Read the following quotation.

Think of all the beauty that’s still left in and around you and be happy.

—*from The Diary of Anne Frank*

*by Anne Frank*

Even in difficult circumstances, some people focus on the positive aspects of life. Think carefully about this statement.

Write an essay stating your opinion on whether a person can choose to be happy.

Be sure to —

- state your position clearly
- use appropriate organization
- provide specific support for your argument
- choose your words carefully
- edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling
Score Point 1

The essay represents a very limited writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is inappropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies that are only marginally suited to the persuasive task, or they are inappropriate or not evident at all. The absence of a functional organizational structure causes the essay to lack clarity and direction.

- Most ideas are generally related to the issue specified in the prompt, but the writer’s position is missing, unclear, or illogical. The writer may fail to maintain focus on the issue, may include extraneous information, or may shift abruptly from idea to idea, weakening the coherence of the essay.

- The writer’s progression of ideas is weak. Repetition or wordiness sometimes causes serious disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times the lack of transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections causes the writer to present ideas in a random or illogical way, making one or more parts of the essay unclear or difficult to follow.

Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is weak. The argument is ineffective and unconvincing because the reasons and evidence the writer uses to support the position are inappropriate, vague, or insufficient.

- The essay is insubstantial because the writer’s response to the prompt is vague or confused. In some cases, the essay as a whole is only weakly linked to the prompt. In other cases, the writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a lack of understanding of the persuasive writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer’s word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the persuasive purpose and does not establish a tone appropriate to the task. Word choice may impede the quality and clarity of the essay.

- Sentences are simplistic, awkward, or uncontrolled, significantly limiting the effectiveness of the essay.

- The writer has little or no command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Serious and persistent errors create disruptions in the fluency of the writing and sometimes interfere with meaning.
Score Point 1
The writer of this composition offers the position that happiness “is not something you can choose to be its something you can be made to be.” There is no attempt to support this position. The writer makes several statements regarding happiness: “happiness is something everyone has felt at one moment in life,” “Happiness is the number one positive emotion,” “happiness can cause boastfulness.” The writer shifts abruptly from idea to idea, and the essay does not progress in a logical manner. The writer reiterates the position at the end of the essay, but this does not help develop the ideas of the position statement. This essay represents a very limited writing performance because it lacks clarity and direction.
A person can choose to be happy; however, the supporting ideas are weakly developed, and the sentence-to-sentence connections cause disruptions in the flow of the essay. The student begins the second paragraph with a topic sentence stating that people choosing to be happy is a good thing. The student goes on to write, “Choosing to be happy or not is not real. Why not be sad?” The flow from each of these sentences is hindered because there are no explicit or implicit connections among these ideas, making this part of the essay unclear and difficult to follow. In addition, the progression of ideas is not always logical. For example, the idea that sadness “can make you feel real and happy” does not contribute to the argument because it makes no sense within the context of the essay. Awkward sentences and inappropriate word choice further impede the clarity of the essay. All these factors contribute to an essay that represents a very limited writing performance.
A person can choose to be happy. Anyone can choose to be happy. It’s just the way they are. Like being the richest guy or girl with money, being a guy who builds a million dollar car, being a guy who owns a mansion, having the world’s best job, also having severest for you telling them what to do. For example, me I would choose to be happy with animals because I love them that what I would choose and you can choose to be happy with whatever you like, love, and live. You can be happy with that but if you wait and want something that you can’t have your going to suffer. So, I am going to tell you here don’t wait. You have a world out there, don’t waste time just go and explore it with that one thing that makes you happy.

Score Point 1
The writer of this composition states that “A person can choose to be happy. Anyone can choose to be happy.” Although the student provides several examples explaining how a person can be happy, they are too brief and lack the detail needed to support the position statement. In addition, the writer has little control of sentence boundaries, causing disruptions to the fluency of the writing and impeding the clarity of the essay. Because the writer ineffectively develops the many ideas provided and exhibits a lack of control of sentence boundaries, this essay represents a very limited writing performance.
A person can choose to be happy. If the person is happy, he/she will have positive things in his/her life. If they decide to be mad, sad, the bad or negative things will come to you. People should always stay happy and positive in everything, but it's still up to the person wants to. Think of all the beauty that's still left in and around you and be happy. That means never be sad or be mad because negative things will come to you. There's some people that they just always mad and they don't change. Vows are emotional but the people that are always happy can have a great big smile in their face even though they are having the worst day, they will keep it positive with a smile to be happy.

Score Point 1
The writer of this composition agrees that a person can choose to be happy but does not make an effective argument to support this idea. The writer explains that a happy person will have “positive things in his/her life,” but if that person is sad “negative things will come to you.” However, the writer does not tie this idea to the choice to be happy. The writer then goes on to describe people who are “always mad” or “always happy,” but the ideas are vague and do not contribute in a logical or clear way to the essay. Overall, this composition represents a very limited writing performance.
Score Point 2

The essay represents a basic writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is evident but may not always be appropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is not always clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are only somewhat suited to the persuasive task.

- Most ideas are generally related to the issue specified in the prompt, but the writer’s position is weak or somewhat unclear. The lack of a clear, effective position or the writer’s inclusion of irrelevant information interferes with the focus and coherence of the essay.

- The writer’s progression of ideas is not always logical and controlled. Sometimes repetition or wordiness causes minor disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections are too perfunctory or weak to support the flow of the essay or show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is minimal. The argument is superficial and largely unconvincing because the reasons and evidence the writer uses to support the position are not always appropriate or are too briefly or partially presented.

- The essay reflects little or no thoughtfulness. The writer’s response to the prompt is sometimes formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates only a limited understanding of the persuasive writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer’s word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the persuasive purpose but does little to establish a tone appropriate to the task. Word choice may not contribute to the quality and clarity of the essay.

- Sentences are awkward or only somewhat controlled, weakening the effectiveness of the essay.

- The writer demonstrates a partial command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Some distracting errors may be evident, at times creating minor disruptions in the fluency or meaning of the writing.
In this essay, the writer presents an evolving position that “Anyone can choose to be happy” and that “it depends on the person.” The writer develops this position by explaining how “you are the one who has the choice to not be happy anymore” when others make rude remarks. However, this example is too briefly presented to effectively support the argument. In addition, the writer’s word choice is too general to get a specific idea of what he is talking about. For example, the student writes that your loved ones “will always be there to cheer you up no matter what the situation is.” The student does not go on to relate how this ties back to his position. Overall, the minimal development and general word choice in this essay represent a basic writing performance.
Can a person choose their happiness? Yes, they can, because it's up to you on how to live your day and life. You are the only one who has control over your happiness. And besides, life is too short to be wasted mad or sad all the time.

In life there will always be people who will try to ruin your day just because they don't have anything better to do, but it will be your decision if you let them achieve their goal or not.

There are many ways to find happiness, for example, being with family and friends. Could be one of the biggest causes of happiness, just being with your loved ones.

In every day there is always something beautiful to discover and be happy for, you just need to find it. Smile every day because you'll never know when will be the last.

Score Point 2
In this response, the writer offers the position that a person can choose happiness “because its up to you on how to live your day and life. You are the only one who has control over your happiness.” The writer asserts that people will try to “ruin your day . . . but it will be your decision if you let them.” In the third paragraph, the student briefly presents an example of how to find happiness through family, friends, and loved ones. These ideas are general and reflect little thoughtfulness. Although the writer provides an appropriate organizational structure, the overall development is minimal and the argument is superficial. This essay represents a basic writing performance.
Score Point 2
The writer of this essay takes the position that a person “can’t simply choose to be happy.” The hypothetical example of a person who cannot choose to be happy because they are depressed due to “a lot going on at home” is only minimally developed. Instead of linking this idea more clearly to the position, the student provides brief speculations as to why a person might choose to mask feelings of sadness. In addition, the writer’s word choice is too general and does little to establish an appropriate persuasive tone. For these reasons, this response represents a basic writing performance.
In the last paragraph of this essay, the writer shares the position that you can choose to be happy when you focus on the positive. Although the writer provides an appropriate organizational structure, the examples contained within the paragraphs are superficially developed and minimal. In the first body paragraph, for example, the writer notes that “scientists state that if you smile then your brain starts to change and then *bam* your actually happy and not at all gloomy.” This idea is too partial because it is dropped and not developed with a more specific example. This essay represents a basic writing performance.
Score Point 3

The essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is, for the most part, appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are adequately suited to the persuasive task.

- The writer establishes a clear position. Most ideas are related to the position and are focused on the issue specified in the prompt. The essay is coherent, though it may not always be unified due to minor lapses in focus.

- The writer’s progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and sentence-to-sentence connections are sufficient to support the flow of the essay and show the relationships among ideas.

Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is sufficient. The argument is largely convincing because the reasons and evidence the writer uses to support the position are specific and appropriate.

- The essay reflects some thoughtfulness. The writer’s response to the prompt is original rather than formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a good understanding of the persuasive writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer’s word choice is, for the most part, clear and specific. It reflects an awareness of the persuasive purpose and establishes a tone appropriate to the task. Word choice usually contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.

- Sentences are reasonably varied and adequately controlled, contributing for the most part to the effectiveness of the essay.

- The writer demonstrates an adequate command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although some errors may be evident, they create few (if any) disruptions in the fluency of the writing, and they do not affect the clarity of the essay.
Score Point 3

In the opinion of the writer of this essay, people should not choose “the way they feel,” but should instead let “emotions flow naturally.” To support this argument, the student writes candidly about how “it is unhealthy to choose to be happy all the time” because people are “not naturally going to be happy” during “a tough circumstance.” The writer adds that keeping one’s real emotions “balled up inside” can “lead to stress” and this can increase the “chances of stroke.” These ideas are developed with enough specificity that the reader can understand the writer’s flow of thought. The student maintains a persuasive tone throughout the essay by including rhetorical questions (“. . . would you choose to be happy?”), concessions (“I can’t speak for other people . . .”), and a call to action in the conclusion (“If your mad be mad, if your happy then be happy. I don’t think you can choose to be happy. I mean really, how do you think the world would be without emotions?”).
Happiness is one of nature's finest qualities. "Think of all the beauty that's still left in and around you and be happy." Anne Frank is explaining that no matter what type of situation someone is in, they always have the right to choose their happiness. Death is a hard subject to talk about with most people because the sadness of losing a loved one is such a powerful pain. Often people go into depression when a loved one is passed because the happy moments are usually forgotten at that very moment. But once memories start flowing through one's head, it's greatly remembered that they're in a better place.

Eating that heart breaking phone call that your significant other no longer wants to be with you is another hard obstacle to overcome. There are many different emotions someone could feel after a moment like such. One of those emotions can be to choose to be happy, because now another opportunity for someone better has been offered.

Happiness is known for the best medicine in life. At the end of the day happiness is always a choice. There's so much to life to not be happy, grieving will get you nowhere, life goes by too fast to take happiness for granted.

Score Point 3
The writer's position in this response is that "no matter what type of situation someone is in they always have the right to choose their happiness." The writer then organizes the paper by discussing two different times a person might not be happy. In the first example, "the sadness of losing a loved one" is eventually replaced by remembering "they are in a better place." In the second example, the writer argues that out of the many emotions one might feel from a breakup, "One of those emotions can be to choose to be happy, because now another opportunity for someone better has been offered." The writer supports the idea of choosing happiness with specific and appropriate examples that reflect some thoughtfulness. Overall, this essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.
Score Point 3
The writer of this essay believes that “Life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent how you respond to it” and concludes the introduction with a position statement: “Happiness is, in fact, a choice.” To support this position, the writer presents two examples. The first example is a personal anecdote about the writer’s aunt who is battling cancer. According to the student, the aunt “stayed strong and didn’t let her issues affect her happiness.”

When things aren’t going your way, it’s hard to keep positive and stay happy, but chances are someone somewhere has it worse off than you. For example, my aunt recently who recently won her battle with ovarian cancer remained positive and upbeat the entire time. She could have moped around and felt sorry for herself, but she didn’t. When my parents and I visited her, she managed to go out to dinner even though she’d been recently treated with chemotherapy. She stayed strong and didn’t let her issues affect her happiness.

There is always something good in your life for you to be happy or greatful for. On a lighter note, a character named Larry on the TV show Parks and Recreation has it rough but nothing can kill his happiness. He is taunted and made fun of constantly by his co-workers who treat him with zero respect. He may have a hard life at work but he lives in a beautiful home with a model trophy wife and lovely kids. I think this keeps him going through his office adversity. The only way someone wouldn’t be able to choose to be happy is if they’re clinically depressed but in this day and age there’s medicine for that. You have the choice to focus on the positive aspects of life.
The writer of this response begins by suggesting Anne Frank was an example of someone who “chose to be happy by focusing on the good things that were around her.” According to the writer, “a person can choose to be happy even if they are facing difficult circumstances by focusing on the good things instead of the bad.” By using a cause-and-effect organizational strategy, the writer demonstrates how people can choose happiness instead of sadness. Although the examples the writer provides are appropriate (focusing on the good things in life, listening to upbeat music, and forgiving a grudge), these details lack the specificity and depth needed to be wholly effective. However, the progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled, and the sentence-to-sentence connections support the flow of this satisfactory writing performance.

Score Point 3
The writer of this response begins by suggesting Anne Frank was an example of someone who “chose to be happy by focusing on the good things that were around her.” According to the writer, “a person can choose to be happy even if they are facing difficult circumstances by focusing on the good things instead of the bad.” By using a cause-and-effect organizational strategy, the writer demonstrates how people can choose happiness instead of sadness. Although the examples the writer provides are appropriate (focusing on the good things in life, listening to upbeat music, and forgiving a grudge), these details lack the specificity and depth needed to be wholly effective. However, the progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled, and the sentence-to-sentence connections support the flow of this satisfactory writing performance.
Score Point 4

The essay represents an accomplished writing performance.

Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is clearly appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is skillfully crafted because the writer uses organizational strategies that are particularly well suited to the persuasive task.

- The writer establishes a clear position. All ideas are strongly related to the position and are focused on the issue specified in the prompt. By sustaining this focus, the writer is able to create an essay that is unified and coherent.

- The writer’s progression of ideas is logical and well controlled. Meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among ideas, making the writer’s train of thought easy to follow.

Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is highly effective. The argument is forceful and convincing because the reasons and evidence the writer uses to support the position are specific and well chosen.

- The essay is thoughtful and engaging. The writer may choose to recognize the complexities of the issue, consider opposing or alternate points of view, use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing, or connect ideas in interesting ways. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the persuasive writing task.

Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer’s word choice is purposeful and precise. It reflects a keen awareness of the persuasive purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the task. Word choice strongly contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.

- Sentences are purposeful, varied, and well controlled, enhancing the effectiveness of the essay.

- The writer demonstrates a consistent command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although minor errors may be evident, they do not detract from the fluency of the writing or the clarity of the essay. The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the essay.
The writer of this essay introduces a complex position in the first paragraph. According to the writer, there are “natural” and “artificial” emotions, and although people may fool themselves into believing they are happy, their natural emotions do not give them “a choice when it comes to being happy.” In the first body paragraph, the writer effectively develops the first idea of natural emotion with a compare-contrast organizational structure, comparing the notion of choosing to be happy with choosing to fall in love, and the student logically concludes that “We must fall into happiness to truly feel it” just as we fall in love. Sustaining the focus on the position statement into the third paragraph, the writer extends the argument to a discussion of artificial or “fake” emotions. Citing movies, television, friends, and family as exemplars, the writer explains how happiness is often confused with a positive outlook. By sustaining this strong focus throughout the composition, the writer has created a unified essay. The student’s purposeful and precise command of language and the essay’s logical progression of well-developed ideas indicate an accomplished writing performance.
In this essay the writer asserts that “happiness is a choice based on your attitude, and your level of gratitude.” Using a personal anecdote, the writer supports this position by developing the ideas of attitude and gratitude in succession, first by effectively describing the joyful attitude the student witnessed among impoverished people in Africa. Second, the writer strengthens the position by recounting with detail the gratitude of these children when presented with new shoes. By focusing on the relationship between attitude and gratitude, the writer is able to unify and deeply develop the essay. In addition, the writer has used her unique view of the world to make the essay thoughtful and engaging. The writer’s command of language (I was rendered speechless; broke my heart . . . mended it back together; joy they carried like a shield) further enhances the effectiveness of this accomplished writing performance.
Score Point 4
The writer of this essay recognizes the complexity of the issue by taking the position that “external conditions and internal willpower both heavily influence the true state of happiness.” The writer examines these opposing ideas in a logical manner throughout the essay. First, the writer develops the idea of the effect of external factors on happiness by citing specific examples (air, food, falling, bacteria, and exams). Then the writer develops the idea of willpower by describing the conditions suffered by individuals or groups (Anne Frank, slaves in the U.S. South, and Buddhists) whose willpower enabled them to find happiness. The classification organizational strategy the student uses throughout the composition is particularly well suited to the persuasive task and contributes to the overall quality of this accomplished writing performance.
Score Point 4

In this essay, the writer asserts that “we can choose to enjoy ourselves,” and that due to our resilience, “Our conscious mind has the power to fix itself, if we allow it to.” The student recognizes the complexity of the issue and sets up an effective organizing structure, juxtaposing those who choose to be happy with those who do not. The essay includes numerous, well-chosen examples of people who have suffered losses but who nonetheless “survive through their will to live.” In contrast to these examples, the writer cites Japan’s “notoriously low rate of happiness,” which, according to the student, results from the emphasis in Japan on “study, work, and bring home a paycheck” at the expense of choosing to be happy. Throughout the essay, the sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among ideas, making this accomplished essay easy to follow.