



All About Scoring

A Webinar from the GED Testing Service[®]

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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

Extended Response Quick Tips

How can I earn points on my written responses?

Simply attempting a written response on the Extended Response items doesn't always mean you will receive points for your work. Your responses are scored against specific criteria shown in the Extended Response Scoring Rubrics. To see a full breakdown of these criteria for RLA and Social Studies, please see the complete RLA and Social Studies Rubrics. You can also refer to the "Extended Response Answer Guidelines."

Here are a few tips for helping you earn points for your written responses:

1. **Write a complete essay.** The ER prompts are designed to give you enough information to analyze so that you can make a statement that answers the prompt and then provide evidence from the source texts to develop your ideas in your own words. If you create a very brief essay, your response may not provide enough evidence of your writing skills to receive any points. Also, 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.
2. **Give commentary on quotations from the source texts.** While you are encouraged to cite specific evidence (phrases and even complete sentences) from the passages that accompany the prompts, you are scored on not just how well you can quote from the passages, but also on whether you can express your own thoughts about your chosen evidence. So you should explain **why** the evidence you've chosen helps you make the point you want to make. Also, if too large a portion of your response is material from the source text, you may receive a 0 because that material is someone else's writing, not yours. Copied text contributes to your score only if you fully explain how that text illustrates a point you are making. Simply lifting information from the passages isn't going to be enough to earn you points.
3. **Develop ideas.** One way to earn points on the ER items is for you to pick two or three main ideas and really explain them fully. A full explanation may require several sentences, each containing related thoughts, to fully develop a main idea. Some responses that briefly mention several ideas but do not build upon them may not score very highly.
4. **Try to save 4 to 5 minutes at the end to quickly proofread.** Written responses are not evaluated for spelling, but a quick check for the following grammar and usage issues can go a long way toward earning points:
 - a. vary your sentence structures
 - b. coordinate the parts of your sentences
 - c. avoid wordiness and awkwardness
 - d. use transitional words to make your ideas logical and clear
 - e. avoid run-on sentences and sentence fragments
 - f. use the right homophone to mean what you say (for example, "to," "too" or "two)
 - g. make your subjects agree with your verbs
 - h. use the correct form of a pronoun
 - i. place your words in the correct order
 - j. capitalize appropriately
 - k. use apostrophes to make nouns possessive
 - l. use punctuation correctly

Multi-Dimensional Scoring Rubric for RLA

Trait 1: Creation of Arguments and Use of Evidence

Score	Description
Trait 1: Creation of Arguments and Use of Evidence	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generates text-based argument(s) and establishes a purpose that is connected to the prompt cites relevant and specific evidence from source text(s) to support argument (may include few irrelevant pieces of evidence or unsupported claims) analyzes the issue and/or evaluates the validity of the argumentation within the source texts (e.g., distinguishes between supported and unsupported claims, makes reasonable inferences about underlying premises or assumptions, identifies fallacious reasoning, evaluates the credibility of sources, etc.)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generates an argument and demonstrates some connection to the prompt cites some evidence from source text(s) to support argument (may include a mix of relevant and irrelevant citations or a mix of textual and non-textual references) partially analyzes the issue and/or evaluates the validity of the argumentation within the source texts; may be simplistic, limited, or inaccurate
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> may attempt to create an argument OR lacks purpose or connection to the prompt OR does neither cites minimal or no evidence from source text(s) (sections of text may be copied from source) minimally analyzes the issue and/or evaluates the validity of the argumentation within the source texts; may completely lack analysis or demonstrate minimal or no understanding of the given argument(s)

Non-scorable Responses (Score of 0/Condition Codes)

Response exclusively contains text copied from source text(s) or prompt

Response shows no evidence that test-taker has read the prompt or is off-topic

Response is incomprehensible

Response is not in English

Response has not been attempted (blank)

Trait 2: Development of Ideas and Organizational Structure

Score	Description
Trait 2: Development of Ideas and Organizational Structure	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains ideas that are well developed and generally logical; most ideas are elaborated upon contains a sensible progression of ideas with clear connections between details and main points establishes an organizational structure that conveys the message and purpose of the response; applies transitional devices appropriately establishes and maintains a formal style and appropriate tone that demonstrate awareness of the audience and purpose of the task chooses specific words to express ideas clearly
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains ideas that are inconsistently developed and/or may reflect simplistic or vague reasoning; some ideas are elaborated upon demonstrates some evidence of a progression of ideas, but details may be disjointed or lacking connection to main ideas establishes an organization structure that may inconsistently group ideas or is partially effective at conveying the message of the task; uses transitional devices inconsistently may inconsistently maintain a formal style and appropriate tone to demonstrate an awareness of the audience and purpose of the task may occasionally misuse words and/or choose words that express ideas in vague terms
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains ideas that are insufficiently or illogically developed, with minimal or no elaboration on main ideas contains an unclear or no progression of ideas; details may be absent or irrelevant to the main ideas establishes an ineffective or no discernable organizational structure; does not apply transitional devices, or does so inappropriately uses an informal style and/or inappropriate tone that demonstrates limited or no awareness of audience and purpose may frequently misuse words, overuse slang or express ideas in a vague or repetitious manner

Trait 3: Clarity and Command of Standard English Conventions

Score	Description
Trait 3: Clarity and Command of Standard English Conventions	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates largely correct sentence structure and a general fluency that enhances clarity with specific regard to the following skills: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> varied sentence structure within a paragraph or paragraphs correct subordination, coordination and parallelism avoidance of wordiness and awkward sentence structures usage of transitional words, conjunctive adverbs and other words that support logic and clarity avoidance of run-on sentences, fused sentences, or sentence fragments demonstrates competent application of conventions with specific regard to the following skills: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> frequently confused words and homonyms, including contractions subject-verb agreement pronoun usage, including pronoun antecedent agreement, unclear pronoun references, and pronoun case placement of modifiers and correct word order capitalization (e.g., proper nouns, titles, and beginnings of sentences) use of apostrophes with possessive nouns use of punctuation (e.g., commas in a series or in appositives and other non-essential elements, end marks, and appropriate punctuation for clause separation) may contain some errors in mechanics and conventions, but they do not interfere with comprehension; overall, standard usage is at a level appropriate for on-demand draft writing.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates inconsistent sentence structure; may contain some repetitive, choppy, rambling, or awkward sentences that may detract from clarity; demonstrates inconsistent control over skills 1-5 as listed in the first bullet under Trait 3, Score Point 3 above demonstrates inconsistent control of basic conventions with specific regard to skills 1 – 7 as listed in the second bullet under Trait 3, Score Point 3 above may contain frequent errors in mechanics and conventions that occasionally interfere with comprehension; standard usage is at a minimally acceptable level of appropriateness for on-demand draft writing.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates consistently flawed sentence structure such that meaning may be obscured; demonstrates minimal control over skills 1-5 as listed in the first bullet under Trait 3, Score Point 3 above demonstrates minimal control of basic conventions with specific regard to skills 1 – 7 as listed in the second bullet under Trait 3, Score Point 3 above contains severe and frequent errors in mechanics and conventions that interfere with comprehension; overall, standard usage is at an unacceptable level for on-demand draft writing. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> response is insufficient to demonstrate level of mastery over conventions and usage

*Because test-takers will be given only 45 minutes to complete Extended Response tasks, there is no expectation that a response should be completely free of conventions or usage errors to receive a score of 3.

2014 GED® Test RLA – Sample Stimulus Material

“Taxation and Revenue” – Test Bank Item 18101, Stimulus and Prompt Press Release from the Office of U.S Representative Melody Walls

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC

*Representative Walls Announces Economic Boost for 12th District
July 17, 2013*

Washington, DC – Representative Melody Walls announced that Congress passed the highway and transit bill today.

“This bill funds the expansion of Highway 17 from a two-lane highway to a four-lane thoroughfare. It will positively affect the town of Oak Falls,” Walls said. As part of the expansion, Highway 17 will move two miles east of the town of Oak Falls. The bill will ease traffic congestion and create job opportunities during and after construction.

Last year, Representative Walls held town hall meetings to gather opinions from her constituents about revitalizing the economy in the 12th District. Two years ago, Turnaround Motors and Bell Camera closed their factory doors. The result has been high unemployment with no immediate prospects for new businesses. Representative Walls heard residents’ concerns for jobs in the district.

Improving the highway means jobs for local construction workers. Once completed, the highway will bring more long-distance travelers into the area. Some officials anticipate a 30% increase in highway traffic due to the ease of traveling on the improved Highway 17. An increase in travelers will attract national motel and restaurant chains along the highway route. These national businesses will mean permanent jobs for residents.

In the future, historical features in Oak Falls and Gaston, such as brick streets built by early settlers and the old wheat mill, will likely become popular tourist attractions. More visitors will increase business for local shops and restaurants.

The improved highway will eliminate eighteen-wheeler traffic through towns, a major source of traffic congestion and noise. A 2001 study in Texas showed that bypasses reduce traffic through towns by as much as 75%. Eliminating eighteen-wheeler traffic will also reduce road maintenance costs.

The improvement of Highway 17, funded by federal tax allocations, is an important investment in the area.

Oak Falls Gazette Letter to the Editor

I am a small-business owner living in Representative Walls's congressional district. A bill has been passed to expand Highway 17 from a two-lane highway to a four-lane thoroughfare. This change includes plans to move Highway 17 two miles to the east, which means it will now bypass our town completely. I find this unacceptable.

The *Gazette* reports that because Highway 17 runs through six states, construction will be paid for with federal road funds. That means some of our federal taxes will pay for a road that I believe will harm our town. I also believe that few residents of Oak Falls will use the road. Our town and district will lose money as a result of this highway bypass paid for by our tax dollars.

The road construction jobs are only a temporary bandage on the wound made by our two manufacturers closing their doors. Once the road construction is finished, only minimum wage jobs will remain.

In fact, the highway will bypass four cities in our district alone. Each of these towns will lose business because fewer travelers will pass through them and eat, stay overnight, or purchase gas. There is no guarantee that tourists will drive an extra two miles into our town if national chain motels and restaurants are built at the highway exits. The 2001 study Representative Walls references does show that bypasses reduce traffic and noise in towns, but the study also shows they have a negative impact on local businesses.

If this project were paid for with state tax money alone, angry voters would have struck it down. Representative Walls held town hall meetings to hear residents' opinions about the local economy, but obviously she did not listen to the concerns they voiced. Please consider local concerns about this federal project.

Prompt:

Analyze the arguments presented in the press release and the letter to the editor. In your response, develop an argument in which you explain how one position is better supported than the other. Incorporate relevant and specific evidence from both sources to support your argument.

Remember, the better-argued position is not necessarily the position with which you agree. This task should take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

RLA Response 1:

Both the press release and the letter to the editor offer positions that are supported by both fact and opinion. The press release seeks to exhort the new bill for expansion of Highway 17, while the letter argues that the passing of the bill could prove detrimental to the district. While both sides make an acceptable case, the latter provides a stronger argument.

One example of the letter's stronger argument is the explanation that federal tax dollars pay for the road, as it will incorporate six different states, therefore eliminating this particular state's ability to strike the bill down. This proves, with factual information, that the district did not have a fair say in the bill. The notion that few residents will use the road that their tax dollars are providing is an opinion. However, a resident and small-business owner in the town is more credible in the awareness of the town's concern, as compared to a representative who attended a few meetings in the town hall.

Another example of the better supported argument in the letter is the reference to the construction jobs as temporary. The press release praises the new jobs created by the highway construction, as this is a valid point. However, the author of the letter is correct in the fact that the jobs will not create a boom in the district's economy, or fill in the gap caused by the closures in the manufacturing plants, as the press release leads listeners to believe. The road construction does not solve the long-term issue of unemployment in the town. In addition, the author of the letter counters the argument that new motels, restaurants, and gas stations along the highway will create permanent jobs for the residents of the town. She explains that, "...only minimum wage jobs will remain." This is a valid argument also, as unemployed residents that need enough income to support a household would not be much better off. Providing restaurant or motel jobs is very unlikely to feed or support an entire family. It will not pick up the laid-off employees of the manufacturing plants, who may have worked for many years towards promotions and a pension.

Another example of the letter's stronger argument is the author's explanation of the 2001 study. She concedes that the representative is correct in citing that bypasses are proven to reduce noise and traffic in town, but she argues that the study shows a negative effect on local businesses. This piece of the study was not mentioned by Representative Walls or the press release, and it is a proven fact. This draws more credibility to the argument in the letter. Also, although it is a speculation, it is more reasonable that travelers will stick to the main highway and not venture miles off their path into small town when chain gas stations, restaurants, and motels are conveniently located directly at the highway exits. It is less likely that old roads in the towns will become historical locations, attracting tourists and boosting small business sales.

Despite the argument and evidence given by the press release, it appears that the letter to the editor offers a stronger case. The author's ideas are backed up by logical explanations and facts with a few speculations. Though the press release offers some fact, it is mainly specked with anticipations and hopes, driven to overshadow any doubts and quell any concerns. The letter is penned by a resident of the town and owner of a business, subject to first-hand opinions of the citizens of the district. The press release is pushed by an elected representative who, upon visiting the town a number of times and consulting a small percentage of the constituents, is convinced she understands the majority. Although both parties may very well have the best interests of the district in mind, and either position could be correct, it is clear that the letter provides a better-supported argument.

RLA Response 2:

Representative Walls claims that the expansion of Highway 17 “will positively affect the town of Oak Falls.” This is a subjective claim according to the author of the letter. The ways in which the town will benefit, provided by the representative, are decreased traffic through town, the creation of job opportunities, new business springing up along the highway, and increased tourism. The press release goes on to state that the representative understands the concern of her citizens, because she had a town hall meeting with them the prior year. This is misleading because it almost implies support for the expansion by these citizens, when this is not the case. From the information provided, they simply expressed economic concerns about jobs, and this solution was neither offered nor discussed.

In the case of the letter to the editor, one citizen’s opinion is very clearly given. She states, that because of passage of this expansion, she will economically suffer. She is a small-business owner that relies on the congestion of traffic to come through town as customers in her shop. She proposes that, by diverting traffic around the cities, local businesses will lose customers. She even goes on to cite the very same 2001 Texas study used by the representative in favor of the road expansion. The representative chooses only to include the statistics supporting her case, a 75% reduction in traffic through towns. Mrs. Jenkins includes the part in the study about bypasses having a negative impact on local business. A statistic vital to the arguing of this case.

The representative’s claim about the bypass creating jobs is questionable, according to the letter. Sure, construction jobs will be created, but they are not permanent thus do not offer a long term solution to the problem. The representative also states that the proposed increase in highway traffic will encourage national chains to build more businesses along the highway, adding more jobs in the process. This might be true, but at what expense? With reduced traffic thru town, already established local businesses will suffer. This will lead to the potential laying off of current employees. Therefore, the representative’s claim that jobs will be created is, in a sense, incorrect. Jobs will simply be redistributed from the town centers to the highways. Mrs. Jenkins also states that the quality of jobs are not satisfactory, because they will mostly be minimum wage positions.

The representative adds that the town’s historical features will likely attract tourists and traffic through the town. Mrs. Jenkins calls this in to question. She contends that there is no guarantee that such an increase will occur. She goes further to assert her belief that tourists will not venture two miles into town to view such attractions. A possible increase is not enough of a reason to intentionally divert the needed traffic away.

RLA Response 3:

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, this will attract more hotels and restaurants which will give people permanent jobs. Another point she brought up was how the highway will help eighteen-wheeler traffic in the towns, it will cut down the noise and the amount of traffic. This new highway will also save the town money in the long run because they won't have to be spending money on repairing roads and they can use the saved money on other expenses the town needs. In all of this new proposed idea I think it would be best for the town to allow the new highway to be built for the people and the economy of the towns near the highway. If they were to build this, they would bring in way more jobs than they already have. It would greatly improve the economy, it would give the people a chance to find a job close to home and give them a steady income, they would not have to worry about losing their jobs because there would be so much traffic going by that the new business would always be busy with truckers,commuters and tourists and this means more money for the business and the workers.

The letter to the editor had a lot of issues with this new four-lane highway. The person that wrote this letter stressed 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 whats 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.

Let's Take Another Look

Writing Sample	Annotations
<p>The best candidate for the jon would be to fix the highways with the four lane it would possibly affect some change in town for Oak Falls. The bill might ease traffic congestion and create job opportunities. As of last yar the unemployment has no fast results for a new business in this case the district were worried about these peoples jobs. And with the highway built it will attract national motel and restaurant chains. That means more permanent jobs and reduce traffic by a good 75%.</p> <p>A local business owner has disagreed with the development of highway 17 being built. Because it might harm the town. Federal taxes will be paid by the local people around the area and will lose money as a result of this highway bypass paid for by tax dollars. Alice stated , "Once the road construction is finished , only minimum wage jobs will remain." Okay, so we all know it will bypass four cities in district alone. That means the local business stores will lose customers and won't purchase anything along with these highways involved.</p> <p>If this was to happen the state tax dollars would be plummet from angered voters. They lacked the consideration of letting people know about this future project. Which remains under concerned to this day.</p> <p><i>Note: Highlighted items indicate non-original text and summarization.</i></p>	<p>Trait 1: Score Point 0 This response is primarily a summary of the source text that demonstrates little to no understanding of the given arguments. The writer includes sections of the text copied from the source. This response lacks purpose and connection to the prompt, and fails to cite evidence in support of an argument, thereby earning a score of 0 for Trait 1.</p> <p>Trait 2: Score Point 0 The response consists of four brief paragraphs that primarily reiterate points from the two passages. The writer attempts to stake out a position in the first sentence, but does so in a way that is unclear (<i>The best candidate for the jon would be to fix the highways with the four lane it would possibly affect some change in town for Oak Falls</i>), and fails to develop this position coherently. There is no discernable organizational structure, and no transitions between one idea or paragraph and the next. There is little to no elaboration of ideas. The tone of the response is occasionally inappropriate for formal writing (<i>Okay, so we all know it will passed by four cities in district alone</i>). Therefore, the response earns a score of 0 for Trait 2.</p> <p>Trait 3: Score Point 0 The response demonstrates consistently flawed sentence structure and problems with mechanics and conventions that interfere with the writer's meaning. There are multiple instances of run-on sentences (<i>As of last yar the unemployment has no fast results for a new business in this case the district were worried about these peoples jobs</i>). In addition, there are errors in subject-verb agreement and in the use of apostrophes with possessives (the preceding excerpt contains examples of both), and there are several sentence fragments (<i>Which remains under concerned to this day</i>). Therefore, the response earns a score of 0 for Trait 3.</p>

Social Studies Extended Response Scoring Rubric

Score	Description
Trait 1: Creation of Arguments and Use of Evidence	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generates a text-based argument that demonstrates a clear understanding of the relationships among ideas, events, and figures as presented in the source text(s) and the historical contexts from which they are drawn cites relevant and specific evidence from primary and secondary source text(s) that adequately supports an argument is well-connected to both the prompt and the source text(s)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generates an argument that demonstrates an understanding of the relationships among ideas, events, and figures as presented in the source text(s) cites some evidence from primary and secondary source texts in support of an argument (may include a mix of relevant and irrelevant textual references) is connected to both the prompt and the source text(s)
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> may attempt to create an argument but demonstrates minimal or no understanding of the ideas, events and figures presented in the source texts or the contexts from which these texts are drawn cites minimal or no evidence from the primary and secondary source texts; may or may not demonstrate an attempt to create an argument. lacks connection either to the prompt or the source text(s)

Non-scorable Responses (Score of 0/Condition Codes)

Response exclusively contains text copied from source text(s) or prompt

Response demonstrates that the that test-taker has read neither the prompt nor the source text(s)

Response is incomprehensible

Response is not in English

Response has not been attempted (Blank)

Trait 2: Development of Ideas and Organizational Structure	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains a sensible progression of ideas with understandable connections between details and main ideas Contains ideas that are developed and generally logical; multiple ideas are elaborated upon Demonstrates appropriate awareness of the task
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains an unclear or no apparent progression of ideas Contains ideas that are insufficiently developed or illogical; just one idea is elaborated upon Demonstrates no awareness of the task

Trait 3: Clarity and Command of Standard English Conventions	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates adequate applications of conventions with specific regard to the following skills: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) frequently confused words and homonyms, including contractions 2) subject-verb agreement 3) pronoun usage, including pronoun antecedent agreement, unclear pronoun references, and pronoun case 4) placement of modifiers and correct word order 5) capitalization (e.g., proper nouns, titles, and beginnings of sentences) 6) use of apostrophes with possessive nouns 7) use of punctuation (e.g., commas in a series or in appositives and other non-essential elements, end marks, and appropriate punctuation for clause separation) • demonstrates largely correct sentence structure with variance from sentence to sentence; is generally fluent and clear with specific regard to the following skills: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) correct subordination, coordination and parallelism 2) avoidance of wordiness and awkward sentence structures 3) usage of transitional words, conjunctive adverbs and other words that support logic and clarity 4) avoidance of run-on sentences, fused sentences, or sentence fragments 5) standard usage at a level of formality appropriate for on-demand, draft writing. • may contain some errors in mechanics and conventions, but they do not interfere with understanding*
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates minimal control of basic conventions with specific regard to skills 1 – 7 as listed in the first bullet under Trait 3, Score Point 1 above • demonstrates consistently flawed sentence structure; minimal or no variance such that meaning may be obscured; demonstrates minimal control over skills 1-5 as listed in the second bullet under Trait 3, Score Point 1 above • contains severe and frequent errors in mechanics and conventions that interfere with comprehension <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • response is insufficient to demonstrate level of mastery over conventions and usage

*Because test-takers will be given only 25 minutes to complete Extended Response tasks, there is no expectation that a response should be completely free of conventions or usage errors to receive a score of 1.

Materials from GED Testing Service®

Social Studies Stimulus Materials and Sample Responses

Tonkin Gulf Resolution – 30180

Excerpt

“In order to lay a due foundation for that separate and distinct exercise of the different powers of government, which to a certain extent, is admitted on all hands to be essential to the preservation of liberty, it is evident that each department should have a will of its own...”

-- James Madison, *Federalist 51*, 1789

Letter

The Honorable Wayne Morse
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

August 12, 1964

Dear Senator Morse:

As a citizen of Oregon I am proud that you are one of the only two U.S senators who voted against the Tonkin Gulf Resolution last week. As a citizen of the United States, I am deeply concerned about the passage of this resolution.

As were many Americans, I was outraged when President Johnson announced earlier this month that two U.S. ships in the Gulf of Tonkin had been attacked by the North Vietnamese. When he said that he had dispatched U.S. planes against the attackers and asked Congress to pass a resolution to support his actions, it seemed to me to be a reasonable response. However, after listening to your reasons for voting against the resolution, I am convinced that Congress has made a grievous error. The following words from the resolution will actually permit the president to wage war: “Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.”

The Founders gave the fearsome power to declare war directly to the representatives of the American people and separated it from the powers of the president as Commander in Chief for good reason. And yet, without declaring war, Congress has given the president the authority to take “all necessary measures” in Vietnam, including sending our young men into battle.

I know, Senator Morse, that you take your oath to support and defend the Constitution very seriously. For the good of our nation, I urge you to lead the move to repeal this resolution with all possible haste.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph H. Roberts

Prompt

In your response, develop an argument about how the author's position in his letter reflects the enduring issue expressed in the excerpt from *Federalist 51*. Incorporate relevant and specific evidence from the excerpt, the letter, and your own knowledge of the enduring issue and the circumstances surrounding the Tonkin Gulf Resolution to support your analysis.

Social Studies Response 1:

This letter written to Senator Wayne Morse by Ralph H. Roberts in regards to his vote with the minority of the Congress against the Tonkin Gulf Resolution reflects the issue of the separation of federal powers outlined in the excerpt from James Madison's "Federalist 51." In the excerpt, Madison states that each department of the government should have a "will of its own," because it is necessary for the "preservation of liberty." The letter was written during the time just before the outbreak of what is now known as the Vietnam War. The Tonkin Gulf Resolution was passed by Congress in August of 1964 when President Johnson asked for it to justify his unconstitutional act of war against the offenders. The power to declare war lies not solely with the President, but with the Congress.

Roberts, in writing his letter to one of the Senators who voted against the passing of the resolution, perhaps unknowingly sided with James Madison's view on the separation of powers in the government. When the U.S. Constitution was written, America was in the process of completely relinquishing the hold on the country by who they viewed as a dictator. The American people did not want to go from one absolute ruler to another, so the Continental Congress wrote a system of checks and balances into the Constitution, in order to ensure that no one man or woman would control the nation. This relates to the Tonkin Gulf Resolution in that President Johnson had no right to take military action before an approval of a declaration of war against North Vietnam. The only reason this was able to be overlooked was that America was deep in the Red Scare, and anything at the time that was used to prevent the spread of Communism would be supported by the people.

With Senator Wayne Morse's disapproval of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, he showed that he would support the Constitution as it was written. Roberts admires his ability to "take [his] oath to support and defend the Constitution very seriously." It can be shown through his admiration of Senator Morse's decision that Roberts is also one who believes that no single person should be in charge of the nation, and that the Constitution applies to every U.S. Citizen, no matter what position of power he or she is in.

The separation of powers in the United States Government is very important to the nation's central values. President Johnson's actions in 1964 were unconstitutional, but the attitude of many people during that time allowed it to be justified to them. There were few people who would stand up and say that the Constitution should be upheld no matter the situation, and Senator Wayne Morse was one of them. Ralph H. Roberts was one citizen who admired this, and, if he were alive at the time, James Madison would undoubtedly admire it as well.

Social Studies Response 2:

In Federalist 51, it is stated that each branch of the government needs to have its own will and be free from the influence of the other branches. The author states that Congress has given some of its power to the president. As a result, the president now has a level of authority that was once held only by the legislative branch of the government. This can be taken to mean that the president now has more power than the other two branches when it comes to executing laws and orders to govern the people in response to the Vietnam crisis. The division of power between three branches of government was meant to hold a system of checks and balances in order to prevent one person or group of people from holding too much power over the country, its laws, and its people. By giving supplementary power to the president, there is a chance that the intended balance has been disrupted, and one branch now holds more power than the others. This could be seen as having the possibility to jeopardize the freedom of the American people, as one person may now take any action they choose and have little force able to oppose them. This is especially troubling when it comes to war, as it can mean that the one with power can now force citizens to fight, and possibly die, for a cause they may or may not support. If the president can force citizens to fight for his own cause, how is this any different from being under the rule of a dictator or monarch? The system of power separated into three independent branches was intentionally designed to prevent one person or group of people from having complete and absolute power over the country and its citizens. By shifting the balance of power, Congress has jeopardized the nation and its people. As a result, we may well be on our way to returning to the days of kings.

Annotations for Sample Writings

RLA Response 1

Trait 1: Score Point 2

The writer generates a text-based argument with strong evidence, stating that *“the letter provides a better-supported argument.”* The writer uses specific details from the text to evaluate the credibility of both authors (*a resident...is more credible...as compared to a representative*). The writer supports the argument by demonstrating how the letter to the editor has *“factual information”* to strengthen the arguments (*...correct in the fact [and] ...backed by logical explanations and facts with a few speculations*). The writer selects unsupported portions of Walls’ argument (*...mainly specked with anticipation and hopes*) and counters weak points with Jenkins’ facts (*...the author of the letter counters the argument*). Overall, the writer creates a strong argument using specific evidence focused on the textual sources. Therefore, the response earns a score of 2 for Trait 1.

Trait 2: Score Point 2

The organizational structure of the response successfully conveys the writer’s message. Beginning with an introduction to the topic that clearly expresses the writer’s argument, the response then develops that argument logically over the following paragraphs. Each paragraph begins with a transitional device (*One example..., Another example...*), thereby sustaining a logical progression of ideas. Each paragraph contains evaluation and analysis of specific points from the two texts (*She concedes...but she argues*). The response concludes with a restatement of the writer’s argument within an analysis of the credibility of each text. The writer maintains a formal style and appropriate tone throughout. Therefore, Response 9 earns a score of 2 for Trait 2.

Trait 3: Score Point 2

This lengthy response demonstrates correct sentence structure and variety throughout, and successfully employs language to achieve clarity and fluidity. The writer applies standard English conventions competently and effectively. He or she avoids wordiness and awkward sentences for the most part, uses punctuation appropriately, and demonstrates mastery of mechanics. Overall, the response is at an appropriate level for on-demand draft writing. Therefore, Response 9 earns a score of 2 for Trait 3.

RLA Response 2

Trait 1: Score Point 1

The writer generates an argument against the expansion (*A possible increase [in traffic] is not enough of a reason to intentionally divert the needed traffic away*). The writer uses this and other reasons to show Walls' argument as "*misleading [and] incorrect*." Although there are only some citations from the evidence used as support, the writer references the text to highlight strengths in Jenkins' argument (*A statistic vitally important to the arguing of this case*). The writer evaluates the argumentation by asking questions to point out flaws in Walls' argument (*This might be true, but at what expense?*). The writer distinguishes between claims by showing which claims are unsupported or incorrect (*Therefore, the representative's claim that jobs will be created is, in a sense, inaccurate*). Although limited, this response includes an argument with some evidence and partial evaluation, which merits a score of 1 for Trait 1.

Trait 2: Score Point 2

The writer has employed a point-counterpoint format throughout the response, in each paragraph pitting the claims of Rep. Walls against the arguments of Alice Jenkins. For the most part, this organizational structure is effective at conveying the writer's views, which seem to support the arguments of Alice Jenkins. The response is lacking a clear statement of the writer's position, however, which occasionally compels the reader to infer the writer's meaning. The main transitional device employed by the writer is to offer responses to Rep. Walls' claims (*Sure, construction jobs will be created, but...*). On the whole, however, the writer's ideas are logical and specific points are elaborated upon. Therefore, Response 6 earns a score of 2 for Trait 2.

Trait 3: Score Point 1

Although the writer varies sentence structure within the response, there are multiple examples of awkward or unclear sentences, sentence fragments (*A statistic vitally important to the arguing of this case*), errors in subject-verb agreement (*the quality of jobs are not satisfactory*), and errors in the use of apostrophes (*assert her belief that tourist's will not venture*) that occasionally interfere with comprehension. Overall, the response demonstrates standard English usage that is at a minimally acceptable level of appropriateness for on-demand task writing. Therefore, Response 6 earns a score of 1 for Trait 3.

RLA Response 3

Trait 1: Score Point 0

This response includes summaries of the source texts with commentary on the topic that serves as a minimal level of analysis. The writer attempts to build an argument in favor of building the highway: *“they should do whats best for the group...to pay for the highway to be built.”* The writer includes information from the text, but this is summary and not evidence to support the argument. Although the writer takes a stand on the issue at hand, it is not based on the strength of the arguments for the two positions. The last sentences of the response contain minimal amounts of analysis of the letter to the editor. Overall, the response earns a score of 0 in Trait 1.

Trait 2: Score Point 1

The writer has attempted to organize his/her ideas by dividing the response into two paragraphs, each of which begins with a summary of one of the two positions followed by a brief and simplistic response to that summary. The first paragraph lays out the position taken by Rep. Walls, followed by the writer’s opinion: *“I think it would be best for the town to allow the new highway to be built for the people and the economy of the towns near the highway.”* The second paragraph describes the letter-writer’s position, followed by a reiteration of the writer’s opinion of the issue (*In all, both of these have pros and cons, but they should do whats best for the group and that would be to pay for the highway to be built*). The response lacks details and contains few transitional devices that would support a logical progression of ideas. Therefore, the response earns a score of 1 for Trait 2.

Trait 3: Score Point 0

The response contains multiple examples of run-on and awkward sentences, homonym confusion (there/their), errors in subject-verb agreement, and incorrect use of apostrophes, detracting from the clarity of the writer’s message and interfering with comprehension. For example: *“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.”* Overall, standard usage is at an unacceptable level for on-demand draft writing. Therefore, the response earns a score of 0 for Trait 3.

Social Studies Response 1

Trait 1: Score Point 2

From its opening sentence, the response generates an argument that demonstrates a clear understanding of the ideas, events, and figures presented in the source texts ("This letter written to Senator Wayne Morse by Ralph H. Roberts in regards to his vote with the minority of the Congress against the Tonkin Gulf Resolution reflects the issue of the separation of federal powers outlined in the excerpt from James Madison's 'Federalist 51'"). The writer builds upon this throughout the remainder of the response ("Roberts, in writing his letter, perhaps unknowingly sided with James Madison's view on the separation of powers in the government." "The separation of powers in the United States Government is very important to the nation's central values"). The response contains many citations of relevant and specific evidence from the source texts that support the writer's argument ("In the excerpt, Madison states that... ""The Tonkin Gulf Resolution was passed by Congress in 1964 when President Johnson asked for it to justify his unconstitutional act of war...."). The response includes historical information not provided in the source texts that is relevant to the enduring issue of separation of powers ("When the U.S. Constitution was written ... [t]he American people did not want to go from one absolute ruler to another, so the Continental Congress wrote a system of checks and balances into the Constitution... ""The only reason this was able to be overlooked was that America was deep in the Red Scare... "). These references demonstrate an understanding of the historical context. Although the writer mistakenly refers to the Red Scare instead of the Cold War in referring to America's struggle with communism, the misstep is a minor one given the amount of time test-takers have to generate their responses. Because the response generates an argument, supports it with relevant and specific evidence, establishes a strong connection to the prompt and the source texts, and integrates the writer's own knowledge of historical context, the response receives a score of 2 for Trait 1.

Trait 2: Score Point 1

The response contains four tightly written paragraphs that demonstrate the writer's ability to organize multiple ideas into a logical progression that effectively builds his or her argument. The first paragraph connects the two source texts and makes the writer's position on the issue clear ("...to justify his unconstitutional act of war"). The next paragraphs further develop this connection and integrate other information (the Constitutional Congress, the Red Scare) that provides additional historical context for understanding the issues around the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and the separation of powers. In the last sentence, the writer again provides a connection between the source texts that serves as a conclusion. Because the writer has articulated a central thesis and fully elaborated on it while maintaining a formal style, the response earns a score of 1 for Trait 2.

Trait 3: Score Point 1

The response contains few if any errors in pronoun use, capitalization, use of apostrophes with possessive nouns, punctuation, or subject-verb agreement. The writer has used a variety of sentence types, with no examples of sentence fragments or run-on sentences. The writer has avoided wordy and awkward sentences, instead employing skill at creating sentences that clearly express his or her ideas while maintaining reader interest. Overall, the writer demonstrates proficiency in the conventions and usage of standard English that are at or above a level appropriate for on-demand task writing. Therefore the response earns a score of 1 for Trait 3.

Social Studies Response 2

Trait 1: Score Point 1

The response generates an argument that demonstrates an understanding of the relationships among the ideas presented in the source texts ("In Federalist 51, it is stated that each branch of the government needs to have its own will and be free from the influence of the other branches. The author states that Congress has given some of its power to the president...in response to Vietnam"). The writer builds upon this argument throughout the remainder of the response. The writer cites some evidence from the source texts, although is somewhat vague in attribution, referring to "the author" without making clear that he or she means the letter-writer. By focusing on the enduring issue of separation of powers, the response is connected to the prompt and the source texts. The response includes no historical information other than that given in the source texts, however, and is, therefore, ineligible for a score of 2. Because the response generates an argument that demonstrates understanding, cites some evidence in support of that argument, and establishes a connection to the prompt and source texts, it earns a score of 1 for Trait 1.

Trait 2: Score Point 1

The response begins with the salient issue from each source text, followed by the writer's argument: "This can be taken to mean that the president now has more power than the other two branches when it comes to executing laws and orders to govern the people in response to Vietnam." Although the response is presented as only one paragraph, the progression of ideas is generally well organized, leading logically to the writer's conclusion that "by shifting the balance of power, Congress has jeprodized the nation and its people." The response includes multiple ideas based on the enduring issue of the separation of powers. The response also demonstrates that the writer understands that the purpose of the task is to produce formal, objective argumentative writing. Therefore the response earns a score of 1 for Trait 2.

Trait 3: Score Point 1

For the most part, the writer demonstrates adequate mastery over the conventions and usage of standard English. The response contains a variety of sentence types and is generally free of errors in pronoun usage, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, and homonym confusion. There are no comma splices or sentence fragments, and the writer has avoided wordiness and awkwardness. The writer has effectively used transitional phrases to link ideas ("As a result..." "This can be taken to mean..." "This could be seen as..."). Overall, the response reflects a level of fluency appropriate for on-demand task writing, and therefore earns a score of 1 for Trait 3.