WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Write an essay about a time you depended on someone.

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.
I always depend on people. Since I was born, I have been dependent on my parents, grandparents, and babysitters. When I am in school, I am dependent on teachers to educate me and prepare me for the future. When I play video games, I am dependent on my allies or team.

My parents always are helping me. They always provide me with clothes, food, a home and a ride to school just this morning. My parents have raised me to be a good person. They have always taught me to use good manners and to work hard in school.

Most of my teachers educate me and prepare me for next year, college, or things I need for the rest of my life. When I play video games, I am dependent on my team not to die all the time. I am also dependent on my bus driver to take me to school.

Score Point 1

This ineffective response begins with the student listing various people on whom the writer has depended. After a brief explanation is given on parents, the writer shifts abruptly to brief discussions about teachers, video-game team members, and the bus driver. The student does not provide an overriding thesis statement that links these people together; therefore, the composition is neither focused nor coherent. In addition, the development of ideas remains general, preventing the reader from understanding the writer's ideas.
A time I depended on someone was when I was in seventh grade, which was the year I turned thirteen. I had to rely on that person because he is very important to me. He’s been there for me since I was two years old. That person always been there for me since day one. I still depend on him today.

He is a great friend to me, and he never gave up on me. That somebody I depended on back then is reliable to everyone. If it wouldn’t have been for him, I would not have the stuff I have today. I still depend on him because he is like a family member to me. He is one of my best friends that a person would ever want.

I still depend on him because he would get and do anything for me. We do everything together and we stick up for each other. It was like we were stuck together. He has brought happiness into my life. He would jump in the water to rescue me if I needed help. I will always depend on that person and we will be friends forever.

Score Point 1
The writer of this ineffective response focuses on how she depended on a best friend in the seventh grade. Although the composition is focused, wordiness and repetition (I had to rely on that person; He’s been there for me since I was two years old; That person [has] always been there for me since day one; That somebody I depended on back then is reliable) stall the writer’s progression of ideas. In addition, the writer’s ideas are so general and vague (he never gave up on me; If it wouldn’t have been for him, I would not have the stuff I have today) that they prevent the reader from understanding them.
I once depended on my best friend well the person I thought was my best friend we promised each other to never tell the thing that we talk about cause it was between us so I told her something, that I never even told a family member and she just had to run her mouth it was the worse day of my life I can never for get that day I told her to never tell or we never going to be friends no more and she promise me so when I get to school somebody come up to me and said I know something about you I said no cause don't nobody know nothing about me but one person then he said I know it was your best friend then I ask him what did she say about me if she really told you something then he got to saying all the things I told her not to tell anybody so I went up to her like a real woman and ask her kind did she tell anybody what I had said she said no so I said well why did this boy come up to me and told me everything I told you she say it wasn't me it must was somebody else that you told I said no cause you the only one I told that to then she got to looking like she was stupid or something then she gone say I only told one person
then I raise my hand up and said I would fight you but you not even worth it the when i got ready to walk away i told her to forget about us being best friends and to come get her stuff from my house then I went to class then after school one came to my house and she ask me can we talk it out i said no then she got her stuff and left.

Score Point 1

The writer of this response describes how a best friend broke her promise and told someone else a secret that was to be shared only by the two of them, causing the worst day of the writer’s life. Although the composition is focused and has some development, the lack of sentence boundaries causes the writing to be difficult to read and indicates an overall lack of fluency. These errors overwhelm the composition’s strengths, making the response ineffective.
I've depended on someone plenty of times. But this one time was when me and my cousin Nicholas was playing a game known as "Mortal Combat Shaolin Monks." He was Liu Kang as usual and I was Kung Lao. So we were playing the game, but at times it got rough were we died and lost but we always came back and won. We were so good even the impossible missions were a breeze. I mean we made masters look like amateurs. But in all the glory there came a mission that was so hard that we didn't even pass the first round. We were so stunned that we went trained for half an hour which is like 2 days for our skill. But if there was anytime I needed him it would have been right there on that bloody game.

The End

Score Point 1
The writer of this ineffective response focuses on playing a video game called Mortal Kombat Shaolin Monks. The writer attempts to discuss the different levels of the game. However, there is very little development of these ideas. Although the composition is focused, has some progression of thought from sentence to sentence, and has adequate conventions, the overall lack of specific development makes the composition ineffective.
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 reader 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.
If you are to ask me about a time I depended on somebody, my first initial thought is every single day of my life. Even though I pride myself on being an extremely independent human being, but the truth is I depend on my father every day. Of my life and every second of every hour.

I depend on my father every day because he is the one that pays the bills for us, puts food in the fridge, works overtime everyday, and still has time to sit down with me and watch Tony Romo become distracted on Tivo because Jessica Simpson is in the stands. I try to be as independent as possible but still I need my father’s help to successfully succeed in life.

I also depend on my father just to sit down with me at night sometimes and just talk to me about his life, his rights, and his wrongs as well as his experiences in life. I do not thank my father everyday even though I should because when I try he says “why are you saying thank you, buy its my job” and he leaves it at that. So that is how and I believe I depend on somebody.

Score Point 2

The writer of this somewhat effective composition focuses on the reasons he can depend on his father. The student presents a number of ideas that are briefly developed (pays the bills for us, I need my father’s help to successfully succeed in life, to sit down with me at night sometimes and just talk to me). Overall, the level of development is superficial, which limits the reader’s appreciation of the writer’s ideas.
As a member of the swim team, I have faced many obstacles to where I depend on others to help me. As the saying goes, "There is no I in TEAM." I cannot win a meet on my own, this is where I need assistance. We are one team but everyone contributes to maintain our district title. There is not one person on the team that brings us down, we all do our part to win. Whether you get first or last you are still part of the mighty swim team. This year I was so proud of the girls, because we got our 6th district title in a row! Because of all of our hard work, we have made a name for ourselves. I depend on everyone on the team because every point counts. If one girl decides she doesn't want to try, we could lose the meet. We have 9 girls going to regionals this week, and we are ranked first by 17 points. I am relying on all the girls on the team because it is so close that if one girl messes up we get 2nd. We have all worked hard this year. So we should do well, but you never know until you race. I am proud of every member.
of the team, because we have worked hard all year long, we deserve this so we have to get it. All practice comes down to one day. Some of the girls have a chance to go to state! It's one of those 'make it or break it moments.' Only time will tell.

No matter what happens, the team is still a family, and we will remain one. Nothing can stop us from doing our best, and working hard. I am only a sophomore, I have a long years of swimming ahead of me, who knows what will happen.

Score Point 2

In this somewhat effective composition, the writer focuses on how she can depend on the other members of the swim team. While there is some sense of the writer's voice and the conventions are appropriate, the repetition of ideas (Because of all our hard work; We have all worked hard this year; we have worked hard all year long) weakens the progression of thought throughout the composition. In addition, the development of ideas is only superficial (we all do our part to win; we have made a name for ourselves; the team is still a family), limiting the reader's appreciation of the writer's ideas.
About two years ago now, I dealt with a hardship that left me devastated for almost a month. It was hard for my entire family and we all helped each other cope with the pain. This situation was when my dog of fifteen years old passed away. I had not been alive a day without her and it became clear to me that I was going to have to accept the fact that she would not be there anymore.

My entire family depended on one another to get through the pain and I, along with my brother, was counting on my parents to make everything better. My friends were also very supportive and it made everything much easier. I was able to see the positive aspects of the situation and become aware of how dependent my parents were. They were there for me to talk to whenever I needed and I was very thankful for that.

Without my parents, brother, and friends' support, I would have had a very hard time dealing with the loss. I felt very fortunate to be able to lean on them for advice and also
have them there just to listen. It is in these tough situations that I am grateful for them the most.

Score Point 2

The writer of this somewhat effective response focuses on the pain she felt when the fifteen-year-old family dog passed away and the subsequent support that she received from her parents, brother, and friends. There is some progression of thought as the writer describes her feelings (I felt very fortunate to be able to lean on them for advice and also have them there just to listen; It is in these tough situations that I am grateful to them the most). However, the ideas are only superficially developed. While the conventions are generally appropriate, more specific development would be needed to achieve a higher score.
On day I had to depend on my brother for a soccer game, but it wasn't no ordinary game that you win and go home. This game was going to be for money. Whoever lost had to pay ten dollars to every player in the opposing team. We were going to play neighborhood versus neighborhood. Five players on each team.

We all gathered up on a park we were going to play in the soccer section. My brother also came but he wasn't going to play, he was just going to watch. So we started playing, we were going to be playing by quarters, ten minutes each for four quarters. The other team were pretty hard. I scored the first goal in the first four minutes. Then they scored us in the last twenty seconds. Finally the first quarter ended. We had a two minute brake. My brother came up to me and told me that he wanted to play but I said no, even though I knew he was better than one of them in my team. We started playing second quarter and in the first minute they scored again. I told my mind that it was alright, right know we we going to be even. When suddenly I sprained my ankle and couldn't run no more. So I told...
my brother to play for my spot. I had to depend on him to win and not pay the other team the money. When I saw him play, I said to myself I should of put him in since the beginning of the game we could of been winning by a lot. He ended up scoring five goals and we ended up winning. The score was six to two. When they gave me the money, I had to give him half of what I won cause he had played half of the game for me.

That is when I had to depend on someone and that someone happened to be my brother. I depended on him when I needed to.

Score Point 2

In this somewhat effective composition, the student uses a personal narrative to describe a soccer game during which he had to depend on his brother to win the match. The descriptions of the game are somewhat general (I scored the first goal in the first four minutes. Then they scored [on] us in the last twenty seconds), and there is little evidence of depth of thinking. A number of errors in conventions, specifically errors in usage and sentence boundaries, weaken the overall fluency of the composition.
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.
People are always depending on others. We rarely do things or accomplish things without others' help. People get financial help to start up businesses. Young adults rely on their parents for help quite often. People's ideas are usually inspired by others. Athletes rely on their coaches to help train them. Students rely on their teachers to teach them. People are very dependent on each other in every aspect of life. People even rely on their enemies to oppose them. Friends rely on friends, and employees rely on workers. Every person is dependent on at least one other.

There is not one specific time that I was dependent on another person, because I depend on people for everything. The people I am most dependent on though are probably my parents. They feed me, clothe me, and take care of me. Even when I am old enough to be able to feed and clothe myself, I will probably always depend on them to take care of me. They give me money when I need it or sometimes just want it. They buy my school supplies and shoes. They work to get me a good education. They support me in everything that I do. They listen to me talk when I need to talk. They were the first to try to get me to be social, and they are the first to help when I am sick or scared. They always try to make me happy. They are the first to stick up for me if I need it. They are always trying to help me be more confident. I depend on my parents for everything in life.
My friends are the people I depend on almost as much as my parents. I do not expect money and food from them, but I do not worry about their judgement like I do my parents. My friends are always there to listen and talk. They never judge me. They like me for who I am not because they have to. I depend on them to make me happy when I am sad. I also depend on them telling me the truth. They are people that I depend on telling me when I am wrong. I rely on them to support me, my dreams, and my decisions. I depend on them to help me and make me stronger. I also depend on them to depend on me. I depend on them trusting me to do what they do for me. My friends are greatly reliable, and I know I can always depend on them.

Everyone in this world relies on another for something. We do not get anywhere in life on our own even though we sometimes believe that we did. The truth is people need people. We need someone to depend on always. With others' help, we can get anywhere in life.

Score Point 3
The writer of this generally effective composition focuses on the idea that people always depend on other people (people are always depending on others. We rarely do things or accomplish things without others' help). The writer begins by discussing being dependent on her parents and then compares this with being dependent on her friends. This comparison creates an internal cohesion between the two ideas, which is reinforced by the conclusion. Overall, the level of development reflects some depth of thought. In addition, a good command of conventions contributes to the effectiveness of this composition.
We had been driving for a while now, through the twisting streets of the city. It was getting later and later and every second the pointer on the dashboard was getting closer to E.

"I don't know where we are. What are we going to do?"

My sister's voice started escalating as her panic grew.

My sister and I had gone to the late night at the Dallas Art museum. Unfortunately, we did not know how to get back to Highway 75, and it was nearing one a.m. We drove through the streets searching signs for a clue.

"I think it's this way." My sister said, the panic still evident in her voice. We took a turn and passed under an overpass and up on a road with no way of turning back. The tall buildings of downtown were gone replaced by rundown stores and warehouses with broken windows. My sister prone to panic was practically hyperventilating due to the fact that we were now headed farther and farther away from the way home and our gas was running low.

We had to ask for directions but barely anybody was around at this time of night and those who were we were not too keen on getting help from. We ended up asking one of the flagwavers for the parking lots that dotted the area. Despite preconceived notions he was very courteous and gave directions that got us back on the road in no time. We were glad to have found someone who could help us find our way home.

Score Point 3
In this generally effective composition, the writer uses a personal narrative to tell an engaging story about being lost after a trip to the Dallas Art Museum. The writer’s progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph is generally smooth and controlled (My sister, prone to panic, was practically hyperventilating due to the fact that we were now headed farther and farther away from the way home and our gas was running low. We had to ask for directions but barely anybody was around at this time of night). Specific details (The tall buildings of downtown were gone, replaced by rundown stores and warehouses with broken windows) reflect some depth of thought and enable the reader to generally understand the writer’s ideas. A sense of the writer’s voice and appropriate use of conventions add to the effectiveness of this composition.
Back in Ireland, I used to play rugby. We would train on Tuesdays, and occasionally on Thursdays. We'd have a match most Saturdays as well. This would go from September to April or May.

Now rugby is very much a team sport, with fifteen lads on either side it has to be. There are two groupings, if you will, that subdivide the team. There are the forwards, who are the big, up-front guys, and the backs, smaller, faster guys. In each group everyone relies on everyone else to do their job.

I play in the backs, as a wing, so I'm on either the far left or right side of the field. Being this far out, your only chance of getting the ball is in receiving a pass or chasing a kick. The irony of the situation is that we're some of the fastest players on the team.

On the times you do receive the ball though, a whole new world opens. This world belongs solely to the ball carrier, regardless of team. His job is to keep advancing and retain the ball, but he can't do it on his own. He always needs support, even if only from one man. Otherwise, the opposition is likely to take the ball and score.

I've spoken in very broad terms here, I know. This is simply because these are experiences from every season I've played. I couldn't take for you one single instance, there are just too many. The attempt here...
is to demonstrate how much you rely on your mates in rugby. You have to be able to know they’ll be there to support you on the runs. Your chances of running in the first place depend on them passing quickly and well. One of the first things every player, or at least myself, has to realize is that you rely on your mates, not just yourself. After all, there’s no “I” in team.

Score Point 3

The writer of this generally effective composition chooses an informative organizational strategy to explain how rugby players depend on each other during a game. The writer’s progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph is generally smooth and controlled (There are two groupings, if you will, that subdivide the team. There are the forwards, who’re the big upfront guys, and the backs, smaller, faster guys. In each group everyone relies on everyone else to do their job). Some specific details of the sport (the times you do receive the ball though, a whole new world opens. This world belongs solely to the ball carrier, regardless of team. His job is to keep advancing and retain the ball) enable the reader to appreciate the writer’s love of rugby. A sense of the writer’s voice and appropriate use of conventions add to the effectiveness of this composition.
For the most part, I consider myself to be a pretty responsible and independent person. I always feel that no one can do things the way you want all the time, so you should do them yourself. Unless of course you absolutely need the help, or are forced to rely on someone else. This happens to be one of those cases.

It was the beginning of the school year and things were just starting to get back into full swing in my classes. I'm in advanced Theatre and the teacher expected us to produce several shows this year. Of the shows, we began casting roles for "Death By Chocolate," and I was assigned to be Alfred, the butler, who actually ends up being the killer. This also being my first show, you could probably guess I was pretty stoked about getting to play such an important role. Well, of course I wasn't the only person in the play. There were two major parts, two semi-major parts, and a few small ones.

The two major roles consisted of a male and female part who had to memorize over four-hundred lines. The male had attempted this production once before so he only had to slightly brush upon the lines. The female had never read the show before so you can imagine she had her work cut out for her. My job was rather small in the lines department. This was no accident either, for I knew already that my line-learning ability was not very strong. I also didn't have the time to contribute to it with cross country practice before and after school, homework in every class, and my duties at home to top it off. I knew that I would have a maximum of one hour a day (not including class time) to remember the little lines that I did have. I wish everyone else would
have been as aware of schedule conflicts as I was. The lead female role happened to be a friend of mine: a varsity cheerleader with a full schedule who intended on graduating early. She took the job lightly, as did I (I had good reason), and we tiddled ourselves through a month and a half of rehearsals. Not that she didn’t have the ability to memorize lines; she just did not have the time. Everyone depended on her to make this show happen, and disappointingly (but not surprisingly) she couldn’t. We cancelled the show, and moved on to another production where the show rested on a male role. As for the girl, she actually came through for a joint semester exam project where we had to memorize and recite a scene; she actually learned her lines better than I did.

Score Point 3

In this generally effective response, the writer combines a personal narrative with reflection to describe how members of an acting class must depend on each other to produce a play. Some specific development (we began casting roles for Death by Chocolate, and I was assigned to be Alfred, the butler, who actually ends up being the killer) enables the reader to generally understand the writer’s ideas. The voice is engaging throughout the composition, and the conventions are generally appropriate. There is some development, although some ideas are more thoroughly developed than others. All ideas should be thoroughly developed to achieve a higher score.
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.
Like most young and adventurous tomboys, my early years were spent climbing, running, playing, swimming, digging, and getting into things. I may have had my princess moments, but there were many times my curiosity and reckless outlook got me into a tight spot, and I found myself calling for help.

When I was around five years old, I got myself into a—literally—tight spot. To this day I remember the feeling of stupidity and annoyance, mixed with a whole lot of fear I felt that day. My best friends, Alex and Adam, were playing with me in my spacious back yard. We chased one another closer and closer to our dog pens, fence, and line of trees at the back of the grassy field. When we neared the pens, I opened one and walked in, deciding to explore my dogs’ world. The twins followed, and my mixed-breed canine companion Dina, raised her head from a bed of grass, then lay back down.

The three of us crawled into the dog house as a casette, climbed on top of it as a periously rocking ship, and collapsed onto the grass as a bed for three exhausted children. By laying on the ground, something else caught my eye. Behind the dog house, it appeared Dina had been digging herself a cave to stay cool in during the oven-house of the day. I found that it came out on the other side of the little house, like a tunnel under the doghouse.

As soon as I pointed it out, Alex shouted, grunting
and shuffling, he inched through, and Adam and I hurried to
the other side. His arms appeared, then his head and shoulders.
As he pulled himself out, I knew I would have to follow suit or
risk being called a sissy. I got down and crawled right in, but
as soon as I was completely merged within the cool, dirty
hole, I realized something. Alex was a good bit skinnier
than me, I would never get out of there on my own.

"Alex?" I called. No reply. "Alex? Adam?" Still no
reply. Why couldn't they hear me? Oh, I'm talking into dirt
two feet under the ground and my lungs are squished, I thought.
I could hear them calling me, but I couldn't turn my head to
call back. Who would hear me? Who would help me? Dina. My
dad taught me to whistle months before. I could depend on
Dina. I formed my lips, fighting panic, tried to whistle.
"Whoa!" Air. No sound. I tried again, "Whee!" It worked! I heard
Dina bark. I whistled again, and she barked again. She
didn't know where my whistle was coming from. I heard
whining. She barked for a minute straight, and I heard a
lot of shouting. My dad's arms were pulling me out of the
dark and into the surface world, chiding me and hugging
me, praising Dina. He had heard her barking.

I loved Dina for being the most dependable
friend I had. She protected me and got me help when
I needed it, and for that I will never forget her.

Score Point 4
The writer of this composition describes a time when she had to rely on the family dog to alert her father to
come rescue her from being stuck inside a hole. The writer's progression of thought is smooth and controlled
(collapsed onto the grass as a bed for three exhausted children. By lying on the ground, something else caught
my eye). The writer develops each idea thoroughly and specifically (I could hear them calling me, but I
couldn't turn my head to call back), and the writing sounds authentic and original (Who would hear me? Who
would help me?). The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the composition,
helping to make this a highly effective presentation of the writer's ideas.
Anytime you depend on someone for something other than minor everyday things, you are taking a risk. You're putting your trust in someone and assuming they will come through for you. This is especially true if you are in a position where you must depend on a stranger. As far as my life, I've been lucky enough not to have had to take the risk of depending on someone I didn't know. That idea is frightening to me because of the "risk factor". In the news there always stories of individuals who depended on people that they shouldn't have and things did not turn out well. Fortunately things don't always turn out badly when you have to put your trust in a stranger.

In "Rwandian Angel" the author, Dora Pedilla and her friend Eleanor are traveling in Turkey where they are befriended by unhelpful Turkish men, Linar. Although they are initially put off by his appearance, "we sat as far away from him as we could," they quickly benefited from his excellent English and his helpfulness. With Linar's aid, the travelers avoid many mishaps—purchasing incorrect tickets, getting off at the wrong station, missing the last bus and gain many benefits—a delightful guided tour, good seating and help with their bags.

What is interesting in this article is that although Pedilla and her friend quickly come to depend on Linar, they are not without their reservations even after they clearly had already benefitted from his acquaintance. Not long after the group arrived in Nairobi, Linar rushed off with their bags! "We feared we had made a terrible mistake, entrusting this stranger with our belongings and that he was now running off with all we had." It turned out that Linar is merely trying to
prevent them from missing their bus; however, they were clearly worried that their dependency on this stranger had put them in harm’s way. For this moment when they saw their luggage disappearing, they realized the risk they had taken in depending on a stranger. What if he had run off with all their luggage? They could have been stranded in a foreign country where they don’t speak the language without their belongings and possibly without their passports, money etc. This is the possibility that causes me concern about depending on others & the risk factors.

Was it wise for Padilla and her friend to depend on her? It turned out fine for them. In fact, their trip was better for having encountered him, but I’m not sure I would take that kind of risk. Perhaps that is always the case though. If you don’t take some risks you may be safe, but you also may miss out on some great opportunities. In the end it is probably good to find a balance between always playing it safe and taking some risks. Each situation just needs to be evaluated individually for its risk factors.

Hopefully if and when I do end up taking a risk and depending on a stranger, it will turn out well for me as it did for Padilla and her friend.

Score Point 4
The writer of this highly focused and coherent composition analyzes “Guardian Angel” in relation to being frightened of depending on strangers. Throughout the composition, the writer effectively weaves quotations from the reading selection with critical analysis, making the progression of thought smooth and controlled, with each sentence contributing to the development as a whole. Consistent control of conventions as well as a conclusion that adds depth enhance the presentation of the writer’s ideas.
A few years ago I went to camp for a week during the summer. It was one of those things where a kid's parents send their child away to some understaffed and primitive camp in order to "make them a better person," as most parents would say, but all it was really doing was denying that child what was most important to them, specifically Playstation, MySpace, and root beer. But when arriving at "Camp Who cares," I wasn't aware that I would soon be in a situation where my life, or at least my health, literally hung in someone else's hands.

One of the aspects of camp that catches a parent's eye is all the "great" classes a kid can take that will further increase their knowledge of the outdoors. The only one of those that I could see myself having fun in was rock climbing, so I signed up.

The class was alright despite the regretful gatherings in the "mess hall" before hand which left you with stomach aches. Students learned how to tie all the knots, techniques, commands, positions, and the strategy of climbing. Now all that was left was to have a certain number of climbs, repels and balays. I had completed everything except all of the climbs. I needed only one more to complete the class and return home to the pleasures of electronics and carbonation.

For my last climb I wanted to go out big. It ended up being in a different way than I thought. I wanted
to climb the wall nicknamed "Mission Impossible." For its height and small amount of hand holes, I was pretty confident so I strapped into a harness and hooked onto the rope. I traded commands with my belayer and got the "O.K." I started up the wall. When I was nearing the top I looked back down to see how far I had come. For some reason right at that moment my stomach started to hurt. It wasn't from being scared but from the chicken I had eaten at lunch. My hand slipped off the rock. I lost my balance and fell backwards. It would be alright though, because the belayer would tighten the rope and my descent would end, but did he lock off the rope. Of course he didn't. I kept falling, reaching out of air hoping my hands would find something to grab. I fell about twenty feet for what seemed about two hours, when finally my belayer locked off the rope and my fall ended five feet above the ground.

That was the last of my climbing at that camp. Even though I didn't finish the climb, they still agreed to let me pass the class. But I didn't care about this; all I cared about was getting as far away from ropes, rocks, and bad chicken as I could.

Score Point 4
In this focused and detailed narrative, the writer describes an adventure at a summer camp climbing a wall nicknamed Mission Impossible. The writer uses specific details to reflect on why parents send their kids to camp in the first place (it was one of those things where a kid's parents send their child away to some understaffed and primitive camp...but all it was really doing was denying that child what was most important to them: specifically, PlayStation, MySpace, and root beer). The logical movement from idea to idea is smooth and controlled as the story effectively climaxes with a failed climb (I kept falling, reaching out in air hoping my hands would find something to grab). A strong sense of the writer's voice engages the reader and contributes to the effectiveness of this presentation.
I felt worse with every passing second. My stomach, which had risen to my throat, felt as though some crazy kid was relentlessly riding a roller coaster inside it. I had been sick before, but not like this. I was the poster child for influenza. Coughing, runny nose, sore throat, fever, stomach ache, I had it all. I looked in the mirror and was a little taken aback by the fact that there was not a large meat cleaver coming out of my head. I had come to the conclusion that a meat cleaver was the only explanation for the pounding in my head. I had been woken up in the bathroom for attention because my mom had gone to work because I had supposedly reached the age at which people take care of themselves. She also wasn't too apt to believe that I was legitimately sick on the same day as our semester test in Algebra. I said convenient coincidence, she thought not. My only hope now was the one person who was immune to all suspicion, Memaw. If I had told her that I was going to the room, she would just need and ask me to bring her a rock. My Memaw is an artist, but an artist with some unconventional canvases. She would paint on everything from logs to turtle shells, but her favorite canvases were rocks. Though she would be a finalist for best artist in the world, she would be looking for best Memaw on the planet. I knew that as soon as I called she would gather up all of the crazy health food she had and high tail it up to my house. I walked through the dark living room into the contrasting bright kitchen. I thought for sure the phone was on the hook, but, surprise, I was wrong. I pressed the page button and instantly heard the annoying beep of our cordless phone. I trudged up the stairs, tightening the vice-grip hold I had on my stomach. I felt as if my stomach might explode if I didn't hold it in place. I immediately spotted the shiny silver at the phone and made my way toward it. I clumsily dialed the number that I had known my entire life. "Hello," Memaw said in her super positive telephone voice. "Memaw, this is Ann. I was wondering if you could bring me some medicine..." I was gritting my teeth trying not to convey the measure of pain I was feeling. "Gloria (my mom) told me that you weren't feeling good, and..."
I would have come right over, but she said you'd be fine." My mom knew what my next move would be and got there first. "Oh... well maybe if you call her she'll change her mind," I said cautiously. "I'll just call her up and tell her that you don't sound good at all, and that I will surely go to my grandchild that I love with all of my heart and soul." She was always saying corny things like that. "Thanks Memaw, I love you too." After hanging up, I thought that, if my mom said yes, it would be a good thirty minutes before Memaw got here, factoring in the gathering of supplies and the extremely low speed at which she constantly traveled. I pleaded my case with an imaginary mother, going through every detail of my ailments. After realizing that this was a pointless occupation, I settled down under my blanket and tried to will my stomach to stop rolling. I'm not sure why it never occurred to me that this was an equally pointless thing to do. The next thirty minutes were agonizing. I had begun to lose hope, but then I heard a familiar knock on the door. "Thank you mom," I said aloud. Relieved, I limped to the door and opened it wide to see my Memaw beaming down on me.

Score Point 4

In this highly effective composition, the writer had to rely on a grandmother to bring medicine when she was sick with influenza. The writer humorously describes her mother's doubts about the legitimacy of the illness and uses personal asides to add specific details that enhance the narrative (I'll just call her up and tell her that you don't sound good at all, and that I will surely go to my grandchild that I love with all my heart and soul. [She was always saying corny things like that]). The logical movement from idea to idea is smooth and controlled (I heard a familiar knock....Relieved, I limped to the door and opened it wide to see my Memaw beaming down on me). In addition, a strong sense of the writer's voice engages the reader and contributes to the effectiveness of this response.