

*California High  
School California  
High School  
Exit Examination  
Exit Examination*

**English-Language Arts  
Released Test Questions**

California Department of Education  
October 2006

**Selected Pre- and Post-Essay  
Questions (Exposition and Persuasion)**

**Adapted for the  
Reading Institutes for Academic  
Preparation**

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### WRITING

The Writing portion of the CAHSEE has three strands: Writing Strategies, Writing Conventions, and Writing Applications. The Reading Institutes for Academic Preparation has chosen to use sample essay prompts (expository and persuasive) from the Writing Applications Strand for pre-and post test writing samples for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders involved in the College Access Study.

### The Writing Applications Strand

The following expository and persuasive California English-language arts academic content standards are assessed on the CAHSEE by one writing task.

#### WRITING (GRADES NINE AND TEN)

**Standard Set 2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics):**

#### PRE-TEST STANDARDS

- 10WA2.3 Write expository compositions, including analytical essays and research reports.
- a. Marshal evidence in support of a thesis and related claims, including information on all relevant perspectives.
  - b. Convey information and ideas from primary and secondary sources accurately and coherently.
  - c. Make distinctions between the relative value and significance of specific data, facts, and ideas.
  - ~~d. Include visual aids by employing appropriate technology to organize and record information on charts, maps, and graphs.\*~~
  - e. Anticipate and address readers' potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.
  - f. Use technical terms and notations accurately.

\* The crossed-out portion of this standard is not assessed on the CAHSEE, but is still included in grade-level standards.

## POST-TEST STANDARDS

10WA2.4

Write persuasive compositions.

- a. Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained and logical fashion.
- b. Use specific rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g., appeal to logic through reasoning; appeal to emotion or ethical belief; relate a personal anecdote, case study, or analogy).
- c. Clarify and defend positions with precise and relevant evidence, including facts, expert opinions, quotations, and expressions of commonly accepted beliefs and logical reasoning.
- d. Address readers' concerns, counterclaims, biases, and expectations.

To demonstrate achievement in this CAHSEE strand, students must successfully respond to one on-demand writing task. The writing task either will be a response to a reading passage, or a response to a writing prompt. With a response to literature, students are asked to analyze the passage and write a text-based response. With a response to a writing prompt, students are asked to write a response based on their own knowledge and viewpoints about a given topic. The CAHSEE 4-point Response to Literary/Expository Text Scoring Guide and Response to Writing Prompt Scoring Guide, which are based on the Writing Applications content standards, are used to score the writing task. These scoring guides are reprinted in the CAHSEE Teacher Guide for English-language arts.

All student essays written for the CAHSEE are scored by two trained scorers who use the scoring guide to assign a score of 1, 2, 3, or 4. If the two scorers give different but adjacent scores (e.g., a 3 and a 4), the student's final score is an average of the two scores. If the two scorers give different and nonadjacent scores (e.g., a 2 and a 4), a scoring leader reads the essay and assigns the score. Papers receive no score if they are blank, off-topic, illegible, unintelligible, or written in a language other than English.

## Pre-Test (Expository) Essay Choice #1 Prompt

### REMINDER

- ✓ Write your response to the writing task below.
- ✓ You may give your writing a title if you would like, but it is not necessary.
- ✓ You may NOT use a dictionary. If you do not know how to spell a word, sound the word out and do the best you can.
- ✓ You may either print or write in cursive.
- ✓ Write clearly! Any erasures or strike-throughs should be as clean as possible.

### Writing Task:

By the time students enter high school, they have learned about many moments in history that have influenced our world today. Think about a moment in history you studied and consider its importance.

Write a composition in which you discuss a moment in history. Share its importance in today's world. Be sure to support the moment with details and examples.

### Checklist for Your Writing

The following checklist will help you do your best work. Make sure you do the following:

- ✓ Read the description of the task carefully.
- ✓ Organize your writing with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.
- ✓ Use specific details and examples to fully support your ideas.
- ✓ Use words that are appropriate for your audience and purpose.
- ✓ Vary your sentences to make your writing interesting to read.
- ✓ Check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence formation.

*NOTE:* Pages 7 through 9 provide a sample student essay for this writing task at each of the four score points with commentary and rationale for the given score. The student responses have been typed with the students' own content, grammar, capitalization, and spelling. The CAHSEE Response to Writing Prompt Scoring Guide for this writing task may be found on pages 29-30.

# 4

## Score Point 4

### Student Response

*While thinking about a moment in history that has influenced our world today, many events come to mind. But an event that seems prominent is not an event at all, but rather a time period and the accomplishments that took place within it, the Industrial Revolution.*

*Having learned about the industrial era just recently a few aspects remain vivid in my mind, such as the many new inventions that served to make our lives easier. The steam engine was developed allowing cities to form in locations other than near water sources, as things had been previously. Once inside those cities, people all came together working in factories which was much more efficient.*

*Through the factory system, goods were produced at a much faster rate, requiring less work so prices were less. Different social classes could afford items causing a change in social structure. Women and children began working stirring up awareness and laws about labor. Unions were formed as a result as well as more organized forms of education. Every aspect of life changed within this time period including advances in medicine, communications, and the way we manufacture today. The moments throughout the Industrial Revolution hold so much importance, they brought us to the way our world is today.*

## Score Point 4

### Commentary

In this response, the writer addresses all parts of the writing task, which is to discuss a moment in history and share its importance in today's world. The writer provides a meaningful thesis that suggests that the accomplishments that took place during the Industrial Revolution have influenced our world today. This is followed with purposefully organized support to illustrate just why this period in history has been so influential.

In the second paragraph, the writer people into unions causing a "change in social structure." As the essay comes to a close, the writer discusses how the steam engine positively affected the growth of cities and the fact that factories helped the people in the cities.

A further discussion on the factory system is developed in the third paragraph. The writer provides thoughtful support through the use of specific details to illustrate the effects that factories had on people. More detail is included to share how the existence of factories united society.

As the essay comes to a close, the writer provides more detail about the Industrial Revolution to connect its positive effect on how it "brought us to the way our world is today."

The variety of sentence types and the use of precise, descriptive language all add to the success of this essay. There are only a few errors in the conventions of the English language within this response, but they are generally first-draft in nature. Overall, this essay is a sample of a 4-point response.

# 3

## Score Point 3

### Student Response

*One of the most important days in history so far is the day that man set foot on the moon. This was not only important in U.S. history, but it was important to everywhere else in the world too. This amazing achievement showed Americans that they can do anything they want, if they try hard enough, and it showed other countries how great we really are.*

*The day that man set foot on the moon was a very exciting day. A lot of people didn't believe that it really happened because it was so amazing. But when everyone realized that it had really happened, it gave them the courage to strive for their goals and achieve them.*

*For years before man stepped on the moon, other countries had been trying to and were unsuccessful. But, America was able to. This made the other countries have so much more respect for us.*

*When man set foot on the moon, it was honestly one of the most important days in history because of what took place as a result of it.*

## Score Point 3

### Commentary

In this response to the writing prompt, the writer discusses “the day that man set foot on the moon.” The thesis expresses the idea that this event was an amazing achievement that affected both Americans and the rest of the world and that it proved that “Americans . . . can do anything they want, if they try hard enough . . .”

The thesis is supported in an organized manner with details and examples. In the second paragraph, the writer concludes that the event was responsible for giving people the “courage to strive for their goals and achieve them.” In third paragraph, the writer suggests that other the countries respect the United States for having walked on the moon.

The writer concludes with the idea that setting foot on the moon was “one of the most important days in history . . .”

The writer addresses all parts of the task through discussion on what the event was and how it affected the world today. The details and examples used to support the thesis are more general than in a 4-point response, but they do successfully support the thesis.

The use of a variety of sentences along with a general sense of audience is evident throughout the essay. There are a few errors in the conventions of the English language, but they do not interfere with the readers’ understanding of the essay. Overall, this essay is a sample of a 3-point response.

## 2

### Score Point 2

#### Student Response

*A moment history that I had studied was when Ben Franklin discovered electricity. Electricity is important today, we use it for a lot of stuff. If he did not discover electricity, we probably wouldn't have a lot of stuff that we have now like lights, heat, air conditioning and a lot other things. He could have gotten electracuted trying to discover it. So it is a good thing that he had find it out. Without electricity we can" do a lot of stuff we do now. We would have to use candles for light or just day light.*

### Score Point 2

#### Commentary

In this response to the writing prompt, the writer discusses Ben Franklin's discovery in a very limited manner. No explanation is provided on the event itself. The writer only provides few details to support the idea that "electricity is important today . . ." Through the use of basic, predictable language, the idea that "we probably wouldn't have a lot of stuff that we have now . . ." is suggested. The language used to support this idea is limited to the word "stuff" that appears three times in this very short paragraph.

There is very little variety at the sentence level and there are several errors in the conventions of the English language. The overall word choice and lack of development illustrate a very limited sense of audience. This essay exemplifies all the criteria within a 2-point response.

## 1

### Score Point 1

#### Student Response

*We studied about all kind of stuff in History. Every thing we Stuyed in History I learned Something know eveyday. History is go because you get to learn about all kinds of knew things abouat whats going on In this world.*

### Score Point 1

#### Commentary

In this response, the writer provides no thesis related to the prompt beyond the idea that "we studied about all kind of stuff in History." No attempt is made to discuss an event in history.

The ideas presented are no more than a brief discussion on the value of learning history. They are expressed through a lack of control at both the sentence and the language level. There are errors in the conventions of written English in each of the three sentences written in this 1-point response.

## Pre-Test (Expository) Essay Choice #2 Prompt

### REMINDER

- ✓ Write your response to the writing task below.
- ✓ You may give your writing a title if you would like, but it is not necessary.
- ✓ You may NOT use a dictionary. If you do not know how to spell a word, sound the word out and do the best you can.
- ✓ You may either print or write in cursive.
- ✓ Write clearly! Any erasures or strike-throughs should be as clean as possible.

### Writing Task:

Television, radio, newspaper, and individual conversations are just a few sources of news available to us. While most people probably rely on combinations of these sources for their news, some people rely on a particular source almost exclusively.

Write an essay discussing the relative strengths and weaknesses of one particular source for news. Provide examples to illustrate your claims. Develop your ideas so vividly that a reader will have a clear understanding of the benefits and shortcomings of a particular source of news.

### Checklist for Your Writing

The following checklist will help you do your best work. Make sure you:

- ✓ Read the description of the task carefully.
- ✓ Organize your writing with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.
- ✓ Provide a thesis responsive to the task and support it fully with specific details and examples.
- ✓ Use words that are appropriate for your audience and purpose.
- ✓ Vary your sentences to make your writing interesting to read.
- ✓ Check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence formation.

*NOTE:* Pages 11 through 15 provide a sample student essay for this writing task at each of the four score points with commentary and rationale for the given score. The student responses have been typed with the students' own content, grammar, capitalization, and spelling. The CAHSEE Response to Writing Prompt Scoring Guide for this writing task may be found on pages 28-29.

# 4

## Score Point 4 Student Response

*Knowing about current events in the outside world is important and people use different methods to find out more about the world. Some people watch television broadcasts of the news while others read a newspaper. The conventional newspaper has both benefits and faults that either help or hinder the reader.*

*There are many benefits that a newspaper can offer a curious reader. The news given is detailed and organized, sharing important and interesting tidbits of information. Many times, a graph or diagram is added to enhance the reader's understanding of the story, especially if the story is about a specialized topic such as the human genome. A newspaper is written in terms that the general populace can understand it easily, aiding people who are not as strong in English as others. Another strength most people enjoy is the myriad of subjects in a single edition of the newspaper. One can find news concerning anything from politics to a new Thanksgiving dinner recipe. Newspapers have much to offer, however, they do have their shortcomings.*

*Newspapers are becoming somewhat obsolete because some of their faults are not worth the trouble. The most obvious reason is that they create an immense load of paper clutter. People combat this by throwing it away instead of recycling it, thus harming the environment. In addition to the cumbersome paper load, the ink comes off readily, giving the reader black and greasy hands. Most people also find it tedious to fold the newspaper properly because it is fairly large in size. Though those reasons are annoying, the worst aspect of a newspaper is that all the headlines present in an edition of a newspaper cannot be read in one glance as they can be on the Internet. People cannot see all the stories without perusing slowly through every section of the newspaper. These shortcomings discourage many people from reading the newspaper. There are many methods to news delivery, newspapers being one of the oldest. Like any method, there are some strengths and weaknesses in newspapers. These influence whether people choose to use a newspaper to broaden their horizons. Though some of the strengths are very helpful, people may overlook them and only see the cumbersome and inconvenient weaknesses.*

**Score Point 4  
Commentary**

This paper clearly addresses all parts of the writing task. The writer begins with a universal statement and then narrows down to a specific, meaningful thesis that clearly states an intention to defend the relative strengths and weaknesses of the “conventional newspaper.” The paragraphs that follow develop both sides of the thesis with precise and relevant evidence.

The writer argues in the first body paragraph that “There are many benefits that a newspaper can offer to a curious reader.” Specific supporting details such as “a graph or diagram,” and “human genome” support the argument. The writer elaborates by stating how newspaper visuals aid people lacking strong language skills. A good command of vocabulary is demonstrated through words such as “tidbits,” “populace,” and “myriad.”

The second body paragraph focuses on the opposing argument by presenting vivid examples of why a newspaper might not be the best choice as a source for news. “The cumbersome paper load,” dirty hands, and difficulty handling a bulky newspaper are the principal examples provided. The strongest evidence, “. . . all the headlines present in an edition of a newspaper cannot be read in one glance . . .,” is presented last. In addition to supporting main ideas with specific details, the writer continues to use refreshing vocabulary: “immense,” “readily,” “tedious,” and “perusing.”

Finally, the concluding paragraph restates the thesis and provides an adequate summary of the writer’s arguments.

The writer develops a focused organizational structure through the use of interesting language and a variety of sentence types. Additionally, the writer exhibits a firm command of written English conventions while maintaining a consistent tone and a clear sense of audience. Overall, this essay is an example of a 4-point response

# 3

## Score Point 3

### Student Response

*In Today's world, we have many choices when it comes to finding out what's new and for finding information. There are televisions which deliver and discuss news on a regular basis; there are radios in which news is talked about regularly on most stations; there are the good, old fashioned newspapers; and there are individual conversations which occur daily.*

*Individual conversations have fantastic advantages to them as well as having many disadvantages. Individual conversations are great because you can talk to anyone about anything whenever you want. For example, asking someone if it is raining outside is a lot easier and faster than walking to your T. V., turning it on, and then finding out if it was raining. However, information about whether it will rain in a week and what is happening in Germany is easier obtained by a television or by the internet rather than an individual person. Individual conversations allow to get ahold of a person's inner opinions on different matters. A disadvantage of that, however, is that their opinions are usually biased and not true. Individual conversations do not always give correct information, either.*

*Although individual conversations may be enlightening and fast, They may not always be the exact truths. Other means may, and usually are more exact and more true.*

## Score Point 3

### Commentary

In this response, the writer is responsive to the writing task, defends both positions with evidence, and anticipates the reader's concerns. The writer concludes the first paragraph with a thesis that is responsive to the writing task, stating that "Individual conversations have fantastic advantages to them as well as having many disadvantages."

The second paragraph is effectively organized in a pro/con format in which each advantage presented is immediately countered with a disadvantage. Some details and examples are provided to support both the advantages and disadvantages of individual conversations.

The last paragraph concludes the essay by summarizing that although individual conversations may be "enlightening" and "fast," they may not "always be the exact truths."

The writer does use some descriptive language such as "obtained" and "biased" as well as a variety of sentence types. Additionally, the writer demonstrates a consistent tone and focus. There are some misspellings and some errors in the conventions of the English language, but they do not interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay. Overall, this essay is an example of a 3-point response.

# 2

## Score Point 2

### Student Response

*There are many sources available to people for news and such, however most people use only one. There is the television, the radio, newspapers, and even conversations to help people to get the information they need. A majority of the people focus on one main source of news or research. Relying on one source only can be both a benefit and a disadvantage.*

*When someone relies on one particular source, it is mainly because of laziness or lack of willingness. There are many weaknesses that come with focusing on one source only. If a person was to look in a newspaper for details on what had happened earlier that morning, that is just one opinion. One would never know the actual truth to the story, when they are exposed with one opinion.*

*Though relying on one source can be an issue at times, it is also comes as an advantage. Someone could be working on a research paper and could have all of the information they need right there in front of them. In this case not many more sources are needed.*

*Using one source is not the more favored way to go. People should always, even if they do not necessarily need it, use more than one source of information. Using more sources gives a better understanding of something.*

## Score Point 2

### Commentary

While not typical for this writing task, the writer's one approach of comparing the pros and cons of using one source of news as opposed to multiple sources is a valid one. The thesis—"Relying on one source only can be both a benefit and a disadvantage"—is related to the writing task.

In the following two paragraphs, the writer then attempts to argue the advantages and disadvantages of employing only one news source; however, the essay's discussion is on a general level only, providing limited details and examples.

The writer comes to the conclusion that "Using more sources gives a better understanding of something" in the final paragraph, but details are not provided to support this conclusion.

This essay provides little support for its thesis and demonstrates a monotonous tone and focus. In addition, some awkward and incorrect use of the English language occurs. All these factors are representative of a 2-point response.

# 1

**Score Point 1****Student Response**

*T.V., Newspaper*

*Which of these news sources do you use?*

*Both of these sources are good in there own way*

*but some people May Prefer one over the other. For intance, one person might get there news off the T.V. when another person might not have time for t.v. so they prefer a newspaper.*

*They Both give the same news but the newspapers faster*

**Score Point 1****Commentary**

In this response, the writer provides a weak thesis that is related to the writing task: “. . . some people may prefer one source over the other.” Although this brief essay does provide a valid foundation for further discussion, it fails to offer substantive support or evidence. Additionally, it does not address the reader’s concerns. The paper does not provide any sentence variety and uses limited vocabulary. Overall, this paper is an example of a 1-point response.

## Post-Test (Persuasive) Essay Choice #1 Prompt

### REMINDER

- ✓ Write your response to the writing task below.
- ✓ You may give your writing a title if you like, but it is not necessary.
- ✓ You may NOT use a dictionary. If you do not know how to spell a word, sound the word out and do the best you can.
- ✓ You may either print or write in cursive.
- ✓ Write clearly! Any erasures or strike-throughs should be as clean as possible.

### Writing Task:

Some students at your school expressed an interest in making the school more attractive by getting rid of the trash on the school grounds.

Write a persuasive essay for your school paper in which you convince the readers of the importance of getting rid of the trash and making the school more attractive. Convince your readers through the use of specific reasons and examples.

### Checklist for Your Writing

The following checklist will help you do your best work. Make sure you do the following:

- ✓ Read the description of the task carefully.
- ✓ Organize your writing with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.
- ✓ State your position, support it with specific examples, and address the reader's concerns.
- ✓ Use words that are appropriate for your audience and purpose.
- ✓ Vary your sentences to make your writing interesting to read.
- ✓ Check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence formation.

*NOTE:* Pages 17 through 20 provide a sample student essay for this writing task at each of the four score points with commentary and rationale for the given score. The student responses have been typed with the students' own content, grammar, capitalization, and spelling. The CAHSEE Response to Writing Prompt Scoring Guide for this writing task may be found on pages 28-29.

# 4

## Score Point 4

### Student Response

*Would you enjoy taking your classes at the city dump? Trash is not beautiful. It is a well-known fact that students learn better when they're in a clean environment. To be more attractive, trash on our school grounds must be picked up. The importance of picking up trash is to beautify our campus and make our school a healthier place to learn.*

*We want our campus to be attractive and clean, right? When rival schools come to compete against us, we don't want them going home criticizing us because of our campus. We don't want our mascot to become a rat or a pig in their eyes. We want to keep our campus clean to show that we're not slobs and are educated enough to pick up our own garbage.*

*Who would want to eat lunch inside a dumpster? Or exercise in a gym that smells like rotten eggs and spoiled milk? We need a campus that will make it easier and healthier to learn. Would essays show the student's best if they brainstormed ideas while looking out the window at old food, used bandaids, empty soda cans and gum wrappers? The way this campus looks influences the way we perform in our classrooms. To get the maximum quality work done, we need clean and sanitary workspaces.*

*In conclusion, picking up any trash around school will be beneficial to everybody, especially us. If you see a piece of paper blowin around stop it with your foot and bend down, pick it up, then throw it away. There's no reason why our campus needs to be anything other than attractive. With everyone's help, it can be attractive and provide a better learning atmosphere.*

## Score Point 4

### Commentary

In this response, the writer addresses all parts of the persuasive writing task: stating a position about the importance of cleaning up trash, defending the position with evidence, and anticipating the reader's concerns. The first paragraph gives the writer's position ("trash on our school grounds must be picked up") and then gives two reasons that picking up trash is important ("to beautify our campus and make our school a healthier place to learn"). These two ideas become the focus for the rest of the essay.

The writer uses the questions that open each of the next two paragraphs to anticipate objections to cleaning up trash, thereby addressing the reader's potential concerns. The second paragraph provides several images to support the argument that a more attractive campus would provide specific benefits (e.g., "We don't want our mascot to become a rat or a pig in their [rival schools'] eyes"). Although the third paragraph provides little detail about the health aspect of the argument, it does use specific details to develop the concept that a clean environment is conducive to learning. The essay provides a strong conclusion that not only restates the writer's position, but also extends the argument with a call to action: "If you see a piece of paper blowin around stop it with your foot and bend down, pick it up, then throw it away".

The essay demonstrates the control of organization that is required for a 4-point paper, and the stated position is developed with details. Although there is a misplaced modifier ("To be more attractive, trash . . ."), and a few additional errors in conventions, overall the writer demonstrates the control of conventions. The essay also uses a variety of sentence types and precise, descriptive language. Overall, this essay is a sample of a 4-point response.

# 3

## Score Point 3

### Student Response

*Nobody would like it if people stopped picking up trash and let our school become filled with trash. It is very important to keep our school clean to provide an appropriate learning environment. If everyone would help out our school would look more attractive.*

*A clean school campus would offer a nicer and appropriate learning environment. A dirty school makes it harder to concentrate on school work. If trash covered the campus students might be looking out classroom windows for what awaits them after class and wondering why someone is not cleaning it up. A clean school would help the students concentrate so grades might raise not only making the school look better on the outside but academically as well.*

*No one enjoys being in a dirty environment. Before school, snack, lunch, and after school would be much less enjoy-able to both the students and faculty if our campus was dirty. People do not like eating in trash filled lunch areas and so there would be more students leaving school permitted or not for lunch. Basically, students and teachers would not be able to stand being in a dirty environment during school hours.*

*In conclusion living environments are kept clean and so it is equally important to keep learning environments clean as well. Both the students and faculty spend large portions of their days here so to make school a little better and more attractive our school needs to be kept clean. It would be easy if everyone just did their part.*

## Score Point 3

### Commentary

In this response to the writing prompt, the writer begins with a paragraph that states three positions about picking up trash—that “Nobody would like” a school “filled with trash,” that a clean school provides “an appropriate learning environment,” and that a clean school would “look more attractive.” The paragraphs that follow discuss each of these ideas.

The second paragraph of the essay focuses on the learning environment, explaining that students can concentrate better if there is no trash on campus. The third paragraph addresses the idea that “no one enjoys being in a dirty environment.” The final paragraph restates the idea that the school could look more attractive if everyone helped.

In general, the paper defends the three positions with some details and examples, but the development is not as thoughtful or thorough as that in a 4-point paper. In the third paragraph, for example, each sentence restates the topic sentence and adds only a few additional details.

The paper addresses readers’ concerns and expectations in a general way by stating that “Nobody would like it if people stopped picking up trash” and “No one enjoys being in a dirty environment,” and thus a general sense of audience is evident throughout the essay.

There are a few errors in the conventions of written English, but they do not interfere with thereader’s understanding. Overall, this essay is an example of a 3-point response to this writing task.

## 2

### Score Point 2

#### Student Response

*The importance of getting rid of garbage on school camps is very important. The importance of getting rid of the garbage is makeing are school look nice, giving less work for the teachers and janitors to do. Another reason it is important because if I don't look oke people are going to think that it isn't a good school.*

*I think that this a good subject to write on because the trash on school campus is terrible. School campuses have alot of garbage because people don't care about throwing there trash away. But people need to think more reasonsivly because they are destroying the earth if they do not pick up there garbage. So people from now on when you have garbage don't throw it on the ground throw it in the garbage can.*

*Another reason it is important for people not to litter because this where we live and we don't need to destroy where we live. Pluse what would other people come to our school meaning the district office people think of us if we just left our trash all over the ground that would make us look bad.*

### Score Point 2

#### Commentary

In this response to the writing prompt, the writer begins by stating three reasons that picking up trash is important: “makeing are school look nice,” “giving less work for the teachers and janitors to do,” and preventing people from thinking “that it isn't a good school.”

Although the paper states these positions with some authority, it fails to support them in the paragraphs that follow. The second paragraph focuses on a new, although related, topic, that people should pick up their trash to avoid destroying the earth. The third paragraph moves from the idea that trash destroys the earth to the idea that it destroys “where we live.” This paragraph also contains an attempt to develop the third position in the opening paragraph, that having trash around suggests that this isn't a good school: “if we just left our trash all over the ground that would make us look bad.”

This essay provides little or no support for its thesis, shows little control over organization, and demonstrates an inconsistent tone and focus. It also fails to anticipate readers' concerns. These factors, in addition to the lack of control over the conventions of written English, particularly spelling, make this essay an example of a 2-point response.

# 1

**Score Point 1****Student Response**

*It would be a good idea to clean up our envirement, maybe if there was more trash cans well you could make our schlool cleaner if just everybody picked up on thing our schlool would not be 3/4ths clean that's how bad our mess has gotten to who wants to attend a school that's now for the trash and ants and roaches etc. No one does that's why we should clean our school & our great reward in the end a clean & safe and healthy envirement and school.*

**Score Point 1****Commentary**

In this response to the writing prompt, the writer begins with the position that cleaning up the environment is a good idea. This statement is followed by two suggestions—that there could be more trash cans and that everyone should help pick up trash. Another topic which is a description of the extent of the trash problem at school, and then the final sentence of the response reaffirms that cleaning up trash will have beneficial results.

This response offers several ideas related to the topic but fails to support these ideas with details or examples. In addition, the response lacks consistency of focus and fails to demonstrate a control of organization. The serious errors in the conventions of written English, particularly in sentence boundaries, interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay and result in a score of 1.

## Post-Test (Persuasive) Essay Choice #2 Prompt

### REMINDER

- ✓ Write your response to the writing task below.
- ✓ You may give your writing a title if you like, but it is not necessary.
- ✓ You may NOT use a dictionary. If you do not know how to spell a word, sound the word out and do the best you can.
- ✓ You may either print or write in cursive.
- ✓ Write clearly! Any erasures or strike-throughs should be as clean as possible.

### Writing Task:

Tourism committees spend a great deal of money each year advocating natural landmarks of states and countries. By using media such as posters, magazine advertisements, television commercials, and radio advertisements, committees are able to send a message about beautiful places, and hopefully convince some tourists to travel to those places.

Suppose you have been hired by a tourism committee. Write a persuasive essay in which you identify a place in the world that has something tourists might find interesting.

Explain precisely what makes that particular place so special. Develop your ideas so that a potential tourist would be persuaded to visit the place you have identified.

### Checklist for Your Writing

The following checklist will help you do your best work. Make sure you do the following:

- ✓ Read the description of the task carefully.
- ✓ Organize your writing with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.
- ✓ State a thesis responsive to the task and support it fully with specific details and examples.
- ✓ Use words that are appropriate for your audience and purpose.
- ✓ Vary your sentences to make your writing interesting to read.
- ✓ Check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence formation.

*NOTE:* Pages 22 through 27 provide a sample student essay for this writing task at each of the four score points with commentary and rationale for the given score. The student responses have been typed with the students' own content, grammar, capitalization, and spelling. The CAHSEE Response to Writing Prompt Scoring Guide for this writing task may be found on pages 28-29.

## 4

**Score Point 4****Student Response**

*Some call it the Happiest Place on Earth and others call it the Magic Kingdom. What is this magical place? Well, if you guessed Disneyland, you were right! Disneyland, home to Mickey and all of his friends, is the host to many tourists and visitors each year.*

*Racking in millions of dollars year round, this exhilarating amusement park is able to please each and every one of its guests. From the moment you set foot on Main Street to the second you exit the gates, it feels as if you're entrapped in a dream. So, embark on a journey with me to explore the many wonders and secrets of this magical theme park.*

*Disneyland is most popular with its food and treats. Whether you're dining under the midnight sky in the Carribbean or having brunch in New Orleans, the Magic Kingdom is sure to please all of your mouthwatering needs. Every restaurant you enter is set with a different atmosphere, with elaborate decorations, sound effects and music. Vendors on the streets are always there and smiling to offer you crisp caramel apples, buttery popcorn, or fluffy cotton candy. Before you know it, you'll have tried every food in the park.*

*Disneyland may have its ups and downs . . . if you're on one of its many extreme roller coasters, of course. The second you pull down the lap bar, get ready for a fun-filled adrenaline rush to add excitement to your day. If you have little ones, Disneyland provides you with fun, colorful storybook rides also. You just sit down, relax, and watch the childrens' eyes light up when they see characters from their favorite movies before their very eyes.*

*It's not everyday that you see the big black sky light up with glittering explosions of light. Yes, Disneyland's sky and streets are filled with entertainment for all to watch for free! People play music, put on parades, set off fireworks and perform in cute, whimsical shows. Be sure to always watch the entertainment, but be careful . . . you might bump into Mickey Mouse. Mickey Mouse and all of his pals make a grand appearance for you to hug, play with, and take pictures with every single day.*

*Sure enough, the end of your day comes and you start to get tired. finally, it's time to leave and go back to your daily life. The only thing you're left with is a great memory . . . and maybe a few suevenirs. So, when your vacation time rolls around and you are sitting on the couch, thinking of where to go, remember the food, rides, and fun at Disneyland, and it won't take you long to make up your mind.*

#### Score Point 4 Commentary

In this response, the writer addresses all parts of the persuasive writing task: stating a position about where the ideal tourist location would be, defending the position with evidence, and anticipating the reader's concerns. In the beginning of the first paragraph, the writer includes a rhetorical question and its answer as the thesis to the essay: "What is this magical place? Well, if you guessed Disneyland, you were right!" The remainder of the paragraph states brief reasons why Disneyland is an ideal tourist location (e.g. hosts many visitors, pleases all ages, and is a fantasy). The writer entreats the reader to continue the journey by resuming to read about the wonders of Disneyland.

The second paragraph emphasizes the variety of food offered at the park. The writer addresses the concerns of the reader by stating that every restaurant has "a different atmosphere" (e.g., Caribbean and New Orleans). Other potential concerns are addressed by the descriptive language used to mention that there are not only restaurants but also vendors selling "crisp caramel apples, buttery popcorn, or fluffy cotton candy."

The third paragraph begins with a pun on the phrase "ups and downs," when referring to Disneyland's roller coasters. Once again, the reader's concerns are addressed by noting that not all visitors to Disneyland will be interested in roller coasters and relating that Disneyland also has rides for children based upon the franchise's popular storybook and movie characters: "You just sit down, relax, and watch the childrens' [*sic*] eyes light up when they see characters from their favorite movies before their very eyes."

The next paragraph details the multitude of free entertainment that is available at the park (e.g., the fireworks at night, the parades, the shows, and even Mickey Mouse). The writer uses ironic humor by suggesting the reader "... be careful ... you might bump into Mickey Mouse."

The final paragraph reemphasizes the reasons to visit Disneyland as an ideal tourist location. It concludes the tight structure and organization of the essay. The use of a responsive meaningful thesis that is thoroughly supported by specific details and examples is representative of a 4-point response. The writer also demonstrates a consistent tone and focus highlighted by the sense of audience and organization of the paper. The essay uses a variety of sentence types and precise, descriptive language. While there are a few errors in the conventions of the English language, they are first draft in nature. Overall, this essay is a sample of a 4-point response.

# 3

## Score Point 3

### Student Response

#### *Where Can Tourists Go?*

*There is a place in the world that tourists would find interesting. They may or may not have heard of this place. It is a city in Mexico called Puerto Vallarta. Tourists would like Puerto Vallarta, because the weather is perfect for different people, the relaxation, and the many things to do and have fun.*

*Many people like different types of weather. If you go to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico you can experience these types of crazy weather. If you go to Mexico during the month's of April to August you would experience rainy, stormy weather. If you love rainy days, that's just the right time for you. However from September to January the weather is just perfect for people who like it not too hot and not too cold. The weather is literally perfect. The sunset and sunrise are very pretty at this time, also. However, between February and May, the weather is transitioning between the two extremes, so the weather can be a little crazy.*

*When you are on vacation, the best thing to do is relax. Puerto Vallarta is the best place for that. Not only is there perfect weather, but the atmosphere of P.V. is just relaxing. Puerto Vallarta allows you to have fun and enjoy yourself. The people also are very welcoming and caring. There is a lot of things to do in Puerto Vallarta.*

*This city is full of things to do to have fun. You can go on cruise ships, go shopping, or go to dinner with friends or family. You can lay out in the sun, go swimming in the ocean, or skydive. Many people came back home wanting to be there. This city is so special, because the weather is perfect, you can have fun while you relax, and you really don't have to do alot to have fun. Puerto Vallarta is a really good place to bring your whole family for vacation, but can also be good for wanting to have loads of fun and experience adventure. Puerto Vallarta is a great place to visit.*

**Score Point 3  
Commentary**

In this response, the writer addresses all parts of the persuasive writing task: stating a position about where the ideal tourist location would be, defending the position with evidence, and anticipating the reader's concerns. The writer concludes the first paragraph with a thesis that is responsive to the writing task, detailing that Puerto Vallarta is the ideal tourist location because of the weather, the ability for relaxation, and the magnitude of options for fun.

The second paragraph details the diversity of the weather: rain, sunshine, and "crazy." The writer attempts to address reader's possible concerns by stating: "If you love rainy days, that's just the right time for you," and ". . . the weather is just perfect for people who like it not too hot and not too cold." The attempt is to illustrate the best time for tourists to visit Puerto Vallarta.

The third paragraph follows the thesis by suggesting that Puerto Vallarta is relaxing, but that is all that it does. The paragraph does not contain any examples or details to support the writer's claim.

The next paragraph lists activities that Puerto Vallarta offers the tourist (e.g., cruise ships, shopping, restaurants). While it offers support of things to do for fun, it does not elaborate.

The last paragraph concludes the essay by restating the thesis established in the first paragraph, leaving with the statement: "Puerto Vallarta is a great place to visit."

The use of a responsive thesis that is supported by details and examples for the majority of the essay is representative of a 3-point paper. The paper is organized and demonstrates a consistent tone and focus with a general sense of audience. It also provides a variety of sentence types and some descriptive language. There are, however, awkward expressions and some errors in the conventions of the English language. It is also repetitive mentioning the "perfect weather" in multiple places (paragraphs 3 and 4). Overall, this essay is an example of a 3-point response.

# 2

## Score Point 2

### Student Response

*Florda*

*This state that you can spend you vacation is Florda. With lots to do and see you will never be left out of the fun. You will see lots of amusment park on you jerony of this state of Florda.*

*One of the Parks is Disny world. they have lots of ride. It takes day to see it all. It also has attractions worth a while. There are others worth your while.*

*Another one is Universul Florda. Smaller Than Disney World, but still you should see it. There are movie stuff to see and collect. there is one more amusment park I recomend.*

*The last park I recomend is Sea World Florda. A park for Sea life. You see dolfins. You also see whales that are lots of fun.*

*I think that you should join other people that visit Florad and have a blast. come and have fun!*

## Score Point 2

### Commentary

In this response, the writer provides a thesis and supports the thesis in the following paragraphs with limited details and examples. Florida offers many amusement parks and three are recommended: Disney world [*sic*], Universul Florda [*sic*], and Sea World Florda [*sic*].

The paragraphs suggesting the three parks note only the minimum attraction of the parks. Disney World has “lots of ride.” [*sic*] Universal Florida contains “movie stuff to see and collect.” Sea World showcases “dolfins [*sic*]” and whales.

This essay provides little support for its thesis, shows little control of organization, and demonstrates a monotonous tone and focus. It also fails to anticipate reader’s concerns. In addition, errors in the conventions of the English language are substantial: misspellings, noun-number errors, and awkward syntax. All of these factors are representative of a 2-point response.

# 1

**Score Point 1****Student Response**

*People should go to Las Vegas to have some fun and make some money*

**Score Point 1****Commentary**

In this response, the writer provides a weak thesis that is related to the writing task: “People should go to Las Vegas to have some fun and make some money.” There are, however, no details or examples given in support of the thesis. With only one sentence, the writer illustrates no control over organization: Because of its brevity, there is nothing to organize. One sentence also does not provide any sentence variety, and the sentence uses limited vocabulary. The paper fails to defend a position and fails to address the reader’s concerns. Overall, this paper is an example of a 1-point response.

# Response to Writing Prompt Scoring Guide

## 4 The essay —

- provides a *meaningful* thesis that is responsive to the writing task.
- *thoroughly* supports the thesis and main ideas with *specific* details and examples.
- demonstrates a consistent tone and focus, and illustrates a *purposeful* control of organization.
- demonstrates a *clear* sense of audience.
- provides a *variety* of sentence types and uses *precise, descriptive* language.
- contains *few, if any, errors* in the conventions\* of the English language. (Errors are generally first-draft in nature.)

### *A Persuasive Composition:*

- states and maintains a position, *authoritatively* defends that position with precise and relevant evidence, and *convincingly* addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

## 3 The essay —

- provides a thesis that is responsive to the writing task.
- supports the thesis and main ideas with details and examples.
- demonstrates a consistent tone and focus; and illustrates a control of organization.
- demonstrates a *general* sense of audience.
- provides a *variety of* sentence types and uses *some descriptive* language.
- may contain *some errors* in the conventions\* of the English language. (Errors do **not** interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay.)

### *A Persuasive Composition:*

- states and maintains a position, *generally* defends that position with precise and relevant evidence, and addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

## 2 The essay —

- provides a thesis or main idea that is related to the writing task.
- supports the thesis or main idea(s) with *limited* details and/or examples.
- demonstrates an *inconsistent* tone and focus; and illustrates *little, if any* control of organization.
- demonstrates *little* or **no** sense of audience.
- provides *few, if any,* types of sentence types, and basic, *predictable* language.
- may contain *several errors* in the conventions\* of the English language. (Errors **may** interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay.)

### *A Persuasive Composition:*

- defends a position with *little* evidence and *may* address the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

## 1 The essay —

- *may* provide a *weak* thesis or main idea that is related to the writing task.
- *fails* to support the thesis or main ideas with details and/or examples.
- demonstrates a *lack of* tone and focus; and illustrates **no** control of organization.
- may demonstrate **no** sense of audience.
- may provide **no** sentence variety and uses *limited* vocabulary.
- may contain *serious errors* in the conventions\* of the English language. (Errors interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay.)

### *A Persuasive Composition:*

- *fails* to defend a position with any evidence and *fails* to address the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

**non-scorable:** The code "NS" will appear on the student answer document for responses that are written in a language other than English, off-topic, illegible, unintelligible, or otherwise non-responsive to the writing task.

\*Conventions of the English language refer to grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and usage.

This guide describes the attributes of student writing at each score point. Each paper receives the score that best fits the overall evidence provided by the student in response to the prompt. However, papers that do not meet the standard for conventions at a 4 or a 3 score point receive a score that is at most one point lower.