

This document contains *Chapter 6: Writing Applications* from the **2008 California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE): English-Language Arts Teacher Guide** published by the California Department of Education. The entire guide is available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/elateacherguide.asp>



Writing Applications

7 questions	18 questions	20 questions	12 questions	15 questions	1 question
Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development	Reading Comprehension	Literary Response and Analysis	Writing Strategies	Written and Oral English Language Conventions	Writing Applications

Students are expected to apply the general strategies of organization, focus, and revision to create specific genres or structures that are sophisticated and complex. Students should be adept at composing narrative, expository, and persuasive types of writing.

In the Classroom

Essays are often assigned, especially in English and social science classes, as a way to find out what a student has learned and, more importantly, how a student uses what he or she has learned. Teachers assign essays to make sure a student can sort through a large body of information, identify what is important or significant, and think critically and analytically about a subject. It is essential to master this skill because over the course of an educational career, students will be asked to demonstrate that they have the communication skills necessary for success in today's competitive world.

Students should be able to write four types of essays that are addressed on the CAHSEE:

- Biographical narratives
- Responses to literature
- Expository compositions
- Persuasive compositions

Each of these types is described in the following table:

Biographical Narratives – Standard 10WA2.1

The purpose of narrative as a type of writing is to present an action or series of actions in such a way that the reader has a sense of being present at that time and in that place. Narrative describes what happened but also may describe how and why it happened. Unlike fictional narrative, historical or biographical narrative must deal with factual events. In a successful narrative, the events are presented in a logical arrangement that makes the writer’s intention clear. Although narration may be an end in itself, it can also be used as evidence in support of other modes of writing such as exposition or persuasion.

Responses to Literature – Standard 10WA2.2

The main goal of responding to literature is to demonstrate a thoughtful comprehension of a literary passage or an expository text. The writer skillfully expresses an idea about a text and supports it with textual evidence. Connections are made between the main idea of the text, the writer’s viewpoint, and the author’s style. The most successful responses to literature or text are supported with textual references and clearly address the ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text. These responses illustrate a clear, comprehensive grasp of the main idea of the text and extend beyond what is present in the text with original ideas and connections.

Expository Compositions – Standard 10WA2.3

The main goal of expository writing is to inform. The writer skillfully produces a thesis and supports it with relevant evidence to provide the reader with knowledge that answers the “who, what, where, why, or how” of a subject. Connections are made between the thesis and primary and secondary sources to support assertions and to enhance the reader’s understanding of the subject. The most successful expository essays provide the reader with new knowledge. Clear and interesting information is shared through a confident and authoritative voice, showing the reader that the writer is knowledgeable about the topic.

Persuasive Compositions – Standard 10WA2.4

The main goal of persuasive writing is to convince. The writer skillfully states and defends a position about a topic and supports it with relevant evidence to provide the reader with a convincing argument. Support is given to each claim to persuade the reader of the validity of the writer’s position on the topic. The most successful persuasive essays provide the reader with convincing evidence. Clear and persuasive support is shared through a confident and authoritative voice, showing the reader that the writer is knowledgeable about the topic.

On the CAHSEE

The CAHSEE contains one Writing Applications prompt. To demonstrate achievement, students must successfully respond to an on-demand writing prompt. The prompt will require a response to either a reading passage or a stand-alone stimulus. The reading response prompt is based on either a literary or an informational passage. Students are asked to analyze the passage and write a text based response. The CAHSEE 4-point Response to Literary/Expository Text Scoring Guide, which is based on the Writing Applications academic content standards, is used to score these questions. This scoring guide is reprinted in Appendix A of this guide.

The stand-alone writing task on the CAHSEE is 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 Writing Prompt Scoring Guide, which is based on the Writing Applications academic content standards, is used to score these questions. This scoring guide is reprinted in Appendix A of this guide.

All student essays written for the CAHSEE are scored by two trained scorers who use the rubric 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 NS (No Score) if they are blank, off-topic, illegible, unintelligible, or written in a language other than English. More information about the scoring process can be found on the CAHSEE Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/scoringprocess.asp>.

The following pages discuss the four academic content standards in Writing Applications. Included are annotated sample student responses for five released CAHSEE writing tasks: a biographical narrative, a response to literature, an expository essay, and one persuasive essay.

<p style="text-align: center;">Writing Applications</p> <p>Standard 10WA2.1 Write biographical narratives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Relate a sequence of events and communicate the significance of the events to the audience. b. Locate scenes and incidents in specific places. c. Describe with concrete sensory details the sights, sounds, and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures, and feelings of the characters; use interior monologue to depict the characters' feelings. d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate changes in time and mood. e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details. 	<p>Throughout your years in school, you have studied about many different people. Think about one of these people you have studied during your time at school. What makes this person special enough to study?</p> <p>Write an essay in which you discuss a person you have studied in school. Explain what it is about this person that is special. Use details and examples to support your ideas.</p>
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Stand-alone writing prompts used to assess this standard require students to write a biographical narrative. Students are not given autobiographical narrative prompts to ensure that questions addressing this standard are consistent with California *Education Code* Section 60614, which prohibits questions that solicit or invite disclosure of a pupil's or his or her parents' or guardians' personal beliefs or practices. Students will not be given a short story prompt because it may be an unfamiliar prompt for many high school students. The student responses to the prompts are scored according to a specific guide developed from the 4-point CAHSEE Scoring Guide for writing prompts, reprinted in Appendix A of this guide.

This writing prompt requires students to identify a person they have studied in school and explain what it is about this person that is special. Four-point responses identify a person and use details to illustrate what makes the person special.

Students are given the following checklist, along with the prompt, to aid them in writing a response. This checklist applies to all writing prompts included in this guide.

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.**
- 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.**

The following pages provide a sample student essay 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, spelling, and capitalization.

4

**Score Point 4
Student Response**

The most interesting person that I have ever studied in history class is Napoleon Bonaparte. He did many great things for the European country France after the French Revolution. He used outstanding military strategies to conquer his enemies. He was also a great leader causing all of his men to be loyal and trustworthy to him. Another quality of Napoleon that made him a special person in history was his ability to control and command other countries once he had conquered them. These qualities alone make Napoleon Bonaparte special enough to study in school.

Napoleon used military strategies that, at that time, Europe had never seen before. He used them to conquer the Austrians at Waterloo and the Prussians at Jena. It was important battles like these that made France one of the most powerful countries in Europe in the 18th Century.

Napoleon's leadership skills were also very helpful to him. His men were always loyal to him because they trusted his decisions. When Napoleon returned from being exiled, (the "Hundred Days"), he was still able to raise an army because he was respected by many men.

Lastly, when Napoleon conquered a country, he did a great job of controlling it. When he conquered Prussia, for example, he cut their territory in half (less power for Prussia). He also did not allow Prussia to raise a large army (this also lessened the power of Prussia).

Those qualities make Napoleon a very special person to study in history. He did many great things for his country and his people. Napoleon Bonaparte is one of the greatest leaders in the history of Europe.

Commentary

In this response the writer addresses the three main elements of a persuasive essay. The writer identifies the problem or issue, states a position or opinion, and thoroughly supports that position utilizing logical arguments and elaborating with specific details and examples.

In the first sentence the writer effectively identifies the issue and states a position by indicating that Napoleon Bonaparte is the most interesting person the writer has studied in history class. The writer then goes on to summarize the arguments that will be presented in the remainder of the essay, stating that Napoleon used outstanding military strategies, was a great leader, and was able to control and command other countries effectively.

In paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 the writer elaborates on these reasons individually by offering specific examples and details that support these arguments. In paragraph 2, for example, the writer names specific battles in which Napoleon's military strategies enabled France to win, making France "one of the most powerful countries in Europe in the 18th Century."

The writer uses a brief but effective transition at the start of paragraph 3 and uses the remainder of the paragraph to support the argument that Napoleon is an interesting person to study due to his leadership skills. The writer then offers specific evidence of these skills by relating Napoleon's ability to raise an army even after returning from exile.

In paragraph 4 the writer elaborates upon the final argument that Napoleon was able to effectively conquer and control foreign countries. The writer thoroughly supports this argument with specific details and examples.

Finally, the author concludes by restating the position and by offering a brief but adequate summary of the argument. The writer's organizational structure is well-designed, and the writer utilizes a variety of sentence patterns and descriptive language. The writer also exhibits a firm command and control of written English conventions.

Overall, the response thoroughly addresses the prompt and is well-organized and thoughtfully developed, and with specific examples, relevant details, and precise and interesting language. The essay is an example of a 4-point response.

3

**Score Point 3
Student Response**

During the course of the years of school you attend, you come in contact with a lot of information about people who have changed the world & who have risked their life for causes they believed in. Martin Luther King was one of these people. He is a very special man because he fought for black people to have rights, but he also fought for peace.

Martin Luther King was an extremely remarkable man. He fought for black people to have rights at a time when many people were very racist against the African Americans. He gave many speeches that influenced many to stand up & fight for their rights. He believed that African Americans should be treated as equally as a white American & that there shouldn't be laws that were based on the color of your skin. To be able to stand up against the common opinion of African Americans, I think you would have to be very courageous and strongly believe in what you were fighting for.

Martin Luther King also fought for peace. He didn't like all the war & the hatred, so he promoted love. He wanted peace everywhere & for people to start loving and stop hating. Some people stopped hating & started loving, but many didn't care to listen because he was black. I think now, many more people have respect for what he was fighting for. The U.S. has a holiday especially reserved for him & for what he fought for during his life - love and peace. I would think you'd have to be very influential on the world to have a holiday reserved for you.

Martin Luther King was an extraordinary man who fought for many things. I don't think African Americans would have the rights today if it wasn't for him. He changed the world's view on Racism & equality. Even though his dream of peace hasn't been fulfilled, it may someday.

Commentary

In this response the writer adequately addresses the three main elements of a persuasive essay. The writer identifies the problem or topic, states a position, and offers supporting arguments that are somewhat developed through specific details and examples.

In the first paragraph the writer effectively introduces the topic by relating that students receive a large amount of information about influential people. The writer then effectively states a position by focusing on Martin Luther King and introduces two main arguments for this choice: that King fought for African-American rights and for peace.

In paragraph 2 the writer elaborates on the argument that King fought for African-American rights. As support, the writer relates that King made many speeches that influence others to stand up for their rights. The writer then goes on to state King's beliefs, but then gets somewhat sidetracked by speculating on King's courage.

In paragraph 3 the writer attempts to elaborate on King's efforts for peace; however, this paragraph is not as well-developed as paragraph 2, and though it basically restates the writer's position that King wanted peace and fought for it, the paragraph does not state specific examples that support the position. The writer then digresses somewhat into speculation on what it takes to have a holiday to honor someone.

Finally, the writer concludes by summarizing the earlier information given about King. The writer does effectively address the prompt and does adequately support the position, but the development of ideas is inconsistent and does not quite indicate the level of thoughtfulness and thoroughness required of a 4-point paper.

Overall, the response is well-organized and the student effectively utilizes a variety of sentence patterns. Though there are some minor errors in the use of conventions, these errors do not significantly detract from the student's presentation of ideas, and the student demonstrates an adequate command of the conventions of written English. The response is an example of a 3-point essay.

2

**Score Point 2
Student Response**

In my years of school, there were many different people that we studied. I've learned alot from my teachers and their minds of thought of the people we studied. Even though, many of the people we studied were alreaded planned, the teachers made them seem alive.

The person that I choose was Oliver Twist. We didn't exactly study about it, but we talked about the society because it worked well with the section we were working on. I choose Oliver because I admired his strength and his will to go on. He wasn't in the best position but he did his best. Also he was very loyal and cared for many. He did want he could in his situation and show a strive for living.

When he got found from the "nicer people", Oliver was so greatful and kind. He knew he was lucky to be him.

In anyway, I admire him on how he saw life. He was at the bottom of the social class but he was still happy with everything. Good things happen to good people.

Commentary

This response attempts to address the prompt and is somewhat organized. However, the writer's introduction does not adequately inform the reader of the problem or issue, and the writer's purpose is therefore unclear. The paragraph is not organized around a central theme and seems to focus more on teachers than on the people the writer studied.

Though the writer states a position in the first sentence of paragraph 2, the position is unclear and dependent upon the readers' knowledge of the prompt. The writer then attempts in the remainder of the essay to support the choice of Oliver Twist, but the writer offers only vague details and opinions.

The writer utilizes only simple sentence patterns and basic language. The writer's modest support is wholly dependent on the reader having knowledge of the subject, and the writer's conclusion does not adequately reflect the essay's content. The writer makes frequent errors on the use of conventions that do occasionally detract from the presentation of ideas. Overall, this response is consistent with a 2-point score.

1

**Score Point 1
Student Response**

The Write brothers are very important people in history because they allowed us to do things that we do today. They invented the airplane. Without them we wouldn't have airlines or privit airptns. Without them we wouldn't have anything to do with flight. As you can see the Write brothers are very important people in history.

Commentary

In this extremely short, one-paragraph response, the writer attempts to address the prompt, but does so in such a vague manner that the reader is unable to determine the writer's purpose without prior knowledge of the prompt.

The writer attempts to support the choice of the Wright brothers, but this support is very superficial and vague and, given the lack of an introduction, it is very ineffective. The writer provides no specific examples or details and does not elaborate upon or explain the sole argument (that there would be no airplanes or flight without the Wright brothers). The concluding sentence is simply a restatement of the vague introductory sentence.

The response lacks organization, utilizes simple sentence patterns and basic language, and lacks elaboration. The writer makes frequent errors in conventions and grammar that contribute to the ineffectiveness of the response.

Overall, this response is extremely vague and does not indicate any level of thoughtfulness on the part of the student. These problems place this response in the 1-point score range.

<p style="text-align: center;">Writing Applications</p> <p>Standard 10WA2.2 Write responses to literature.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of the significant ideas of literary works. b. Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text or to other works. c. Demonstrate awareness of the author’s use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created. d. Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text. 	<p>In the story “The Hiking Trip,” the reader learns about the main character, Jeff. Jeff’s personality and emotions are revealed through the actions and dialog presented in the story.</p> <p>Write an essay in which you describe the personality and emotions of Jeff, the main character. How do his personal characteristics add to the events in the story? How does the author reveal this information about Jeff in the story? Use details and examples from the story to support your ideas.</p>
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The writing prompts used to assess this standard are passage-based. Literary or informational passages may be used as the basis for the questions, and each prompt directs students to use information from the passage in the response. The student responses to the prompts are scored according to a specific guide developed from the 4-point CAHSEE Scoring Guide for responses to literary or expository text, reprinted in Appendix A of this guide.

Questions addressing this standard are consistent with California *Education Code* Section 60614, which prohibits questions that solicit or invite disclosure of a pupil’s or his or her parents’ or guardians’ personal beliefs or practices.

This prompt is based on the passage “The Hiking Trip,” which is reproduced on pages 94 and 95 in Appendix B of this guide. The prompt is related to two of the Literary Response and Analysis standards: 10RL3.4, which requires students to analyze the text to determine what a character is like, and 10RL3.3, which requires students to understand how character affects the plot. Accurate and complete responses illustrate a thorough grasp of the text and summarize Jeff’s personality and emotions, with use of specific evidence from the text. Four-point responses also describe the ways that Jeff’s character affects the events of the story, incorporating specific references to the text.

Students are given the following checklist, along with the prompt, to aid them in writing a response.

Checklist for Your Writing

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

- Carefully read the passage and the description of the task.
- Organize your writing with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Use specific details and examples from the passage to demonstrate your understanding of the main ideas and the author’s purpose.
- Use precise language that is 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.

The following pages provide a sample student essay 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, spelling, and capitalization.

4

Score Point 4
Student Response

In the story "The Hiking Trip" Jeff had to hike down a canyon and go get help for his brother Mark. Jeff is courageous and loving, and his true character is revealed by his actions.

The author gradually reveals Jeff's bravery through his actions and his decision to save Mark. At first, Jeff is afraid of hiking down the canyon alone. The father tells Jeff to have courage and Jeff exclaims that he doesn't want it. The father also tells Jeff to have enough love for his brother to save him. Even though he is afraid and doesn't want to hike down the canyon, Jeff does it anyways. He does it to try to save his brother. This point in the story shows Jeff's love for his brother and his determination to save him.

This is the turning point in the story. If Jeff had not made the decision to hike down the canyon alone the outcome of the story may be entirely different. Jeff's bravery, love, and perserverance played an enormous role in this story. Without them he may have never tried or been able to save Mark.

This story shows how someone can overcome their own fears to help others. Jeff was an example of unselfishness, bravery, and courage. His character traits caused him to do what was right and they (his character traits) may have been the deciding point of his action and later on the outcomes of his story.

Commentary

In this response, the writer addresses all parts of the writing task, which include describing Jeff's personality and emotions, identifying the way the author reveals Jeff's personality, and relating Jeff's personality to the plot. The response also illustrates a comprehensive grasp of the text.

The first paragraph of the response summarizes the main action of the story and states the thesis that Jeff is courageous and loving and that his "true character is revealed by his actions."

Next, the writer gives more detail about the main action of the story, using evidence from the text to show how Jeff's actions reveal his courage and love. Specific references to the text are included (e.g., "the father also tells Jeff to have enough love for his brother to save him").

In the third paragraph the writer focuses on the relationship between Jeff's personality and the plot, identifying the turning point in the story as Jeff's decision to go for help alone and tying this decision to Jeff's love and determination: "Without them he may have never tried or been able to save Mark."

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

3

Score Point 3
Student Response

To understand who Jeff is, you have to realize what he has to go through in the story. In the beginning, Jeff is afraid to hike and doesn't want to have the courage to climb the mountain. After Jeff's dad says, "If not courage, fine. Then have enough love for your brother," Jeff realizes that he has to do it to save his brother's life. He becomes determined to find help. He thinks about how badly his brother needs medical attention.

Jeff becomes so determined to get help, he begins to climb faster and faster until he passes up his dad. He says to himself "Can't stop, Mark's in big trouble." This shows how his love for his brother has substituted for the courage that he did want to have. Do you think that his love for his brother gives him the courage or the will to climb the mountain and get help for Mark.

Hours later after Mark is rescued, Jeff wakes up but doesn't know what had happened. His father tells him that he's a hero and that he saved his brother's life. He had pushed himself to the limits trying to get help for Mark. His love for Mark had given him the will, the determination, and the courage to get over his fear and climb the mountain for help.

Commentary

In this response, the writer explicitly or implicitly addresses all parts of the writing task and shows a good grasp of the text.

The first paragraph of the response summarizes the main action of the story and suggests the thesis that is later expressed in the final paragraph—that Jeff has determination, courage, and love. The second paragraph summarizes events in the story to show that the author uses the events to reveal Jeff's character, although this connection is not explicitly stated. The final paragraph sums up Jeff's role in the plot: "His father tells him that he's a hero and that he saved his brother's life." Again, this relationship is not explicitly stated.

The response represents a 3-point paper because it addresses all parts of the writing task and shows a good grasp of the story. Also, it makes specific references to the text (e.g., "Can't stop, Mark's in big trouble"). However, it lacks the purposeful control of organization and explicit statement of ideas that characterize a 4-point paper. The observations about Jeff's personality are structured by the story line rather than directed by the writer. The paper also illustrates an inconsistent sense of audience, as shown by the direct address to the reader in the first and second paragraphs.

There are only a few errors in the conventions of written English within this response, but they do not interfere with the meaning. Overall, this essay is a sample of a 3-point response.

2

**Score Point 2
Student Response**

Jeff, the main character shows much of his personality and emotions. He is an understanding and motivating person. He knows what strength he has but he doesn't know how to use it. Although Jeff has many fears and knows he must overcome them to save his brother. His father knows his sons power, but its Jeff who doesn't realize his own. Jeff doesn't have self confidence of self will. His emotions in the story change. He starts off as a boy who doesn't believe in himself, to a boy who's emotions completely change under the circumstances. He must save his brother in order know if he really has inner power inside of him. This was the test. His personal characteristics add to the event of the story by making it more intense. The more intense the better the story. He adds problem to the story line and a resolution He doubts his own strength but he ends up winning.

Commentary

In this response, the writer addresses some parts of the writing task and demonstrates a limited understanding of the main elements of the story. The response begins with three very general statements about Jeff's personality. Then the writer begins to focus on a potential thesis that could be supported by textual evidence: "Although Jeff has many fears and knows he must overcome them to save his brother." This statement also shows the writer's grasp of important ideas within the text. As the response continues, the statement that Jeff must overcome his fears receives additional development with the assertion that Jeff's emotions "completely change under the circumstances." However, these ideas receive no additional development through the use of textual evidence.

The final sentences of the response begin to address the relationship between Jeff's personality and the plot: "His personal characteristics add to the event of the story by making it more intense." One of these sentences uses the vocabulary of plot analysis ("He adds problem to the story line and a resolution") but provides little actual analysis.

The lack of a clear thesis statement and the failure to develop ideas by using evidence from the text are characteristic of a 2-point paper. The response also fails to demonstrate a purposeful control over organization. There is some variety in sentence structure, but there are several errors in the conventions of written English. Overall, this essay is an example of a 2-point response.

1

**Score Point 1
Student Response**

This story tells about a boy who has doesn't want to go on a trip with his father and learn more about hiking but then, when he gets their he realizes the important thing that is about hiking. His father was really understanding and motovating, one of the things Jeff new it was important to learn hiking was for what happened to his father the accident he had, he knew it was important cause he know what to do during an accident.

Commentary

This response begins to address the writing task in its opening statement: "This story tells about a boy who has doesn't want to go on a trip with his father." However, there is little understanding of the main elements of the story; the response continues by implying that the primary issue is the value of hiking and that Jeff's father (not his brother) has had an accident.

The failure to demonstrate a grasp of the text, the lack of a main idea, the failure to develop ideas using evidence from the text, and the serious errors in the conventions of written English make this a 1-point response.

Writing Applications

Standard **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. Anticipate and address readers' potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.**
- e. Use technical terms and notations accurately.**

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.

Stand-alone writing prompts are used to assess this standard. Questions are consistent with California *Education Code* Section 60614, which prohibits questions that solicit or invite disclosure of a pupil's or his or her parents' or guardians' personal beliefs or practices. The student responses to the prompts are scored according to a specific guide developed from the 4-point CAHSEE Scoring Guide for writing prompts, reprinted in Appendix A of this guide.

The sample writing prompt requires students to identify and discuss a moment in history. Four-point responses identify a historical moment, establish a thesis about the importance of that moment to the world today, and support the thesis with specific evidence, including facts and ideas. Four-point responses also address readers' potential misunderstandings, bias, and expectations.

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.

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 the world today. The writer provides a meaningful thesis that suggests that the events that took place during the Industrial Revolution have influenced our world today. This statement is followed with purposefully organized support to illustrate just why this period in history was so influential.

In the second paragraph, the writer discusses how the steam engine positively affected the growth of cities and how factories grew in the cities.

An additional 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 show how the existence of factories helped create unions, causing a “change in social structure.”

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 written English within this response, and 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 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.

Today's space missions can be traced directly to the success of the moon landing. 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.

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 the third paragraph, the writer suggests that other countries respect the United States for having sent men to walk 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 of 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 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 written English, but they do not interfere with the reader's understanding. Overall, this essay is a sample of a 3-point response.

2

**Score Point 2
Student Response**

A moment in 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 electrocuted 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

Commentary

In this response to the writing prompt, the writer discusses Ben Franklin's discovery in a very limited manner. No explanation is provided about the event itself. The writer provides only a 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 short paragraph.

There is little variety at the sentence level, and there are several errors in the conventions of written English. The overall word choice and lack of development illustrate a limited sense of audience. This essay exemplifies the criteria for 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 about whats going on In this world.

Commentary

In this response to the writing prompt, 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 with 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.

- Writing Applications**
- Standard **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.**

Some students at your school have 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.

Stand-alone writing prompts are used to assess this standard. The student responses to these prompts are scored according to a specific guide developed from the 4-point CAHSEE Scoring Guide for writing prompts, reprinted in Appendix A of this guide.

The prompts addressing this standard are consistent with California *Education Code* Section 60614, which prohibits items that solicit or invite disclosure of a pupil's or his or her parents' or guardians' personal beliefs or practices.

This prompt asks students to state and defend a position with regard to the importance of getting rid of trash at school. Many successful papers also discuss ways to reduce the amount of trash, but the main focus of the prompt should be reasons that getting rid of trash is desirable. Four-point papers develop a persuasive essay as described in standard 10WA2.4 above, using relevant evidence and anticipating readers' concerns and counterclaims.

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 slob 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.

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 very 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 aspects 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 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 enjoyable 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.

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 the reader’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.

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.

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 follows, 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.