



## OVERVIEW AND SCORING PROCESS FOR THE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

### OVERVIEW

In the writing prompt section of the Writing subtest, examinees are asked to prepare a written response to each of two assigned topics. In the directions for the writing prompt section, examinees will be instructed to read the topics carefully before beginning to write and to think about how to organize what they plan to say. Examinees may use the supplemental space provided outside of the answer area to make notes, prepare an outline, or write a first draft. The final response must be the examinee's original work, written in his or her own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work.

Responses are scored on the extent to which they effectively communicate a whole message to the specified audience for the stated purpose. Examinees are assessed on their ability to express, organize, and support opinions and ideas rather than on the position they take. Each response is scored according to the following performance characteristics:

- **FOCUS AND APPROPRIATENESS:** the fluency and quality of the discussion, and the sustained attention on a given topic using language and style appropriate to a specified audience, purpose, and occasion
- **UNITY AND ORGANIZATION:** the effectiveness of the organization, the logical sequence of ideas, and the clarity of the writing used to state and maintain a main idea and point of view
- **DEVELOPMENT AND RATIONALE:** the relevance, depth, and effectiveness of statements or arguments and examples used to support those statements or defend a position
- **USAGE AND SENTENCE STRUCTURE:** the precision in word choice and use of effective sentence structure
- **MECHANICAL CONVENTIONS:** the use of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation according to standard writing conventions

Responses to the writing assignments must be written in the answer area provided. Responses that are written outside of the answer area will not be scored.

Responses are rated on a four-point scoring scale with "1" indicating the lowest score and "4" the highest score. Specific performance characteristics (see above) describe the elements typically found in responses at each of the four score points, although any particular response may be either more or less developed in respect to any specific element. Each category of the four-point scale encompasses a range of ability across that particular score. Thus, a response may score high on one element and low on another. Further, among the most competent written responses, there will be those that represent a "high 4" (the best) as well as those that represent a "low 4" (clearly superior responses, but they are not quite as well written as the "high 4"). This range of ability holds true within each of the other three points on the scoring scale.



## THE SCORING PROCESS FOR THE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

The writing assignments are designed to assess objective 12 from the Writing subtest.

**0012 Prepare an organized, developed composition in response to instructions regarding content, purpose, and audience.**

*The candidate may be asked to respond to persuasive and/or expository writing exercises in which the candidate is asked to do one or more of the following.*

- Compose a fluent, focused, and sustained piece of writing on a given topic using language and style appropriate to a specified audience, purpose, and occasion.
- State and maintain a clear main idea and point of view using effective organization to enhance meaning and clarity.
- Take a position on a contemporary social or political issue and defend that position with reasoned arguments and supporting examples.
- Use effective sentence structure.
- Demonstrate the ability to spell, capitalize, and punctuate according to standard writing conventions.

*Based on the writing exercise assigned, responses will be evaluated according to the following performance characteristics.*

### Performance Characteristics

Focus and Appropriateness	The fluency and quality of the discussion, and the sustained attention on a given topic using language and style appropriate to a specified audience, purpose, and occasion.
Unity and Organization	The effectiveness of the organization, the logical sequence of ideas, and the clarity of the writing used to state and maintain a main idea and point of view.
Development and Rationale	The relevance, depth, and effectiveness of statements or arguments and examples used to support those statements or defend a position.
Usage and Sentence Structure	The precision in word choice and use of effective sentence structure.
Mechanical Conventions	The use of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation according to standard writing conventions.

Responses are rated on a four-point scoring scale with "1" indicating the lowest score and "4" the highest score. Specific performance characteristics (see above) describe the elements typically found in responses at each of the four score points, although any particular response may be either more or less developed in respect to any specific element. Each category of the four-point scale encompasses a range of ability across that particular score. Thus, a response may score high on one element and low on another. Further, among the most competent written responses, there will be those that represent a "high 4" (the best) as well as those that represent a "low 4" (clearly superior responses, but they are not quite as well written as the "high 4"). This range of ability holds true within each of the other three points on the scoring scale.

Each response will be read and scored by two readers; the sum of the two readers' scores will be the examinee's total score for the writing assignment. Any pair of scores that differs by more than one point will be regarded as discrepant and will require resolution by a third reader. For example, a total score of 6 would result from the assignment of a "3" and a "3" from each of two readers; it could not result from assigned scores of "4" and "2" because the scores differ by more than one point.



## SCORING SCALE

Score	WEST-B Score Point Descriptions
<b>4</b>	<p>A "4" is a well-organized and developed composition that effectively addresses the assigned content, purpose, and audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The writer effectively addresses the given topic and remains focused on that topic; the discussion is fluent and includes language and style appropriate for the audience, purpose, and occasion.</li><li>• The composition is well organized with a logical sequence of ideas and clear writing.</li><li>• The writer's position is well developed with relevant, strong, and effective supporting information; the reasoning is strong.</li><li>• The composition exhibits careful and precise word choice; sentence structures are varied and effective.</li><li>• The composition includes no more than minor flaws in standard spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.</li></ul>
<b>3</b>	<p>A "3" is an adequately organized and developed composition that addresses the assigned content, purpose, and audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The writer addresses the given topic and generally remains focused on that topic; the discussion is coherent and includes language and style generally appropriate for the audience, purpose, and occasion.</li><li>• The composition is adequately organized with a logical sequence of ideas and generally clear writing.</li><li>• The writer's position is adequately developed with generally relevant, strong, and effective supporting information; the reasoning is generally sound.</li><li>• The composition exhibits adequate word choice; sentence structures are generally effective.</li><li>• The composition may include some flaws in standard spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.</li></ul>
<b>2</b>	<p>A "2" is a somewhat organized and developed composition that partially addresses the assigned content, purpose, and audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The writer may address, but lose focus on, the given topic; the discussion may be confused or include some language and style inappropriate for the audience, purpose, and occasion.</li><li>• The composition is somewhat disorganized with a questionable sequence of ideas and/or some unclear writing.</li><li>• The writer's position is partially developed with somewhat relevant but generally weak and ineffective supporting information; the reasoning may be simplistic.</li><li>• The composition exhibits some lack of care and precision in word choice; sentence structures may be weak or lack variety.</li><li>• The composition may have distracting flaws in standard spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.</li></ul>
<b>1</b>	<p>A "1" is a poorly organized and developed composition that inadequately addresses the assigned content, purpose, and audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The writer fails to address or remain focused on the given topic; the discussion lacks coherence and/or includes language and style inappropriate for the audience, purpose, and occasion.</li><li>• The composition is poorly organized with an illogical sequence of ideas and/or unclear writing.</li><li>• The writer's position is poorly developed with little, if any, relevant supporting information; the reasoning is unsound or absent.</li><li>• The composition exhibits careless and imprecise word choice; sentence structures are flawed.</li><li>• The composition includes significant errors in standard spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.</li></ul>
<b>U</b>	<p><b>The response is unscorable because it is unrelated to the assignment, is illegible, is primarily in a language other than English, or does not contain a sufficient amount of original work to score.</b></p>
<b>B</b>	<p><b>The answer area is blank.</b></p>