WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Rubrics and Sample Responses
Write an essay explaining the importance of taking responsibility for yourself.

The information in the box below will help you remember what you should think about when you write your composition.

REMEMBER—YOU SHOULD

☐ write about the assigned topic

☐ make your writing thoughtful and interesting

☐ make sure that each sentence you write contributes to your composition as a whole

☐ make sure that your ideas are clear and easy for the reader to follow

☐ write about your ideas in depth so that the reader is able to develop a good understanding of what you are saying

☐ proofread your writing to correct errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure

The names of individuals mentioned in the compositions have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the students whose responses appear in this guide.
SCORE POINT 1

Each composition at this score point is an ineffective presentation of the writer's ideas.

Focus and Coherence

☐ Individual paragraphs and/or the composition as a whole are not focused. The writer may shift abruptly from idea to idea, making it difficult for the reader to understand how the ideas included in the composition are related.

☐ The composition as a whole has little, or no, sense of completeness. The introduction and conclusion, if present, may be perfunctory.

☐ A substantial amount of writing may be extraneous because it does not contribute to the development or quality of the composition. In some cases, the composition overall may be only weakly connected to the prompt.

Organization

☐ The writer's progression of thought from sentence to sentence and/or paragraph to paragraph is not logical. Sometimes weak progression results from an absence of transitions or from the use of transitions that do not make sense. At other times, the progression of thought is simply not evident, even if appropriate transitions are included.

☐ An organizational strategy is not evident. The writer may present ideas in a random or haphazard way, making the composition difficult to follow.

☐ Wordiness and/or repetition may stall the progression of ideas.

Development of Ideas

☐ The writer presents one or more ideas but provides little or no development of those ideas.

☐ The writer presents one or more ideas and attempts to develop them. However, this development is so general or vague that it prevents the reader from understanding the writer's ideas.

☐ The writer presents only a plot summary of a published piece of writing, a movie, or a television show.

☐ The writer omits information, which creates significant gaps between ideas. These gaps prevent the reader from clearly understanding those ideas.

Voice

☐ The writer does not engage the reader, therefore failing to establish a connection.

☐ There may be little or no sense of the writer's individual voice. The composition does not sound authentic or original. The writer is unable to express his/her individuality or unique perspective.

Conventions

☐ There is little or no evidence in the composition that the writer can correctly apply the conventions of the English language. Severe and/or frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure may cause the writing to be unclear or difficult to read. These errors weaken the composition by causing an overall lack of fluency.

☐ The writer may misuse or omit words and phrases and may frequently write awkward sentences. These weaknesses interfere with the effective communication of ideas.
The Importance of Taking Responsibility

Of your self it shows loyalty and dignity
for your self by making right actions and choosing
the right thing to do.

Meaning in which I just said it would make you
feel better, if not it would let other people see you
as a real smart person and being real responsible
it would bring up your ego and self esteem up.
Also that means you would be real organized and
would be making real good grades at school and
by making your family and teachers proud of you.
You would also be real good when you get a job.
You will have everything organized so when you get
married you would be managing the bills so your
wife won't tell you your lazy.

So what I have been trying to say for all this time
is if you are responsible you will have everything
in your life runned. So that makes life
a lot more easier for you well then the end
of my conclusion. Thanks for listening Good Bye.

Score Point: 1

In this ineffective response the writer attempts to list some reasons why responsibility is important. There is little to no development of the writer's ideas (it would let other people see you as a real smart person and being real responsible it would bring up your ego and self esteem up), and the composition shifts quickly from idea to idea, making the composition difficult to follow. Errors in conventions further weaken the response.
Taking responsibility for yourself is very important. As you grow up you can not always have your mother and your father bailing you out of things your whole life. You must take charge of your life and take responsibility for yourself because no body else will.

You have to grow up some day you can not be stuck under your parent’s wing forever. Live your life to it’s fullest, because one of these days you will regret it for the rest of your life. Teenagers today are so scared to grow up and be a responsible and mature adult. We are afraid of the big bad world and think when we get out there, it is just going to gobble us whole.

We have to leave and conquer the world and not be afraid of our responsibilities in life. That our Lord put on this earth for us. Life and success is our only goal that must be met.

Score Point: 1
The writer of this ineffective response discusses the importance of growing up and becoming responsible as a teenager. Though the composition is somewhat focused, the progression of thought is not always logical. Development remains vague (one of these days you will regret it for the rest of your life...think when we get out there, it is just going to gobble us whole), preventing the reader from understanding the writer's ideas.
I think everybody should be responsible for themselves, because one day you will be on your own trying to keep a job and taking care of a family. I think responsibility is very important in your life because without it, it would be very unorganized and confused. Your whole life is depending on responsibility. If you're irresponsible than your not going to have a very good life, because everything needs to be planned out and organized. Like for example If you're not responsible and let's say you have kids, and you get paid and go spend all your money on beer and junk and all those other things you don't need, then there's not enough money to pay bills or the car payment then what happens to the heat and cool air no light no water and no car how are your kids getting to school. See all these problems you have without responsibility. So this is why responsibility is very very important.

Score Point: 1
In this ineffective response the writer focuses on the negative consequences of not being responsible as an adult. The writer presents several ideas and attempts to develop them, but the development remains general (you get paid and go spend all your money on beer and junk and all those other things you don’t need). Errors in conventions weaken the composition, and wordiness stalls the progression of ideas.
The Importance of taking responsibility for yourself to me is immense. For kids that are 11 yrs. old to do this is amazing.

To take responsibility for yourself is not easy. Many adults have failed at this. Can you imagine kids doing this? When you take responsibility you have to be smart and you can’t give up for one little problem. You have to let go of many things. Say you usually go out with your friends but you can’t this time because of whatever you have to do.

Next, taking responsibility makes you grow up a little faster. To do this task you have to think and act like an adult. To take responsibility has its advantages. Older people will start treating you with respect. Your parents might even start giving you more freedom.

When doing what you’re suppose to be doing without any body telling you. You are taking responsibility for yourself. In doing this you become more active and more social. You start meeting new people. Adults or even peers. When you do this everybody likes you and your self esteem goes up.

In conclusion taking responsibility for yourself makes you a better person.
and helps you understand what being an Adult is.

Score Point: 1

In the first paragraph the writer seems to be referring to one of the reading selections on the test but fails to clearly explain this reference. The writer shifts quickly from idea to idea without logical transitions (Next, taking responsibility Makes you grow up a little faster. To do this task you have to think and act like an adult). In addition, the writer provides little development of the ideas in this effective composition.
SCORE POINT 2

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS A SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER’S IDEAS.

Focus and Coherence

☐ Individual paragraphs and/or the composition as a whole are somewhat focused. The writer may shift quickly from idea to idea, but the reader has no difficulty understanding how the ideas included in the composition are related.

☐ The composition as a whole has some sense of completeness. The writer includes an introduction and conclusion, but they may be superficial.

☐ Some of the writing may be extraneous because it does not contribute to the development or quality of the composition as a whole.

Organization

☐ The writer’s progression of thought from sentence to sentence and/or paragraph to paragraph may not always be smooth or completely logical. Sometimes the writer needs to strengthen the progression by including more meaningful transitions; at other times the writer simply needs to establish a clearer link between ideas.

☐ The organizational strategy or strategies the writer chooses do not enable the writer to present ideas effectively.

☐ Some wordiness and/or repetition may be evident, but these weaknesses do not completely stall the progression of ideas.

Development of Ideas

☐ The writer attempts to develop the composition by listing ideas or briefly explaining them. In both of these cases, the development remains superficial, limiting the reader’s understanding and appreciation of the writer’s ideas.

☐ The writer presents one or more ideas and attempts to develop them. However, there is little evidence of depth of thinking because this development may be somewhat general, inconsistent, or contrived.

☐ The writer may omit small pieces of information that create minor gaps between ideas. However, these gaps do not prevent the reader from understanding those ideas.

Voice

☐ There may be moments when the writer engages the reader but fails to sustain the connection.

☐ Individual paragraphs or sections of the composition may sound authentic or original, but the writer has difficulty expressing his/her individuality or unique perspective.

Conventions

☐ Errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure throughout the composition may indicate a limited control of conventions. Although these errors do not cause the writing to be unclear, they weaken the overall fluency of the composition.

☐ The writer may include some simple or inaccurate words and phrases and may write some awkward sentences. These weaknesses limit the overall effectiveness of the communication of ideas.
Taking responsibility for yourself is very important. It can not only help us in life now, but it can also help us in the future. Being responsible takes some energy and discipline. If you don't take responsibility for yourself, you may not be as successful as you planned.

Being responsible for yourself can help you reach goals you would like to accomplish in the future. Many of your actions may affect opportunities in life later on. If you are not responsible for your own actions, you might get into trouble and even have the risk of going to jail. People who don't have jobs or are spending time in prison were not responsible for themselves.

The decisions you make may affect your responsibility. It is better to make choices you know are responsible, and won't cause you to get hurt or get into trouble. When you make a decision about something, you should think about the effect it will cause or how it could help you. If you are responsible for yourself, making the right decisions won't be too difficult. We face many difficult decisions each day, and many people know what is right and what is wrong. For some, making the right decision is challenging because of things like peer pressure, your friends or the
people you hang out with may effect your decisions, so it is good to have friends you know are also responsible and make the right decisions.

Another way to help you be responsible is by setting goals. Setting goals lets you know what you want in the future and how to accomplish that. Being responsible helps you accomplish goals by encouraging you to do better so that you can get what you have worked for. When you set goals it helps you to know certain decisions to make. If you are no responsible for yourself, you may not accomplish your goal or be successful in the future.

If you don’t take responsibility for yourself, you may not be as successful as you planned. There are many ways, but also many difficulties, to be successful. If you set your mind to it or set a goal, you can be responsible for yourself. Being responsible for yourself may also help others, as long as yourself.

Score Point: 2

In this somewhat effective response, the writer discusses the importance of setting goals and making good decisions. Some wordiness and repetition is evident (Being responsible for yourself can help you reach goals; Being responsible helps you accomplish goals). While the writer attempts to develop the ideas, this development remains superficial (When you set goals it helps you to know certain decisions to make), limiting the reader’s appreciation of the ideas.
A well-paying job, a great car, and a healthy, happy family is the American dream of society today. Without taking responsibility for yourself, not many things are possible. Meaning, you have to work for the things you want in life. Some people work their whole lives working 18 hour shifts, but they are doing their best and taking responsibility by supporting their family. Others, however, are more fortunate, but in no means more responsible. You can't sit back and wait for a miracle to happen. In order to achieve success, some type of responsibility is required. For instance, performing well in school, turning in work, finishing high school, getting a job, and helping out around your house. No one is going to follow you around with a checklist making sure your priorities are met. They are YOUR priorities and taking responsibility for yourself is what it takes to meet your goals. Set standards for yourself, make challenges. Everything in life is not going to be easy. Your future has been placed in front of you. Take responsibility for yourself and your actions; that's what it takes to live a happy, healthy, successful
development remains supplemental. The sense of completeness, but there is little evidence of depth of thinking because the essay’s focus has been placed in front of you. The composition as a whole has some sentence is not always smooth (make challenges. Everything in the introduction is not going to be the necessary steps to achieve success in life. Progression of thought from sentence to sentence of this somewhat effective response seems to encourage the reader to take

Score: 2
In my point of view taking responsibility for yourself is an important thing to do. First of all you have to improve it so that everybody knows you can.

Firstly, you have to be responsible for all chores like in the house like putting dishes in the dishwasher everyday, vacuuming the floor, clean your bedroom, wash your clothes etc. You have to do all these things for your mom or Dad to see that you are indeed a good child. You have to be sensible enough to think fast. You have to be capable of doing things your parents wouldn’t be embarrassed about.

Secondly, you must to honest. Tell the truth to your parents always, try and keep your duty going as it should be. You have to be dependable so that your parent will always depend on your when you are doing. Even if the thing is difficult they know you are responsible so you can handle it without any stress. Respectful is also very important because if you are respectful everybody likes you and believes in you that you are going to do something good in future. It has to be made clear to your parents that you have the sense of responsibility in you.

You have to prove that good manners is part of your life, because if you are responsible without good manners is not the best. Make your parents trust you and know that even without them you can do something on your own without their help.
Thirdly you must be faithful to your parents, make your parents know that you are trustworthy. Let them know that you are a person of principle. Make them feel you are devoted and so they can rely on you anytime they want. You have to be a kind of person who has sympathy and close to people who need you when they are in trouble.

You have to be strict on those who is letting down your principle. Be correct and precise always make sure you are accurate in everything you do. You have to care and love people who loves you. Don't treat people bad that is a bad thing to do. One thing I learnt from my parent is that, people of all faith are allowed to worship freely.

Lastly your have to be accountable I mean giving accounts to everything you do when it is time for you to give it. You have to be liable and subjected to everything you do. You must be a good and amiable person, socially by doing all those amiable works your responsibility is going to be perfect without any questionable character.

I think by taking these responsibility by yourself Parent will be proud to have you as a child.

Score Point: 2
In this somewhat effective composition, the writer explains several ways to prove to your parents that you are responsible. Progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph is not always smooth because the writer shifts quickly from idea to idea (...always make sure you are accurate in everything you do. You have to care and love people who love you). The writer attempts to develop the ideas, but the development is somewhat general and wordy. Some awkward sentences limit the overall effectiveness of the communication of ideas.
Taking Responsibility for Yourself

Has anyone ever wondered what it would be like to take responsibility of themselves? Of course, many people have. Taking responsibility of yourself means not being dependent on others and only on yourself. Taking responsibility for yourself is a great thing to do for many reasons, but here are just a few.

Taking responsibility for yourself will give one independence. A person will not have to depend on others to make the right decisions for them, but will be able to make the right decisions for themselves. Taking responsibility will also give one a sense of being independent. Johnny in "Business at Eleven", had become independent as well as Ashlee in "Tough Cookie". They both were responsible for themselves and gained independence. They both worked hard and with hard work they earned independence.

Being responsible for yourself also earns one the respect of many. Being responsible for one's own actions will earn the respect of many because it will give off the sense that one is responsible and honest.

Being responsible also means that one will be able to get through in life without the need of others. It is the same as being independent, but one is making sure that one's self does not need to depend on others to help them with something that they themselves have to do on their own. They are doing what they are supposed to be doing on their own without needing the help of others.
Taking responsibility for yourself earns one the sense of independence, respect from others, and being independent. Although earning the sense of being independent and being independent do not seem different, they are. Having the sense that one is independent gives one confidence and being independent lets others see that one is independent. As for respect, respect is just what it is—respect. This allows for others to see that one is responsible and independent.

Score Point: 2

The writer of this somewhat effective composition discusses the importance of being independent. Repetition, though present, does not completely stall the progression of ideas. Though the writer includes an introduction and conclusion, they are superficial, and the development overall remains superficial as well.
SCORE POINT 3

EACH COMPOSITION AT THIS SCORE POINT IS A GENERALLY EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF THE WRITER’S IDEAS.

Focus and Coherence

☐ Individual paragraphs and the composition as a whole are, for the most part, focused. The writer generally shows the clear relationship between ideas, making few sudden shifts from one idea to the next.

☐ The composition as a whole has a sense of completeness. The introduction and conclusion add some depth to the composition.

☐ Most of the writing contributes to the development or quality of the composition as a whole.

Organization

☐ The writer’s progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph is generally smooth and controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and the links between ideas are logical.

☐ The organizational strategy or strategies the writer chooses are generally effective.

☐ Wordiness and/or repetition, if present, are minor problems that do not stall the progression of ideas.

Development of Ideas

☐ The writer attempts to develop all the ideas included in the composition. Although some ideas may be developed more thoroughly and specifically than others, the development overall reflects some depth of thought, enabling the reader to generally understand and appreciate the writer’s ideas.

☐ The writer’s presentation of some ideas may be thoughtful. There may be little evidence that the writer has been willing to take compositional risks when developing the topic.

Voice

☐ The writer engages the reader and sustains that connection throughout most of the composition.

☐ For the most part, the composition sounds authentic and original. The writer is generally able to express his/her individuality or unique perspective.

Conventions

☐ The writer generally demonstrates a good command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure. Although the writer may make minor errors, they create few disruptions in the fluency of the composition.

☐ The words, phrases, and sentence structures the writer uses are generally appropriate and contribute to the overall effectiveness of the communication of ideas.
I have 2 friends: Grace and Madison.

Both live in completely different situations.

Grace’s family babies her and Madison’s family leaves her more on her own. I’ll start out with Madison’s story.

Maddy, as we call her, doesn’t have a very stable home life. Her parents fight most of the time and forget they even have a daughter. Needless to say, this leaves Maddy alone to take care of herself. Right at age 15 she applied for a job at the Dollar Tree which she received. Now Madison takes care of her clothes, cell phone, food, and entertainment. She is practically independent. She learned early on that she had to take responsibility for herself. Grace, on the other hand, couldn’t have a more opposite story.

Grace’s parents get along most of the time. When Grace comes home, her mother asks her how her day was. Grace doesn’t have a job; she doesn’t need one, her parents say. She can’t cook macaroni and cheese, and she can’t handle her laundry. Grace has absolutely no responsibility for herself. She is even going to get a new Mercedes when she turns 16. But what is the point of my stories?
for as long as she can remember, has had to take care of herself. If she hadn’t taken responsibility for herself when she did, she may not have straight A’s, or be a determined theatre student. She may have fallen to theft to take care of herself, or worse!  

Grace, though, needs to learn responsibility. When she graduates and leaves for college, how is she going to take care of herself? She won’t know how.  

Taking responsibility for oneself is an extremely vital part of growing up. Those who never learn that important trait have a hard time surviving in an adult world. It’s a dog-eat-dog world out there and if someone doesn’t take responsibility for themselves they will, sadly, be eaten!

Score Point: 3

The writer of this generally effective composition contrasts the lives of two friends, Grace and Madison. The writer generally shows the relationship between ideas, explaining the connection between the two stories. The writer’s presentation of some ideas is thoughtful (Grace, though, needs to learn responsibility. When she graduates and leaves for college, how is she going to take care of herself?). Progression is generally smooth, and the composition sounds authentic.
In my household the importance of taking responsibility is great. Due to two hard-working parents spending most of their time at work, with my father owning a business and my mother working in downtown Houston, they are rarely home, leaving myself to do all of the house-keeping and taking care of our dog, Buster.

First off to start the day, I wake up at 5:30 to put my dog outside and start breakfast. Then at about 6:10 I wake up my dad to eat breakfast. Our breakfast normally consists of: sausage, biscuits, scrambled eggs, cereal, and a glass of milk. Although I wake my dad up at 6:10 to eat I normally eat before that to have time to get ready for school. As soon as my dad is ready we leave, normally around 7:00.

After arriving home from school at about 3:00 I let Buster inside and feed him. After that
Household work consists of cleaning my room, making my bed, taking out the trash, vacuuming, and mowing the lawn. After all, this is complete. I check to see what movies are on television or get on the computer and check e-mail while looking at paintball stuff on eBay.com.

Then at about 5:30 I check the dishes to see if they are clean or not, and wait for my mom to get home at 6:30-7:00 to either bring home food or prepare to make it. After eating I jump into the shower and get ready for bed.

Overall, since I am the only one home at most times, responsibility is key for me to keep things in line while my parents are at work.

Score Point: 3
In this generally effective response, the writer explains how he helps keep his household running with two working parents. The organizational strategy the writer chooses is generally effective. The writer attempts to develop most of the ideas in the composition and demonstrates a good command of conventions.
As a person grows up they are given many different responsibilities throughout their lifetime. It is these tasks that give an individual self-worth, pride in their view and values, or teaches them life lessons, that they will use throughout their existence on earth. The importance of taking responsibility for yourself shows others that you are not just one of the crowd, but an outstanding individual who needs to be recognized.

Taking responsibility for your actions gives you the self-worth that no other accomplishment can give. When I was younger I cherished every award that I received, but the most rewarding achievements were when I did something no one else had done. An example of this was when I helped my brother on his Boy Scout Eagle Award by cleaning up a park. The rewarding part of that was not the gracious thank you or the tremendously annoying, itchy poison oak I got. But the fact that helping contributed to my self-worth as a human being, stepping up to a challenge by taking responsibility.

I am a proud member of the Girl Scouts, a Roman Catholic and a High School Student. By taking responsibility for the world around me through these three groups, I take pride in my values. Some of which include getting an
excellent education, having fun while working, and assisting those who need my help. I also ask for help when I need it (not all of the time, my pride gets hurt). These values and organizations I am in give me challenges to face, and things I have to do (even if I don't want to do something).

Life lessons are taught by taking responsibility. When a teenager has a younger sibling that needs to be taken care of, they should help their parents by babysitting or watching that child. Another example is learning how to take care of yourself, whether it be cooking, cleaning, or staying home alone. All of these situations express the importance of taking responsibility for what you say, do, or how you act.

When you seize an opportunity to lay hold of a responsibility, take it. Responsibility can teach you many important life lessons, give you some self-worth, and show what you view or value in life. Responsibility is important too because it gives you pride in yourself. Without this pride you think you have been worthless. That is what is the importance of taking responsibility for yourself is. Giving yourself a purpose for life. Unless you have some responsibility, your life really doesn't have a purpose does it?

Score Point: 3
The writer of this generally effective response explains how responsibility can give us a purpose in life by increasing our sense of self-worth and helping us face life lessons. For the most part the transitions are meaningful, and the writer makes few sudden shifts from one idea to the next. Although some ideas are developed more thoroughly and specifically than others, the development overall reflects some depth of thought.
In a world containing more and more children who become slaves to video games or television, it is important to stress responsibility to the youth of the world. It seems most people are focused on not much more than the next episode of "Friends" or "Survivor". It is important to take responsibility in order to reap emotional rewards, benefit others, and better the standard of living for one's self.

Taking personal responsibility rewards a person with emotional benefits. A person taking new responsibility receives confidence, optimism, and new situation handling skills. Toshiro Mori's "Business at Eleven" shows a character with the confidence to get started and the optimism to continue on a path to his dreams. Even when his family decides to move, Johnny's responsibility has taught him enough to handle this situation and turn it into possibility for more growth and expansion. Also consider "Tough Cookie" written by Alex Tresniowski, Kate Kriise, and Lauren Comander. Ashlee Vann's optimism keeps her positive enough to land a job after election failure, and her confidence helps keep that opportunity going strong. Personal responsibility results in a new positive outlook, situation handling skills, and a strong unshakeable confidence.

Taking personal responsibility also provides a benefit to others. A young person can share their talent while helping people to better their lives. Once again consider Ashlee Vann and her cooking skills. When Ashlee shares her talents, she helps many in the community and eases the national burden.
of hunger. Consider Noelia Collela’s "My First Million" and how
Noelia’s book shares her talents with millions of readers.
After success in business, Noelia shares her story of financial
success with other teenagers in hopes of improving their lives as
much as she improved hers, when a young person chooses
to take responsibility, they share their talents and better the
lives of others.
Responsibility does not only provide others with better
lives, but it also improves the standard of living for the
person taking responsibility. A responsible person can make money
or improve their work ethic. Ashley Vann from "Lough Cookie" is
able to draw a new work ethic from her volunteer work that allows
her to improve her school work and juggle a schedule more
efficiently. In "My First Million" Noelia Collela is able to
make money and improve the quality of life thanks to
the responsibility she took. The same could also be
said for Johnny from "Business at Eleven" as he makes
money to buy presents and make his family happy.
Responsibility instills a strong positive work ethic and an
opportunity to make money that can better one’s standard
of living.
The emotional benefits, assistance to others, and
a better standard of life makes taking responsibility in
one’s life a worthwhile goal. After writing this, I have come
to the conclusion that it is very important and necessary
for me to take more responsibility in my life.

Score Point: 3
In this generally effective composition, the writer discusses both reading selections as well as the visual
representation to explain that being responsible leads to emotional rewards, benefits for others, and a better
standard of living. The progression is generally logical, the conventions contribute to the overall effectiveness
of the communication of ideas, and there is an attempt to develop all the ideas presented. However, the choice
of such a broad focus limits the writer’s ability to achieve the depth of thought necessary for a higher score
point.
SCORE POINT 4

Each composition at this score point is a highly effective presentation of the writer’s ideas.

Focus and Coherence

☐ Individual paragraphs and the composition as a whole are focused. This sustained focus enables the reader to understand and appreciate how the ideas included in the composition are related.

☐ The composition as a whole has a sense of completeness. The introduction and conclusion are meaningful because they add depth to the composition.

☐ Most, if not all, of the writing contributes to the development or quality of the composition as a whole.

Organization

☐ The writer’s progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph is smooth and controlled. The writer’s use of meaningful transitions and the logical movement from idea to idea strengthen this progression.

☐ The organizational strategy or strategies the writer chooses enhance the writer’s ability to present ideas clearly and effectively.

Development of Ideas

☐ The writer’s thorough and specific development of each idea creates depth of thought in the composition, enabling the reader to truly understand and appreciate the writer’s ideas.

☐ The writer’s presentation of ideas is thoughtful or insightful. The writer may approach the topic from an unusual perspective, use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing, or make interesting connections between ideas. In all these cases, the writer’s willingness to take compositional risks enhances the quality of the content.

Voice

☐ The writer engages the reader and sustains this connection throughout the composition.

☐ The composition sounds authentic and original. The writer is able to express his/her individuality or unique perspective.

Conventions

☐ The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the composition. The writer demonstrates a consistent command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure. When the writer attempts to communicate complex ideas through sophisticated forms of expression, he/she may make minor errors as a result of these compositional risks. These types of errors do not detract from the overall fluency of the composition.

☐ The words, phrases, and sentence structures the writer uses enhance the overall effectiveness of the communication of ideas.
One of the most important lessons to learn when growing up is to take responsibility for yourself. Parents anywhere in the world try to teach their children how to accept the consequences of their actions. From the time little children start comprehending the world around them, they do things because they want to, without thinking of its consequences. They throw things around, put things in their mouths, annoy their siblings and are always surprised at how their parents get mad at them. They don't think "I was doing something wrong and should accept my punishment." Later, when school starts parents seem annoying when they just won't stop talking about homework. "Did you do your homework? You get done with your homework first, then you can watch TV!" Parents try to teach more aspects of being responsible, organizing, planning, and knowing how to spend your time effectively. By the time you get to high school you better have learned some of this, because when you have to juggle homework, projects, work and extracurricular activities time seems to slip by very fast. Parents also worry, because their children seem to know so little, yet they will be on their own soon. Sure, they started showing some responsibility, they are working, and school is going fine. But can they live alone, can they keep a home, manage money intelligently, have a car? And what don't you see; are they drinking? Sure, they know it's dangerous, but are they responsible enough to do the right thing. When the children are grown up, that's when the responsibility falls on their shoulders, and their parents are no longer
there to help them. If children can’t take responsibility for themselves when they get to this point, they will have a really hard time being happy. They struggle to succeed, and most learn it the hard way. If teens learn to take responsibility for themselves, they will find the transition from their parent’s home to their own home much easier. Later in life they will again need responsibility to raise a family, and teach their children to be independent.

Score Point: 4

In this highly effective composition, the writer follows the progression of responsibility from infancy to adulthood. Sustained focus allows the reader to understand and appreciate the writer’s ideas. The progression is smooth, and the writer’s presentation of ideas is thoughtful (when you have to juggle homework, projects, work and extracurricular activities time seems to slip by very fast; But can they live alone, can they keep a home...). The writer is able to express his unique perspective.
Taking responsibility for yourself. Not a concept that most people under the age of eighteen understand very often. I didn't. Not until I was fourteen did I finally figure out what my parents had been nagging me about since I was four.

It was two summers ago, I was visiting my relatives in Colorado. My aunt lives on a small ranch with three of my cousins. My eldest cousin, Caleb, usually does most of the grunt work. My other two cousins, Carter and Chloe, take care of the housework while my aunt works in town for the local bank. The ranch has about forty acres and 25 to 30 head of cattle along with three horses.

Well one fine day, Carter and I were feeding the cattle out in the pasture. Soon, we finished up and were headed back when we spotted my aunt and two cousins in the pickup coming down the gravel driveway. They said they were going into town to see our grandparents who were passing through. Unfortunately, we'd only be able to catch dinner with them before they hit the road again. Carter jumped into the back of the truck when he realized he'd forgotten the empty feed bag. I told him I would meet them down at the end of the fence line and that I would retrieve the bag. I took off and reached the bag, scooping it up as I continued on towards the truck.
I hopped in and we were on our way.

That night we returned home, satisfied with the trip to town.

On our way up the driveway we noticed that we couldn't see any cows in the pasture. When we reached the top of the driveway we found the gate to the cow pasture was open. Everyone in the truck looked as if they were in horror at the gate. We swore up and down that he had closed it before we left. My seat didn't believe him, but I knew better. I realized I left it open when I went back for the bag. I kept my mouth shut though. My aunt wasn't pleased. She sentenced me to rounding up all the cattle before he could return home. The gate had been open for at least six hours. He had a long night ahead.

Two weeks went by and it was due home in a few days.

Unfortunately I couldn't take it anymore. I had to tell the truth. I went to my aunt and told her what had really happened with the gate. She was not happy at all. For the next three days I had the privilege of doing all the chores on the ranch. I was blessed with the

When I made it onto the plane home, I swore I would never let someone else take responsibility for my actions ever again. I slept the whole way home.

Score Point: 4

The writer of this highly effective response tells the story of how a day on his aunt's ranch taught him the true importance of responsibility. The composition has a sense of completeness, with a meaningful introduction and conclusion. Thorough and specific development of each idea creates depth of thought (I took off and reached the bag, scooping it up as I continued on towards the truck; Everyone in the truck looked to Carter as he stared in horror at the gate), allowing the writer to express his individuality. Logical movement from idea to idea and a consistent command of conventions strengthen the composition.
I really hate projects and when Mrs. Harris told my tenth-grade English class to do a report over our ancestors, I just sunk into my chair and took out my CD player. "This project will count as half of your semester grade, kids, so you better get started on it as soon as possible," said Mrs. Harris. All I heard was "Blah, Blah, Blah..." As the bell rang, Mrs. Harris handed us the sheet of paper that explained what to do for the report, when it was due, and all this other stuff that I didn't care about.

When I got home that day, I crumpled up the paper, threw it in my pig-sty looking room, and went to watch some television. For a minute, I actually thought about who my ancestors might be. 'Man, I must be a nerd for actually thinking about doing a school report,' I thought to myself. I dozed off to sleep as the next episode of "I Love Lucy" aired on the television.

The next day, I walked into English, sat down in my seat, and once again put on my CD player. Mrs. Harris made the class take out our books to read about Shakespeare, but instead, I took out my Teen Magazine and read that. At the end of class, Mrs. Harris said something about our reports but I was too busy listening to my music to have time to listen to...
anything that she said. A few weeks later, I was walking in the halls after school one day, and my friend Gabriella came running up to me so shaken up, I thought she'd seen a ghost or something.

"Oh my gosh, our reports are due tomorrow!" she exclaimed.

"Who cares?" I said casually. "It's just a dumb report."

"A dumb report?!" she said. "Mrs. Harris said we'll fail if we don't pass it!"

Then it hit me. The thought of having to repeat 10th grade English next year was not on my "To Do" list. I ran home and surfed the internet for anything I could find over the Cherokee Indians, who I remembered from my dad saying once, were my closet ancestors. When I finished my report, I looked at it in disgust. This was not good enough to turn in tomorrow.

I ended up having to repeat sophomore English since I failed my report and class. I always hear the junior class across the hall and I wonder to myself everyday, "I could be in there with all my friends if I had just taken responsibility!" I stopped taking my CD player to class this year and I listed for instructions better, too.

Score Point: 4
In this highly effective composition, the writer tells the story of ignoring a class project and having to re-take sophomore English. Thorough and specific development of each idea allows the reader to truly understand the writer's ideas and reveals an authentic voice (All I heard was "Blah, Blah, Blah..."; "Man, I must be a nerd for actually thinking about doing a school report!"). The progression of thought is smooth and controlled, and the composition as a whole has a sense of completeness. The strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the composition.
Millions of people around the world are irresponsible every day and
countless more die for their lack of reliability. Driving drunk, whether a
person is alone or with colleagues, is always a hazardous conception. Not
only do those intoxicated drivers take the chance of destroying their own lives,
but also the multitude of lives on the road with them. The lives of the other
people that are driving, along with their families and friends, can all be
obliterated in a single instant; inInstance where just one solitary person
makes the decision to drive under the influence.

My own personal experience has tied me to the belief that all drivers who are
even the slightest bit inebriated are not merely drunken drivers, but potential
murderers with no regard or consideration for anyone other than themselves. It was
Thanksgiving Day in 1999 when two policemen watched an accident happen before
their eyes. Hastily, the two officers rushed to a large dark green truck and
discovered two people. The passenger was a young man, unconscious in his seat.
He had not worn his seat-belt and had launched forward and pounded his
head on the dashboard. The driver, whose airbag had prevented him from
dying the same (because his unused seat-belt wouldn't have), was staring
straight ahead in shock at the steel telephone pole about ten or fifteen feet
away. 'Never saw what hit us coming,' whispered the driver semi-coherently. The
officer had to explain to this man of no more than twenty-three that HE hadn't
hit the pole. Another car, a 1974 red Mustang convertible had been captured
between the truck and pole and was blown so hard on impact that it
quite literally bent around the cold steel telephone pole. This small, bent
car was at such an angle that it was impossible to get to without the truck
moving. After the policemen and their backup (who had been contacted
by horrified on-lookers) had moved the truck and pulled off the driver's door,
They were met with the site of three bodies, my two cousins, Joscie and Francine, and myself were on a trip to get cranberries when we were struck by a giant green truck on the driver's side. Joscie, the one driving, had died on collision impact and was lying lifeless, strapped to her seat. Francine, who was sitting in the passenger's seat, was alive by a miracle for three different shards of glass were cut into her throat and lodged there. I was in the backseat virtually unharmed. Suffering only from a concussion and some scrapes and bruises, I was unconscious in between the fire and seats. As it was explained to later by mourning and shocked relatives, the driver of our green attacker had been drunk and so was his friend. They were on their business when suddenly there was a little red car and then a pole and then it was all a blur, unravelled the passenger who was a meekly nineteen years of age. It was just one moment, one instant and then my entire family's reality was broken from its calm and order. It only takes just one.

This one man and his friend abandoned their responsibilities that day. They took the duty to make sure they drove safe and obeyed the law; we all do. These two men let us down. They drove drunk and walked away, killers. They were both physically fine except for a few bruises and minor cuts but the scars that they carry with them will never heal and never go away. I pray they never do. If they never drive drunk again because of those scars, then maybe we can save someone else from this fate, put it is up to all of us everywhere around the globe to not make the same mistakes as those two men. It is our commitment as soon as we step behind the wheel, just be sure that these responsibilities are upheld.

Score Point: 4

The writer of this highly effective response uses a personal tragedy to discuss the irresponsibility of drunk driving. The strength of the conventions and the variety of sentence structures enhance the effectiveness of the composition (Not only do those intoxicated drivers take the chance of destroying their own lives, but also the multitude of lives on the road with them; Those two men let us down. They drove drunk and walked away killers). Sustained focus and thorough development enable the reader to truly appreciate the writer's ideas. The progression is smooth, and the introduction and conclusion add depth to the response.