6 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**

On the CAHSEE, you will be expected to write one essay. The writing task for the essay will require you to do any one of the following types of writing:

- Biographical narrative
- Response to literature
- Expository essay
- Persuasive essay
- Business letter

The CAHSEE will test your knowledge of 5 Writing Applications Standards. They are:

10WA2.1 Write biographical narratives:
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.

10WA2.2 Write responses to literature:
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.

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.

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.

10WA2.5 Write business letters:
a. Provide clear and purposeful information and address the intended audience appropriately.
b. Use appropriate vocabulary, tone, and style to take into account the nature of the relationship with, and the knowledge and interests of, the recipients.
c. Highlight central ideas or images.
d. Follow a conventional style with page formats, fonts, and spacing that contribute to the documents' readability and impact.

In this section, different types of writing are discussed and illustrated. They include writing tasks and sample student responses from previous CAHSEEs. You should practice these writing types often. You probably are writing in school, but another useful activity is to keep a journal and write about people you know (biographical narrative), things you have learned (expository essay), or opinions you have on any subject (persuasive essay).

BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAYS

When you write a biographical narrative, you are writing about a real person who is important to you. You will want the reader to know why this person is important to you and why you feel about this person the way you do. One way to do this is to tell stories or anecdotes about this person.

You could start by making a chart. The chart might have two columns—one for a list of adjectives that describe the person, for example, with a list of traits that you admire and the other for a list of stories (anecdotes or examples) that demonstrate or explain how or why you feel that way. The chart below shows some notes the author made before writing about her dad. In the first column, she put the words *intelligent, loving,* and *funny.* In the second column she wrote a few notes about some stories that she thinks will show different ways in which her dad was intelligent, loving, and funny. When she is ready to write, she can focus on just one of these, or two, or all three. If the time to write is limited, she might just choose to tell the stories about how intelligent he is and how much she respects, admires, and even envies his intelligence.

My Dad

Trait	*Story*
Intelligent	*Story about when he was in elem. School.* *Able to read and remember, photo mind* *Knowledgeable about everything*
Loving	*Would do anything for me and mom* *Left little notes in crazy places for mom when he went on trips*
Funny and fun-loving	*Great story teller* *Told shaggy dog stories* *Liked to play games (not sports)* *The ultimate Dodger fan*

In your essay, you will want to include something from each item on the following list, which is from the California content standards:

- Explain why this person is important to you and give examples.
- Be specific. Don't just say the person is interesting. Let your reader *see the person*. Show the person doing something interesting.
- Include sensory details: sights, sounds, and smells.
- Decide how much time to spend on each part of your story so that you are able to include everything you want to say.
- Make sure the reader can see this person. What does she look like? What does he do?

Now you pick someone, make a chart, and write your biographical narrative. When you finish, ask a teacher or someone else to read it and comment on it for you.

RESPONSES TO LITERATURE

Before you can "respond to literature," you have to read something. The California content standards for writing responses to literature require that you are able to:

- ***Demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of the significant ideas of literary works.*** What are the main ideas? What is the author saying? Why (or why not) is what the author is saying important?
- ***Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text or to other works.*** How do you know what the author's ideas are? Can you quote from the text to prove what you say?
- ***Demonstrate awareness of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created.*** Does the author use figurative language? Give an example. Does the author use symbolism? How is the symbolism used? Does the author use words that help you to see, smell, taste, hear, or feel the setting or scene? Does the author use words that make you angry or sad or excited or scared?
- ***Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.*** This one sounds complicated, doesn't it? But don't worry. The best writers usually say something that makes you think, makes you question, makes you wonder. Just go with it. Ask the questions. Try to figure it out. Don't look for a *right* answer—there may not be a right answer. It's all right to talk about and write about the things that confuse you.

In the pages that follow, you will read a passage (literature), and write an essay (response) based on that passage.

Let's examine a prompt that appeared on the CAHSEE during a previous administration. First you will need to read the story "The Hiking Trip."

The Hiking Trip

"I never wanted to come on this stupid old hiking trip anyway!" His voice echoed, shrill and panicked, across the narrow canyon. His father stopped, chest heaving with the effort of the climb, and turned to look at the boy.

"This is hard on you, son, I know. But you've got to come through with courage and a level head."

"But I'm scared! I don't even want to have courage!" he retorted. He jerked his head the other way and wiped his eyes across his arm.

"If not courage, fine," his father replied sternly. "Then have enough love for your brother to think this through!" He pulled a bandana from his back pocket and tied it around his neck. Then he gently placed his hand on the boy's shoulder and continued, more softly this time. "Now, I don't know if I can make it without stopping every so often. And we just don't have the time to stop. You're young, but you're strong and fast. Do you remember the way back from here to the road, if you had to go alone?"

Jeff flashed back to the agonizing scene of his seventeen-year-old brother at their campsite that morning. He'd been bitten by a snake yesterday during a rough hike through very rocky terrain. By the time they returned to their tents, he was limping badly. Then this morning he couldn't put on his boots, and the pain seemed to be getting worse. He needed medical attention right away, so leaving him there was their only choice.

"Jeffrey? Jeffrey, could you do it? Could you make it to the road without me if you had to?"

Jeff blinked and looked past his father's eyes to the end of the canyon, several miles away. He nodded slowly as the path and the plan began to take hold in his mind. "What was the name of that little town we stopped in to get matches, Dad?"

His father smiled and replied, "Flint. After we left Flint, we parked at the side of the road a few miles out of town. When you see which way our car is facing, you'll know that the town is back the other direction." Jeff thought about this and then nodded. They both drank water and then continued scrambling over the rocks.

Nothing was as pretty as it had seemed when they first hiked this way to their

campsite. Before, the boulders and rocks had been an interesting challenge. Now, they were obstacles that threatened their footing and their velocity. Overhanging limbs had earlier been natural curiosities in the cliffs. But now they were nature's weapons, slapping and scratching the boy and the man who crashed by and pushed through as quickly as they could.

Stone by stone, they made their way up the canyon. Jeff's father grew smaller and smaller in the distance. "He must be stopping a lot," Jeff thought. He waved to him from a bend in the canyon wall. His father waved back. Jeff turned and made the final ascent up an easier slope toward the road and spotted his father's car. He lurched toward it, half stumbling, and leaned on the hood, breathless.

"Can't stop," he thought. "Mark's in big trouble. Gotta keep going." The fast, loud thudding in his ears was deafening, and as he pulled himself upright, he was surprised as a car sped by, heading toward Flint. "Hey, mister!" he shouted, waving both arms. He began to walk, faster and faster until he was jogging. Then he quickly crossed the highway and broke into a full-speed run, holding his left arm straight out, his thumb up.

His chest was burning with every breath when he suddenly heard several loud honks from behind. He turned as the brakes squealed and saw "Bob's Towing & Repair, Flint" right behind him. "Jump in, boy! What's up?" Jeff explained between gasps as the truck picked up speed. The driver reached for his two-way radio as soon as he heard about Mark. "Better get the helicopter in there," he seemed to be shouting into his hand. But Jeff wasn't sure about that because everything got fuzzy and then went black and quiet.

Hours later, Jeff opened his eyes to find strange surroundings and his father on a chair nearby.

"You're a hero, son," his father said with a smile. "You saved Mark."

"What happened?" Jeff asked through a wide yawn. "Where are we?"

"This is a motel room in Flint. You made it into town and sent the helicopter into the canyon after Mark. I can't tell you how happy I was when I saw it overhead. I'm so proud of you!"

Jeff sat up suddenly. "Where's Mark? Is he OK?"

"They airlifted him out and got him to the hospital. His leg's still in bad shape, but he's going to be just fine in a couple of days. Thanks to you, son."

Jeff's worried face relaxed as his father spoke. "How about you, Dad? How did you get out?"

"Well, I finally hiked myself out of that canyon and to the road. I won't be going back there any time soon. That's for sure. Anyway, I couldn't see the car, and as I headed for Flint I got lucky and was able to hitch a ride from a fellow named Bob in a tow truck."

Jeff laughed out loud. "I guess Bob makes a good living going up and down that road. I hope you gave him a good tip, Dad!"

Sample CAHSEE question
Writing Task

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 dialogue presented in the story.

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.

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.

(10WA2.2)

Make sure you know exactly what the prompt asks you to do. Does it ask you to summarize the story? No, it doesn't. The prompt asks you to write about Jeff's personality and emotions. How would you describe his personality? What were his emotions? What in the story tells you this? If you make a simple grid, you can organize your thoughts before you begin to write.

Jeff's personality/emotions	*Evidence from the story*
Courageous	*At the beginning, he didn't think he was courageous.* *Didn't want to be.* *Went on alone.* *"You're a hero, son."*
Loving	*Did it for his brother* *"Mark's in big trouble. Gotta keep going."*
Determined	*Kept going* *"His chest was burning."*

With this simple grid, you can focus on what you write about Jeff, not on retelling the story.

Now look at a sample student essay, one that earned a score of 3 (out of 4) on the CAHSEE. The Writing Applications Strands section contains a student essay for each possible score point.

Student Essay

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 brothers 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

The writer addressed all parts of the writing task. He described Jeff's personality and emotions, quoted from the text, and showed how his personality and emotions added to the events of the story. (He did forget to mention the name of the story. When you write your response to literature, don't forget to include the title of the piece!)

What could the writer have done to make this essay even better? This paper did not receive a 4 because of its chronological arrangement; the paper summarizes the story instead of focusing on the main character, Jeff. Although the second and third paragraphs implicitly, indirectly, give evidence of Jeff's character, the scorers felt that this should be more explicit, more direct.

The writer also forgot his audience. In the first sentence, he directs his words to "you." He does it again in the second paragraph. "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?" I am writing this study guide to you, so I refer to you in practically every paragraph because I want you to pass the CAHSEE. Who is the audience for this piece on "The Hiking Trip"?

One more tip. Strong beginnings can signify strong papers. Try starting with dialogue or a description, something that grabs the reader right away. Do we really care "who Jeff is" with this beginning? These sentences, quoted from the story, might make a good beginning. "Jeffrey, could you do it? Could you make it to the road without me if you had to?"

EXPOSITION

Expository essays: Exposition is a type of writing that explains, gives information, or clarifies an idea. This is the most common type of writing in school and in life. When your teachers ask you to write a report or a research paper or a summary, they are asking you to write exposition. Exposition is also used as a part of other types of writing. For example, in writing a story, you may be writing exposition to set up the plot, the characters, and their conflicts. Exposition is most often nonfiction, meaning that it deals with real people, things, events, and places. According to the California content standards for expository writing, you should know how to do these things:

- Gather evidence in support of your subject.
- Use primary (first-hand) sources and secondary sources (newspapers) accurately.
- Distinguish between information and the significance of the data.
- Know how to use and include visual aids—charts, maps, graphs, technology.
- Be aware of your audience, anticipating misunderstandings.
- Use subject-specific terms accurately.

Let's examine a prompt that appeared on the CAHSEE.

L0000064

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:

- ❏ Read the description of the task carefully.
- ❏ Use specific details and examples to fully support your ideas.
- ❏ Organize your writing with a strong introduction, body, and conclusion.
- ❏ Choose specific 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, and sentence formation.

(10WA2.3)

What do the writers of the prompt ask you to do first? They ask you to think about a time in history that you have studied, to think about why that time in history was important. Then they ask you to write about that time in history, telling why it is important in today's world, and to support what you say with details and examples.
So how many things do you have to do?

An organizational chart can organize your thoughts.

- ❑ **Divide your paper into three columns.**
- ❑ **In the first column, describe the event or events. (You may want to list two or three to see which one you know the most about. You should pick a topic that you know something about so that you have something to say. It could be something you have just studied in school or something that has just happened in current events.)**
- ❑ **In the second column, write some notes about what the world was like before the event.**
- ❑ **In the third column, write about how this event has changed the world or why it is still important in today's world. In this column you need to list many examples to prove the event's importance. If you can't think of enough examples, you should choose another event.**
- ❑ **When your chart is complete, you are ready to write.**

Again, a reminder that the writing itself is what's important here. You are not being asked to show what you know about history. If you are hazy about details, admit that in the writing.

Event/description	*World before/at time of event*	*Why important in today's world*
Man on moon	*Unsuccessful attempts*	*Americans can do anything they want* *Americans are great* *Gave Americans courage* *Gave Americans respect*
Invention of auto	*Horse-drawn carriages* *Rode horseback* *Walked* *Took forever to travel* *People did not travel* *Uncomfortable* *Trains didn't go everywhere*	*People can live farther from their workplace* *Created an urban/sub-urban society* *Highways, maps, freeways, toll roads, high speeds* *Comfortable* *Independence*

Following is a released student essay, one that earned a score of 3 (out of 4) on the CAHSEE. The writer chose "man setting foot on the moon" as the event. He does not know much about this event.

Student Essay

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.

Commentary

Notice that this writer has written an introduction that makes it clear he is going to write about the moment in history when "man set foot on the moon." His reason is that this "amazing achievement showed Americans they can do anything they want." It also showed other countries what a great country the U.S. is. Consider what this writer might have done to make his introduction more interesting. Perhaps he could have started with a description of that moment when Neil Armstrong "set foot on the moon" and the words he said that have gone down in history.

In the second paragraph he says the day was "exciting" and "amazing." He says that this moment "gave them [Americans] courage to strive for their goals and achieve them."

The writer tells us in the third paragraph that because of this moment, other countries gained respect for America. He concludes, "... it was... one of the most important days in history."

If you want to practice, write an expository essay to this prompt. Choose a period of history you know well, and recall all the things you have learned about writing expository essays. Ask a teacher to read it and comment on it for you. Expository essays will be scored using the same rubric as biographical narratives. If you would like to read a sample student essay for each other score point you can go to http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/.

PERSUASIVE ESSAYS

When you turn the page in your test booklet to the writing prompt, it won't be labeled as a persuasive essay, but you will know if you are being asked to write a persuasive essay by reading the description of the task carefully. Persuasive essays ask you to defend a position or issue you support. An issue is something about which people disagree.

As you prepare to write, you will need to take a stand on the issue the prompt provides. Do you agree or disagree? Decide and then make two columns. In one column, list all the reasons why you support your position, why you believe as you do. Try to come up with at least three reasons. In the other column list all the reasons why an opponent might disagree with you. These are counter-arguments. Try again for at least three. Consider this kind of writing as a debate on paper.

You are almost ready to write. When you write your arguments, you want the two most powerful points to be first and last.

Place a star by those arguments. Now you are ready to write.
In order to meet the California content standards, your persuasive essay will need to do the following:

- Have a logical structure. Put your most powerful arguments first and last.
- Appeal to the reader's logic or emotions.
- Tell a personal story or someone else's story or make a comparison. This may be a good way to start.
- Use fact, expert opinions, or both to clarify your position. You want to demonstrate that this is not merely your opinion but an opinion that other thoughtful individuals share.
- Address the reader's concerns and arguments. Use your list of counter-arguments to help you do this.

In an effective persuasive essay, the writer's opinion is clear. Check that your opinion and reasoning are clear and understandable. You might also want to consider using a hook to involve readers immediately—a meaningful quote, an interesting anecdote, a puzzling question, or a dramatic statistic—or several of these combined. Finally, don't forget to include the arguments of those who disagree with you—then, explain why your arguments are stronger.

Let's examine a prompt that previously appeared on the CAHSEE.

L000060

Sample CAHSEE question

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:

- ❏ 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.

(10WA2.4)

Following is a sample student essay, one that earned a score of 3 (out of 4) on the CAHSEE.

Student Essay

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.

Commentary

When you read the first paragraph of this essay, you know immediately that the writer wants everyone to help keep the school environment attractive, and in the following paragraphs, the writer gives reasons why: to present an appropriate learning environment; to make the school a more enjoyable place. The writer ends with "It would be easy if everyone just did their part."

The writer has met the basic demands of persuasive writing. The writer has an introduction, body, and conclusion; the writer has stated a clear position; the writer has used a variety of sentence structures; the writer has addressed the reader's concerns.

What could the writer have done to make this piece more interesting to the reader? What would you advise? How about beginning with a great description of a dirty campus (or a clean one)? How about some anecdotes, little stories that describe what students who care can do? What about some dialogue between two students about the state of the campus? When a writer adds these kinds of dramatic examples, the writing becomes more powerful.

Why don't you try writing your own essay on this topic for practice? Read the prompt again, and write a persuasive essay in which you convince your readers of the importance of getting rid of the trash on your school grounds and making your school more attractive. Persuasive essays will be scored using the rubric for these essays which you will find on page 117.

BUSINESS LETTERS

When writing business letters, your purpose may be to inform, to suggest, to complain, to argue, to persuade, or to commend. Sometimes a business letter is an expository piece of writing about buying a product that didn't work: You explain how the product was defective and demand your money back. A business letter might also be a persuasive piece of writing: Students deserve clean school restrooms, but your school's restrooms are a mess. You write a letter to the Board of Education to persuade the Board to take action on this problem. A business letter might be a biographical piece of writing: If you are asked to write a letter of recommendation, you will have to describe the person you are recommending and tell how he or she would be perfect for the job.

According to the California content standards, you should be able to:

- Read the prompt carefully. What does the prompt ask you to do? Begin with a salutation, "Dear _____" or "To Whom It May Concern:" Sign your name at the end of your business letter.
- Remember your audience, the person who will be receiving the letter, and use language that the person will appreciate and pay attention to. Don't use slang when addressing the Board of Education, for example. On the other hand, you might use some slang if you're requesting a free CD from your favorite musician's record company.
- Keep the letter short and to the point. Make your central ideas clear.
- Remember that if you want to make a good impression, you will need to pay attention to format and spacing as well as spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Look at the practice persuasive essay you wrote about picking up trash on the school grounds. Can you turn that essay into a letter? Of course you can. Who would be your audience? The students at your high school—the same audience you had when you wrote for the school newspaper. It shouldn't take much effort to take those ideas and put them in the form of a business letter. Try it.

[Note: No sample student essays have been released for business letters.]

So there you have it. You have finished this study guide that was written just for you. We hope it will help you pass the California High School Exit Exam. If you still have questions, your teachers can help you. Perhaps your parents or guardians can help as well. Everyone wants you to succeed. Just remember to read carefully, reread when you have questions, and use logic and common sense. Don't forget to use the "practice test" in this Study Guide as you prepare for the real thing.

Every chance you get, read and write for your own enjoyment. Talk to others about the books you read. Keep a journal. This isn't only about succeeding on a test or in your English class. This is about enriching your life!

California High School Exit Examination

SCORING GUIDE

Response to Literary/Expository Text

4 The response—

- demonstrates a *thoughtful,* comprehensive grasp of the text.
- accurately and coherently provides *specific* textual details and examples to support the thesis and main ideas.
- demonstrates a *clear* understanding of the ambiguities, nuances, and complexities of the text.
- 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.)

Response to informational passages:

- *thoughtfully* anticipates and addresses the reader's potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

Response to literary passages:

- clearly demonstrates an awareness of the author's use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

3 The response—

- demonstrates a comprehensive grasp of the text.
- accurately and coherently provides *general* textual details and examples to support the thesis and main ideas.
- demonstrates a *general* understanding of the ambiguities, nuances, and complexities of the text.
- 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.)

Response to informational passages:

- anticipates and addresses the reader's potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

Response to literary passages:

- demonstrates an awareness of the author's use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

2 The response—

- demonstrates a *limited* grasp of the text.
- provides few, *if any,* textual details and examples to support the thesis and main ideas.
- demonstrates *limited, or no* understanding of the ambiguities, nuances, and complexities of the text.
- provides *few, if any,* types of sentences and uses *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.)

Response to informational passages:

- *may* address the reader's potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations, but in a limited manner.

Response to literary passages:

- *may* demonstrate an awareness of the author's use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

1 The response—

- demonstrates *minimal* grasp of the text.
- may provide ***no*** textual details and examples to support the thesis and main ideas.
- may demonstrate ***no*** understanding of the ambiguities, nuances, and complexities of the text.
- 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.)

Response to informational passages:

- does ***not*** address the reader's potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

Response to literary passages:

- does ***not*** demonstrate awareness of the author's use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

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.

California High School Exit Examination

SCORING GUIDE

Response to Writing Prompt

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.