



Evidence-Based Writing
Should Begin with ABE Students

COABE 2018

Session Objectives



- Overview the performance expectations for CR items and scoring



- Explore teaching key aspects of constructed response that should begin with ABE students



- Present a structured approach to tackling a writing task
- Share resources

2 GEDtesting.service.com • GED.com



Sharing Findings

Test-Taker Performance: What We've Found

3 GEDtesting.service.com • GED.com



Why Are Students Struggling?

- Refuse to use an outline or plan from which to write
- Ignore the value of a structured approach to the task
- Do not write enough to be scored
- Do not use the available time

4 GEDtesting.service.com • GED.com



What is the Skills' Gap?

Reasoning—both qualitative and quantitative

- **Analysis** of written material—including the role of details, main ideas, thematic support, and relationships within written sources;
- Extraction of **evidence** (e.g. facts, statistics, examples, or expert testimony) from written material and the ability to draw logical inferences or develop valid claims;
- **“Connecting the dots”**: understanding relationships (between people, places, things like processes and events, etc.) and the analysis of cause-and-effect relationships, both simple and complex

5 GEDtesting.service.com • GED.com



What do students do?

Sample Response 1

The Press Release from the office of U.S. Representative Melody Walls has many could intentions, they want to make Highway 17 a four-lane highway instead of the two-lane highway it is now. Ms. Walls believes it will ease traffic congestion and create new job opportunities during and after construction. She also believes the highway will bring in more traffic, due to the new four-lane highway and a increase in travelers from around the state. It attract more hotels and restaurants which will give people permanent jobs. Another reason she brought up was how the highway will help eighteen-wheeler traffic in the town. She said that because of the amount of traffic. This new highway will also save money on repairs because they won't have to be spending money on repairs. She said that money on other expenses the town needs. In all of these reasons, she would be best for the town to allow the new highway to be built. She said that the economy of the towns near the highway. If they were to build the highway, it would be better than they already have. It would greatly improve the economy of the towns near the highway. She said that they would have a chance to find a job close to home and give them more money. She said that they would have to worry about losing their jobs because there are many people who are unemployed. She said that the new business would always be busy with trucks. She said that they would have more money for the business and the workers.

The letter to the town of issues with this new four-lane highway. The person that wrote this letter said that the new highway would totally bypass there town and they would lose business because of this. The letter also stressed that yes the highway will bring in new jobs but the high paying jobs will be temporary and the minimum wage jobs will be permanent, which concludes that there towns economy will take a big hit over the years. Lastly, the letter stressed that the tax payers would be paying for this highway and it won't even benefit them as much as the other towns and cities around the area. In all, both of these have pros and cons, but they should do what's best for the group and that would be to pay for the highway to be built. It would bring in more jobs for the people in the surrounding areas and the towns that won't really benefit might just have to think about changing jobs so they can be employed for years to come.

6 GEDtesting.service.com • GED.com



From Struggling to Successful

	Struggling Writers	Successful Writers
Plan	• Are unaware of purpose or process of writing • Have little or no knowledge of the text structure of an essay • Have difficulty developing plans and staying focused on the topic • Experience greater writing anxiety and decreased motivation	• Analyze the task • Understand and apply all the elements of an essay • Create goals for their writing • Develop plans to achieve their goals • Discuss how and why a plan will work
Organize	• Produce fewer ideas • Fail to organize their thoughts	• Develop multiple ideas • Organize their ideas
Draft/write	• Plan what they are going to say as they write • Use imprecise and nonspecific vocabulary • Struggle to convey their thoughts, ideas, and opinions • Write fewer sentences • Focus on mechanics rather than on clarity and organization	• Write using an organized plan, but adjust goals when obstacles arise • Use vocabulary accurately • Experience fewer difficulties with the elements of an essay • Generate sentences that support their ideas
Edit and Revise	• Experience problems with grammar, punctuation, and spelling • Place words and letters too close or too far from each other • Do not review and make correction	• Edit spelling, capitalization, and punctuation • Make more content revisions • Correct overall appearance

7

GEDtestingervice.com • GED.com

The IRIS Center Vanderbilt Peabody College

GED
LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Getting Started with Evidence-Based Writing

Moving students from "I think, I feel, I believe"

8

GEDtestingervice.com • GED.com

GED
LIFE-LONG LEARNING

"The goal of making an argument is to convince an audience of the rightness of the claims being made, using logical reasoning and relevant evidence..."

— Source: National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers, College & Career Ready Standards for Reading, Writing and Communication

12

GEDtestingervice.com • GED.com

GED
LIFE-LONG LEARNING

But First . . .

13

GEDtestingervice.com • GED.com

GED
LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Different Types of Evidence

Type of Evidence	Definition
Factual	Truthful statements that cannot be denied. Statements that the average person may know or which can be proven.
Statistics or Data	Numerical facts; can be presented in raw numbers, percentages, or fractions.
Examples or Anecdotes	Real-life situations, events, or experiences that illustrate a position; anecdotal stories that help explain an author's claim.
Expert Testimony	The observations or conclusion of someone who is considered highly knowledgeable because he/she is an expert in a particular field of study or occupation; someone who has firsthand knowledge and experience.
Logical Reasoning	An explanation which draws conclusions that the reader can understand; a discussion which helps the reader understand or make sense out of facts or examples offered.
Emotional Appeal	Use of sympathy, fear, loyalty, etc. to persuade; manipulates the reader's emotions – ethos, pathos, logos.

14

GEDtestingervice.com • GED.com

GED
LIFE-LONG LEARNING

What-Why-How

What What is the claim?	Why Why is that claim made?	How How do you know?
This is the claim.	These are the reasons for the claim.	This is the evidence or example that supports that claim.

15

GEDtestingervice.com • GED.com

GED
LIFE-LONG LEARNING

What-Why-How

WHAT This is the claim	WHY These are the reasons	HOW This is your evidence or example												
Even though they feed with Wegman's, Publix is the best grocery store in America.	Locate items	<table><thead><tr><th>WHAT This is the claim</th><th>WHY These are the reasons</th><th>HOW This is your evidence or example</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td rowspan="4">Even though they feed with Publix, Wegman's is the best grocery store in America.</td><td>Specialty departments</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Item availability</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></tbody></table>	WHAT This is the claim	WHY These are the reasons	HOW This is your evidence or example	Even though they feed with Publix, Wegman's is the best grocery store in America.	Specialty departments		Item availability					
	WHAT This is the claim	WHY These are the reasons	HOW This is your evidence or example											
	Even though they feed with Publix, Wegman's is the best grocery store in America.	Specialty departments												
		Item availability												
Fast checkouts														
Clean stores														

16

GEDtestingservice.com • GED.com



Could you develop an evidence-based argument?

Could you develop an evidence-based argument?	
Claim	
Evidence 1	
Evidence 2	
The Other Side	
Conclusion	

17

GEDtestingservice.com • GED.com



Where do you begin?

- Introduce the idea of developing an evidence-based argument
- Use real-life situations
- Start with personal opinion supported by evidence
- Move to more complex situations or real-life articles

18

GEDtestingservice.com • GED.com



Let's Brainstorm

- In your groups, think of some real-life situations that you could use to provide practice for students.
- Share your ideas!

19

GEDtestingservice.com • GED.com



What is the Next Step?

Bring on the Source Text

20

GEDtestingservice.com • GED.com



Identify Source Text

- Find text that is interesting to students
- Best Source – Newsela
 - Range of topics
 - Adjustable reading levels
 - Supporting activities

21

GEDtestingservice.com • GED.com



- What-Why-How
- Both Sides Now

What-Why-How

Both Sides Now

WHAT	WHY	HOW
This is the claim	These are the reasons	This is your evidence or example

Evidence that Supports	Both Sides Now	Evidence that Opposes
	Question or statement Which position is better supported?	

22 GEDtestingservice.com • GED.com



Emotional Appeal

23 GEDtestingservice.com • GED.com



self-driving car system would require countless amounts of effort and money. Car companies would need to maintain and update information on millions of miles of roads.

[illegible]

GED
TESTING SERVICE

[illegible]

- List the Pros
- List the Cons
- Think about the differences between the arguments

25 GEDtestingservice.com • GED.com

GED
TESTING SERVICE

Based on the text, which of the arguments is best supported?



26 GEDtestingservice.com • GED.com



- Use the evidence from the article
- Explain why that evidence supports your argument
- Avoid giving your own opinion



27 GEDtestingservice.com • GED.com

Develop Your Claim

Decision (Claim)

Reasons (Analysis/Evaluation)

In deciding which side was better supported, I asked myself...

- Was it based on evidence?
- What evidence was the strongest?
- Why was the evidence strongest?

28

GEDtesting.service.com • GED.com



Keep the Structure Simple

Beginning

Middle

Ending

- The introduction states the main idea or position. It begins with a topic sentence/thesis statement. The beginning restates the question and sets the stage to answer the prompt.
- Answer the question first.
- Provide important information the author stated and meant. This is where you go to the text(s) and provide examples/evidence and important details to support the answer.
- Sample phrases to introduce each text reference include: ... stated; in the text ...; for example ...
- Include background information as required through the prompt.
- Write a closing that summarizes the position taken or restates the thesis statement in a different way.

29

GEDtesting.service.com • GED.com



Get Started in ABE Classes

Beginning Literacy and ABE Level

- Use Real-Life Situations (What-Why-How)
- Short passage – one position
 - If required, read the text to students
 - Have students listen for evidence
 - List the evidence on the board for students
 - Together, construct a paragraph that explains how the author made his/her point

30

GEDtesting.service.com • GED.com



Move from Level to Level

Low Intermediate ABE Level

- Short passage (appropriate level) – one position
 - Have students read source text
 - Have students post evidence using What-Why-How
 - Discuss evidence
 - Independently, have them write a paragraph

31

GEDtesting.service.com • GED.com



Move from Level to Level

High Intermediate ABE Level

- Lengthier passage (appropriate level) – two positions
 - Have students read source text(s)
 - Provide students with a writing prompt
 - Have students use *Both Sides Now* and analyze text
 - Discuss evidence and come to a decision
 - Discuss why
 - Independently, have students write a multi-paragraph response

32

GEDtesting.service.com • GED.com



All Roads Lead to the GED® Constructed Response

What drives (no pun intended) argumentative writing? Evidence!

33

GEDtesting.service.com • GED.com



30

Setting the Claim (statement of stance)

This . . .

Instead of . . .

Between the two positions in this article, the one against Daylight Savings Time is better supported because of the stronger research used.

Between the two positions arguing whether or not Daylight Saving Time (DST) is useful in terms of energy consumption and safety, the argument in favor of DST is better supported because it uses more factual evidence.

They say daylight savings time is a great thing.

The changing to daylight saving time twice a year is quite confusing to a lot of people, especially at the time right before and after the change.

40

GEDtestingervice.com • GED.com

GED

31

Students Earn Points By . . .

- Analyzing the issue or the quality of the argument through which both sides are presented
 - Evidence cited must support overall message **and** must be analyzed in some way
- Demonstrating that the test-taker has engaged with the text and has created a text-based argument

41

GEDtestingervice.com • GED.com

GED

32

Analyze, (evaluate), and engage

This . . .

Instead of . . .

In the argument for daylight savings time, it seems that the pro daylight savings time position has won. The first article brings up several improvements in the daily lives of Americans which daylight savings time brings about. The article then uses studies and large scale research to support its position. In the second article, only smaller scale studies are used, and the writer uses arguments with no factual basis to support anti-daylight savings positions.

The changing to daylight saving time twice a year is quite confusing to a lot of people, especially at the time right before and after the change. A person can become upset when they forget to change their clock each time. More accidents can also happen in rushing, when you forget to change all of your clocks.

42

GEDtestingervice.com • GED.com

GED

33

What Students Need to Avoid

Responses should not

- Be composed of a summary of the passage or authors' positions
- Include personal information (e.g., opinion)
- Be written in first person (let's discuss why)

43

GEDtestingervice.com • GED.com

GED

34

Examples

Summarization

Personal Information

If those are the arguments that are made, then people just need to be more responsible if they are having trouble adjusting with the time change.

Back when it was thought of it made sense – but times have changed and now its time to not have it.

44

GEDtestingervice.com • GED.com

GED

35

Know What is Expected

When you write . . .

- determine which position presented** in the passage(s) is **better supported** by evidence from the passage(s)
- explain why the position you chose is the better-supported one**
- remember, the better-supported position is not necessarily the position you agree with**
- defend your assertions with multiple pieces of evidence** from the passage(s)
- build your main points thoroughly**

45

GEDtestingervice.com • GED.com

GED

6

Don't Forget the Little Stuff

Expose students to a structured approach to the writing task and help them understand that they need to:

- Write a complete response, not just a short paragraph (300-500 words)
- Provide commentary on the evidence cited (explain the "why")
- Fully develop two or three ideas, rather than mention a lot of things without detail
- Leave five minutes at the end for proofreading—that is one of the things evaluated

46 GEDtesting.com • GED.com GED

7

"Stuff to Teach"

- Writing about what is read (Hint: Practice, practice, practice!)
- Using a plan (e.g., a graphic organizer or an outline) for organizing the information from the reading and then writing about it
- Bringing good grammar to the writing task
- Answering the question that is asked

47 GEDtesting.com • GED.com GED

Know that Students Can Do This!

Sample Response 2

I believe that Highway 17 should be expanded from a two lane highway to a four lane highway due to the better support it has. There are many benefits of extending the highway and although it may seem negative at times, we need to look at the broader picture as well as some specifics. Overall, expanding the highway will create new jobs in communities, benefit helping economically, and also will help decrease traffic congestion.

With an increase in unemployment in the 17' district after two major factories closed down, there is also hopes for new businesses to arise as well as for the unemployed to receive jobs. With a need to improve highways, jobs will be created as construction workers. This will therefore help the community get back on its feet and to help the community's economy. Some of the road construction jobs which are created while creating the road may be temporary, however there is room for permanent positions. Roads always will need upkeep and fixing up, which is why some will need to stick around to do the job after the creation of the road.

With roads being completed, this will allow more tourists to come visit the area. It will now be easier for people to travel from far distances and there will be an increase of travelers. This will bring money to the area temporarily, benefiting restaurants and motels as well as the old school motels for tourism. This will then allow people who work at those places to spend their money they are making within the community to help everyone living in it. These businesses also will be doing well, perhaps expanding and hiring more workers. This will mean permanent jobs for residents.

Eighteen whenever traffic in towns will be eliminated through towns. Noise will become a minimal issue as well as traffic congestion. It will also reduce road maintenance costs, which will help the city economically.

Although the expansion of Highway 17, federal taxes will be used to pay for the road. This will not have a direct effect on solely one community. Money will be used, given by the government which would come from everyone living in the United States.

Although the new highway will bypass four cities in the district, there is still a lot of room for advertisement. Travelers will be able to easily get to the four cities by the highway and come from longer distances. Although there is no guarantee tourists won't stop in the city, with advertising and networking with national media and restaurants, they may be able to suggest ones in the four cities.

Overall there seems to be stronger evidence that building the new highway will help communities and decrease traffic congestion.



48 GEDtesting.com • GED.com GED



A FEW WORDS OF ADVICE

49 GEDtesting.com • GED.com GED

Test-Taking Tips for RLA CR

- **Always** complete the constructed response! (You cannot use the 45 minutes provided for any other part of the test.)
- Read and analyze the prompt first.
- Closely read the source texts, analyzing and evaluating the evidence before determining your claim.
- Use the highlighting tool and the erasable note boards for planning.
- Plan your time
 - Use the entire 45 minutes to write your response
 - Spend 10-15 minutes for reading and planning
 - Save 4-5 minutes to proofread your response

50 GEDtesting.com • GED.com GED

"Practice isn't the thing you do once you're good. It's the thing you do that makes you good." - Malcolm Gladwell

51 GEDtesting.com • GED.com GED



54



59

