



**NEW ENGLAND  
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items  
Support Materials  
2013**

**Grade 8  
Writing**

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

**7.9.1 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying rules of standard English usage to correct grammatical errors** EXAMPLES: Clear pronoun referent, subject-verb agreement, consistency of verb tense, irregular forms of verbs and nouns

- 1 What is the correct form of the underlined word in the sentence below?

We laughed as the dog shaked the rain off his fur.

- A. shakes
- B. shook
- C. shaking
- D. shooked

**7.9.4 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying appropriate punctuation to various sentence patterns to enhance meaning** EXAMPLES: colons, semicolons

- 2 Where should a semicolon (;) be added to the sentence below?

At the ice-cream shop, one of my favorite flavors is vanilla it tastes so sweet and creamy.

- A. after *ice-cream*
- B. after *flavors*
- C. after *vanilla*
- D. after *sweet*

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

**7.9.5 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by correctly spelling grade-appropriate, high-frequency words and applying conventional spelling patterns/rules** EXAMPLES: consonant doubling, consonant patterns, units of meaning – common roots, base words, pre/suffixes

- 3 How should the underlined word in the sentence below be spelled?

We scanned the vast crowd for a fammiliar face.

- A. familear
- B. familier
- C. familliar
- D. familiar

**7.9.2 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying capitalization rules**

- 4 Which edit should be made to the sentence below?

Every November, Americans take time on Veterans day to honor those who served their country in the military.

- A. Change *November* to **november**.
- B. Change *Veterans* to **veterans**.
- C. Change *day* to **Day**.
- D. Change *military* to **Military**.

**NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING**

**7.1.1 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by using varied sentence length and structure to enhance meaning (e.g., including phrases and clauses)**

- 5 What is the **best** way to combine the three sentences below?

Mount Rainier has three named peaks. Mount Rainier is located in Washington. Mount Rainier is an active volcano.

- A. Located in Washington, Mount Rainier is an active volcano with three named peaks.
- B. Mount Rainier is an active volcano, has three named peaks and it is located in Washington.
- C. An active volcano, but Mount Rainier has three named peaks and is located in Washington.
- D. Mount Rainier has three named peaks, it is located in Washington, and it is an active volcano.

**7.9.4 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying appropriate punctuation to various sentence patterns to enhance meaning**  
EXAMPLES: colons, semicolons

- 6 Which sentence is punctuated correctly?
- A. Last night's game which included several players, from last year, was particularly exciting.
  - B. Last night's game which included several players from last year, was particularly exciting.
  - C. Last night's game, which included several players from last year, was particularly exciting.
  - D. Last night's game, which included several players from last year was particularly exciting.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

**7.9.5 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions** by correctly spelling grade-appropriate, high-frequency words and applying conventional spelling patterns/rules EXAMPLES: consonant doubling, consonant patterns, units of meaning – common roots, base words, pre/suffixes

- 7 Which word is **misspelled** in the sentence below?

It will be necessary for the government buildings to be painted in February.

- A. necessary
- B. government
- C. buildings
- D. February

**7.9.1 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions** by applying rules of standard English usage to correct grammatical errors EXAMPLES: Clear pronoun referent, subject-verb agreement, consistency of verb tense, irregular forms of verbs and nouns

- 8 Which of the following is a sentence fragment?
- A. The American flag fifty white stars on a blue background.
  - B. The stars stand for the fifty states that make up the United States.
  - C. The number of stars changes when the number of states changes.
  - D. The thirteen stripes on the flag stand for the original thirteen colonies.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

**7.9.4 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying appropriate punctuation to various sentence patterns to enhance meaning**  
EXAMPLES: colons, semicolons

- 9 Where should a comma be added to the sentence below?

My father said “Get your chores done and you can go to Jacob’s house for dinner.”

- A. after *father*
- B. after *said*
- C. after *chores*
- D. after *house*

**7.9.2 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying capitalization rules**

- 10 Which word in the sentence below should be capitalized?

The governor toured the towns in the southern counties, and then she traveled to Rush city.

- A. governor
- B. towns
- C. southern
- D. city

## Persuasive Writing

(There is no passage that accompanies this prompt.)

**7.8.3** In informational writing, students demonstrate use of a range of elaboration strategies by including sufficient details or facts for appropriate depth of information: naming, describing, explaining, comparing, use of visual images

- 11 Some young people think of professional athletes as role models. Do you think that professional athletes have a responsibility to set a good example for young people? Write a paragraph that develops **one** strong argument supporting your opinion.

### Scoring Guide:

Score	Description
4	The paragraph provides one thorough argument that supports a position on the question of whether professional athletes have a responsibility to set a good example for young people. The paragraph contains a relevant focus/controlling idea and details that support the focus. The paragraph includes a variety of correct sentence structures and demonstrates sustained control of grade-appropriate grammar, usage, and mechanics.
3	The paragraph provides one argument that supports a position on the question. The paragraph contains a relevant focus/controlling idea and appropriate details. There may be minor lapses in focus and/or details that lack development or specificity. The paragraph includes some sentence variety and demonstrates general control of grade-appropriate grammar, usage, and mechanics.
2	The paragraph is an attempt at a paragraph that supports a position on the question. There may be major lapses in focus (i.e., the position and support may be unclear). The paragraph includes some attempt at sentence variety and may demonstrate inconsistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics.
1	The paragraph is undeveloped or contains an unclear focus (i.e., there is little evidence of a position or support). The paragraph includes little or no sentence variety and may demonstrate lack of control of grammar, usage, and mechanics.
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 4  
(EXAMPLE A)

11 I am absolutely positive that athletes of all kinds, especially those that are professionals have a responsibility to set a good example for young people. The main reason I feel this way is due to the fact that many kids and teenagers want to pursue a sports career, and look up to professional athletes tremendously. In their eyes, that athlete represents that sport and a career in that field. Why, I myself look up to some professional Showjumping champions. But I realize that they're human, and they make mistakes and that they can't control every aspect of competition. However, not every young person may think about that. They might think that athlete is perfect, which is why professionals have a responsibility to set a good example.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 4  
(EXAMPLE B)

11 A lot of young kids find professional athletes as role models. I do believe that athletes should set a good example for kids when on the field and off the field. I think this because people like myself are always watching professional athletes to see and learn what they do. Especially when your an athlete. So it is imperative that the players set a good example by not taking steroids or anything like that. For example, players such as Barry Bonds and Jason Giambi were very good baseball players and a lot of people idolized them. But they then tested positive for steroid use. A lot of young kids were affected by that. Sure people would say they don't have to set a good example. They say this because they think that kids should not care about what happens to professional athletes outside of sports. But when you idolize a player a lot. It is hard to do. In conclusion I believe that professional athletes should set a good example for kids because then the kids will have a better chance of succeeding in their sports career and off the field as well.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 3  
(EXAMPLE A)

11 I think that it is very important for professional athletes to be good role models. Kids growing up dream of being in the MLB, NFL of the NBA. They want to be like the best player, no matter what sports. Not all athletes set good role models, some do drugs, bet on games or are just bad. Some kids might get the impression it is okay to use steroids. That is only because their favorite player did it. This could put the wrong idea in millions of kids heads. Is it okay? That is why they are under pressure to try to be a good role model. Those who take steroids are setting a horrible example, while those who stay clean can be called a true role model.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 3  
(EXAMPLE B)

11 Yes, I do think that they have a responsibility to set a good example. I believe this because "Young People" will look up to them, and the athletes should expect to be looked at as a role model. For example, a young boy wants to be a football player. Well if their favorite player is Tom Brady and then the boy finds out that Tom Brady did something bad then if the boy wants to be just like Tom the boy may do something bad too. Athletes know when they signed up for it that they would be role models. It is a part of the job. It is their responsibility to set a good example.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 2  
(EXAMPLE A)

11 I think that professional athletes should set a good example because if they do drugs and all that stuff and they are young peoples role models those young people are going to be more likely to do that stuff that they are doing. So that is why they should just try to be a good role model.

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 2  
(EXAMPLE B)

11 Yes I think that professional athletes have a responsibility to set a good example for young people because, if the professional athletes shows something bad to the young people. The young people would do the same thing, but they would say that I saw my favorite athlete doing it and, I thought that it would be a great idea to do it to.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 1  
(EXAMPLE A)

11 I think that professional athletes are nice and caring well most of them some are evil to others.

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 1  
(EXAMPLE B)

11 I think that athletes should and should not set an example for children because some athletes get in trouble with the law and some don't.

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 0

11 Athletes means sports. role models means great. arguments means saying.

## My Mother Made Me . . . Response to Informational Text

(The passage for this prompt is located in Released Items 2013 – Grade 8 Writing.)

**7.3.3** In response to literary or informational text, students make and support analytical judgments about text by using specific details and references to text or relevant citations to support focus or judgment

- 12 Write a paragraph that explains how Ann Bancroft’s childhood experiences helped her choose her career as an explorer. Use details from the passage to support your response.

### Scoring Guide:

Score	Description
4	The paragraph provides a thorough explanation of how Ann Bancroft’s childhood helped her choose her career. The paragraph maintains a focus/purpose throughout, includes relevant supporting details, and is well-organized. The paragraph includes a variety of correct sentence structures and demonstrates sustained control of grade-appropriate grammar, usage, and mechanics.
3	The paragraph provides an explanation of how Ann Bancroft’s childhood helped her choose her career. The paragraph has a focus/purpose, but there may be minor lapses. The paragraph includes some supporting details and is generally well-organized. The paragraph includes some sentence variety and demonstrates general control of grade-appropriate grammar, usage, and mechanics.
2	The paragraph is an attempt at an explanation of how Ann Bancroft’s childhood helped her choose her career. The paragraph contains major lapses in focus/purpose and/or few relevant supporting details. The paragraph includes some attempt at sentence variety and may demonstrate inconsistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics.
1	The paragraph may be unclear and/or a minimal attempt to answer the prompt.
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 4  
(EXAMPLE A)

12

Ann Bancroft had a childhood of adventure and discovery that is probably what led her to become an explorer. She said that she always loved the outdoors which is good since you can't explore too many things inside. Her mom was also a big part of her childhood because she was always encouraging her to "Do her best," and "Give it a try." when she was young she liked to climb bookcases, build rafts, and pretend to be a pirate, all those things could have had an impact on Ann becoming an explorer. Since Ann Bancroft was one of the four American woman who skied to the South Pole pulling a sled, this could have been because when she was young she liked to go outside during blizzards and pretend that she was somewhere in the world pulling a sled. All these things from he childhood could have helped her decide her career as an explorer now.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 4  
(EXAMPLE B)

12

Ann Brancroft's childhood experiences helped her choose her career as an explorer because she was pretty much training for the job, whether she knew it or not. For instance, Ann climbed bookcases, which is like training for climbing trees or anything steep. She prepared and got used to the cold, by walking in the deep, fresh, snow, and pulling a sled. Ann pretended to be a pirate on the seas while she went canoeing, which could help her imagine toughness at sea. She also read books about other explorers and their journeys, which may have also helped her make her pick of becoming an explorer. Her most beneficial activity, however, would probably be walking in the snow during snowstorms, because both times she made history were in cold, snowy weather.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 3  
(EXAMPLE A)

12 The great explorer, Ann Bancroft, has always loved the outdoors and going on adventures. Starting very young, she would climb bookcases, build rafts and pretend to be a pirate on the high seas while canoeing. At the age of ten, she most of all loved going outside during a blizzard-like storm. Pretending to be in a remote part of the world made Ann who she is today. These experiences made her choose to become an explorer.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 3  
(EXAMPLE B)

12

Ann Bancroft's childhood was full of adventure. In the passage it said that she would climb bookcases and go out in snow storms. I think it also helped that her mom was so supportive. If her mom didn't let her branch out and try new things, then she would probably not be where she is today. I think that an explorer is a perfect career for her because she loved adventure. In the passage it said that she loved reading adventure books and would pretend that she was a pirate while canoeing. I think without her childhood experiences she wouldn't be an explorer.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 2  
(EXAMPLE A)

12 Ann Bancroft's childhood helped her become an explorer because her mother encouraged her to do what she loved and pretend she was an explorer. Ann Bancroft's mother would always say go ahead and try - you might get what you want. That's how Ann Bancroft's childhood helped her get the career she wanted.

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 2  
(EXAMPLE B)

12 Ann Bancroft's childhood experiences helped her choose her career as an explorer, by her mom influenced her to be adventurous. Her mother made her read "The Red Pony" and "Rascal" which involves two adventurous girls.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 1  
(EXAMPLE A)

12 she spend her child hood acting  
in the snow, Reading books about  
animals, she love the out doors,  
she build Raft and pretend to be  
a preat

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 1  
(EXAMPLE B)

12 she loved the outo  
doors when she was a kid. She  
wanted to be like her mother  
and to fill her dream

## Report

(The passage for this prompt is located in Released Items 2013 – Grade 8 Writing.)

**7.7.2 In informational writing, students effectively convey purpose by stating and maintaining a focus/controlling idea**

### **7.1 Structures of Language – Applying Understanding of Sentences, Paragraphs, Text Structures**

- 7.1.1 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by using varied sentence length and structure to enhance meaning (e.g., including phrases and clauses)**
- 7.1.2 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by using the paragraph form: indenting, main idea, supporting details**
- 7.1.3 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by recognizing organizational structures *within* paragraphs or *within* texts** EXAMPLES (of text structures): description, sequential chronology, proposition/support, compare/contrast, problem/solution EXAMPLE: When given a paragraph or text and a description of text structures, students identify structure used or their purposes
- 7.1.4 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by applying a format and text structure appropriate to the purpose of the writing**

### **7.6 Informational Writing (Reports, Procedures, or Persuasive Writing) – Organizing and Conveying Information**

- 7.6.1 In informational writing, students organize ideas/concepts by using an organizational text structure appropriate to focus/controlling idea** EXAMPLES (of text structures): description, sequential, chronology, proposition/support, compare/contrast, problem/solution
- 7.6.2 In informational writing, students organize ideas/concepts by selecting appropriate information to set context, which may include a lead/hook**
- 7.6.3 In informational writing, students organize ideas/concepts by using transition words or phrases appropriate to organizational text structure**
- 7.6.4 In informational writing, students organize ideas/concepts by writing a conclusion that provides closure**

**NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING**

**7.8 Informational Writing (Reports, Procedures, or Persuasive Writing) –  
Using Elaboration Strategies**

- 7.8.2 In informational writing, students demonstrate use of a range of elaboration strategies by including facts and details relevant to focus/controlling idea, and excluding extraneous information**
- 7.8.3 In informational writing, students demonstrate use of a range of elaboration strategies by including sufficient details or facts for appropriate depth of information: naming, describing, explaining, comparing, use of visual images**
- 7.8.4 In informational writing, students demonstrate use of a range of elaboration strategies by addressing readers’ concerns (including counterarguments – in persuasive writing; addressing potential problems – in procedures; providing context – in reports)**
- 7.8.5 In informational writing, students demonstrate use of a range of elaboration strategies by commenting on the significance of information, when appropriate**

**7.9 Writing Conventions –  
Applying Rules of Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics**

- 7.9.1 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying rules of standard English usage to correct grammatical errors EXAMPLES: Clear pronoun referent, subject-verb agreement, consistency of verb tense, irregular forms of verbs and nouns**
- 7.9.2 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying capitalization rules**
- 7.9.4 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying appropriate punctuation to various sentence patterns to enhance meaning EXAMPLES: colons, semicolons**
- 7.9.5 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by correctly spelling grade-appropriate, high-frequency words and applying conventional spelling patterns/rules EXAMPLES: consonant doubling, consonant patterns, units of meaning – common roots, base words, pre/suffixes**

**NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING**

- 13 Write a paragraph that explains places a tourist could visit in Boston. Select **appropriate** information from the organizer to support the focus of your paragraph.

**Scoring Guide:**

<b>Score</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>4</b>	The paragraph contains a thorough explanation of places a tourist could visit in Boston. The paragraph maintains a focus/purpose throughout, includes relevant facts from the organizer, and is well-organized. The paragraph includes a variety of correct sentence structures and demonstrates sustained control of grade-appropriate grammar, usage, and mechanics.
<b>3</b>	The paragraph contains an explanation of places a tourist could visit in Boston. The paragraph maintains a focus/purpose but there may be minor lapses. The paragraph includes mostly relevant facts from the organizer, and is generally well-organized. The paragraph includes some sentence variety and demonstrates general control of grade-appropriate grammar, usage, and mechanics.
<b>2</b>	The paragraph is an attempt at an explanation of places a tourist could visit in Boston. The paragraph contains major lapses in focus/purpose and/or few relevant facts from the organizer. The paragraph includes some attempt at sentence variety and may demonstrate inconsistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics.
<b>1</b>	The paragraph is a minimal or vague statement about places a tourist could visit in Boston.
<b>0</b>	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
<b>Blank</b>	No response

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 4  
(EXAMPLE A)

13

If you decide to vacation in Boston, Massachusetts, there are plenty of things to do and places to visit. One huge attraction is the New England Aquarium. This huge structure is visited by 13 million people every year. Tourists can see fish, birds, and sea mammals in this world of water, consisting of a monumental, multi-story cylindrical fish tank, and smaller exhibits surrounding it.

Another place to visit is the Public Garden. With 57 flowerbeds and 750 trees and shrubs, this can be a serene place to relax. Visitors can also ride on famous paddleboats shaped like swans.

When people think of Boston, they think of American History. Ben Franklin's birthplace, the house of Paul Revere, and Bunker Hill Monument are all located here and open for tours.

Finally, tourists can travel to the 60th floor of the John Hancock Tower to see sweeping views of the whole city, or see mummies and modern art in the Museum of Fine Arts. A trip to Boston will never be boring!

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 4  
(EXAMPLE B)

13 There are many great places a tourist could visit while in Boston. One of the best places to go is the New England Aquarium. It features exhibits of sea mammals, marine birds, and fish and can provide entertainment for hours. Another great activity is walking the Freedom Trail. Boston is jam-packed with history, and this path will take you throughout the city, stopping at places like the Paul Revere House. Boston is also home to many great sports teams. Head to a basketball, football, or hockey game and you're sure to meet tons of enthusiastic fans and have loads of fun! If you're looking for a quieter destination, be sure to head to the Public Garden. It has 57 flower beds, 750 trees and shrubs, and the famous swan boats. Another quiet spot is the Museum of Fine Art, which has collections anywhere from modern art to ancient mummies. Boston is a great destination that certainly has something for everyone!

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 3  
(EXAMPLE A)

- 13 There are many places a tourist can visit in Boston, here are a few examples of them. One example is the Museum of Fine Arts. It has a lot of collection ranges from ancient mummies to modern art, tourist from all over the world can go there and find ancient collection from way back when. Another place where a tourist can visit in Boston is the New England Aquarium. There's a lot of exhibits of sea mammals, like marine birds and fish; visited by over 1.3 million people a year. Lastly, the Public Garden can be a great place for tourist to visit. The Public Garden has 57 flower beds, 750 trees and shrubs, and famous swan-shaped paddleboats. There are so many interesting places tourist can visit.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 3  
(EXAMPLE B)

13 If you're a tourist looking to visit Boston, there's a lot of fun places you can go! One is the Museum of Fine Arts, which is a collection of art from mummies to modern art. Also, there is a lot of different early American historical places you can visit, including Revere House, Bunker Hill Monument, and even Benjamin Franklin's birthplace. You may also want to visit the beautiful Public Garden, with flower beds, trees, shrubs, and their swan-shaped paddle boats. You can also visit the John Hancock Tower, which is the tallest skyscraper in New England! And last, but not least, you can visit the New England Aquarium—with exhibits of sea mammals, marine birds, and fish.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 2  
(EXAMPLE A)

13 When tourist would have many things to do in Boston. They could visit historic land marks like banker hill, or even modern land marks like the John Hancock Tower, the tallest one in New England. They could visit fine arts museums and the Public Garden. Or stop in at the TD Banknorth Garden for a Celtics game or Fenway park for a Red Sox game.

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 2  
(EXAMPLE B)

13 A place that a tourist would visit is the John Hancock tower the tallest Sky scraper in new england because that would be preaty cool to visit the tallest sky scrape in new england. Another place that a tourist would visit is the Paul revere house and bunker hill monument. Also they would visit the championship profesSional SportS team and enthusiastic fans.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 1  
(EXAMPLE A)

13 There are many places to visit in the Boston area. You can visit our sports teams and go to museums. You can go see our buildings and statues. There is a lot to do around Boston.

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 1  
(EXAMPLE B)

13 A tourist could visit the coast of Boston because it is very nice and pretty down there. Also another place they could visit is all of the baseball fields that are down in Boston Massachusetts.

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 0

13 There are a lot of things to do in Boston.

## The Cliff

### Response to Literary Text

(The passage for this prompt is located in Released Items 2013 – Grade 8 Writing.)

#### 7.1 Structures of Language – Applying Understanding of Sentences, Paragraphs, Text Structures

- 7.1.1 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by using varied sentence length and structure to enhance meaning (e.g., including phrases and clauses)
- 7.1.2 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by using the paragraph form: indenting, main idea, supporting details
- 7.1.3 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by recognizing organizational structures *within* paragraphs or *within* texts EXAMPLES (of text structures): description, sequential chronology, proposition/support, compare/contrast, problem/solution EXAMPLE: When given a paragraph or text and a description of text structures, students identify structure used or their purposes
- 7.1.4 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by applying a format and text structure appropriate to the purpose of the writing

#### 7.2 Writing in Response to Literary or Informational Text – Showing Understanding of Ideas in Text

- 7.2.1 In response to literary or informational text, students show understanding of plot /ideas/ concepts by selecting and summarizing key ideas to set context
- 7.2.3 In response to literary or informational text, students show understanding of plot /ideas/ concepts by connecting what has been read (plot/ideas/concepts) to prior knowledge, other texts, or the broader world of ideas, by referring to and explaining relevant ideas

**NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING**

**7.3 Writing in Response to Literary or Informational Text –  
Making Analytical Judgments about Text**

- 7.3.1 In response to literary or informational text, students make and support analytical judgments about text by** stating and maintaining a focus (purpose), a firm judgment, or point of view when responding to a given question
- 7.3.2 In response to literary or informational text, students make and support analytical judgments about text by** making inferences about the relationship(s) among content, events, characters, setting, theme, or author’s craft  
EXAMPLES: Making links between characterization and author’s choice of words; making links to characteristics of literary forms or genres
- 7.3.3 In response to literary or informational text, students make and support analytical judgments about text by** using specific details and references to text or relevant citations to support focus or judgment
- 7.3.4 In response to literary or informational text, students make and support analytical judgments about text by** organizing ideas, using transition words/phrases and writing a conclusion that provides closure

**7.9 Writing Conventions –  
Applying Rules of Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics**

- 7.9.1 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by** applying rules of standard English usage to correct grammatical errors EXAMPLES: Clear pronoun referent, subject-verb agreement, consistency of verb tense, irregular forms of verbs and nouns
- 7.9.2 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by** applying capitalization rules
- 7.9.4 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by** applying appropriate punctuation to various sentence patterns to enhance meaning  
EXAMPLES: colons, semicolons
- 7.9.5 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by** correctly spelling grade-appropriate, high-frequency words and applying conventional spelling patterns/rules EXAMPLES: consonant doubling, consonant patterns, units of meaning – common roots, base words, pre/suffixes

**NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING**

**The Cliff  
Response to Literary Text**

- 14 How does the author make the climb up the cliff seem challenging? Use details from the passage to support your response.

**Scoring Guide:**

Score	Description
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose is clear throughout; strong focus/controlling idea OR strongly stated purpose focuses the writing</li> <li>• Intentionally organized for effect</li> <li>• Fully developed details, rich and/or insightful elaboration supports purpose</li> <li>• Distinctive voice, tone, and style enhance meaning</li> <li>• Consistent application of the rules of grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose is clear; focus/controlling idea is maintained throughout</li> <li>• Well-organized and coherent throughout</li> <li>• Details are relevant and support purpose; details are sufficiently elaborated</li> <li>• Strong command of sentence structure; uses language to enhance meaning</li> <li>• Consistent application of the rules of grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose is evident; focus/controlling idea may not be maintained</li> <li>• Generally organized and coherent</li> <li>• Details are relevant and mostly support purpose</li> <li>• Well-constructed sentences; uses language well</li> <li>• May have inconsistent control of grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing has a general purpose</li> <li>• Some sense of organization; may have lapses in coherence</li> <li>• Some relevant details support purpose</li> <li>• Uses language adequately; may show little variety of sentence structures</li> <li>• May contain some serious errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempted or vague purpose; stays on topic</li> <li>• Little evidence of organization; lapses in coherence</li> <li>• Generalizes or lists details</li> <li>• Lacks sentence control; uses language poorly</li> <li>• Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are distracting</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of evident purpose; topic may not be clear</li> <li>• Incoherent or undeveloped organization</li> <li>• Random information</li> <li>• Rudimentary or deficient use of language</li> <li>• Serious and persistent errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics throughout</li> </ul>
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
<b>Blank</b>	No response

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 6

14

As I read this passage The Cliff, it was more than a story: it was an experience that was described so effectively, I felt like I was there. Not only did the author make Anna and Eagle's climb scary and suspenseful, he also made the hike sound incredibly challenging. The author used several ideas that made the climb a challenge: the thought that the cliff was slippery, the way the cliff was sheer, and the part where Anna almost fell off.

The first way the author made the climb seem like a difficult act, was how he described the cliff as slippery. It is a known fact that when rock is wet, it is more dangerous than ever to climb, so that boosted the challenging factor by a lot. Also, not only does water make a climb more difficult, it's also cold, and after a long time climbing, it sort of numbs the fingers, so that they're quite unaffordable to climb with. Thirdly, having small waterfalls flowing from the cliff puts a lot of restraints on places to grip, because when the rocks and crannies that would make easy places to grab onto have water flowing out of them, it makes these spots sort of off limits. The author did a great job elaborating on the difficulty of the climb, by making something as simple as water seem terrifying.

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 6

In addition, another technique the author used to make Anna's climb a challenge was by describing the cliff as sheer. Sheer rock is especially hard to climb because it's a vertical slope, and along the way, Anna would have no time to stop, rest, or even turn around, since the rock was so steep and sheer. Also, the fact that the cliff consisted of no plantlife other than moss growing near the streams, made it incredibly challenging because there were no trees or vegetation to grab on to if Anna slipped and was about to fall. Finally, climbing sheer rock would be so intimidating, because anytime Anna would look up, she'd see nothing but vertical rock, and sky. The use of sheer rock left me terrified, and made the hike even more challenging than ever.

Finally, at the climax of the story, when Anna almost slipped, the difficulty of the hike seemed almost impossible to overcome. First off, when Anna slipped, she had nowhere to put her feet, and she was barely hanging on with her already numb fingers, she seemed helpless, but she got her way out. Also, the readers have to wonder what Anna was thinking then, and if she lost hope, the difficulty to keep going was probably more overwhelming than ever before. Last of all, how terrified must she have been if she hadn't have found

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 6

that ledge, and it seemed the only way out was down? Even at a time when all hope seemed lost, Anna overcame the challenge.

To conclude, the three techniques the author used to make the cliff hike seem challenging were describing the rock as sheer, making the cliff slippery, and the many things that happened when Anna slipped. This small passage teaches to not give up, no matter how ridiculously difficult the situation may seem. If we all can express the kind of determination Anna held in her, we can climb over the rough spots, and continue our journeys of life.

- Purpose is clear throughout; strong focus/controlling idea OR strongly stated purpose focuses the writing
- Intentionally organized for effect
- Fully developed details, rich and/or insightful elaboration supports purpose
- Distinctive voice, tone, and style enhance meaning
- Consistent application of the rules of grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics

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GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 5  
(EXAMPLE A)

14

Have you ever done something challenging? Something that took a lot of effort and courage, but in the end you are glad that you did it? That's how a girl named Anna feels in the story "The Cliff" by T.A. Barron. Anna has to climb a cliff with her pet sparrow named Eagle, and even though it is a difficult climb, she makes it to the top. The author makes the cliff climb seem challenging by describing how the cliff is slippery, making it hard for Anna to reach a ledge, and having a piece of rock break off the cliff.

One way the author makes the climb seem challenging is that they say the cliff is slippery. As Anna walks toward the cliff, she notices that not only is it taller than she thought, but she also sees water trickling out of the cracks and it flowed down the cliff, making it very shiny and slippery. That would be challenging because it would be hard to cling on to the rock if it was slippery.

Another way that the author makes the climb up the cliff seem challenging is at one point, it is very hard for Anna to reach a ledge. As Anna makes the climb up, she is climbing up a crack that goes up the cliff by putting her toes in the crack. But as she gets closer to the top, the crack comes to an end. She sees a thin ledge, but she can't reach it with

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STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 5  
(EXAMPLE A)

her hands, so she tries to have her feet reach it. She lifted up her leg to the ledge, and her big toe caught it. That would make the climb seem challenging because after she realized that her hand couldn't reach it, she probably panicked a little, and also, it is much harder to reach something with your feet than with your hands.

The last way that the author made the climb seem challenging was that a piece of the cliff breaks off. Right after Anna got her toe to reach the ledge, the lip of the rock broke off, almost making her slip. So she steadied herself, then swung her leg to reach a lower spot on the ledge, and she caught it and then made her way to the top. This could be challenging because she almost slipped so that probably made her nervous, but also because she could have made it if the piece of the cliff didn't break off.

As you can see, the author made the climb up the cliff seem challenging by describing how the cliff is slippery from water, making it hard for Anna to reach a ledge, and having a piece of rock break off of the cliff. Anna was very brave to climb up the cliff, and even when it got difficult

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STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 5  
(EXAMPLE A)

She kept going and going. If I were Anna, I probably wouldn't have climbed up the cliff because I am scared of heights, but if I were to climb up the cliff and have to face the challenges that she faced, I would have been scared, and I might not have kept going like she did. "The Cliff" by T. A. Barron was a great story that taught me if you set your mind to something, you can do it.

- Purpose is clear; focus/controlling idea is maintained throughout
- Well-organized and coherent throughout
- Details are relevant and support purpose; details are sufficiently elaborated
- Strong command of sentence structure; uses language to enhance meaning
- Consistent application of the rules of grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 5  
(EXAMPLE B)

14

The Author makes the climb up the cliff seem challenging in several ways. The first way is that the author gives lots of details. For example, the way the author said "Anna shook a drop of sweat off her nose". The author stalls a lot to make you think that the climb is more challenging. When there are a lot of details, it takes longer to read, so you build up with suspense. When you build up with suspense, it makes the characters seem like they are doing a lot, even if they are just starting to climb a cliff. That is one way that the author makes the cliff seem challenging.

Another thing that made the cliff seem challenging was the part where Anna's foot slipped. It says in the passage, "She wropped [her toe] around the outcropping, braced herself, and - the lip of the rock broke off!" That, and the few seconds before it, were key to the story. The first thing that pops into everyone's head when they read that part is "Does she fall?"

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STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 5  
(EXAMPLE B)

Does she hang on? Will she live? Does she die?" This makes climbing that cliff seem very scary and challenging.

A few seconds before the part where Anna's foot slips is very important to making the cliff seem challenging, too. When she doesn't have any other option but to swing her leg up, hanging on by only her hands, and try to catch a ledge and pull herself up. That part makes you hope that she is able to swing her leg up instead of falling and possibly dying. So, the rising action of the story was very important to make the cliff seem challenging.

The end of the passage, when Anna stood safely on top, helped the cliff seem challenging. The way it says "...and stood at the top safely" sets the mood at the end. I can see a picture of a girl standing at the edge of a cliff, looking down at it, thinking "wow. I just climbed that." So for me, the end makes me visualize the intensity of the cliff

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STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 5  
(EXAMPLE B)

that Anna just climbed. It makes the cliff seem impossible to climb. So all of the details in the passage form some great pictures in your mind to intensify the plot. Visuals are very important in creating a feeling in the story.

Those are several ways that the author makes the cliff seem challenging. Visuals, details, rising action, and the climax really pulled the story together to let you see how hard it would be to climb a cliff.

The author did a great job in making the cliff seem challenging.

- Purpose is clear; focus/controlling idea is maintained throughout
- Well-organized and coherent throughout
- Details are relevant and support purpose; details are sufficiently elaborated
- Strong command of sentence structure; uses language to enhance meaning
- Consistent application of the rules of grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 4  
(EXAMPLE A)

14

The author makes the climb up the cliff seem difficult in many ways throughout the passage. First, so the reader understands the difficulty of the climb, Anna notices that the rock is very slippery and says, "Looks tough, Eagle." This sets the scene for the challenging climb ahead.

Next, the author describes Anna inching up the cliff. To show what little she has to hold on to, the author says, "Sometimes she clung mostly to the rock itself, sometimes to the tufts of moss that sprouted from the watery seams, and sometimes, it seemed, to the very air." This quote illustrates how precarious the handholds that Anna has really are.

Later, as Anna is attempting to get ahold of an outcropping,

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GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 4  
(EXAMPLE A)

the author says, "The lip of the rock broke off! She almost fell." Anna then hears the pieces of rock tumble down the cliff. This climactic scene shows how risky each step is, and how dangerous a fall would be.

Finally, as Anna hieves herself to the top of the cliff, the passage says, "The muscles in her thighs ached terribly." This shows how strenuous the climb up the cliff is on Anna's body.

These are a few of the ways that the author made the climb up the cliff seem difficult throughout the passage.

- Purpose is evident; focus/controlling idea may not be maintained
- Generally organized and coherent
- Details are relevant and mostly support purpose
- Well-constructed sentences; uses language well
- May have inconsistent control of grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 4  
(EXAMPLE B)

14

Making a story seem harder than it actually is maybe challenging, but there are many way you can do it. For example the author of 'The Cliff', T. A. Baron, wrote the story so that climbing the cliff seemed extremely challenging. Some of the ways Baron did this was adding exclamations, describing the cliff in detail, and adding in what the main character, Ana was doing.

One of the ways the author made climbing a cliff seem difficult was by adding in exclamations. When reading exclamation marks readers know the author is trying to make something loud, big, or have lots of emotion. Some examples of the author using exclamatory words are "The Cliff itself!" or "Crab claws!" These things made the reader believe the cliff was challenging to climb. Exclamatory words or phrases is just one way the author created the illusion that the cliff was challenging to climb.

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STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 4  
(EXAMPLE B)

Another way the author made the cliff seem challenging to climb was describing the cliff in detail. When telling about the cliff T.A. Baron was very descriptive. These descriptions make the reader think the cliff is larger than life. The author uses descriptions like "... a deep crack that snaked its way up from the base." These descriptions made the cliff seem challenging to climb.

Lastly, the author added in how Anna, the main character, was climbing the cliff. The way the author wrote about the things Anna was doing made the cliff seem challenging to climb. Descriptions such as "She leaned out as far as she dared..." and "...her hands dug deep into their hold..." These descriptions help to create the illusion that the cliff was challenging to climb.

All in all, exclamations,

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STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 4  
(EXAMPLE B)

details about the cliff, and describing the main characters actions created an illusion that the cliff was hard to climb. How would you have made the cliff seem challenging to climb?

- Purpose is evident; focus/controlling idea may not be maintained
- Generally organized and coherent
- Details are relevant and mostly support purpose
- Well-constructed sentences; uses language well
- May have inconsistent control of grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 3  
(EXAMPLE A)

14

I think the author makes it challenging because it had tons of parts in the story that said, for example it said, "It's very slippery". Another example it said, "She clung mostly to the rock itself, sometimes to the tufts of moss that sprouted from the watery steams". Before she climbed the cliff she said "Looks tough" so she knew it was going to be a challenge for her. In some parts she said "she stretched out her hand, farther... and farther... no! Just out of reach. So that was a challenge because some spots she couldn't reach. Another part that made it challenging for her was, there was a dead end at one part and that was challenging because you gotta find a new spot to get up. These are a lot of reasons why the author made it challenging for ANNA to get up the cliff safely.

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GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 3  
(EXAMPLE B)

14

The author in this story made climb up the cliff very challenging. It was very challenging climbing the cliff because it was very steep. The girl didn't have any climbing equipment which made it even more challenging for her to climb the cliff. Also the girl was carrying a pet on her shoulders so it was more challenging. Next, there was water pouring out of the cracks of the rock which made it very slippery to climb. She could have easily slipped and fell off the cliff which would have been very bad. Then the girls muscles got very weak and it was hard for her to hold on to the ledge, finally, the rocks were far apart which made it hard to get to each ledge. So she had to leap from one to another rock. Another reason the cliff was difficult was because the rocks were very loose. When she tried to lean onto another rock it broke off and she almost fell. In conclusion, the author made the cliff very challenging to climb and made it seem like you were in the story climbing the cliff.

- Writing has a general purpose
- Some sense of organization; may have lapses in coherence
- Some relevant details support purpose
- Uses language adequately; may show little variety of sentence structures
- May contain some serious errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 2  
(EXAMPLE A)

14

The author made this climb feel challenging by how the climb progressed. At first Anna came out of a bushy trail and saw the cliff. She progressed by climbing up the cliff by slipping on the rocks. She tried grabbing onto the edge but she couldn't get it. But she got it with her foot and almost fell when the edge fell off. But she did make it up.

- Attempted or vague purpose; stays on topic
- Little evidence of organization; lapses in coherence
- Generalizes or lists details
- Lacks sentence control; uses language poorly
- Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are distracting

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 2  
(EXAMPLE B)

14

The author makes climbing up the cliff challenging because he or she said that the rock was cold, damp, and slippery. Anna had to be cautious and shift her weight to the other ledge. They also make it seem painful when they say that the rock scraped against her knees and elbows.

- Attempted or vague purpose; stays on topic
- Little evidence of organization; lapses in coherence
- Generalizes or lists details
- Lacks sentence control; uses language poorly
- Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are distracting

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 1  
(EXAMPLE A)

14

The girl and whatever the thing is on her sholder climb the cliff and some of the cliff broke off when she was climbing the cliff when some broke off of the cliff byt the girl and her animal thing were still alive then they got to the top of the cliff.

- Lack of evident purpose; topic may not be clear
- Incoherent or undeveloped organization
- Random information
- Rudimentary or deficient use of language
- Serious and persistent errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics throughout

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 1  
(EXAMPLE B)

14 The author make the climb up the cliff seem challenging is making a person climb up a cliff with her pet Eagle and it is hard to climb up a big cliff scraping her elbows and knees to stand on top of it. That is who you can challenge or body with out using on rope or nothing to climb up the cliff just using hre hands climbing up the cliff.

- Lack of evident purpose; topic may not be clear
- Incoherent or undeveloped organization
- Random information
- Rudimentary or deficient use of language
- Serious and persistent errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics throughout

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 0

(continued on next page)

14 The Author climb up the cliff  
that climed mostly rock so  
sometimes to the tufts of moss  
it seemed very out of the ground  
at wedged into the crack and  
crept higher. the land grew  
steadily steeper. And dotted  
with a dark boulders  
broken chunks of the cliff  
a pproached and shook overhead  
meanwhile leafly vines  
the dangled from hemlock  
and stepped.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 0

(continued on next page)

Also the lip of rock broke off  
and drop of sweat of her noise  
as broken pieces clattered down  
she wrapped it around the  
outcropping, braced her self and  
the sprouted from the watery seams  
As she neared the top of the  
cliff. as big crack came  
to sudden she dared and  
scanned the face a thin  
ledge just to her right couldn't  
reach. She strode over the  
deep crack in the snake's  
way up from the base.

NECAP 2013 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE – SCORE POINT 0

Cautiously she shifted her weight  
to the edge her hands  
searched for new hold as she  
slid herself across the rocky  
face cold, damp scraped against  
her elbow and knees the  
muscles in her thigh a creak  
terribly made it a single  
run on her shoulder with  
his foot. She tilted her  
head and nuzzled him

Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.

## Grade 8 Writing Released Item Information – 2013

Released Item Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Content Strand <sup>1</sup>	SC	PW	RW	IR	PW									
GLE Code	7-9	7-9	7-9	7-9	7-1	7-9	7-9	7-9	7-9	7-9	7-8	7-3	7-7, 7-6, 7-8, 7-1, 7-9	7-2,7-3,7-1,7-9
Depth of Knowledge Code	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3
Item Type <sup>2</sup>	MC	CR	CR	CR	ER									
Answer Key	B	C	D	C	A	C	A	A	B	D				
Total Possible Points	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	4	12

<sup>1</sup>Content Strand: SC = Structures of Language & Writing Conventions. Short Responses — NW = Narrative Writing, RW = Report Writing, IR = Response to Informational Text. Extended Response — PW = Persuasive Writing.

<sup>2</sup>Item Type: MC = Multiple Choice, CR = Constructed Response, ER = Writing Prompt