doing. The computer is an outstanding way to communicate with people, something that I thoroughly enjoy doing.

Secondly, the computer is a necessity for completing that dreaded homework assignment at the last minute; one can research ideas and topics at the click of a mouse. One time, I was attempting to finish a very long report on President Rutherford B. Hayes, and the library was closed. Once again my computer saved the day! I did all of my research on that mighty piece of equipment. The computer is one’s source of information needed for reports and research papers.

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## 8<sup>th</sup> 2004 Persuasive 5.0 Chewing Gum

Good catchy opening.  
Clever use of dialogue.

“Dang, girl, your breath stank.”

“Well if I had some gum, it wouldn’t.” Some people have halitosis\* and the only way to fix it is gum. How would you like it if someone said hi to you and you almost threw up from the stench? If they had gum, it wouldn’t stink so bad.

Fix pronoun shift.

Also, everyone chews gum. It’s a fact of life. It just makes students mad when **they** can’t do something in school they do everywhere else. **We** are older and know not to stick it under desks. **They** only do that because they don’t want to get caught, and the only place to put it is under the desk.

Provide an example or anecdote to support your point.

Incorrect transition. “Again” refers to something already mentioned.

**Again**, you get nervous. But chewing gum might help you overcome your nervousness. **If you chew gum while, let’s say giving a speech, it might distract you from all the people watching and help calm your fears.** Sometimes you don’t know what to do with your mouth, but when you chew gum you don’t have to worry about it.

Good point. Follow it with an example or anecdote.

This is a good place to provide an example or anecdote.

Finally, think about all the written detentions that have been given. A lot of those have gone to students chewing gum. **So why not make your lives and the lives of students easier? If we were allowed to chew gum, you would be able to rest your hand from writing all those detentions, and we can rest our hands from having to write all those paragraphs about chewing gum.**

Weak transition. Revise.

**In conclusion**, the ban on chewing gum in school should be eliminated. If your breath stinks, what do you normally do? **You pop in a piece of Ice-Breakers, and**

Good detail connecting to the introduction.

Don’t restate your points in your conclusion. Instead, provide an insightful thought.

**it takes away the stench. Everyone chews gum, including teachers. So if teachers are allowed to chew gum during class, so should we. When you get nervous, chewing gum can distract you from all the people out there in the audience. And lastly, stop writing all those detentions. You write too many for students chewing gum. Just let us chew gum in school, and we all go home happy. So let us chew gum in school.**

Omit. Don’t introduce a new idea in the conclusion.

Good call-to-action.

**\*\*No more bad breath!**

Clever.

Repetitive. Omit.

## 8th 2004 Persuasive 5.0 Chewing Gum

“Dang, girl, your breath stank.”

“Well if I had some gum, it wouldn’t.” Some people have halitosis\* and the only way to fix it is gum. How would you like it if someone said hi to you and you almost threw up from the stench? If they had gum, it wouldn’t stink so bad.

Also, everyone chews gum. It’s a fact of life. It just makes students mad when they can’t do something in school they do everywhere else. We are older and know not to stick it under desks. They only do that because they don’t want to get caught, and the only place to put it is under the desk.

Again, you get nervous. But chewing gum might help you overcome your nervousness. If you chew gum while, let’s say giving a speech, it might distract you from all the people watching and help calm your fears. Sometimes you don’t know what to do with your mouth, but when you chew gum you don’t have to worry about it.

Finally, think about all the written detentions that have been given. A lot of those have gone to students chewing gum. So why not make your lives and the lives of students easier? If we were allowed to chew gum, you would be able to rest your hand from writing all those detentions, and we can rest our hands from having to write all those paragraphs about chewing gum.

In conclusion, the ban on chewing gum in school should be eliminated. If your breath stinks, what do you normally do? You pop in a piece of Ice-Breakers, and it takes away the stench. Everyone chews gum, including teachers. So if teachers are allowed to chew gum during class, so should we. When you get nervous, chewing gum can distract you from all the people out there in the audience. And lastly, stop writing all those detentions. You write too many for students chewing gum. Just let us chew gum in school, and we all go home happy. So let us chew gum in school.

\*\*No more bad breath!

## 8<sup>th</sup> 2005 Expository 5.0 Time of Year

Make rhetorical question more relevant.

Hey! What's your favorite time of year? Personally I love summer. I like summer because I get to see my family. I don't see my extended family a lot because they live in West Virginia, Also the theme parks! Last is for once I am able to relax.

Revise introduction to make a clear thesis statement with parallel ideas.

Is the reason you visit your grandparents to stay at their house? Clarify.

Oh, how I love to see my family. When we do, we usually visit my grandparents. We do this because we usually stay at their house. After we rest, my grandmother fixes breakfast and brings us around to show us everything she likes. For example she found this website where you can see this huge bridge and they would wave to us through the camera. Then my grandparents would bring us to my uncle's house. That means all my cousins who live there are back from college. We'd swim and play video games. Next, we go to my second cousin's house. She's only ten, but she is a ton of fun and very athletic.

This is a listing. Elaborate with details and examples.

Good transition.

After visiting family, we go to amusement parks! I have fallen in love with Cider Point; it has the largest rollercoaster in the United States and in the world! Isn't that amazing? Well that is far away from my house so we will also go to Busch Gardens. It has awesome rides and scrumpchish food. Some day will be too hot to walk around Bush Gardens so we will go to Sea World.

Is it amazing just because the writer says it is. Show; don't tell.

Paint vivid images of "awesome rides" and "scrumptious food."

This sentence seems like an afterthought. Explain why.

Good. Addresses the reader.

Finally, after all the excitement and after visiting everyone, it is time to relax. For me there is no school!! That also means no track meets. One thing that I enjoy is no chores! With all this free time you probably wonder what I do. I go on campouts with Boy Scouts or with the High Adventure crew. I know that might seem strange to you but as every kid I hang out with my friends. I'll go over to Travis's house and invite a few friends who live in the area and have a party or just hang out. We will also play my favorite game football! We'll play video too just not as often.

Listing. Choose one idea (hang out with friends) and elaborate.

Describe what you do on campouts or with High Adventure crew.

This is why I have grown to love summer as if it were family. First, I visit family. Second, My family and/or friends go to theme parks with me. Last, I get to relax, which I believe is the most important. That is why my favorite time of year is summer. What is your favorite time of year?

Don't merely restate your points in your conclusion. Leave your reader with an insightful thought.

Weak ending. See adjacent comment.



## 8th 2005 Expository 5.0 Time of Year

Hey! What's your favorite time of year? Personally I love summer. I like summer because I get to see my family. I don't see my extended family a lot because they live in West Virginia, Also the theme parks! Last is for once I am able to relax.

Oh, how I love to see my family. When we do, we usually visit my grandparents. We do this because we usually stay at their house. After we rest, my grandmother fixes breakfast and brings us around to show us everything she likes. For example she found this website where you can see this huge bridge and they would wave to us through the camera. Then my grandparents would bring us to my uncle's house. That means all my cousins who live there are back from college. We'd swim and play video games. Next, we go to my second cousin's house. She's only ten, but she is a ton of fun and very athletic.

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Finally, after all the excitement and after visiting everyone, it is time to relax. For me there is no school!! That also means no track meets. One thing that I enjoy is no chores! With all this free time you probably wonder what I do. I go on campouts with Boy Scouts or with the High Adventure crew. I know that might seem strange to you but as every kid I hang out with my friends. I'll go over to Travis's house and invite a few friends who live in the area and have a party or just hang out. We will also play my favorite game football! We'll play video too just not as often.

This is why I have grown to love summer as if it were family. First, I visit family. Second, My family and/or friends go to theme parks with me. Last, I get to relax, which I believe is the most important. That is why my favorite time of year is summer. What is your favorite time of year?

## 8<sup>th</sup> 2005 Persuasive 5.0 Television

Some people think that watching television is not harmful. I have to differ. I think teens waste too much time watching television. Here are some reasons watching television for teens is a waste of time, television is a bad influence, while watching television teens get less things done, and television is bad for your health.

First, television is an awful influence on teens. T.V. shows sex before marriage, drugs, violence, guns, and fighting. Now I'm not saying that the T.V. controls the minds of teens because it doesn't. Teens think for themselves, but watching T.V. isn't helping. It's bad enough that in the world today, there are teens having babies before they get out of high school but T.V. doesn't help that it influences them by showing sex before marriage and other things like that. Also it shows teens taking drugs and violence. Talk about peer pressure—well, T.V. has it. It shows teens overdosing and bringing guns and weapons to school. T.V. doesn't pop out and say let's take a weapon to school, but it influences it. Television is a horrible influence on teens today.

Second, if you are into a good movie on T.V. you can't want to get up and do your chores and homework you want to stay there and watch it. If teens are sitting on the couch watching T.V., they don't do their homework. Homework is about 25% of their grade and not doing their homework lowers their grade. Also, most teens nowadays have chores like doing dishes and cleaning their rooms or taking the dog out. But when they sit and watch T.V., do the chores do themselves? No, they don't. This means the house becomes a mess. Watching television does not help teens get things done.

Finally, teens watching television is not healthy. For example, if you sit or stand too close to the T.V. then you can get bad eyesight. And most teens when watching T.V. like to grab something to eat like chocolate or popcorn or chips. And that's not healthy for the body. When watching T.V., teens do not exercise, and they can gain weight. Teens also lose brain cells when watching T.V. especially when it is dark and the lights are out the big flashes aren't good for the brain. So teens watching television is not healthy at all.

Now that you know all my reasons that teens watching television is a waste of time which are television is a bad influence, less things get done and it is not healthy. You can conclude if you think teens watching television is a waste of time or not.

**Strong Introduction.**

**Weak transition, but good topic sentence.**

**Revise run on sentence.**

**Unclear pronoun. Be specific.**

**Revise for clarity.**

**Revise run on sentence.**

**Don't just restate your points in your conclusion. Instead, provide an insightful thought.**

**Avoid listing. Combine with thesis for clarity.**

**Good discussion. Use an example or anecdote to strengthen your point.**

**Revise run on sentence.**

**Elaborate more fully. Choose one or two points to develop with an example or anecdote.**

**Don't give your reader a choice; finish with a strong call-to-action.**

## 8th 2005 Persuasive 5.0 Television

Some people think that watching television is not harmful. I have to differ. I think teens waste too much time watching television. Here are some reasons watching television for teens is a waste of time, television is a bad influence, while watching television teens get less things done, and television is bad for your health.

First, television is an awful influence on teens. T.V. shows sex before marriage, drugs, violence, guns, and fighting. Now I'm not saying that the T.V. controls the minds of teens because it doesn't. Teens think for themselves, but watching T.V. isn't helping. It's bad enough that in the world today, there are teens having babies before they get out of high school but T.V. doesn't help that it influences them by showing sex before marriage and other things like that. Also it shows teens taking drugs and violence. Talk about peer pressure—well, T.V. has it. It shows teens overdosing and bringing guns and weapons to school. T.V. doesn't pop out and say let's take a weapon to school, but it influences it. Television is a horrible influence on teens today.

Second, if you are into a good movie on T.V. you can't want to get up and do your chores and homework you want to stay there and watch it. If teens are sitting on the couch watching T.V., they don't do their homework. Homework is about 25% of their grade and not doing their homework lowers their grade. Also, most teens nowadays have chores like doing dishes and cleaning their rooms or taking the dog out. But when they sit and watch T.V., do the chores do themselves? No, they don't. This means the house becomes a mess. Watching television does not help teens get things done.

Finally, teens watching television is not healthy. For example, if you sit or stand too close to the T.V. then you can get bad eyesight. And most teens when watching T.V. like to grab something to eat like chocolate or popcorn or chips. And that's not healthy for the body. When watching T.V., teens do not exercise, and they can gain weight. Teens also lose brain cells when watching T.V. especially when it is dark and the lights are out the big flashes aren't good for the brain. So teens watching television is not healthy at all.

Now that you know all my reasons that teens watching television is a waste of time which are television is a bad influence, less things get done and it is not healthy. You can conclude if you think teens watching television is a waste of time or not.

## 8<sup>th</sup> 2006 Expository 5.0 Favorite Thing in Nature

Avoid ending sentences with a preposition.

Wow! When you take a step back, or take yourself out of the picture, you realize our world is amazing. The plants, animals, and weather in nature are indescribable. My favorite part of nature is the water. It makes noises that relax me. The amazing plants and animals that grow and live inside it are unbelievable, Finally, on summer days it's fun to splash around in.

Give specific examples.

Fragment—revise into a sentence.

Water is like a spa; it's relaxing! I enjoy resting on the warm speckled sand on the beach. With a book in hand listening to the roar of the ocean waves pound against the mini shells and sand that lay below it. It's a waterfall of memories. Water just calms you down.

Elaborate with a specific memory.

Off topic. Stay with the "sounds" point.

You take time to listen and recall events because you're relaxed. You rest and sleep like a baby when you go to the beach.

Provide an example.

Good use of a simile.

Water is one of nature's most amazing creations. It provides many other pieces of nature to have a home. Think of the Florida Keys. Many people snorkel there because they have sorts of amazing colored fish that glide around the teal blue waters. Also the coral and the slimy green sea horses decorate the sea floor like sprinkles on a cake. Water and the creatures that live in it are just so amazing. There's no wonder that it's my favorite part of nature!

Elaborate with examples.

Fragment—revise into a sentence.

"Girls just want to have fun," but I think everyone just wants to have fun! That's why my favorite part of nature is the water. There's so much to do in the water. Like swimming in your pool in the summer, laughing, splashing, just having a good old time. You can also go fishing. Reeling in that gigantic fish from the depths of the dark blue ocean is like picking a prize out of the prize box. Also in water, you can go on a real exciting adventure; you can go tubing. While that boat drags you along behind it, you hold on as tight as you can, but when your grip loosens, you hit that cool, crisp, water with a giant "THUD!"

Add transitional sentence here for clarity and logic.

Conclude with a personal experience or clever anecdote.

Well, there you have it, I've told you my favorite thing in nature would be the cool, refreshing water. I enjoy the water for reasons such as it allows other beautiful fish and animals to swim and live in it. Also water is relaxing and calm. Water is fantastic because it provides us with fun-filled activities that we can use on it. That's why water is my favorite thing.

Omit this kind of statement; be direct.

## 8th 2006 Expository 5.0 Favorite Thing in Nature

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## 8<sup>th</sup> 2006 Persuasive 5.0 Group Work

Dear Principal Smith,

I thoroughly believe that students should be able to work in groups to do all of their school work. **There are many reasons why this should be.** Yet, the two most bold reasons would obviously be, it lets thoughts and ideas about the work be discussed among your peers and you can learn from one another. The working of groups should have limitations, but it also creates a better learning atmosphere. Here are some detailed reasons to why group work should be allowed.

Revise this paragraph to eliminate wordiness.

Combine two opening sentences. Use "for" instead of "there are."

**One bold, motivational reason would definitely have to be, thoughts and ideas**

**may be discussed.** If you or any members of your group may have suggestions or thoughts, **these may be brought up** with your peers. Having these free working discussions may many benefit from a smart idea someone may have. For example, Jenny may have a new, more understandable way to figure out the algebra problem, and this may let not only her, but all group members benefit from the discovery. Overall having these talks will **let** many minds grow.

Use active form of verb.

"Thoughts and ideas" is too vague; be more specific.

Use stronger verb.

Another door the group working will open would be learning from one another. Instead of having to ask your teacher a question, you could ask a group member to help you out. A lot of the time, I have found having a peer reword a problem or situation is a lot easier to comprehend than coming completely from the text or an adult. There also may be topics you can all share your knowledge **of that subject on**, and have everyone learn something new. All in all, learning from one another is a great benefit **everyone should have the chance to have.**

Why should they have the experience? Explain.

Elaborate with a specific example.

Eliminate or revise.

Omit filler words.

As you can see, group working would be a wonderful new idea. Discussing thoughts and ideas as well as learning from one another are just a few of the benefits group working holds. **These reasons as to why group working would be helpful are obviously true.** Having the next generation of our world excel together would be, **in my opinion**, fantastic. Letting fresh thoughts and other ideas from one another flow thorough our young minds may be a new key to successful thinking.

Omit filler words.

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One bold, motivational reason would definitely have to be, thoughts and ideas may be discussed. If you or any members of your group may have suggestions or thoughts, these may be brought up with your peers. Having these free working discussions may many benefit from a smart idea someone may have. For example, Jenny may have a new, more understandable way to figure out the algebra problem, and this may let not only her, but all group members benefit from the discovery. Overall having these talks will let many minds grow.

Another door the group working will open would be learning from one another. Instead of having to ask your teacher a question, you could ask a group member to help you out. A lot of the time, I have found having a peer reword a problem or situation is a lot easier to comprehend than coming completely from the text or an adult. There also may be topics you can all share your knowledge of that subject on, and have everyone learn something new. All in all, learning from one another is a great benefit everyone should have the chance to have.

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## 8<sup>th</sup> 2007 Expository 5.0 How You Learn

Start with a hook to catch the reader's attention. Ex. – 8 out of 10 teenagers learn by watching.

There are many different ways of learning. You can learn by listening, reading, watching, and doing. Everyone has a different way of learning. I learn how to do something by watching someone else do it.

Good solid thesis.

The main reason I learn by watching is that it's easier for me. I can watch a teacher do a problem step-by-step. I can watch the first step, and then try it myself. Usually I understand the process after watching it. If I don't understand, I ask for it to be repeated. Then, after I've learned that step, I'll go on to the next step and repeat the process.

Give a specific, concrete example.

Unclear pronoun. Be specific.

It's also more simple for me because I have a photogenic memory. Most of the time, when I see something, I will remember it. Being able to flash back to what I saw happening helps majorly. I can pull that picture from the brain area in my head to replay what happened.

Give a solid, concrete example.

Fix awkward, slang word.

Seeing it in my head, I can use the process on a new problem and see if it works.

Delete this sentence. It is redundant.

Use a transitional sentence to connect ideas.

Seeing a word written out syllable by syllable can also help me learn how to pronounce a word. Especially if the word happens to be long, such as supercalifragilisticexpialidocious. It also helps when I'm trying to say a word

that's in a different language. This strength I have in learning by watching helps me when I am in my Spanish class. Some of the words can be very hard to pronounce or even to spell.

Use a specific, concrete example or a personal anecdote.

Fix fragment. Use this idea in a complete sentence.

Watching is the way that I learn. It is what's easier for me. Find the way that you learn your best. Use that process in any way you can, and you will find that you can learn a lot. You'll soon be thriving with information.



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## 8<sup>th</sup> 2007 Persuasive5.0 Candy and Soda Machines

Dear Mr. Eminems,

After hearing the news in the air about allowing candy and soda machines in our school, I asked myself what my opinion was. Though there are many reasons who or why not to allow such an atrocious idea, I believe that candy and soda machines should not be permitted in school.

For one reason why this idea should not take place is the blatant fact that it's just not healthy. Recent polls have been taken on how many schools have overweight pupils due to candy and soda machines dwelling on their campus. And statistics say that in all schools taking this survey 85% of overweight students are from the very school that allows such machines on their campus. The military, in fact, does not allow their soldiers to drink soda during training; the carbonation in soda eats away the calcium in your bones, particularly the shin bones. They find that when this happens, the shin bone gets so weak and brittle that when they run, the bone just breaks.

"Calm down or you'll get a detention!" That statement is what you'll hear in your classrooms due to the lack of coherent students in the classroom. Certain sodas and sweets act as an artificial stimulant to people. It gives you a rush or sugar "high" that can distract other students from doing work. The rush could take a toll on yourself as well, because it can cause you not to be focused on your school work. I remember a time when my friend Matt went up to a gas station before school to buy himself an energy drink because he didn't get a good night's rest. That soda gave him a rush that got him and two other students he distracted in trouble. Then later on in the day he sort of got a "sugar hangover" which made him ill for the rest of the day. For one he got in trouble, and he was detained from doing his work for the day.

How refreshing and tasty these items are to us, but it is only vanity and worthless.

Like grasping for air, soda and candy are pointless and only cause grief and confusion. I would definitely prohibit the idea of such a revolting thing to put in our lovely school system.

**Revise this part of your sentence for clarity.**

**Revise. Make your meaning clearer.**

**Choose a more accurate verb.**

**Use "because of."**

**Add a transition sentence here to relate what went before to what follows.**

**Add a strong "call to action" final statement.**

**Say why. Include your points in the introduction to show a focused thesis statement.**

**Fix preposition.**

**Fix number agreement.**

**Make pronouns more specific.**

**Fix misused preposition.**

**Make parallel. Use two adjectives or two nouns.**

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How refreshing and tasty these items are to us, but it is only vanity and worthless. Like grasping for air, soda and candy are pointless and only cause grief and confusion. I would definitely prohibit the idea of such a revolting thing to put in our lovely school system.

## 8<sup>th</sup> 2004 Expository 6.0 Invention

“Please fasten your seatbelts and prepare for takeoff.” Mankind has always yearned to fly. We studied birds in awe of how they soared through the clear blue sky. When the Wright Brothers invented the first successful flying machine, it was as if humans were defying the laws of gravity. The airplane was going to be a big part of our future and we’re willing to take the invention and fly with it.

Not only did the airplane fulfill man’s wildest dreams but it was also very important historically. The airplane spread new ideas and culture. Airplanes could take you from one country to another in a matter of hours. This meant that new languages and concepts could devour the world much faster than ever thought possible. Our planet was becoming united and we owed much of this connection to the airplane.

Like Jekyll and Hyde, the airplane has always had two personalities in constant battle. The airplane made uniting the world easier but it also brought new means of war. Bombs were dropped, and cities were destroyed thanks to the airplane. Stealth Bombers could slip in and out of enemy territory undetected. Our technology was improving at a vast rate, but at the same time war was becoming more advanced and deadly.

You know that an invention has truly been important when it leads to new more technologically advanced inventions. More than half a century after the invention of the plane, man was not only soaring through our skies, but through space! The airplane was a tree trunk and its newest branch was the space shuttle!

The airplane has been one of the most historically significant inventions, yet so far. It has been able to bring people and ideas together. But it has also torn countries apart. The airplane started with flights lasting minutes, and branched into shuttles exploring uncharted space. The thought of man in flight began as a mere fantasy and become an important part of air reality and history. The invention of the airplane proves that all you need is to believe in your dreams, and they will soar higher than you ever thought possible.

## 8<sup>th</sup> 2005 Expository 6.0 Favorite Time of Year

Burr! The chill of the frosty cold air sends shivers down my spine. I sure do love winter! The fact that it's Christmas time, winter break, and I get to go to Minnesota to visit my grandparents makes winter my all-time-favorite time of year. A year without winter is like hot chocolate without marshmallows-and you know there's going to be a lot of that when winter time rolls around.

"Ho ho ho! Merry Christmas," says a familiar face. Along with Rudolph and all the sleigh bells jingling, Santa Clause makes every Christmas unforgettable-which is why winter is always a season to look forward to. Christmas is a festive, jolly time of the year where everyone decorates their house in shimmering green and red beads, hangs fuzzy stockings in front of their toasty fireplace, and sings happy Christmas carols. But my personal favorite would have to be baking ginger bread cookies and decorating them with all sorts of colored frosting and shiny sprinkles. Munch...munch...munch...And of course eating them is the best part. Winter would not be the same without Christmas.

Every year around winter time, my family and I fly on an airplane up to Minnesota to visit Grandma and Grandpa. "To Grandmother's house we go!" I love spending time with my lovable and sweet grandparents who always have something exciting in store when we come. Last year they took us to a huge frozen lake where we ice skated the day away. Even though my fingertips froze like ice cubes, I'd do it again anytime. Going to Minnesota at the end of every December is an event that is always written on my calendar.

What vacation does everybody look forward to because you know you're half way through the school year? Yup, that's right, it's winter vacation! And you know what that means- no school, no homework, and a time to do whatever you please. I prefer hanging out with friends and enjoying the cool weather. I love getting two whole weeks to take time off from school- to take a break and put my feet up. It's a feeling of being refreshed when school gets back in season.

As you can see, winter is my absolute favorite time of year. The things that make it so wonderful are the Christmas season, getting to visit Grandma and Grandpa out in the boondocks of northern Minnesota, and having a break in the middle of the school year to take time for myself to refresh. I love winter so much, sometimes I wish the whole year could be like that.

## 8<sup>th</sup> 2005 Persuasive 6.0 Television

Have you ever watched a TV show and thought to yourself, “What a bunch of lies!” It seems as if television itself drives the minds of entertainment-craving teens. Mr. Editor, I truly believe that teens do spend far too much time watching television. And as a teen myself, I believe that it is painstakingly obvious. Television has given us the definition of the term “couch potato” and drives the lack of activity among our youth. It also leads to a slight, but noticeable drop in school grades and homework productivity. Yet, the epitome of television itself is founded on the violence and profanity expressed on even the most docile of shows.

Laziness itself has grown more common through generations and is derived heavily from “the tube”. It has almost mind controlling qualities that grab teens and pull them into a world of reality TV and potato chips. Unless you’re an amazing multi-tasker, no physical activities are performed while staring at a “pimped out ride” on a reality car fixing show. This not only damages a teen’s body physically, but socially and mentally too.

So while you stare at a television screen for 5 hours straight, when do you expect to get anything done? Homework is easily strewn aside until “later” and is likely never completed. This does not have a positive impact on your grades. TV also provides a thick mental barrier which can prevent us teens from being able to remember what we did even a few minutes ago. So then when we’re in class and are asked a question about chemistry or algebra, our best response is, “Uh ... I don’t know!”

This mindlessness is also due to the fact the overwhelming amounts of profanity and violence crammed into one show teach us that well maybe violence is ok. For example, while a sensible person may see a bloody switchblade fight on the “action channel” as unrealistic, the feeble minds of some teenagers view it as cool and that it’s something that they would be tough enough to do. This leads to a lot of senseless violence at school or around the neighborhood. Even, worse, the excessive use of profane language soaks into our heads and drips out our mouths when we carry on normal conversations and even when were talking to adults.

Television should definetley be limited inside the home. It spawns laziness and teaches bad habits to those of us still learning about the world around us. Homework is neglected, and grades get annihilated when this privilege is overused. But the violence and tyranny television brings to kids only damages thier growing minds. I can only hope that this unreal reality can be stunted, for it in itself can ruin lives.

## 8<sup>th</sup> 2006 Expository 6.0 Nature

As I sped down the slope, the wind in my hair, I felt my skis building momentum. Faster, faster, till I thought I would collapse. But I didn't; I kept on going. The view took my breath away. The snow-covered mountains, my breath in the icy air: I love the both the winter and the snow. This particular skiing trip was during winter break one year when we went to New York. The snow was absolutely beautiful, neither too cold nor too wet. It was a perfect day for skiing. I'm so glad that Mother Nature gave us snow because it provides so many activities that keep me from being bored. Snowball fights, sledding, you name it, and snow provides the perfect opportunity.

Snow also gives me plenty of winter sports, like snowboarding and skiing. They can be competitive or just fun with family and friends. Ice skating is another winter sport that can be fun or competitive. New fallen snow is so heavenly to look at. When you wake up in the morning during winter, throw open the curtains and look out the window to see a fresh white blanket over everything, you just gasp at the beauty of it all. Then you go outside and break an icicle off the overhang of the roof. It tastes so pure and crystalline cold. And then you look over the hills and see the ice and snow twinkling in the morning sun, untouched by human hands, the beautiful white icing on a cake, not yet broken by a knife. This truly is a sight to see.

Snow also provides an awesome opportunity to sit inside by the fire in your pajamas and tune out. This feeling is best right around Christmas when you get to sit and relax with hot chocolate and marshmallows all gooey and yummy and anticipate your family coming in from the rush and cold of Christmas shopping.

Snow gives you that kind of feeling; a feeling of lightness, like the weight of the world being lifted, like you have no worries and are free to float along among the clouds. In nature, snow is beautiful in every way.

...That skiing trip was awesome, and afterwards, we sat in a new lodge which felt just like home. As I sat in a dark green overstuffed chair by the fire, slowly peeling off layers of clothing, I hear the "ding" of the microwave. I get up; they are serving free hot chocolate and cookies, my favorite! And as I look out the big window and see the sun setting behind snow-covered mountains, I feel at peace within myself. Snow is a wonderful, wonderful thing.

## 8<sup>th</sup> 2006 Persuasive 6.0 Group Work

“Oh Man! I am paired up with Tyler again!” Have you ever heard that before? When students are assigned to groups, some are intrigued and some are not. Students tend to work more efficiently when they work individually. Some students, working in groups, goof off or talk about the latest fashion craze instead of doing their work. All in all, when students work in groups, distraction is established.

Whenever I am working in a group, I only enjoy working together if I was lucky enough to be paired with my friends. If you are paired up with friends, it's natural instinct to start chatting. But, when you aren't, all you want to do is get the project over with. Either way, it's a lose-lose situation. You are never able to efficiently focus on the new content, resulting in the new information to go in one ear and out the other. These situations don't sound like an ideal learning environment to me.

If you do work, it's not always done to its full potential. The kids who might be lazier than the other kids in their group may just not do their work because they simply don't have to. This leaves the rest of the group to pick up their group members' slack. One time I was selected to be with a group of kids who weren't doing so well in the class. Just because I had an A didn't mean that I had to do all the work! Before I knew it, I became the group. I still did the project; the other kids just received the benefit of the doubt. They didn't learn any new content and got the same grade that I deserved. Is this how it should be?

Additionally, there are always the students who will play around instead of learn. These tend to be the students who don't really care how they do. They care more about what's going on outside of school than they care about a project. Why should they have to do it anyway? Having a straight A student in a group is not always a good thing. The good student will attract the average and below average students to the group. These students will then sit back and let the strong student do all the work. When only one or two students care about the work, the whole group's grade suffers. Therefore, students do not learn the content that the teachers are attempting to convey.

All in all, students should not be required to always work in groups. Group work causes some students to slack off because these students wonder why they should work if they don't have to. The same problem leaves the students with a declining education. Some will learn and some will not. Students will work in groups because they imagine it as a time to catch up on the latest gossip. Group work results in multiple cons. Why establish this type of learning environment? As you can see, it's best to require students to do their own work and leave the groups to be social gatherings in the cafeteria.



## 8<sup>th</sup> 2007 Expository 6.0 Way to Learn

### The Way I Learn Best

I snap my pencil quietly against the solid wood of the kitchen table. Melodies, beats, and lyrics escape my radio like an upturned lullaby, as I slip into my working zone. As the final chorus of my favorite song slowly leaks into oblivion, I realize I have constructed the last problem on my science homework. Tossing aside my textbook; I snatch another. I dive into my next assignment as the opening chords of a soothing song drift across my ears. I learn most of what I require by listening to music.

Most parents believe that any entertainment during homework is distracting in a way. I agree with them although, ultimately it is how you use the entertainment that matters most. Personally, I use music to my advantage. While most kids can't recall what homework they did, or what it is about, I can summon that information simply by remembering what song I was tapping into at that moment. My brain splurges a connection. "Chapter twelve...at that point I was listening to Green Day... and I remember wondering what atoms were around the second song...atoms!" In that sense, I have a mental filing cabinet.

My method works with almost any subject. Simply because there are songs about many things, and by comparing emotional lyrics to drowsy book definitions, you can easily educate yourself. However, you have to have a multitude of patience. In order to learn efficiently, you must have an empty, bland space with neat surroundings. How can you let the words sink into your head if you are being distracted by upheaval and chaos that is the content of your room? In addition, it has to be silent. Except for the radio, of course with the silence, the melody can escape its prison and work its way into your mind, drowning you in the depths of its meaning while you relate it to the dark poetry you were instructed to skim for Language Arts class.

The wrong kind of music can utterly destroy the atmosphere, however. If you are engrossed by history, inspire yourself with an historical composer of that time. Science should probably be imitated by techno or disco. In this way, the mood of the assignment converses with your melodic world. It also helps for the dreary subjects, if you pair it up with some popular, modern-day masterpieces.

I hastily turn the beat-up radio off as I finish the final installment of my homework. Making a mental notation of what songs I listened to during what assignment makes me smirk. Learning by music definitely has its quirks.

## 8<sup>th</sup> 2007 Persuasive 6.0 Candy and Soda Machines

Once upon a time there was a girl named Tracy. One day she was at lunch and she decided that instead of going and waiting in that long lunch line, she would just go to the candy machines and soda machines to get her food there. After she was done she got this sudden urge to run around frantically.

Teachers, do your students seem to be coming back from lunch extremely hyper? If the answer is yes, then the problem is the candy and soda machines you may have in your school. Just imagine, you finally get your break after a long day. You sit back and relax waiting for your students to come back from lunch, not expecting the worst part of your day. When they get there, sit down, and you begin your lesson, you notice kids talking over you, not being able to sit still, and moving around. They sit there during their big test of the week, twiddling their thumbs, not being able to concentrate on anything except talking to their neighbors, and the big snickers bar they just had washed down with a bottle of mountain dew. Sending kids out of the classroom left and right is not what you get paid to do.

Secondly after they get that sudden burst of energy, they begin to calm down, a little too much though. All that sugar they had made them extremely lackadaisical. They sit there leaned back in their chairs and with their heads on their chests drooling. They were too lazy with their low energy to do anything! They were like robots. Imagine having sat there doing nothing, while you do the same thing in the morning, and at lunch. You go day after day watching your grades drop one by one. All because of candy and soda. Well, I guess so much for those A's and B's you promised Mom last semester.

Finally, Hey principals, are you walking around your schools campus seeing what looks like chocolate every where on your walls and grounds? Or are you walking in classrooms with soda stains on the floor? You finally realized why as you walked around stepping all over candy wrappers and soda bottles everywhere you turn. These messy kids were throwing their trash everywhere but the trash can. I wonder why you didn't get that environmental award.

And as Tracy walked into her classroom after lunch, she felt extremely sick and tired. Her face was like an attack the giant pimples. She quickly ran out of the classroom to the principal and told him that something needed to be done about those machines before they ruined her school career, all because of dropping grade.

**Activity**  
**8<sup>th</sup> 2006 Persuasive 5.0 Group Work**

Dear Principal,

“Hey, Let me get your answers!” Students should not be allowed to work in groups to do their homework. One student could easily do the work for the rest of the group, and nobody is learning anything that way. Also, when students get together, friends or not, it can be very distracting. We just can’t help but talk. Peer pressure could kick in if students work in groups, like being called the nerd for doing the homework assignment. These are all the magnificent reasons of why students should not work in groups to do homework.

Let’s face it. If about five students got together to do a class assignment, only about two of them would actually use their brains. Mr. Principal, nobody learns anything just by copying the work from the person beside them. Besides the few that do the work, everyone else is simply slacking off. Everyone would cheat, and cheating is unacceptable! I’ll admit it, if I were in a group and someone got done before me, I would probably take their answers. This is what will happen if students begin to work together for school.

If three or more social teenagers are allowed to sit down together, there’s a better change of them growing wings than keeping their mouths shut. Students tend to talk when they get together, there’s no avoiding it. Talking is very distracting, and with it, work is bound to be left unaccomplished. Not only talking could become a distraction, though. If two students in the group don’t get along, they could become quarrelsome and cause a gigantic distraction. Imagine, Mr. Principal, students trying to work together with two classmates screaming at each other. It would be ridiculous to think students could work together under these conditions.

Peer pressure could kick in if students do not work as a team. A student might not work with all of his or her effort, afraid to be teased by others. I know that this sounds cruel, but kids are harsh these days. Students could easily gang up on someone if put in a small study group. Other classmates could call him or her a “geek” or a “nerd” because the student happened to do the homework.

So, Mr. Principal, students should definitely not be put in groups to work on school work, Not only would classmates copy from one student, but a distraction could occur. Not to mention a student could be teased. Let students remain individuals.

- **Develop this writer’s hook by adding two sentences that help the reader picture this scene.**
- **This writer’s second paragraph has several bare sentences that need to be extended and elaborated. Choose one idea and develop it with details that help the reader picture it.**

## **Activity**

### **8<sup>th</sup> 2005 Persuasive 5.0 Television**

Teenagers. The scapegoats of America today. Many teenagers fail to realize the fate of their generation rests in their hands. By watching too much television, which many teens sufficiently do, they're branding themselves as lazy, unproductive members of society.

So many teens complain about their life or lack of independence, but many of them just sit on their butts, watching television all day. The drugs, violence and sex you see on tv nowadays, only emphasizes to adults how useless teens are when they see us watching those shows.

To many teens waste time in, watching some of the shows constantly, tearing them away from the real world. It is a proven fact, that if a person, watches a display of violence, or someone tampering with drugs, their brain will get used to it, and begin to think that it is okay. By wasting time watching television, teenagers are introducing the ideas to the brain that you can break the law and get away with it, or that doing drugs won't kill you, or having sex won't impregnate you.

I really wish teenagers would tear themselves away from the latest reality show and GET INVOLVED. To stop wasting time, and get involved with the real world. So many teenagers complain about lack of life, but what they're really suffering is from a lack of chance. Instead of living their own lives, they're living through the lives of their favorite tv character.

If teenagers don't waste so much time, so many aspects of our society could change. It is a gross injustice to the majority of teens that don't spend their nights methodically sweeping their tortilla chips through some old salsa while transfixed into the lives of a make-believe superhero, that are branded as last no-good teenagers that will never succeed.

I hope that you take this essay into heart, Mr. Editor-in-chief, that your results of your survey were completely factual despite any letters you may receive. The majority of teenagers DO watch television more that they should wasting their time, my time, and society's time. It would do America a big favor, for teens to snap off that remote, and start living their own reality show.

- **Rewrite the first paragraph of this essay by creating an imaginative, developed hook.**
- **Rewrite paragraph three by developing the writer's topic sentence. Write an extension and an example or anecdote that clearly helps the reader picture this author's concept.**
- **Rewrite the concluding paragraph in this essay. Correct the areas that lack logic or clarity.**

**Activity**  
**8<sup>th</sup> 2006-Expository 5.0 Nature**

Wow! When you take a step back, or take yourself out of the picture, you realize our world is amazing. The plants, animals, and weather in nature are undiscrivable. My Favorite part of nature is the water. It makes relaxing noises. The amazing plants and animals that grow and live inside it are unbelievable, Finally on summer days it's fun to splash around in.

Water is like a spa; it's relaxing! I enjoy resting on the warm speckled sand on the beach. With a book in hand listening to the roar of the ocean waves pound against the mini shells and sand that lay below it. It's a waterfall of memories. Water just clams you down. You take time to listen and recall events because your relaxed. You rest and sleep like a baby when you go to the beach.

Water is one of nature's most amazing creations. It provides many other pieces of nature to have a home. Think of the Florida Keys. Many people snorkel there because theirs all sorts of amazing colored fish that glide around the teal blue waters. Also the coral and the slimy green sea horses decorate the sea floor like sprinkles on a cake. Water and the creatures that live in it are just so amazing. That theres no wonder that it's my favorite part of nature!

"Girls just want to have fun"! I think everyone just want to have fun. That's why my favorite part of nature is the water. Theres so much to do in the water. Like swimming in your pool in the summer, laughing, splashing, just having a good old time. You can also go fishing. Reeling in that gigantic fish fro the depths of the dark blue ocean is like picking a prize out of the prize box. Also in water, you can go on a real exciting adventure, you can go tubing. While that boat drags you along behind it, you hold on as tight as you can, but when your grip loosens, you hit that cool, crisp, water with a giant "THUD"!

Well, there you have it, I've told you my favorite thing in nature would be the cool, refreshing water. I enjoy the water for reasons such as it allows other beautiful fish and animals to swim and live in it. Also water is relaxing and calm. Water is fantastic because it provides us with fun filled activities that we can use on it. That's why water is my favorite thing.

- **Rewrite the introductory paragraph for clarity and specificity. Include a well-worded thesis statement.**
- **Use the writer's topic sentence, "Water is like a spa; it's relaxing!" and write a paragraph using imagery that clearly elaborates on this idea.**

**Activity**  
**8<sup>th</sup> 2006 Expository 5.0 Nature**

Quack, ribet, roar, chirp. Don't you just love these random noises of nature? I know that I do. Most people might enjoy the wild animals or weather about nature but have you ever listen to nature itself? It's one of the most amazing things that could ever flow through your ears. The sound of a lion roaring, a bird chirping, and a duck quacking, all sounds of nature, and all very beautiful to listen too,

The sounds let of unique differences to each and every animal. I remember when I would go camping out in the wild with my family and wake up in the morning to the crickets cricketing and the birds humming a sweet little toon/ every noise I heard was different and never cam out the same. Just imagine all the wonderful toons and sounds all the animals can make together. At first when you hear them all it sounds like a circus, but once you actually listen to the sounds you can make anything out of them. Such as a scary or even classical toon.

Not only are the sounds beautiful, but they are also very relaxing at times. The sweet little noises of baby birds start to soothe my mind just thinking about it. Each chirp coming out with a different toon can make my mind begin to float off into a wounderland. These noises can really be helpful on a nice vacation when you just want to lay back and relax for a while.

When hearing these unforgettable noises you can sort of get a feel about what nature is really about. For example if you hear a lion roaring and a cry from another animal your going to think nature is violent. But if you hear sweet silent noises from the animals your going to believe nature is quiet and calm.

All these different sounds of nature can come into wounderful unforgettable toons that you want to waltz away from. The sounds of nature help me remember about when I used to go camping with my family and what wonderful sounds to remember. Sounds of nature can just make music to your ears.

- **Rewrite this author's fourth paragraph by adding details that help the reader grasp the contrast that this writer is trying to portray.**
- **Find at least seven convention errors in this essay. On your paper write the errors first, and then write the corrections.**

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade 6.0 Introductions and Conclusions

### 2004 Expository

### Invention

(Intro.) One of mankind's most important inventions is the modern computer. It helps people from around the world to connect and share thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Never before has there been such a powerful invention with so many practical applications in various areas of our society. Today, when you look around almost everything relies on a computer in one way or another. The modern computer is indeed a very important tool for man and his countless endeavors.

(Conc.) In conclusion, the modern computer is one of mankind's most important inventions and surely the most important invention of late. It unites people from every ethnicity and background around the world and pulls them together in a collective neighborhood we have dubbed "the internet". The computer is an extraordinary efficient and powerful tool on a myriad of fields. Almost everything manmade that you see and touch today either relies on or was manufactured by these magnificent machines. With the aid of this important tool, the doors of the future are open to us, and we have only to choose our direction and go.

### 2004 Persuasive

### Chewing Gum

(Intro.) Mr. Smith, please open your eyes! Your naïveté surprises me. To allow students at this school to chew gum is like allowing someone to disrupt the atmosphere around school. Hey, that's my number one reason for staying in school. NO to gum! It is disruptive to the learning environment. It, and I mean gum, is also unhealthy for the perspective gum chewers. This school already has a litter problem without adding gum to the mix.

(Conc.) Mr. Smith, spare your students and ban gum chewing in school. It's disruptive to students and teachers alike. It's also an unhealthy habit to acquire. The litter problem here is already immense. So put a stop to gum chewing! What's that, Mrs. Harrison? Spit out my gum? Yes, ma'am . . .

**2004 Persuasive****Chewing Gum**

(Intro.) Dear Principal,

I ask you to put yourself in the students' position for a few moments. You're sitting in class anticipating the test soon to come. These days, tests and grades are so important, so every day tests are nerve racking and your mouth goes dry. What can subdue these before test anxieties? Chewing gum. I will be telling you some of the reasons why allowing students to chew gum in class would be a good policy.

(Conc.) Put yourself back into the classroom taking a test. You have just finished, and you are sitting calmly and triumphantly because you have a good feeling about the test. See, the gum really helped! Though gum might not act as a test stress-reliever for all, let it be an option for those it helps. Mr. Principal, thank you for considering this because this could keep Grant Middle School an "A" school.

**2005 Expository****Time of Year**

(Intro.) The months of the year all represent one thing or another. February is the month of love, December fills us with Christmas glee, and July represents the month our country came to be. I myself would rather spend my time in March. March symbolizes the coming of spring. While we've been basking in sub-par weather and blustery winds, March is the first month of the year that we receive nice weather and the birth of wildlife hidden under their rocky homes, waiting out the cold. It also doesn't hurt that my birthday falls in March.

(Conc.) From my standpoint, March couldn't be better. It's the month were the New Year seems to burst open with excitement. Wildlife sprouts from almost every corner of the world, climates reach amazing levels of comfort, and it's a great month to have your birthday. If you ask me, March will always be the best month of the year.



**2005 Expository****Time of Year**

(Intro.) Blue clear day, leaves emerging off the bare branches of winter, flowers blooming in a colorful spectrum; yes, you guessed it . . . Spring! Spring is my favorite season of the year hands down. I mean how could it not be, with the perfect weather, beautiful scenery, and the week off for Spring Break? Good thing spring comes after the grey winters of boredom.

(Conc.) Spring can only bring good things. It's the whole shebang, with the perfect weather, the scenery springing to life, and spring break. Even though this year, the ground hog saw its shadow, which means six more weeks of winter, it will only make me appreciate spring so much more. I wish that it could be spring all year around.

**2005 Persuasive****Television**

(Intro.) The television twilight zone is where wide eyes are staring at the screen, oblivious to nothing. Thousands of homes have been plagued by this trait of TV watchers. The problem with this is that it has become a daily routine of society. Personally, I am convinced that television has taken control of teenagers these days. When TV shows are the only noises that echo from the walls of a home, teenagers become recessive; their school work is not completed, and they become dysfunctional.

(Conc.) Parents need to teach their children discipline or else the entire household will live in complete disarray. Mr. Editor, your newspaper can make a severe difference in a home if you only acknowledge the fact that teens waste hours watching TV. The only exercise permitted in this state of mind is pressing the TV selector on the remote. If teens stop abusing their minds by watching TV, they will be able to function much better. Promoting this idea in your newspaper will help us all.

**2005 Persuasive****Television**

(Intro.) Click, click, click. Sound familiar? I bet it does. That would be the sound of kids channel surfing. Television today captivates kids to the point where they don't want to do anything but watch it. Kids use TV as an excuse to put off homework, instead of going outside and playing sports. When you're bored, you just pick up the remote, and with a wide variety of TV shows, kids never stay far from it. So, Mr. Editor, would you agree that kids waste too much time watching TV?

(Conc.) Crash! That was the sound of me throwing my brother's TV out the window! I mean captivating kids so they don't do their homework. Instead of playing sports, they watch TV and the variety of shows makes kids never want to stray far from the TV. Well, Mr. Editor, here's my take on kids turning into couch potatoes by watching too much TV. Wouldn't you agree?

**2006 Expository****Nature**

(Intro.) As I sped down the slope, the wind in my hair, I felt my skis building momentum. Faster, faster, till I thought I would collapse. But I didn't; I kept on going. The view took my breath away. The snow-covered mountains, my breath in the icy air: I love the both the winter and the snow. This particular skiing trip was during winter break one year when we went to New York. The snow was absolutely beautiful, neither too cold nor too wet. It was a perfect day for skiing.

(Conc.) ...That skiing trip was awesome, and afterwards, we sat in a new lodge which felt just like home. As I sat in a dark green overstuffed chair by the fire, slowly peeling off layers of clothing, I hear the "ding" of the microwave. I get up; they are serving free hot chocolate and cookies, my favorite! And as I look out the big window and see the sun setting behind snow-covered mountains, I feel at peace within myself. Snow is a wonderful, wonderful thing.

**2006 Expository****Nature**

(Intro.) Most people aren't fascinated with nature any more. I think it might be because it is all around us. However, I know of something that not a lot of people get to experience. Volcanoes have been around for the longest time, are all different shapes and sizes, and are very dangerous to humans. I've always loved the sheer power of volcanoes. I don't know anybody that can watch an eruption or stand on the edge of a massive volcano and not be drawn to it.

(Conc.) I hope you can see why I and many others are drawn to volcanoes. Whether it was the age, size, or danger of them that got you hooked, I guarantee the other aspects will keep you intrigued. You will learn to love the mystery of them like I have over the years. Volcanoes are truly one of nature's most magnificent theatrical dramas.

**2006 Expository****Nature**

(Intro.) I sit and smile as the dark night sky metamorphoses into a tapestry of pastel color. The myriad of shades grow brighter and brighter, and then they give way to day and are gone. But though they are gone, the soft smile lingering on my lips is a silent testament to the sunrise's brief, but wonderful presence.

(Conc.) And even though the sunrise lasts a regrettably short few minutes, the warmth, relaxation, and peace that it grants me last all day long. As I sit back each day, watching the soft hues of dawn color the sky, I am reminded that no matter today's mistakes and misgivings, tomorrow is always a brand new day.

**2006 Persuasive****Group Work**

(Intro.) Mr. Principal, why must you torture us so? Can't you see that we're doing just dandy completing our school work by ourselves? I have heard that you are considering forcing us to work in groups for our school work. I simply cannot live with this, for the fact that some students wouldn't accomplish a thing; they'd just copy their partner's work, and working in teams will only lead to arguments. It's time that you open up those tired and naïve eyes, Mr. Principal. You run a quality institution, but by forcing us to work with our peers, your school will drop from an "A" school to down as low on the charts as a two-year-old's heights on a growth chart.

(Conc.) Mr. Principal, you as a peacemaker shouldn't be forced to break up more quarrels, and we as students shouldn't be forced to work in teams. If we have to work with our peers, we will be fighting like starving animals over a bit of food, and too many lazy bums will be using their teammates' answers. Choosing groups will be the beginning of pure chaos in our school. I, for one, don't desire to have my learning environment interrupted. As a caring student at your exquisite institution, I ask you, Mr. Principal, to choose individuality; vote against working in groups.

**2006 Persuasive****Group Work**

(Intro.) "NO!" I shrieked at the top of my lungs. "We have to do it my way, or we'll get an F!" Bobby yelled as his face turned crimson, and his temper flared. I am sure you've been brutally forced to work in a group with your foe. This is an example of why you should not force us to work in groups for all of our school work. Friends would be distracted if they were in a group together, a lot of people prefer to work alone, and if you or someone else doesn't get along with someone, then all you will hear is bickering.

(Conc.) Don't you understand why you can't put us in groups for school work? It will turn out to be a disaster, so DON'T! Friends won't do any work; people like being alone, and enemies don't go together like peanut butter and jelly. People like the peace of working by themselves, so don't take that away! We can't be forced to work in groups if it will effect our grades. Just don't do it!

**2007 Expository****Way to Learn**

(Intro.) Sometimes people want to learn how to ride a bike or even how to fix a device. It can be easy for people to learn by either reading, listening, or doing. That depends on the type of person you are. For me, it is easier to learn something new by doing it myself and having someone tell me if I am doing it right or wrong. One reason is because my mistakes can be corrected as I attempt to try something new. Also, things might sound easy but unless you are actually trying it, you might never know. Another reason I learn by doing is because I can concentrate better. And I won't forget.

(Conc.) All in all, I think that if I only listened or read instructions, I might have never learned how to use a computer or even ride a bike. By doing something new for myself, I can learn from my mistakes. I will also know for myself if the task is hard or easy to perform instead of taking someone's word for it. Most importantly, I can learn better by doing because I will have more concentration and there is a smaller chance I will forget my new knowledge.

**2007 Persuasive****Candy and Soda Machines**

(Intro.) 76% of children are overweight because of the food they eat. Children generally spend about 66% of their time at school, where they eat lunch. School can be tiring, and the kids do not really care what they are eating; just that it tastes good, and it doesn't consume all their allowance. Candy and soda machines at school are just another way to bring the weight and behavioral issues of children to the max. Putting the junk food in an easily accessible place for kids is ridiculous. How will the kids stay in shape and learn responsibility if you keep giving them what they want? It seems society doesn't understand how kids' minds work.

(Conc.) In a nutshell, putting candy and soda machines in school would be an overall bad idea. The obesity and behavior of your children or students can start with a little candy and grow to be a big problem. Believe me, when I say that I know what I am talking about. Sometimes, you have to take candy from a baby.

	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Conventions</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>focused and purposeful reflects insight into the writing situation</b>	<b>adheres to main idea organizational pattern provides for a logical progression of ideas effective use of transitional devices conveys a sense of completeness and wholeness</b>	<b>substantial, specific, relevant, concrete and/or illustrative shows commitment to and involvement with the subject clarity in presentation of ideas may use creative writing strategies mature command of language (word choice) with freshness of expression sentence structure is varied and complete, except where fragments are purposeful</b>	<b>few, if any, convention errors in mechanics, usage, punctuation, and spelling</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>focused on the topic</b>	<b>organizational pattern provides a logical progression of ideas (some lapses may occur) conveys sense of completeness or wholeness effective use of transitions</b>	<b>ample support mature command of language, including precision in word choice variation in sentence structure, and, with rare exceptions, sentences are complete, except where fragments are purposeful</b>	<b>generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, and spelling</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>focused on the topic may include some extraneous or loosely related material</b>	<b>organizational pattern is apparent, although some lapses may occur use of transitional devices exhibits some sense of completeness</b>	<b>support, including word choice, is adequate; development may be uneven word choice may lack specificity little variation in sentence structure, but most sentences are complete</b>	<b>generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, and spelling.</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>generally focused but may contain extraneous or loosely related material</b>	<b>an organizational pattern has been attempted but may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness may lack a logical progression of ideas</b>	<b>some support included, but development is erratic word choice is adequate but may be limited, predictable, or occasionally vague. little, if any variation in sentence structure</b>	<b>knowledge of the conventions of mechanics and usage is usually demonstrated commonly used words are usually spelled correctly</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>related to the topic but includes extraneous or loosely related material</b>	<b>little evidence of an organizational pattern may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness</b>	<b>development is inadequate or illogical word choice is limited, inappropriate, or vague. little, if any variation in sentence structure gross errors in sentence structure may appear</b>	<b>errors in basic conventions of mechanics and usage may occur, and commonly used words may be misspelled</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>may only minimally address the topic</b>	<b>response is a fragmentary or incoherent listing of related ideas or sentences or both</b>	<b>little, if any, development of support or a pattern or both is apparent limited/inappropriate word choice may obscure meaning gross errors in sentence structure and usage may impede communication</b>	<b>frequent and blatant errors may occur in the basic conventions of mechanics and usage commonly used words may be misspelled</b>



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Superintendent  
Brevard Public Schools

Ms. Brenda Blackburn  
Associate Superintendent,  
Division of Curriculum  
and Instruction  
Equity Coordinator

Dr. Walter Christy, Director  
Office of Secondary Programs

Ms. Eva Lewis, Director  
ESE Program  
Support Services  
ADA/Section 504  
Coordinator

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2700 Judge Fran Jamieson Way  
Viera, Florida 32940-6601  
(321) 633-1000

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