

# Extended Response Answer Guidelines – RLA Test

Please use the guidelines below as you answer the Extended Response question on the Reasoning Through Language Arts test. Following these guidelines as closely as possible will ensure that you provide the best response.

- 1. Please note that this task must be completed in no more than 45 minutes.**  
However, don't rush through your response. Be sure to read through the passage(s) and the prompt. Then think about the message you want to convey in your response. **Be sure to plan your response before you begin writing.** Draft your response and revise it as needed.
- 2. Fully answering an ER prompt often requires 4 to 7 paragraphs of 3 to 7 sentences each** – that can quickly add up to 300 to 500 words of writing! A response that is significantly shorter could put you in danger of scoring a 0 just for not showing enough of your writing skills.
- 3. As you read, think carefully about the argumentation presented in the passage(s).** “Argumentation” refers to the assumptions, claims, support, reasoning, and credibility on which a position is based. Pay close attention to **how the author(s) use these strategies to convey his or her positions.**
- 4. When you write your essay, be sure to:**
  - **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**
  - **put your main points in logical order** and tie your details to your main points
  - **organize your response carefully** and consider your **audience, message, and purpose**
  - **use transitional words and phrases** to connect sentences, paragraphs, and ideas
  - **choose words carefully** to express your ideas clearly
  - **vary your sentence structure** to enhance the flow and clarity of your response
  - **reread and revise your response** to correct any errors in grammar, usage, or punctuation