



FORMATIVE WRITING ASSESSMENT

Department of Literacy
Instruction & Interventions
Office of Academics

Grade 11

Text-Based Writing Prompts:

Administration and Scoring Guidelines

Teacher Directions:

Students will read a stimulus about a single topic. A stimulus consists of several texts written on a single topic. The stimulus may include informational or literary fiction or nonfiction texts and can cover a wide array of topics. After reading the stimulus, the students will respond to a writing prompt in which they will provide information on a topic, develop a narrative, or take a stance to support an opinion or argument. Students will be required to synthesize information from the text sets and must cite specific evidence from the texts to support their ideas. Students' informative/explanatory responses should demonstrate a developed and supported controlling idea. Students' opinion/argumentative responses should support an opinion/argument using ideas presented in the stimulus. Students will have 90 minutes to read the passages, and plan, write, revise and edit their essay. **Students should read the prompt first.** They should be encouraged to highlight, underline, and take notes to support the planning process.

Scoring:

The attached text-based rubric should be used to score student responses. While the total possible points on the rubric is ten, it is recommended that three individual scores be given—one score for each of the three domains on the rubric. This will allow the teacher to determine specific areas of need within individual student responses, thus allowing for differentiation in the writing instruction that follows these formative writing tasks. The three domains are: Purpose, Focus, Organization (PFO), Evidence and Elaboration (EE), and Conventions of Standard English (CSE). Teachers should score **holistically** within each domain—PFO (4-points), EE (4-points), and CSE (2-points).

Each level of scoring within a domain is based on the overarching statement for the score found in the rubric. For example, on the grades 6-11 rubric for argumentation, the overarching statement for a score of 4 in the Purpose, Focus, Organization domain is, "The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness." The bulleted points that follow the statement must be considered as factors in the scoring, but should not be utilized as a checklist. Most, but not all, of the bulleted points will be evident in the student writing for a score at a specific level.

Teachers should keep in mind that a score of 3 on the rubric for a domain signals student proficiency in the addressed writing standard with a score of 4 representing mastery. In the CSE domain, a score of two represents student proficiency in the standard.

Eleventh Grade: Argumentative Prompt #2

Write an essay that explains why you agree or disagree with requiring students to perform community service learning before graduating. Remember to cite textual evidence in your response.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages
- Plan your essay
- Write your essay
- Revise and edit your essay

Be sure to:

- Include a claim
- Address counterclaims
- Use evidence from multiple sources
- Avoid overly relying on one source

Your written response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph essay. Remember to spend time reading, planning, writing, revising, and editing.

Volunteering to Graduate: Do We Need More Requirements?

by Miriam Dodge

The following editorial about adding community service to graduation requirements was written by one student for her school newspaper.

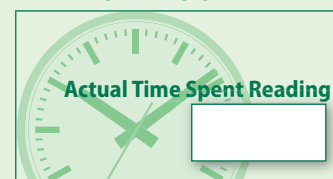
The query posed in the title above may sound like a rhetorical question, but the issue of required volunteer hours for high school students has become a much-debated topic. A number of American high schools have made the completion of a certain number of community service hours a requirement for graduating.

Those who support the requirement do so with good reason. Participating in volunteer work can help students in many ways. It requires them to schedule their time and learn how to juggle responsibilities. The ability to multitask is a skill that they will need
10 in both work and college environments. Students learn the value of responsibility and discipline, as well as the value of giving back to their community. Students who participate in community service tend to graduate at a higher rate than students who do not engage in such activity.

Not all students—or parents—support this mandate as an additional criterion to required coursework. For one thing, making a selfless act a requirement for graduating negates the spirit of volunteerism itself. If a student gives only to get in return, that does not teach him or her the true value of donating time. The student will not
20 feel the reward of having spent time charitably, and may not be inclined to volunteer in the future. Having an added requirement for graduating turns an already stressful year, a year full of college applications, final exams, GPA tallies, after-school jobs, extracurricular activities, and goodbyes to classmates into a mad rush of meeting deadlines. Finally, enforced community service is a form of penance for those who have committed a punishable crime—should the same service be asked of high school students?

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Am I on Track?



ANCHOR TEXT

Pro/Con: should student service learning hours be mandatory for high school graduation?

by Claire Koenig, Print Managing Op/Ed Editor and
Simrin Gupta, Print Managing Entertainment Editor, *Silver Chips Online*

March 10, 2011

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Simrin Gupta says yes: The SSL hour requirement benefits the community and encourages responsibility.

Picking up trash might not be the average teenager's idea of a fun weekend activity. But as students complete their Student Service Learning (SSL) hour requirement cleaning up the environment, they end up picking up a lot more than trash. For years, high school students have been giving back to the community through the SSL hour requirement. As a result, causes across the community have benefitted and students have taken on a new sense of responsibility. The SSL hour
10 requirement lets students establish social partnerships while addressing recognized needs.

The purpose of SSL hours is to address community needs in a way that reinforces curriculum goals because they arm students with the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary for productivity in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. According to the original 1997 MCPS memo, all community service action, whether it be direct or indirect, encourages career preparation and reflection.

First and foremost, the SSL hour requirement teaches students responsibility. Regardless of the type of activity they decide to pursue,
20 students are held responsible for completing a job to the best of their ability. This sense of accountability contributes to an overarching feeling of personal responsibility. Furthermore, according to Blair Student Service Learning Coordinator Robert Hopkins, "The greatest part of SSL hours is that students learn transferable skills that can be applied to a variety of unique situations," he says.

More importantly, the SSL hour requirement prompts experiences that can form links to what students learn at school. These learning links reinforce the concepts students have been introduced to at school. Throughout elementary, middle and high school, MCPS [Montgomery
30 County Public Schools] students learn about major issues like natural disasters and ecosystem conservation, as well as societal issues like bullying prevention, nutrition and fitness. For example, a student with a particular interest in environmental science puts their knowledge to

the test when they volunteer with organizations like the Seneca Creek State Park or the C&O Canal Association. Even when activism is not directly related to coursework, students learn universal lessons like the importance of helping their fellow community members when they help feed the homeless or build homes for natural disaster victims. By fulfilling this requirement, students also gain the opportunity to

40 volunteer in fields that interest them, allowing them to experiment with possible career paths.

But perhaps the most beneficial part of the SSL hour requirement is that it gives students experience with group dynamics. When performing community service, students learn to form a cooperative team in order to accomplish their goal. They have to effectively work with members in authority positions as well. When they dedicate time to the community, students make attitudinal and behavioral strides by learning how to be productive members of society. According to Julie Ayers, a service-learning specialist for the Maryland State Department

50 of Education, the hours students spend doing community service equip them with the knowledge and skills needed for civic engagement.

Instead of taking a more lax approach regarding the SSL hour requirement, MCPS should continue to make the hours mandatory for graduation. Though a 15-hour increase may strike some as a burden, it's 15 more hours during which students are learning skills crucial to their future success. Without the consequence of not graduating, the majority of students may not be exposed to the numerous advantages of community service work. The community benefits from students' work, and students take away experiences that enable them to live successfully.

60 **Claire Koenig says no: Mandated community service takes away from the meaning of the experience.**

What happened to asking what we can do for our country? All for one and one for all? It's a small world? Apparently, the school system feels that there isn't enough kumbaya to go around, so it has chosen to make service a part of the graduation requirement.

The Student Service Learning (SSL) obligation imposed upon high school students today is not only unfair, but unnecessary. The initiative to serve the community shouldn't have to come from fear of failing to graduate, but from a student's passions and interests.

70 The obvious merit of community service is not debatable—students learn to appreciate lending a hand while non-profits put those hands to good use. But the logic of forcing people to volunteer falls short when compared to the benefits students gain from the act of offering

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to perform community service. Schools should do all they can to encourage students to volunteer by continuing to provide opportunities in the community and rewarding students who complete an exemplary number of hours, but community service should not be required in order to achieve a high school diploma.

80 The merit of volunteer work stems from the fact that it is voluntary —if schools mandate that students perform community service, then projects lose value to the student participants. Many students don't feel inspired by their time serving the community so much as irritated that they were forced to do so by the school system in the same way that some children disregard good advice because it comes from their parents.

The SSL requirement can also be insulting to those that are enthusiastic about their volunteer work. These students should be proud that they can help selflessly out of intrinsic motivation, instead of feeling forced to put their hours of hard work towards an SSL
90 requirement. The 1992 district court case *Steirer v. Bethlehem Area School District* highlighted this dilemma when two students dedicated to their service work appealed to the court for their diplomas after refusing to put their volunteer hours toward the community service requirement. Although the court's verdict came back against the students' plea, the message they sought to send is clear: They performed community service for good, not for graduation.

High school is a busy time—many students juggle jobs or multiple afterschool activities in addition to their schoolwork. It is unfair to those students who have obligations outside of school to keep them
100 from graduating because of SSL hours, because some of them simply don't have the time to spare.

In some cases service hours are the barrier keeping students from graduating. Encouraging good work for a good cause is one thing; driving students to the good work for the sake of graduating is another.

While it is true that the required hours of service do open students to work in the community that they would not experience should the mandate be eliminated, but the SSL requirement also enforces the wrong mindset toward community service in students.

As it is, MCPS is encouraging students to do the right things for all
110 the wrong reasons.

Am I on Track?



FINAL

English Language Arts
Text-based Writing Rubrics
Grades 6–11: Argumentation



Grades 6–11 Argumentation Text-based Writing Rubric (Score points within each domain include most of the characteristics below.)			
Score	Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)
4	<p>The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear claim and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly maintained claim with little or no loosely related material • Clearly addressed alternate or opposing claims* • Skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas • Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end with a satisfying introduction and conclusion • Appropriate style and tone established and maintained 	<p>The response provides thorough, convincing, and credible support, citing evidence for the writer’s claim that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoothly integrated, thorough, and relevant evidence, including precise references to sources • Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques to support the claim, demonstrating an understanding of the topic and text • Clear and effective expression of ideas, using precise language • Academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose • Varied sentence structure, demonstrating language facility 	
3	<p>The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear claim and evident organizational structure with a sense of completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained claim, though some loosely related material may be present • Alternate or opposing claims included but may not be completely addressed* • Adequate use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas • Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end with a sufficient introduction and conclusion • Appropriate style and tone established 	<p>The response provides adequate support, citing evidence for the writer’s claim that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally integrated and relevant evidence from sources, though references may be general or imprecise • Adequate use of some elaborative techniques • Adequate expression of ideas, employing a mix of precise and general language • Domain-specific vocabulary generally appropriate for the audience and purpose • Some variation in sentence structure 	
<i>Continued on the following page</i>			

FINAL ELA Text-based Writing Rubrics, Grades 6–11: Argumentation
Florida Standards Assessments

Score	Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric)
2	<p>The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience, and task but may include loosely related or extraneous material; and it may have a claim with an inconsistent organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused claim but insufficiently sustained or unclear • Insufficiently addressed alternate or opposing claims* • Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety • Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end with an inadequate introduction or conclusion 	<p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the writer’s claim that includes partial use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weakly integrated evidence from sources; erratic or irrelevant references or citations • Repetitive or ineffective use of elaborative techniques • Imprecise or simplistic expression of ideas • Some use of inappropriate domain-specific vocabulary • Most sentences limited to simple constructions 	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some minor errors in usage but no patterns of errors • Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling
1	<p>The response is related to the topic but may demonstrate little or no awareness of the purpose, audience, and task; and it may have no discernible claim and little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent, confusing, or ambiguous claim • Missing alternate or opposing claims* • Few or no transitional strategies • Frequent extraneous ideas that impede understanding • Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization 	<p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the writer’s claim, including little if any use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal, absent, erroneous, or irrelevant evidence or citations from the source material • Expression of ideas that is vague, unclear, or confusing • Limited and often inappropriate language or domain-specific vocabulary • Sentences limited to simple constructions 	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various errors in usage • Inconsistent use of correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling
0			<p>The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning.</p>

*Not applicable at grade 6