

Writing Proficiency Exam Scoring Guide

6 Exemplary

Comprehension: Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the reading and prompt in developing an insightful response

Organization: Addresses all the parts of the prompt thoroughly; demonstrates strong paragraph and whole-essay organization

Development: Strongly develops the controlling idea through specific and appropriate detail; presents supporting points in a logical, intelligent, and/or creative manner

Expression: Exhibits proficient sentence structure and usage but may have a few minor slips (e.g., an occasional misused or misspelled word, or a comma fault); may show stylistic flair

5 Proficient

Comprehension: Demonstrates a sound understanding of the reading and prompt in developing a well-reasoned response

Organization: Addresses all parts of the prompt; demonstrates effective paragraph and whole-essay organization

Development: Develops the controlling idea through specific and appropriate details but may lack the level of logic or creativity found in an exemplary paper

Expression: Structures sentences effectively, but may lack stylistic flair; keeps diction appropriate but may waver in tone; maintains sound grammar usage though may err occasionally

4 Acceptable

Comprehension: Demonstrates (sometimes by implication) a generally accurate understanding of the reading and prompt in developing a sensible response

Organization: Shows adequate paragraphing and essay organization, but may give disproportionate attention to some parts of the prompt

Development: Shows adequate logical development of the controlling idea but may not be as fully and specifically developed as an exemplary essay or may respond in a way that is somewhat simplistic or repetitive

Expression: Shows adequate command of sentence structure using appropriate diction but may contain some minor problems in grammar, punctuation, or usage (problems that might annoy a reader but that do not lead to confusion or misunderstanding)

3 Failing (clearly inadequate in one of the following categories or marginally inadequate in more than one of the following categories)

Comprehension: Demonstrates some understanding of the reading and prompt but may misconstrue parts of it or make limited use of the reading in developing a weak response

Organization: Does not address major aspects of the prompt; presents a predominantly narrative response; is deficient in organization at the paragraph or whole-essay level; lacks focus or wanders from the controlling idea

Development: Generalizes consistently without adequate support for the controlling idea; presents conclusions that do not follow logically from the evidence; repeats consistently rather than explores ideas

Expression: Shows deficient sentence structure; uses primer prose (grade-school-style sentences); or contains errors in mechanics (including spelling) that are serious or frequent enough to affect understanding

2 Failing (seriously inadequate in more than one of the following categories)

Comprehension: Demonstrates poor understanding of the main points of the reading and prompt or does not use the reading appropriately in developing a response

Organization: Shows serious flaws in organization (paragraph and whole-essay structure is illogical and transitions are absent); presents an entirely narrative response

Development: Lacks sufficient, if any, support for the controlling idea

Expression: Shows such severe and pervasive sentence level errors that other strengths of the paper become obscured