



WEST–B: WRITING

In the Writing section of the Washington Educator Skills Test—Basic, the knowledge and skills that are tested are those that reflect "Standard English" as used in the United States. "Standard English" is a version of English that conforms to the conventions of style, usage, and syntax as represented in formal written texts. This is the form of English that is used by writers in the United States to communicate in textbooks, government documents, magazines, newspapers, and the like. While there are many varieties of written and spoken English, the academically established set of rules for "Standard English" as used in the United States will be measured by this test.

Select any of the test objectives listed below to view

- a set of descriptive statements that further explain each objective, and
- one or more sample test question(s) aligned to each objective.

Test Field	WEST–B: Writing
Test Format	Multiple-choice questions and constructed-response items
Number of Questions	Approximately 50 multiple-choice items, 2 written assignments
Additional Materials	Overview and Scoring Process for the Writing Assignments Glossary

For sample items that would appear as part of a cluster on the actual test, stimulus material is repeated for the purposes of this study guide.

Objectives:

0007 Understand the role of audience and purpose in written communication.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this objective.

- Assess the appropriateness of a written selection for a specific purpose or audience (e.g., a business letter, a communication to parents/guardians/caregivers).
- Determine the likely effect on an audience of a writer's choice of a particular word or words (e.g., to evoke sympathy, to raise questions about an opposing point of view).
- Recognize persuasive techniques used by a writer in a passage.



Sample Item(s):

1. Read the selection below; then answer the question that follows.

¹In 1811 and 1812 a series of three earthquakes took place near Madrid, Missouri, all of which are thought to have registered 8.0 or higher on the Richter scale. ²Large areas of the region sank, new lakes formed, the Mississippi River changed course, and about 150,000 acres of forest were destroyed. ³More recently, a 1976 earthquake on the east coast of China killed over 240,000 people. ⁴In 1985 an earthquake registering 8.1 on the Richter scale hit Mexico; a slightly less powerful aftershock struck 36 hours later. ⁵Between 5,000 and 10,000 people died in the disaster.

⁶Yet, when asked about earthquakes, people in the United States rarely recall any of these seismic disturbances. ⁷Rather, they are much more likely to mention the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. ⁸It was, to be sure, a major earthquake that registered 8.2 on the Richter scale and destroyed large areas of the city. ⁹That is not the only reason why it so well remembered, moreover. ¹⁰Its lasting place in U.S. history owes a whole lot to the fact that it was the first large earthquake to be extensively covered in the media. ¹¹Major periodicals of the period included *The Nation*, *Harper's Weekly*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. ¹²Pictures of the panic and destruction appeared in newspapers throughout the country, and there were numerous eyewitness accounts. ¹³As a result of this coverage, the quake soon entered the realms of both legend and history.

The writer's main purpose in the selection is to:

- A. analyze the destruction caused by various earthquakes.
- B. explain why the 1906 San Francisco earthquake is so well remembered.
- C. evaluate media coverage of various earthquakes.
- D. compare major earthquakes of the 1800s and 1900s.

Correct Response and Explanation

B. After briefly describing the 1811 and 1812 Madrid, Missouri, earthquakes, the 1976 Chinese earthquake, and the 1985 Mexican earthquake, the author goes on to ask the central question of the selection: why the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 is so well remembered (Response B), even though it was no more powerful or destructive than those that came before or after. The writer mentions the destruction caused by the San Francisco earthquake and the Missouri earthquakes, but no effort is made to analyze the damage (Response A), while the destruction caused by the other earthquakes is not even described. Although information concerning media coverage of the San Francisco earthquake is important to the writer's argument, the selection makes no mention of coverage of other earthquakes; nor does the writer attempt to analyze or evaluate media reports of the San Francisco earthquake (Response C). And while the writer offers information about each of the earthquakes mentioned in the selection, a systematic comparison (Response D) is not the main point of the selection.



2. Read the selection below; then answer the question that follows.

¹Born in 1940, Maxine Hong Kingston is the daughter of Chinese immigrants who grew up in a California neighborhood surrounded by people from her father's native village. ²During her childhood, she would listen for hours to stories that they and her mother told of China. ³Later, as an undergraduate at the university of California, Berkeley, she switched her major from engineering to English so that she could develop her own storytelling skills.

⁴Kingston brings an understanding of three cultures to her work: the Chinese culture of her parents, the American culture in which she lives, and the Chinese American culture of her personal experience. ⁵In her first book, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* (1976), she combined autobiography and fiction to relate the story of a daughter of Chinese parents growing up in America. ⁶Her second book, *China Men* (1980), adopted the perspective of males in her family to celebrate their achievements while chronicling the exploitation and prejudice they faced.

The writer's main purpose in the selection is to:

- A. show how Maxine Hong Kingston gathers ideas for her books.
- B. compare Maxine Hong Kingston's main works.
- C. analyze recurring themes in books written by Maxine Hong Kingston.
- D. describe major features of Maxine Hong Kingston's life and work.

Correct Response and Explanation

D. After providing a brief biographical portrait of Kingston, the writer devotes the second paragraph of the selection to a discussion of some of the major themes and characteristics of Kingston's work (Response D). Although readers might infer from information furnished in the selection how Kingston gathers ideas for her books (Response A), this does not make up the main thrust of the writer's discussion. The second paragraph focuses on how Kingston's multiple cultures influenced her books, not on a detailed comparison between them (Response B) or an analysis of common themes (Response C).



0008 Understand idea development, fluency, and organization within writing.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this objective.

- Identify organizational methods used by the writer of a selection.
- Distinguish between effective and ineffective thesis statements.
- Recognize unnecessary shifts in point of view (e.g., shifts from first to third person) or distracting details that impair development of the main idea within a written selection.
- Recognize the appropriate use of transitional words and phrases to convey text structure.
- Recognize examples of focused, concise, and well-developed writing.

Sample Item(s):

1. Read the selection below; then answer the question that follows.

¹In 1811 and 1812 a series of three earthquakes took place near Madrid, Missouri, all of which are thought to have registered 8.0 or higher on the Richter scale. ²Large areas of the region sank, new lakes formed, the Mississippi River changed course, and about 150,000 acres of forest were destroyed. ³More recently, a 1976 earthquake on the east coast of China killed over 240,000 people. ⁴In 1985 an earthquake registering 8.1 on the Richter scale hit Mexico; a slightly less powerful aftershock struck 36 hours later. ⁵Between 5,000 and 10,000 people died in the disaster.

⁶Yet, when asked about earthquakes, people in the United States rarely recall any of these seismic disturbances. ⁷Rather, they are much more likely to mention the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. ⁸It was, to be sure, a major earthquake that registered 8.2 on the Richter scale and destroyed large areas of the city. ⁹That is not the only reason why it so well remembered, moreover. ¹⁰Its lasting place in U.S. history owes a whole lot to the fact that it was the first large earthquake to be extensively covered in the media. ¹¹Major periodicals of the period included *The Nation*, *Harper's Weekly*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. ¹²Pictures of the panic and destruction appeared in newspapers throughout the country, and there were numerous eyewitness accounts. ¹³As a result of this coverage, the quake soon entered the realms of both legend and history.

Which underlined word or phrase should be replaced by a more appropriate transitional word or phrase?

- A. sentence 3: More recently
- B. sentence 6: Yet
- C. sentence 7: Rather
- D. sentence 9: moreover



Correct Response and Explanation

D. Sentence 9 requires a transition word such as "however" that links dissimilar ideas (the destruction caused by the San Francisco earthquake and the publicity it received in newspapers and magazines of the day), rather than a word such as "moreover" that links similar ideas (Response D). The words "more recently" are used correctly in sentence 3 to show chronological order (Response A). In sentence 6 the word "yet" (Response B) is used correctly to link contrasting ideas (the size of the earthquakes mentioned and the lack of public knowledge about them), while in sentence 7 the word "rather" is used similarly to contrast the lack of knowledge the public has about the other earthquakes with their recognition of the San Francisco earthquake (Response C).

2. Read the selection below; then answer the question that follows.

¹Born in 1940, Maxine Hong Kingston is the daughter of Chinese immigrants who grew up in a California neighborhood surrounded by people from her father's native village. ²During her childhood, she would listen for hours to stories that they and her mother told of China. ³Later, as an undergraduate at the university of California, Berkeley, she switched her major from engineering to English so that she could develop her own storytelling skills.

⁴Kingston brings an understanding of three cultures to her work: the Chinese culture of her parents, the American culture in which she lives, and the Chinese American culture of her personal experience. ⁵In her first book, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* (1976), she combined autobiography and fiction to relate the story of a daughter of Chinese parents growing up in America. ⁶Her second book, *China Men* (1980), adopted the perspective of males in her family to celebrate their achievements while chronicling the exploitation and prejudice they faced.

Which organizational method does the writer use in the first paragraph of the selection?

- A. comparison and contrast
- B. topical order
- C. chronological order
- D. cause and effect



Correct Response and Explanation

C. The first paragraph traces major events in Kingston's life from her birth in 1940 to her undergraduate days at the University of California, Berkeley, in the chronological order in which they occurred (Response C). The paragraph does not compare or contrast aspects of Kingston's life (Response A) or discuss different biographical topics in order of importance (Response B). At the very end of the paragraph, the writer notes that Kingston switched her college major to enable her to write more about her experiences, but this cause-and-effect relationship (Response D) is not the primary means of organizing the information presented in the paragraph.

0009 Recognize writing that effectively communicates intended messages.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this objective.

- Distinguish between effective and ineffective development of ideas within a paragraph.
- Understand the use of paragraphing to reinforce text structure.
- Determine whether supporting details in a written selection are essential or nonessential.

Sample Item(s):

1. Read the selection below; then answer the question that follows.

¹Adults have been reading the stories and verses of "Mother Goose" to children for more than, 400 years. ²The collection originated in France in 1697 with eight fairy tales published as *Stories and Tales of Past Times with Morals; or Tales of Mother Goose*. ³The book's cover showed an engraving of an elderly woman sitting by the fireside next to a sign that read: "stories of my mother the goose." ⁴Considered the beginning classic of children's literature, the book includes stories such as "Cinderella," "Sleeping Beauty," and "Little Red Riding Hood." ⁵Today, "Mother Goose" is more closely associated with nursery rhymes than with fairy tales. ⁶This is largely a consequence of the business practices of an eighteenth-century English publisher. ⁷In 1768 he published a translation of the original tales under the title *Mother Goose's Tales*, but he also attached the name to a collection of rhymes that he called *Mother Goose's Melody*. ⁸Most of the verses were traditional folk songs, tavern ballads, and satirical poems written to entertain adults. ⁹They have since become the delight of young children, who enjoy them for their silliness and lyricism.



To improve the structure of the selection, it would be most effective to begin a new paragraph starting with which sentence?

- A. sentence 4
- B. sentence 5
- C. sentence 6
- D. sentence 7

Correct Response and Explanation

B. Sentences 1 to 4 and sentences 5 to 9 form separate units of information. Sentences 1 to 4 are primarily a description of the contents of the 1697 edition of *Stories and Tales of Past Times with Morals; or Tales of Mother Goose*, which introduced classic children's stories. Sentences 5 to 9 describe the changes introduced by the 1768 edition of *Mother Goose's Tales*, in which what we now call nursery rhymes were first collected. Therefore, sentence 5 (Response B) is the best place to divide the selection into two paragraphs.

2. Read the selection below; then answer the question that follows.

¹In 1811 and 1812 a series of three earthquakes took place near Madrid, Missouri, all of which are thought to have registered 8.0 or higher on the Richter scale. ²Large areas of the region sank, new lakes formed, the Mississippi River changed course, and about 150,000 acres of forest were destroyed. ³More recently, a 1976 earthquake on the east coast of China killed over 240,000 people. ⁴In 1985 an earthquake registering 8.1 on the Richter scale hit Mexico; a slightly less powerful aftershock struck 36 hours later. ⁵Between 5,000 and 10,000 people died in the disaster.

⁶Yet, when asked about earthquakes, people in the United States rarely recall any of these seismic disturbances. ⁷Rather, they are much more likely to mention the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. ⁸It was, to be sure, a major earthquake that registered 8.2 on the Richter scale and destroyed large areas of the city. ⁹That is not the only reason why it so well remembered, moreover. ¹⁰Its lasting place in U.S. history owes a whole lot to the fact that it was the first large earthquake to be extensively covered in the media. ¹¹Major periodicals of the period included *The Nation*, *Harper's Weekly*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. ¹²Pictures of the panic and destruction appeared in newspapers throughout the country, and there were numerous eyewitness accounts. ¹³As a result of this coverage, the quake soon entered the realms of both legend and history.



Which change would best improve the development of ideas in the second paragraph of the selection?

- A. Delete sentence 8.
- B. Reverse the order of sentences 9 and 10.
- C. Delete sentence 11.
- D. Reverse the order of sentences 12 and 13.

Correct Response and Explanation

C. Sentence 11 should be deleted (Response C) because it contains details that distract from the development of the main idea of the second paragraph. Readers need to be told about the nature of media coverage of the San Francisco earthquake, but they do not need to know the names of some of the major periodicals of the era. By contrast, sentence 8 provides relevant information showing that the San Francisco earthquake was a major seismic event (Response A). Reversing the order of sentences 9 and 10 (Response B) or sentences 12 and 13 (Response D) would create confusion rather than improve the development of ideas in the second paragraph.

0010 Apply revision strategies to written works.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this objective.

- Apply revision strategies affecting voice, syntax, transitions, organization, clarity, coherence, and point of view in a written selection.
- Make revisions that improve the fluency and focus of a written selection or that improve cohesion and the effective sequence of ideas.
- Improve the clarity and effectiveness of a written selection through changes in word choice.
- Eliminate or replace unnecessary or imprecise words and phrases.
- Insert appropriate transitional words or phrases (e.g., however, as a result) into a passage to convey the structure of the text and to help readers understand the sequence of a writer's ideas.
- Recognize wordiness, redundancy, and ineffective repetition in sentences and paragraphs.



Sample Item(s):

1. Read the selection below; then answer the question that follows.

¹Adults have been reading the stories and verses of "Mother Goose" to children for more than, 400 years. ²The collection originated in France in 1697 with eight fairy tales published as *Stories and Tales of Past Times with Morals; or Tales of Mother Goose*. ³The book's cover showed an engraving of an elderly woman sitting by the fireside next to a sign that read: "stories of my mother the goose." ⁴Considered the beginning classic of children's literature, the book includes stories such as "Cinderella," "Sleeping Beauty," and "Little Red Riding Hood." ⁵Today, "Mother Goose" is more closely associated with nursery rhymes than with fairy tales. ⁶This is largely a consequence of the business practices of an eighteenth-century English publisher. ⁷In 1768 he published a translation of the original tales under the title *Mother Goose's Tales*, but he also attached the name to a collection of rhymes that he called *Mother Goose's Melody*. ⁸Most of the verses were traditional folk songs, tavern ballads, and satirical poems written to entertain adults. ⁹They have since become the delight of young children, who enjoy them for their silliness and lyricism.

Which underlined word in the selection should be replaced by a more appropriate word?

- A. sentence 2: originated
- B. sentence 4: beginning
- C. sentence 6: largely
- D. sentence 8: satirical

Correct Response and Explanation

B. *Beginning* can mean "to start," it can refer to something appropriate for children as opposed to adults, or it can refer to a new learner—which makes it an awkward and confusing way of expressing the prominence of one work of a particular genre of literature. A classic of literature may be a major or minor classic, or an early or later classic, but it is not a "beginning" classic (Response B). The first clause of sentence 4 would be improved if it were revised to read: "Considered the first classic of children's literature." The words "originated" (Response A), "largely" (Response C), and "satirical" (Response D) are all used correctly in the selection.



2. Read the selection below; then answer the question that follows.

¹In 1811 and 1812 a series of three earthquakes took place near Madrid, Missouri, all of which are thought to have registered 8.0 or higher on the Richter scale. ²Large areas of the region sank, new lakes formed, the Mississippi River changed course, and about 150,000 acres of forest were destroyed. ³More recently, a 1976 earthquake on the east coast of China killed over 240,000 people. ⁴In 1985 an earthquake registering 8.1 on the Richter scale hit Mexico; a slightly less powerful aftershock struck 36 hours later. ⁵Between 5,000 and 10,000 people died in the disaster.

⁶Yet, when asked about earthquakes, people in the United States rarely recall any of these seismic disturbances. ⁷Rather, they are much more likely to mention the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. ⁸It was, to be sure, a major earthquake that registered 8.2 on the Richter scale and destroyed large areas of the city. ⁹That is not the only reason why it so well remembered, moreover. ¹⁰Its lasting place in U.S. history owes a whole lot to the fact that it was the first large earthquake to be extensively covered in the media. ¹¹Major periodicals of the period included *The Nation*, *Harper's Weekly*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. ¹²Pictures of the panic and destruction appeared in newspapers throughout the country, and there were numerous eyewitness accounts. ¹³As a result of this coverage, the quake soon entered the realms of both legend and history.

Which change in word choice is needed to improve the effectiveness of the second paragraph?

- A. sentence 6: Change "when asked" to "if questioned."
- B. sentence 7: Change "much more likely" to "more inclined."
- C. sentence 8: Change "large areas" to "major parts."
- D. sentence 10: Change "a whole lot" to "much more."

Correct Response and Explanation

D. Changing "a whole lot" to "much more" (Response D) would make the second paragraph more effective by replacing a very casual expression with language that is more explicit and more appropriate to the purpose and audience of the selection. The revisions suggested for sentences 6 (Response A), 7 (Response B), and 8 (Response C) would change neither the meaning nor the level of language used in those sentences.



0011 Recognize the use of standard writing conventions.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this objective.

- Recognize the use of standard writing conventions (e.g., grammar) that enhance or impair meaning and clarity.
- Understand the standard use of verbs (e.g., subject-verb agreement, verb tense, consistency of tense), nouns (e.g., plural and possessive forms), pronouns (e.g., pronoun-antecedent agreement, standard pronoun cases, use of possessive pronouns, standard use of relative and demonstrative pronouns), and modifiers (e.g., adverbs, adjectives, prepositional phrases).
- Recognize instances in which incorrect or extraneous punctuation has been used or necessary punctuation has been omitted.
- Identify standard initial capitalization and standard capitalization with proper words and titles.
- Recognize the standard spellings of words.
- Identify sentence fragments and run-on sentences.

Sample Item(s):

1. Read the selection below; then answer the question that follows.

¹Adults have been reading the stories and verses of "Mother Goose" to children for more than, 400 years. ²The collection originated in France in 1697 with eight fairy tales published as *Stories and Tales of Past Times with Morals; or Tales of Mother Goose*. ³The book's cover showed an engraving of an elderly woman sitting by the fireside next to a sign that read: "stories of my mother the goose." ⁴Considered the beginning classic of children's literature, the book includes stories such as "Cinderella," "Sleeping Beauty," and "Little Red Riding Hood." ⁵Today, "Mother Goose" is more closely associated with nursery rhymes than with fairy tales. ⁶This is largely a consequence of the business practices of an eighteenth-century English publisher. ⁷In 1768 he published a translation of the original tales under the title *Mother Goose's Tales*, but he also attached the name to a collection of rhymes that he called *Mother Goose's Melody*. ⁸Most of the verses were traditional folk songs, tavern ballads, and satirical poems written to entertain adults. ⁹They have since become the delight of young children, who enjoy them for their silliness and lyricism.

Which change is needed in the selection?

- A. sentence 1: Delete the comma after "than."
- B. sentence 2: Insert a comma after "France."
- C. sentence 3: Delete the apostrophe in "book's."
- D. sentence 6: Insert a comma after "eighteenth-century."



Correct Response and Explanation

A. A conjunction used to make comparisons, "than" is not followed by a comma (Response A). The punctuation marks identified in sentence 2 (Response B), sentence 3 (Response C), and sentence 6 (Response D) are all used correctly.

2. Read the selection below; then answer the question that follows.

¹Born in 1940, Maxine Hong Kingston is the daughter of Chinese immigrants who grew up in a California neighborhood surrounded by people from her father's native village. ²During her childhood, she would listen for hours to stories that they and her mother told of China. ³Later, as an undergraduate at the university of California, Berkeley, she switched her major from engineering to English so that she could develop her own storytelling skills.

⁴Kingston brings an understanding of three cultures to her work: the Chinese culture of her parents, the American culture in which she lives, and the Chinese American culture of her personal experience. ⁵In her first book, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* (1976), she combined autobiography and fiction to relate the story of a daughter of Chinese parents growing up in America. ⁶Her second book, *China Men* (1980), adopted the perspective of males in her family to celebrate their achievements while chronicling the exploitation and prejudice they faced.

Which underlined word in the selection contains an error in capitalization?

- A. sentence 3: university
- B. sentence 3: major
- C. sentence 3: engineering
- D. sentence 3: English

Correct Response and Explanation

A. In sentence 3, "university" should be capitalized because it is the first word in the name of a specific institution, "University of California, Berkeley" (Response A). Both "major" (Response B) and "engineering" (Response C) are common nouns that should not be capitalized. "English" (Response D) is formed correctly because languages are always capitalized.



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

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.

Sample Writing Assignments:

1. The following is a sample of the expository type of prompt to which examinees are asked to respond.

What are the characteristics of a good friend? In an essay to be read by a general audience of educated adults, explain your ideas about what makes someone a good friend. Include details to support your views.

Score Point 4 Response

One could argue that there is no such thing as a bad friend. In a sense, goodness is inherent in being a friend. Someone who fails to embody the qualities that define friendship may be better described as an acquaintance. These qualities include, among others, being supportive, trustworthy, and willing to make sacrifices. Just as important, however, is the awareness on both sides that, as friends, each will be called upon to assume the assortment of roles required. A good friendship, like any relationship, involves a good deal of give and take.

When I was a sophomore in high school, my parents separated and eventually were divorced. This was an extremely difficult period of my life, and I'm not sure that I would have survived it without the support, trust and sacrifices of a few close friends. Throughout the entire ordeal, I knew I could vent all of my anger, pain and confusion to these friends and they would be willing to listen and not judge. I also knew that I could trust them with personal and private thoughts and feelings; my confidences would not be repeated. These friends gave up much time to listen to my problems, time which allowed me to sort my thoughts out verbally and, ultimately, to come to some understanding of my family's breakup.



Opportunities to return favors to these friends have arisen over the years. In their own times of crisis or indecision, they have come to me searching not so much for answers as for the reassurance that they were not alone, that a friend was near. Being that friend was easy because they had shown me the way; the roles were simply reversed. When they looked to me for emotional support and understanding, I needed only to remember the acceptance they had given me. Likewise, when they entrusted me with their most personal thoughts, I knew to guard their vulnerability and privacy. I also came to understand that changing plans in order to maintain a friendship is not so much a sacrifice as it is the investment in a valuable bond.

Such a bond was strengthened just last year when my friend Daniel's father died of a sudden heart attack. Daniel called me just before midnight, and I got out of bed to drive to his apartment. I knew I couldn't make his pain go away, but I could stand by him and listen to his regrets and sorrows; I could remind him of the memories of his father he would always cherish. In many ways, although my loss was less severe, this is exactly what Daniel had done for me when my parents separated.

I have been lucky in life to have had friends whom I could count on. Through good times and bad, these friends have stood by me, honored my confidences, and made sacrifices in countless variations of their loyalty. In general, they have enriched my life by their mere presence. I hope, in some small way, that I have done the same for them.

Rationale: Score Point 4

Focus and Appropriateness *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.*

The opening paragraph of the response establishes focus by enumerating the qualities that the examinee views as essential to friendship and asserting that friendship is a mutual undertaking. The focus and position are maintained throughout the response. Elaboration and support make up the body of the response, while the concluding paragraph gives further support and summarizes the main thesis. The writing is fluent and easy to follow; vocabulary and syntax are at the appropriate level for a general audience of educated adults. The writing style is consistent with the purpose and occasion.

Unity and Organization *The composition is well organized with a logical sequence of ideas and clear writing.*

The response is well organized and unified. The opening paragraph introduces the topic and clearly states the examinee's position. The next paragraphs develop and support the main thesis by providing examples from the examinee's own experience in which these qualities were exemplified by individuals. The concluding paragraph returns to the examinee's view of the qualities necessary to friendship and concludes by making the thesis personal. The writing is clear, logical, and easy for the reader to follow.



Development and Rationale *The writer's position is well developed with relevant, strong, and effective supporting information; the reasoning is strong.*

The examinee's position is that the qualities of supportiveness, trustworthiness, and willingness to make sacrifices are necessary between friends. The response then develops this position by describing examples from the examinee's own experience in which these qualities were illustrated. The second paragraph describes how friends assisted the examinee during a difficult period, and the third and fourth paragraphs describe instances in which the examinee had opportunities to return the assistance. These examples offer useful and effective support for the examinee's thesis by clearly demonstrating the practical importance of the qualities asserted to be essential to friendship. These examples are offered with a candor that makes them compelling.

Usage and Sentence Structure *The composition exhibits careful and precise word choice; sentence structures are varied and effective.*

The examinee's choice of words is careful and precise (e.g., the use of *embody*, *ordeal*, *crisis*, *indecision*, *vulnerability*). Sentence structures are varied and effective. Transitions link sentence sequences effectively (*When...This was...ultimately*).

Mechanical Conventions *The composition includes no more than minor flaws in standard spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.*

The response demonstrates mastery of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in standard English as used in the United States.

Score Point 3 Response

I believe that it takes a very special person to be a good friend. There are certain characteristics that define what a good friend is, and someone must personify those characteristics to be considered worthy. A good friend will be honest, supportive and fun.

A true "good" friend would never lie to you. They would be someone you could trust with your most precious secrets, hopes and aspirations, without worrying about them spreading rumors or rolling their eyes when you tell them you want to be a Broadway actress someday. Trust is the foundation of any strong friendship, and without it there is no chance of a deep relationship.

A friend must also be supportive, even when times are bad (especially when times are bad). It is not enough to just be there to congratulate a friend when she gets an "A" on her Chemistry final, but you also must console her when she gets that "F". You want to count on a true friend to boost your spirits when you face failure or sadness.



Finally, a good friend also needs to be fun. If you don't have fun with a person, you won't want to spend any time with them, and you will drift apart from each other over time. A friend needs to be someone you have a lot in common with and share interests with, so that the time you spend together will be enjoyable. You need someone to make you laugh at all the absurd things in life. And a good friend would be that someone

In conclusion, a person need to be honest, supportive and fun to be a truly good friend. Without these characteristics, a person is really just someone you know, maybe like a little, but not a "good friend."

Rationale: Score Point 3

Focus and Appropriateness *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.*

The opening paragraph of the response establishes focus by stating the defining characteristics of a friend. The focus is maintained throughout the response. The body of the response provides some elaboration, and the concluding paragraph reiterates the thesis. The writing is coherent; vocabulary and syntax are generally appropriate for a general audience of educated adults. The writing style is generally consistent with the purpose and occasion and lends a sense of personality to the piece.

Unity and Organization *The composition is adequately organized with a logical sequence of ideas and generally clear writing.*

The response is adequately unified and organized. The opening paragraph introduces the topic and states the examinee's position. The middle paragraphs develop and provide some support for the main thesis. The concluding paragraph simply reiterates the examinee's view of the qualities necessary to friendship. The writing is generally clear and easy to follow.

Development and Rationale *The writer's position is adequately developed with generally relevant, strong, and effective supporting information; the reasoning is generally sound.*

The examinee's position is that honesty, supportiveness, and being fun are essential characteristics of a friend. The response then develops the meaning of each of these characteristics. The second paragraph offers some elaboration of what honesty involves. The third paragraph elaborates the meaning of supportiveness, while the fourth paragraph offers a brief explanation of why a friend must be someone who is fun. The support provided in the writing is adequate, but not strong.

Usage and Sentence Structure *The composition exhibits adequate word choice; sentence structures are generally effective.*



The examinee's choice of words is adequate, though there are some instances in which better choices would have strengthened the word usage. For example, repetition of the word *fun* in the first two sentences of the fourth paragraph could be improved with the use of a synonym. Sentence structures are generally effective, though there are some conspicuous grammatical errors (e.g., failure of agreement between pronoun and antecedent: *They would be someone you could trust*). Sentence interjections break syntactic flow (when times are bad [especially when times are bad]).

Mechanical Conventions *The composition may include some flaws in standard spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.*

There are some flaws in standard spelling (e.g., *asparations* and *especialy*).

Score Point 2 Response

My idea of a good friend is you can count on them. A good friend wouldn't ever be to busy or tired to helpout or listen. Even when their mad at you good friends take the time to listen.

A lot of time people get so rapt up in their own world they forget its not all about them. They have their job to do so that's there priorety. If a friend calls up in the middle of that job their in a hurry and they don't care if they show it. By the time they get off the phone, the friend feels worst than before. Like they should feel guilty for interrupting. This had happen to me before and it makes you feel like this person isn't your friend at all.

This kind of insident can actually lead to a fight. Instead of having friends you have two people that don't even speak to each other. Sometimes for weeks or even months, some people even go for years. The best thing to do in a situation like this is rember just who your friends are when you come right down to it, friends are few and far between. It makes it easier to make that call or knock on that door and just say I'm sorry. This goes for family member to not just friends.

Those two little words can mean a lot. They can change the world. In face, if we had more people who was willing to say I'm sorry when they hurt someone's feelings, the world would be a better place.

Friends can make the diference!

Rationale: Score Point 2

Focus and Appropriateness *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.*



The opening paragraph states the examinee's view that a good friend is reliable and takes the time to listen. The connection between this thesis and the discussion of the barriers to friendship within the following paragraphs is not entirely clear. The examinee's conclusion, that the words *I'm sorry* are important within a friendship, is only peripherally related to the original thesis.

Unity and Organization *The composition is somewhat disorganized with a questionable sequence of ideas and/or some unclear writing.*

The second paragraph moves from the thesis to a related topic, the circumstances under which and the consequences that ensue when a friend proves unreliable. The shift in focus is not signaled by the examinee nor connected to the essay's opening. The last sentences appear to bear little relation to the original statement about time to listen.

Development and Rationale *The writer's position is partially developed with somewhat relevant but generally weak and ineffective supporting information; the reasoning may be simplistic.*

The second and third paragraphs attempt to explain the importance of reliability in a friend, but the candidate drifts to a discussion of the bad feelings that result when friends are too busy to provide support. The fourth paragraph suggests how to make amends with a friend with whom one has had a disagreement but offers no support for the main thesis.

Usage and Sentence Structure *The composition exhibits some lack of care and precision in word choice; sentence structures may be weak or lack variety.*

The response contains errors in word choice (e.g., *worst* instead of *worse*; the use of *like* in *Like they should feel guilty for interrupting.*) and sentence structure (e.g., *Sometimes for weeks or even months, some people even go for years.*).

Mechanical Conventions *The composition may have distracting flaws in standard spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.*

The response contains errors in spelling (e.g., *to* instead of *too*; *its* instead of *it's*; *their* instead of *they're*; *rapt up* instead of *wrapped up*; *priorety* instead of *priority*) and punctuation (e.g., absence of quotation marks enclosing the words *I'm sorry* in the second-to-last sentence).

Score Point 1 Response

A good friend is someone who can always be their for you. Someone who never lets you down. A friend will help you in need, with no thanks.



The best friend you can have is one that is going to be one you can always count on. And never blames you. I am lucky I have one best friend. We vacation together and she took me to disneyland the first time. Also, I went to Hawiai with two friends after high-school. Also, your friends will tell you when your wrong about something without making you feel bad about it. That's why friends are important to have.

And friendship mean that you do'nt have to feel embarrassed with your friend. The best chances to make a friend is school or work.

Rationale: Score Point 1

Focus and Appropriateness *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.*

The opening paragraph states the examinee's view that a good friend is someone who is reliable and helpful. In the remainder of the essay, however, the examinee immediately loses focus and shifts to describing vacations taken with friends without connecting the examples to the qualities named. The piece then returns without transition to the help a friend can provide.

Unity and Organization *The composition is poorly organized with an illogical sequence of ideas and/or unclear writing.*

The second paragraph begins by reiterating the thesis of the first paragraph, but the examinee does not continue developing support for the thesis. The examinee follows with a transitional listing of thoughts about friendship: the piece asserts that friends never blame each other and then proceeds to describe travel experiences with friends. Next comes a sentence about constructive criticism and another about not needing to feel embarrassed when among friends. The concluding sentence mentions good places to make friends.

Development and Rationale *The writer's position is poorly developed with little, if any, relevant supporting information; the reasoning is unsound or absent.*

The body of the response provides little support or development for the thesis stated in the first paragraph because none of the listed assertions is linked back to the thesis in any deliberate way. The connections remain in the examinee's thoughts and do not make their way to the page.

Usage and Sentence Structure *The composition exhibits careless and imprecise word choice; sentence structures are flawed.*



The response contains numerous distracting errors in word choice (e.g., *with no thanks; one that is going to be one; the first time* instead of *for the first time; is school or work* instead of *is at school or work*) and sentence structure (e.g., the sentence fragments *Someone who never lets you down.* and *And never blames you.*) that inhibit communication of meaning.

Mechanical Conventions *The composition includes significant errors in standard spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.*

The response contains numerous distracting errors in spelling (e.g., *their* instead of *there; your* instead of *you're; do'nt* instead of *don't; Hawiai* instead of *Hawaii*), capitalization (*disneyland* instead of *Disneyland*), and punctuation (e.g., lack of a comma in the compound sentence *We vacation together and she took me to disneyland the first time.*) that inhibit communication of meaning.

2. The following is a sample of the persuasive type of prompt to which examinees are asked to respond.

Some people believe that voter turnout in local, state, and federal elections would increase if election day were a national holiday, while others disagree that this would help significantly. In an essay to be read by a general audience of educated adults express your opinion on this issue. Defend your position with reasoned arguments and supporting examples.

Score Point 4 Response

Although voting is an ethical responsibility in our democratic society, many Americans obviously shirk their duty. Given this current apathy, voter turnout could be improved significantly if Election Day were made a national holiday, provided the government linked a number of incentives to this new holiday.

To begin with, financial incentives could be used to encourage voting. While the act of participating in the choosing of our leaders should be enough motivation to get people into the voting booth, it clearly hasn't been recently. Undoubtedly, if voting had a positive effect on citizens' wallets, many more Americans would vote. Money rules in our capitalist society. Such incentives need not be costly. Businesses could be encouraged to offer slight discounts to consumers who showed their voting stubs, perhaps for the entire election week. Restaurants, theatres, and stores would likely welcome this increased opportunity to snag customers and increase sales; the voter discount would not cost them any more than customary discounts they offer for sales, coupons, etc., plus they could save on the usual advertising costs. Consumption always increases on a holiday, since Americans love to shop and dine out on non-work days, so this plan would be good for the overall economy.

An Election Day holiday could also be linked to recreational incentives. One idea would be to waive the entrance fees at all local, state, and national parks and recreation areas to visitors showing proof of voting. This would energize many citizens not only to vote, but also to spend an active day in nature instead of being trapped behind closed doors and desks.



Since creating this holiday would cause many people to want to vote either very early or very late in the day (to allow for all that shopping, dining, and recreating), a convenience incentive needs to be added. To avoid long lines at voting booths, as well as hanging chads and improperly punched ballots, online registration and voting should be implemented. Surely, many more citizens would register and vote if it only required a few mouse clicks. Online voting would greatly increase voting by 18-30 year olds, who already do most tasks online, and have the lowest voter participation rates. In addition, for those who might still need to work on Election Day, such as small business owners and emergency service workers, online voting would be easier and quicker.

A democracy such as ours ceases to function if people don't vote. An Election Day holiday, combined with these incentives, could only serve to improve voter turnout. For these reasons alone, every practical measure should be implemented.

Rationale: Score Point 4

Focus and Appropriateness *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.*

The opening paragraph of the response establishes focus by stating the problem of voter apathy followed by a clear expression of the examinee's position. The focus and position are maintained throughout the response. Elaboration and support make up the body of the response, while the concluding paragraph gives further support and summarizes the main argument. The writing is fluent and easy to follow, vocabulary and syntax are at the appropriate level for a general audience of educated adults, and the writing style is consistent with the purpose and occasion.

Unity and Organization *The composition is well organized with a logical sequence of ideas and clear writing.*

The response is well unified and organized. The opening paragraph introduces the topic and clearly states the examinee's position. The middle paragraphs develop and support the main thesis by elaborating on the additional incentives an Election Day holiday would allow to significantly increase voter turnout. The concluding paragraph furthers the main argument by offering a strong reason for implementing a plan that promises to increase voter turnout. The writing is clear, logical, and easy for the reader to follow.

Development and Rationale *The writer's position is well developed with relevant, strong, and effective supporting information; the reasoning is strong.*

The examinee's position is that making Election Day a national holiday will increase voter turnout as long as additional incentives are provided. This complex and qualified position is evidence of strong reasoning that takes account of possible objections and implications of its proposal. The response then



develops its position by offering suggestions as to the particular incentives to be used, analyses of the ways in which these incentives would function to increase voter turnout, and argument for the cost-effectiveness and feasibility of implementing them. The arguments and analyses are supported by factual knowledge about politics (e.g., the age group with the lowest voter participation; the risk of "hanging chads") and insights into human nature (e.g., the view that monetary incentives, recreation, and convenience will win out over voter apathy), the nature of democracy, and the popularity and convenience of computer technology. Since these insights are plausible to the reader, they offer useful and effective support for the examinee's argument.

Usage and Sentence Structure *The composition exhibits careful and precise word choice; sentence structures are varied and effective.*

Precision of word choice contributes significantly to the quality of this response. Exact and appropriate meaning are conveyed by such words and phrases as *ethical responsibility, shirk, apathy, linked, incentives, effect on citizens' wallets, capitalist society, customary discounts, consumption, energize, convenience incentive, hanging chads, and a few mouse clicks*. This care in word choice is complemented by structurally varied and error-free sentences that give the writing lucidity while at the same time allowing for the maximum expression of complex ideas.

Mechanical Conventions *The composition includes no more than minor flaws in standard spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.*

The response demonstrates mastery of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in standard English as used in the United States.

Score Point 3 Response

I think that making election day a national holiday would not achieve its intended purpose. Voting is a choice that not everybody chooses to take. If election day were a national holiday it may result in somewhat of a higher turnout, but not too much.

My brother didn't register to vote until he was 21 years old. It was not because he didn't care, but more because he just never thought about it. There are a lot of people like him out there, and making election day a national holiday would not get them into gear any faster than before. The only reason he finally did register was because people at the DMV did it for him when he renewed his license. When the next election comes around he says he will probably vote, but it's not at the top of his to-do list. I doubt if having an entire day off to do it would help him anyway because he would just get caught up in other things.

Another issue that arises, is that not everybody observes national holidays. The restaurant that I work at is closed for Christmas and Easter, and that is it. I know the owner would not close for a day just so we could vote, and many other business owners would feel the same way.



The only way this idea would work would be to make it mandatory to vote on the designated day, which would be hard to enforce. I think people need to be made more aware of voting and the importance of elections. My brother and I were never given the awareness or had the importance stressed to us, and you have read the results of this. Make people more aware and care more, and the numbers will go up.

Rationale: Score Point 3

Focus and Appropriateness *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.*

The response begins with an explicit statement of the examinee's position. The response remains generally focused on this topic and position. Language and style, although generally appropriate, are at times excessively informal (e.g., *get them into gear, says he will probably vote, caught up in other things*) to be persuasive on this topic for this audience. The response is generally coherent.

Unity and Organization *The composition is adequately organized with a logical sequence of ideas and generally clear writing.*

On the whole, the response exhibits a unified and logical structure. There is an introduction, followed by two paragraphs of support and elaboration, and a concluding final paragraph that ties the supporting details into the main thesis (*my brother and I...the results of this*). Although the writing is generally clear, the occasional use of vague words and phrases can leave the reader wondering about meaning (e.g., *somewhat of a higher turnout, caught up in other things, that is it, you have read the results of this*). The connections between ideas are not always explicit, although the reader is usually able to infer them. For example, the conclusion (that voter turnout would be more likely to increase if people were made more aware of the importance of voting) leaves the reader to wonder why the examinee doesn't see the creation of a national holiday as a way to make people more aware of the importance of voting and hence, by the examinee's own argument, to increase voter turnout. Had this reasoning been made more explicit, the response would have been strengthened.

Development and Rationale *The writer's position is adequately developed with generally relevant, strong, and effective supporting information; the reasoning is generally sound.*

The response is adequately developed. The position that making Election Day a national holiday would be insufficient to increase voter turnout is developed and supported by examples based on the examinee's personal experience. In the sole example of voter behavior, the examinee's brother is held up as representative of *a lot of people like him*. Although the generalization may be true, there is no supporting argument given for it, so the force of the example is quite weak. In addition, the claim in the last paragraph that making voting mandatory *is the only way this idea would work* is unsupported.



Usage and Sentence Structure *The composition exhibits adequate word choice; sentence structures are generally effective.*

The examinee's choice of words is generally adequate, but there are instances in which more precise words would have made the meaning clearer (e.g., *somewhat, other things, did it for him, that is it, hard to enforce, the results of this*). There are also some awkward word choices and sentence structures that impede fluency (e.g., *a choice that not everybody chooses, If...were a...it may result, was because people, anyway, the restaurant that I work at*).

Mechanical Conventions *The composition may include some flaws in standard spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.*

Mechanical conventions are adequately followed, but there are some flaws (e.g., *whan* for *when*, a misplaced comma in the third paragraph after *arises*).

Score Point 2 Response

I personally think making Election Day a National Holiday is a great idea. If the idea was ever on the ballot, I'd vote for it in a heartbeat. But I don't think it would work.

One reason it wouldn't work is most people wouldn't vote any ways. They'd say they were taking the holidays to go to the poles but they wouldn't. Its kind of like the way people take sick days. Most jobs permit a certain number of sick days so that people aren't pennialize when they do get sick and it isn't there fault. But most people use sick days like personal days. Everybody knows their doing it but theres not much you can do since its a law. It would be the same with a Holiday on Election Day.

Another reason is just giving people a Holiday doesn't mean their going to do a good job voting. The whole idea of wanting somebody to go to the poles is you think they'll vote for the best canidate. When the truth is most people don't pay enough attention to know who the best canidate is. It would be nice to think that with a whole day to think about it you could come up with some good choices, but how many people would really spend all that day studying the ballet. It comes right back to the same old problem. People would'nt be doing there job and they still wouldn't know enogh to make good decision. Which is scarry when you come to think of it.

These are two reasons I believe that have Election Day be a National Holiday would'nt work. People would'nt vote any ways. And they would'nt do a good job voting. It would hurt are economy to give every one the day off when they could be working.



Rationale: Score Point 2

Focus and Appropriateness *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.*

The examinee, with an opening bow to the author of the prompt, takes a strong position opposing the suggested holiday and then advances two reasonable arguments for that opposition (people won't vote and they won't vote intelligently). However, neither point is supported coherently as the piece wanders off to other issues (use of sick days). The level of language usage and colloquial writing style are generally inappropriate for the audience and occasion.

Unity and Organization *The composition is somewhat disorganized with a questionable sequence of ideas and/or some unclear writing.*

The sequence of ideas in the response is questionable. After the apparent inconsistency that an Election Day holiday won't increase voter turnout, but is a good idea nonetheless, the examinee again betrays confusion by citing apparently inconsistent reasons for support. The first reason given is that *most people wouldn't vote*. The second reason, that people wouldn't *do a good job voting*, assumes that they would be voting. In addition, the concluding paragraph gives evidence of poor organization by introducing for the first time the supporting claim that creation of the holiday would be harmful to the economy. This claim would have been helpful had it been developed in the body of the text. Placed at the end, this statement raises questions that are not addressed in the following text.

Development and Rationale *The writer's position is partially developed with somewhat relevant but generally weak and ineffective supporting information; the reasoning may be simplistic.*

The support is weakly reasoned and developed. The first argument is based on a simplistic analogy with *the way people take sick days*. The analogy itself is unsupported. It is not clear that an Election Day holiday would be used by most people in the same way that they use sick days. Even assuming the analogy holds, the claim that sick days are generally misused is unsubstantiated. The claim that voters won't be conscientious is an interesting, and perhaps valid, argument, but the examinee offers little supportive evidence.

Usage and Sentence Structure *The composition exhibits some lack of care and precision in word choice; sentence structures may be weak or lack variety.*

Word choice is frequently vague, imprecise, and careless. Sentence structures are simple, while there are some errors in syntax and sentence fragments (e.g., *when the truth is...candidate is, which is ...when you come to think of it*).



Mechanical Conventions *The composition may have distracting flaws in standard spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.*

The response contains numerous distracting spelling errors such as *poles*, *pennalize*, *theres*, *enogh*, and *ballet*. There are instances of incorrect capitalization (*Holiday*) and punctuation (*would'nt*).

Score Point 1 Response

Voter turnout in local, state, and federal elections would not increase. If election day were a national holliday. Many people go on holliday weekends. My family and me go out town ever three day weekend.

So more people would not go to polls. Many people go out of town whenever a holliday chance comes. Time off is a personal posesion that many don't want to feel they have to do anything on because it is theirs. Those that left town will not vote. But probably don't want to anyway do to inconveinience of it.

If they vote on 4th of July mabey more would vote. Ever body would be patriatic on that day.

Rationale: Score Point 1

Focus and Appropriateness *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.*

The quality of the discussion and the level of language usage are not appropriate to an audience of educated adults or to the purpose or occasion of the assignment.

Unity and Organization *The composition is poorly organized with an illogical sequence of ideas and/or unclear writing.*

The sequence of ideas in the response is difficult to follow due to poor organization and unclear writing. There are large logical gaps between ideas that require the reader to guess at the meaning in order to make sense of the response. The first paragraph assumes a connection between going out of town and voting that is not explicitly stated until the second paragraph (*Those that left town will not vote*). The second paragraph is arbitrarily created, since there is no distinct central idea to give it unity. The idea introduced in the final paragraph, voting on the Fourth of July, does not follow from the previous discussion but appears to be an afterthought.

Development and Rationale *The writer's position is poorly developed with little, if any, relevant supporting information; the reasoning is unsound or absent.*

The opinion expressed in this response is given little support. The reasoning given is that many people go out of town on holidays so they would not, and could not, vote on an Election Day holiday. This line



of argument raises many questions, but the response fails to answer any of them (Is the number of people that leave town on holidays so large that it would negate any gain in voter turnout resulting from giving people a holiday to vote? Would all those who typically leave town on holidays also leave on an Election Day holiday? Would people be able to vote before they went out of town? Would this holiday create a three-day weekend?).

Usage and Sentence Structure *The composition exhibits careless and imprecise word choice; sentence structures are flawed.*

There are some awkward word combinations (e.g., *many don't want to feel they have to do anything on*). Many sentences are structurally flawed, such as the sentence fragment *If election day were a national holliday*. There are several errors in syntax, such as *My family and me go out town...* These errors inhibit communication of meaning.

Mechanical Conventions *The composition includes significant errors in standard spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.*

There are many significant mechanical errors. Errors in spelling (*Holliday, posesion, and patriatic*), capitalization (*election day*), and punctuation (periods inserted between sentence fragments) interfere with reader comprehension.