



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

English II Reading Language Arts

Constructed-Response Scoring Guide

Spring 2026

General Information

Beginning with the 2022–2023 school year, reading language arts assessments include an extended constructed response, or essay, at every grade level. They also include short constructed-response questions. Students are asked to write the essay in response to a reading selection and write in one of two modes: informational or argumentative.

This State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) constructed-response scoring guide provides student exemplars at all score points for extended constructed-response and short constructed-response prompts from the STAAR reading language arts English II operational test. The prompts are presented as they appeared on the test, and responses were scored based on the rubrics included in this guide, which were developed with the input of Texas educators. Essays were scored using a five-point rubric. Short constructed responses in the reading domain were scored using a two-point prompt-specific rubric. Short constructed responses in the writing domain were scored using a one-point rubric.

The five-point rubric for extended constructed responses includes two main components: organization and development of ideas and conventions. A response earns a specific score point based on the ideas and conventions of that particular response as measured against the rubric. The annotation that accompanies each response is specific to that response and was written to illustrate how the language of the rubric is applied to elements of the response to determine the score the response received. Extended constructed responses are scored by two different scorers, and the scores are summed to create a student's final score, so students may receive up to 10 points for their essay.

The responses in this guide are actual student responses submitted online during the testing window. To protect the privacy of individual students, all names and other references of a personal nature have been altered or removed. Otherwise, the responses appear as the students wrote them and have not been modified.

English II Reading Passage with Extended Constructed Response and Short Constructed Response

Read the excerpt and choose the best answer to each question.

In this excerpt, the author recalls an encounter he experienced in the forest near Mussoorie, a hill station in the foothills of the Himalayas in northern India.

from The Leopard

by Ruskin Bond

- 1 When I first discovered the stream it was early April and the wild roses were flowering—small white blossoms lying in clusters.
- 2 I walked down to the stream almost every day, after two or three hours of writing. I had lived in cities too long, and had returned to the hills to renew myself, both physically and mentally. Once you have lived with mountains for any length of time, you belong to them, and must return again and again.
- 3 Nearly every morning, and sometimes during the day, I heard the cry of the barking deer. And in the evening, walking through the forest, I disturbed parties of pheasants. The birds went gliding down the ravine on open, motionless wings. I saw pine martens and a handsome red fox, and I recognized the footprints of a bear.
- 4 As I had not come to take anything from the forest, the birds and animals soon grew accustomed to my presence; or possibly they recognized my footsteps. After some time, my approach did not disturb them.
- 5 The young ones scuffled and wrestled like boys, while their parents groomed each other's coats, stretching themselves out on the sunlit hillside. But one evening, as I passed, I heard them chattering in the trees, and I knew I was not the cause of their excitement.
- 6 As I crossed the stream and began climbing the hill, the grunting and chattering increased, as though the langoors were trying to warn me of some hidden danger. A shower of pebbles came rattling down the steep hillside, and I looked up to see a sinewy, orange-gold leopard poised on a rock about twenty feet above me.
- 7 It was not looking towards me, but had its head thrust attentively forward, in the direction of the ravine. Yet it must have sensed my presence, because it slowly turned its head and looked down at me.

- 8 It seemed a little puzzled at my presence there; and when, to give myself courage, I clapped my hands sharply, the leopard sprang away into the thickets, making absolutely no sound as it melted into the shadows.
- 9 It was some weeks before I saw the leopard again, although I was often made aware of its presence. A rasping cough sometimes gave it away. At times I felt almost certain that I was being followed.
- 10 Once, when I was late getting home, and the brief twilight gave way to a dark, moonless night, I was startled by a family of porcupines running about in a clearing. I looked around nervously and saw two bright eyes staring at me from a thicket. I stood still, my heart banging away against my ribs. Then the eyes danced away, and I realized that they were only fireflies.
- 11 In May and June, when the hills were brown and dry, it was always cool and green near the stream, where ferns and maidenhair and long grasses continued to thrive.
- 12 Downstream I found a small pool where I could bathe, and a cave with water dripping from the roof, the water spangled gold and silver in the shafts of sunlight that pushed through the slits in the cave roof.
- 13 The hill station's summer visitors had not discovered this haven of wild and green things. I was beginning to feel that the place belonged to me, that this dominion was mine.
- 14 The stream had at least one other regular visitor, a spotted forktail, and though it did not fly away at my approach, it became restless if I stayed too long, and then it would move from boulder to boulder uttering a long complaining cry.



The spotted fork-tail is found in the Himalayas and in the hills of northeast India.

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- 15 I spent an afternoon trying to discover the bird's nest, which I was certain contained young ones, because I had seen the fork-tail carrying grubs in her bill. The problem was that when the bird flew upstream, I had difficulty in following her rapidly enough, as the rocks were sharp and slippery.
- 16 Eventually I decorated myself with bracken fronds and, after slowly making my way upstream, hid myself in the hollow stump of a tree at a spot where the fork-tail often disappeared. I had no intention of robbing the bird: I was simply curious to see its home.
- 17 By crouching down, I was able to command a view of a small stretch of the stream and the sides of the ravine; but I had done little to deceive the fork-tail, who continued to object strongly to my presence so near her home.
- 18 I summoned up my reserves of patience and sat perfectly still for about ten minutes. The fork-tail quietened down. Out of sight, out of mind. But where had she gone? Probably into the walls of the ravine, where I felt sure she was guarding her nest.
- 19 I decided to take her by surprise, and stood up suddenly, in time to see, not the fork-tail on her doorstep, but the leopard bounding away with a grunt of surprise! Two urgent springs, and it had crossed the stream and plunged into the forest.

Excerpts from "The Leopard" from PANTHER'S MOON AND OTHER STORIES by Ruskin Bond, first published in Puffin by Penguin Books India 1991. Copyright © Ruskin Bond 1991. Used by permission of Penguin Random House India. All rights reserved.

English II Reading Extended Constructed Response

Prompt



ESSAY: Write your essay in the empty box below.

Read the excerpt from “The Leopard.” Based on the information in the excerpt, write a response to the following:

Describe how the author uses language throughout the excerpt to build toward the encounter with the leopard in paragraph 19.

Write a well-organized essay that uses specific evidence from the excerpt to support your response.

Remember to —

- clearly state your thesis
- organize your writing
- develop your ideas in detail
- use evidence from the selection in your response
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar

Manage your time carefully so that you can —

- review the selection
- plan your response
- write your response
- revise and edit your response

Write your response in the box provided.

English II Reading Passage with Extended Constructed Response

Informational Writing Rubric

Score Point	Organization and Development of Ideas
3	Controlling idea/Thesis is clear and fully developed The controlling idea/thesis is clearly identifiable. The focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. Organization is effective A purposeful structure that includes an effective introduction and conclusion is evident. The organizational structure is appropriate and effectively supports the development of the controlling idea/thesis. The sentences, paragraphs, or ideas are logically connected in purposeful and highly effective ways. Evidence is specific, well chosen, and relevant The response includes relevant text-based evidence that is clearly explained and consistently supports and develops the controlling idea/thesis. For pairs in grades 6 through EII, evidence is drawn from both texts. The response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose. Expression of ideas is clear and effective The writer's word choice is specific, purposeful, and enhances the response. Almost all sentences and phrases are effectively crafted to convey the writer's ideas and contribute to the overall quality of the response and the clarity of the message.
2	Controlling idea/Thesis is present and partially developed A controlling idea/thesis is presented, but it may not be clearly identifiable because it is not fully developed. The focus may not always be consistent and may not always be easy to follow. Organization is limited A purposeful structure that includes an introduction and conclusion is present. An organizational structure may not be consistent and may not always support the logical development of the controlling idea/thesis. Sentence-to-sentence connections and clarity may be lacking. Evidence is limited and may include some irrelevant information The response may include text-based evidence to support the controlling idea/thesis, but it may be insufficiently explained, and/or some evidence may be irrelevant to the controlling idea/thesis. For pairs, evidence is drawn from at least one of the texts. The response reflects partial understanding of the writing purpose. Expression of ideas is basic The writer's word choice may be general and imprecise and at times may not convey the writer's ideas clearly. Sentences and phrases are at times ineffective and may interfere with the writer's intended meaning and weaken the message.

Score Point	Organization and Development of Ideas
1	• Controlling idea/Thesis is evident but not developed A controlling idea/thesis is present but not developed appropriately in response to the writing task. • Organization is minimal and/or weak An introduction or conclusion may be present. An organizational structure that supports logical development is not always evident or is not appropriate to the task. • Evidence is insufficient and/or mostly irrelevant Little text-based evidence is presented to support the controlling idea/thesis, or the evidence presented is mostly extraneous and/or repetitious. Explanation of any evidence presented is insufficient and may be only vaguely related to the writing task. For pairs in grades 6 through EII, evidence is drawn from only one text. The response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose. • Expression of ideas is ineffective The writer's word choice is vague or limited and may impede the quality and clarity of the essay. Sentences and phrases are often ineffective, interfere with the writer's intended meaning, and impact the strength and clarity of the message.
0	• A controlling idea/thesis may be evident. • The response lacks an introduction and conclusion. An organizational structure is not evident. • Evidence is not provided or is irrelevant. The response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose. • The expression of ideas is unclear and/or incoherent. <i>Please note that if a response receives a score point 0 in the Development and Organization of Ideas trait, the response will also earn 0 points in the Conventions trait.</i>

Score Point	Conventions
2	Student writing demonstrates consistent command of grade-level-appropriate conventions, including correct: • sentence construction • punctuation • capitalization • grammar • spelling The response has few errors, but those errors do not impact the clarity of the writing.
1	Student writing demonstrates inconsistent command of grade-level-appropriate conventions, including limited use of correct: • sentence construction • punctuation • capitalization • grammar • spelling The response has several errors, but the reader can understand the writer’s thoughts.
0	Student writing demonstrates little to no command of grade-level-appropriate conventions, including infrequent use of or no evidence of correct: • sentence construction • punctuation • capitalization • grammar • spelling The response has many errors, and these errors impact the clarity of the writing and the reader’s understanding of the writing.

Sample Student Responses

Score Point 0

Response 1

The author uses language throught the excerpt by building suspense and showingt the birds that led him to the leopard again.

Organization and Development of Ideas: 0

The writer presents a thesis that the author, Ruskin Bond, “uses language throught the excerpt by building suspense and showingt the birds that led him to the leopard again.” An organizational structure is not evident because the response is limited to only a thesis statement. Although a connection is proposed between the use of language and the creation of suspense, the writer offers no text-based evidence to support this idea. The vague idea that Bond built suspense by showing the birds that led him to the leopard is not explained. The overall expression of ideas is unclear, and the response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

Conventions: 0

If a response receives a score point 0 in the Organization and Development of Ideas trait, the response must also earn 0 points in the Conventions trait.

Response 2

The author speaks on how the animals treat him. As the animals ignore him he encounter a leopard that sensed his presence. The author sharply claps then the leopard disapears into the thickets. Weeks had went by before he had seen the leopard again but it made its presence know. At time he felt as if he was being followed. The aurtor had also been frightened by fireflies. He continued to explore the hills finding a place to bathe ,and a cave dripping water frome the roof. While in the hills he felt as if the place had belonged to him.

The author found that the stream had at least one other regular visitor, a spotted forktail. Eventually he decorated himself with brackens fronds. The aurtor also hid imself in a hollow tree stump at a spot the forktail often disappeared. He was curious to see its home. He found that the forktail objected his presence so near her home. The aurtor had lost site of the forktail then dicided to take he by surprise, but found the the forktail isint the one he surprised but the leoperd bounded away with a grunt of surprise.

Organization and Development of Ideas: 0

The writer does not provide a clear thesis but rather begins with a vague statement (“The author speaks on how the animals treat him”). Starting with the second sentence, the response is a summary of the story, which results in an inappropriate organizational structure for an informational essay. The writer provides details from the story about the author’s encounters with the leopard (“the leopard disapears into the thickets”; “it made its presence know”; “the leoperd bounded away with a grunt of surprise”), but any cited text evidence does not provide relevant support because there is no attempt to address the prompt. The writer provides a description of events that led to seeing the leopard but no connection to how the author uses language to build toward the encounter. Overall, this response reflects a lack of understanding of the writing purpose.

Conventions: 0

If a response receives a score point 0 in the Organization and Development of Ideas trait, the response must also earn 0 points in the Conventions trait.

Score Point 1

Response 1

The author uses strong leguage and intense leguage throught the excerpt to buld twords the encounter with the leapord in paragrph 19. Because in paragraph 17 The author said "forktail who continued to oject to my presence so near here home" this show how he uses that strong leguage thoug 18 as well with the lines of "Probaly in to the walls of the revine, where I felt sure she was guarding here nest" this is were he whnated to take here in surprice by finding the nest this is were the Intence leguage the author said " I decided to take her by surprice, and stood up suddenly, in time to see, not the forktail on her doorstep but the leopard bounding away with a grunt of surprise!". This show how from Strong leguage to intense language towards paragraph 19.

Organization and Development of Ideas: 1

The writer presents a thesis statement that the author, Ruskin Bond, uses strong and intense language to build toward the encounter with the leopard, but this thesis is not developed appropriately. The organization of ideas is weak, and the first and last sentences function as a minimal introduction and conclusion. The conclusion is a vague summary of the analysis ("This show how from Strong leguage to intense language"), and effective transitions are lacking. Quoted text evidence from paragraphs 17, 18, and 19 are provided as examples of Bond using strong and intense language, but the writer's explanations of how these examples demonstrate that use are only vaguely related to the task ("this show how he uses that strong leguage"; "this is were he whnated to take here in surprice"; "this is were the Intence leguage"). Additionally, limited and repetitious word choices ("The author said," "this show how," "this is were") weaken the effectiveness of the written expression. Overall, the response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

Conventions: 0

The writing demonstrates little to no command of grade-level-appropriate conventions. Most of the response ("Because in paragraph 17 . . . 'with a grunt of surprise!'") is written as one long run-on sentence when it should be punctuated as at least three separate sentences. Misspellings are frequent ("leguage," "throught," "buld twords," "leapord," "oject," "here [her]," "were [where]," "whnated," "surprice"). In addition, grammatical errors and incorrect phrasing are present throughout the response ("this show how," "take here in surprice," "from Strong leguage to intense language towards") along with some incorrect capitalization and missing commas. These frequent errors impact the clarity of the writing and the reader's understanding of the writer's thoughts.

Response 2

Have you ever had a encounter wuthe a leopard? this author has and he explains and useses certin language in order to create suspense and tention and gives it a more dramatic encounter. like he said in paragraph 19 he wanted to take her by surprise so she can get caught off guard and more her more angry so it will be a tougher challenge. he stood up and they make eye contact and create tis tention which is what he wants to create and help you undertand they both stand verys tilll until the author makes a move and the leopard decides not to attack but to run away. just after 2 sprints the lepoard was gone and the author makes a run for it and they both dissapear in the forest and creates suspense and curiosity of what would happen next and which one will make it out alive.

Organization and Development of Ideas: 1

The writer presents the thesis in the second sentence that Ruskin Bond has encountered a leopard “and he explains and useses certin language in order to create suspense and tention and gives it a more dramatic encounter.” The response is weakly organized to follow just the final paragraph of the story. The introduction uses a rhetorical question (“Have you ever . . . a leopard?”) to set up the thesis, but there is no conclusion. Support for the thesis is minimally developed with insufficient paraphrased textual evidence from paragraph 19 (“he stood up and they make eye contact”; “decides not to attack but to run away”). The explanations of how Bond seeing the leopard creates tension (“so it will be a tougher challenge”) and the leopard escaping creates suspense (“curiosity of what would happen next and which one will make it out alive”) are insufficient. The writer’s word choice (“and more her more angry”; “the author makes a run for it”) sometimes weakens the clarity of the message of how Bond’s writing has an intentional effect on the reader. Overall, the expression of ideas is limited, and this response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

Conventions: 0

The writing demonstrates little to no command of grade-level-appropriate conventions. Grammatical and usage errors (“so she can get caught off guard and more her more angry”; “he stood up and they make eye contact and create tis tention”; “and creates suspense and curiosity of what would happen next”) are frequent. Additionally, the writer does not capitalize the first word of sentences and does not use required commas for sentence construction (“they both stand verys tilll until the author makes a move and the leopard decides not to attack”). There are also a number of misspellings (“wuthe,” “useses certin,” “tention,” “tis,” “dissapear”). The high rate of errors across all the conventions categories impact the clarity of the writing and the reader’s understanding of the writing.

Score Point 2

Response 1

The author uses language throughout the excerpt to build toward the encounter with the leopard in paragraph 19 to add tone and mood to the text.

in the artice, it says, "i decided to take her by suprise, and stood up suddenly, in time to see." This quote means that the author enjoys bulding toward the encounter with the leopard. This matters because its an important piece in the story.

Another example is, in the article it states "Two urgent springs and it crossed the streama dn plunged in the forrest." This qoute means a lot of things moslty how urgent the springs were and how it crossed the steams.

Organization and Development of Ideas: 1

The writer presents the thesis that the author uses language "to add tone and mood to the text," but this thesis is not developed appropriately. The organization of ideas is weak. The first sentence functions as a perfunctory introduction, and there is no conclusion. A transitional phrase ("Another example is") is used to connect paragraphs, and while the quoted text is presented in separate paragraphs, it is not made clear whether they exemplify tone or mood or both. Quoted text evidence from paragraph 19 is provided as two examples of how the writer thinks that Bond adds tone and mood to describing the final encounter with the leopard, but the writer's explanations of how Bond's language conveys tone or mood are only vaguely related to the task ("the author enjoys bulding toward the encounter"; "its an important piece in the story"; "moslty how urgent the springs were"). Overall, the development of ideas is minimal. Additionally, limited word choice ("because its an important piece in the story"; "This qoute means a lot of things") weakens the effectiveness of the written expression. This response reflects a limited understanding of the writing purpose.

Conventions: 1

The writing demonstrates an inconsistent command of grade-level-appropriate conventions. The writer demonstrates adequate sentence construction and shows an awareness of necessary punctuation. The grammar is generally correct with a few errors including a missing apostrophe ("its an important piece"). Many misspellings ("artice," "suprise," "bulding," "a dn," "forrest," "qoute," "moslty," "steams [streams]") and capitalization errors ("in the artice," "i decided") are present in the writing. Despite the errors, the reader can understand the writer's thoughts.

Response 2

In the Excert "The Leopard" a guy moved back to the Himalayas after being in the city the animals soon become a accustom to him. Throughout the stary the author uses stong language choices to build up the encounters he has with leopard in the mountains. For example the author says " orange-gold leopard poised on a rock about twenty feet above me" this show the presence of the leopard and how scary it must have been to encounter him. The guy later was going home afterf seeing the leopard earlier that day when he saw what he thought was to bright eyes staring at him he says " I stood still, my heart banging away against my ribs" he was so afraid of the leopard all to fing out they were fireflies. The guy found a area in the mountains with a place to bathe that the summer vistitors had not discovered. In this place he found a spotted forktail in which he wanted to find the nest of so waited but the bird had moved out of sight so the man stood up to see better when he saw it. He saw the leopard the author says " stood up suddenly, in time to see, not the forktail on the doorstep, but the leopard bounding away with a grunt of surprise." It is made clear throught the language and choice of word in the passage built up the strong surpise and fear of his final encounter with the leopard.

Organization and Development of Ideas: 2

The writer presents a general thesis statement that "the author uses stong language choices" in the buildup to his final encounter with the leopard, but this thesis is only partially developed. The response has a limited organizational structure that follows the chronology of the story. There is no introduction, but there is a conclusion that provides a clearer statement of the thesis ("language . . . built up the strong surpise and fear of his final encounter"). The writer presents evidence to support the thesis by including quoted text that highlights the instances in the story when Bond expresses fear or surprise along with paraphrased details of the story ("The guy later was going home . . . bright eyes staring at him"; "The guy found a area . . . to see better when he saw it"). Development is partial as the writer cites examples of how Ruskin Bond describes himself being afraid in the story, but these examples are not consistently connected to how the language choices are strong or impactful. The evidence is insufficiently explained because the writer identifies Bond's emotions ("how scary it must have been"; "he was so afraid of the leopard") but does not explain how these moments exemplify the use of strong language; the writer conveys how Bond's fear in paragraphs 6 and 10 builds up to the encounter in paragraph 19. The expression of ideas is basically clear in the effort to analyze how Bond's descriptions of his fears build an understanding for the reader of what his emotions were at the story's end. This response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

Conventions: 0

The writing demonstrates little to no command of grade-level-appropriate conventions. The essay contains repeated examples of sentence construction errors ("In this place he found . . . when he saw it"; "It is made clear throught . . . encounter with the leopard"), and several run-on sentences ("In the Excert . . . accustom to him"; "For example the author says . . . to encounter him"; "The guy later was going home . . . they were fireflies"; "He saw the leopard . . . 'a grunt of surprise'") occur because of missing sentence boundaries. Incidents of grammatical and usage errors are present ("become a accustom to," "this show," "to bright eyes," "found a area," "to see better when he saw it"). Additionally, there are a number of misspellings ("Excert," "stary," "stong," "throught") and several missing commas after introductory clauses, before quotations, and before conjunctions. The errors, especially those with sentence boundaries and construction, impact the clarity of the writing and the reader's understanding of the writer's ideas.

Score Point 3

Response 1

In excerpts and literature, authors use different types of language. It is sometimes used to build up to something. In "The Leopard" the author uses language to build up to the second encounter with the leopard.

The author uses imagery to describe the leopard. The excerpt says the character saw a "sinewy, orange-gold leopard"(6) that "melted into the shadows"(8). This shows that the leopard is a sneaky animal.

The author foreshadows a second encounter with the leopard. The character thinks they see "two bright eyes staring at [them] from a thicket"(10). This sentence shows that the character in the excerpt is aware of the leopard's presence, and it makes them nervous.

Organization and Development of Ideas: 1

The writer attempts a thesis in the first paragraph by essentially repeating the prompt ("In 'The Leopard' the author uses language to build up to the second encounter with the leopard"), but this thesis is a weak and vague presentation of a controlling idea. The organization is also weak. The introduction is ineffective as it presents vague and general ideas ("is sometimes used to build up to something"), and there is no conclusion. The second and third paragraphs are organized to separately address Ruskin Bond's use of imagery and foreshadowing, giving a minimal amount of structure to the response. The writer uses quoted text from paragraphs 6 and 8 to show examples of imagery and then quoted text from paragraph 10 as an example of foreshadowing. The accompanying explanations ("the leopard is a sneaky animal"; "aware of the leopard's presence, and it makes them nervous") are insufficient to give a reader more than a limited idea of how Bond is using language to build to the second encounter with the leopard. Word choice is limited and impedes the quality of the essay. Overall, a limited understanding of the writing purpose is demonstrated by this minimally developed analysis of the passage.

Conventions: 2

The writing demonstrates consistent command of grade-level-appropriate conventions. The construction of sentences is consistently correct as is the use of proper grammar. The capitalization is consistently correct as is the spelling, with only a few errors occurring ("language," "describe"). The punctuation is also consistently correct, with the writer appropriately embedding quotations and correctly using brackets ("eyes staring at [them] from"). Any errors present do not impact the clarity of the writing.

Response 2

The author uses the language throughout the story to build up the leopard encounter through the animal noises and the author actions.

Normally Ruskin Bond the author, he travels through the forest until he hears noises from the animals and clues in that there might be an unwanted visitor. The noises that he heard were from the young birds, and other animals which follows "I heard them chattering in the trees, and I knew I was not the cause of their excitement." and "As I crossed the stream and began climbing the hill, the grunting and chattering increased." Both of these are significant because it shows that due to the sudden noise from the animals which the author strange through his daily walks, shows that something or someone was disturbing them. Another idea is that this would only mark the beginning of their interaction and that they would meet again at another time in the forest.

When the author found out about the leopard he decided to ignore it and go for a forktail he had discovered. He wanted to find the forktail home because simply he was curious so he formulated a plan and it went like "But where had she gone? Probably into the walls of the ravine, where I felt sure she was guarding her nest." and "I decided to take her by surprise, and stood up suddenly." These texts are evident in the building up of the suspense that something is about to go wrong and that there's going to be another visitor besides the birds.

Overall the suspense from the author's failed plan, and the growing suspicions from the other animals show that the leopard was going to pop up near the bird's nest.

Organization and Development of Ideas: 2

A thesis is present but not clearly identifiable because the idea is divided between the introduction and conclusion. The thesis idea is that through the descriptions of animal noises and the author's actions, suspense is created in the buildup to the final encounter with the leopard. The focus of the essay is not always easy to follow. In the second and third paragraphs, the ideas are organized to follow the plot of the story, but this structure does not effectively support the logical development of ideas because the writer's intended point is sometimes unclear. In the second paragraph, the writer uses quoted text evidence and explanation to describe what happens in the story ("he hears noises from the animals . . . there might be an unwanted visitor"), but the explanation at the end of the paragraph ("this would only mark the beginning . . . they would meet again") that a future meeting has been foreshadowed is not supported by the provided evidence. Text evidence is quoted to describe what happened with the explanation that Bond is building suspense into the story ("something is about to go wrong and that there's going to be another visitor besides the birds"), and the writer's ideas become clearer but are still insufficiently explained. Overall, the development of ideas generally shows how Bond's storytelling builds up to the final encounter with the leopard but lacks examination of any specific language use. Additionally, the writer's word choice is general ("noises from the animals"; "other animals"; "noise from the animals"; "something or someone"; "something is about to go wrong") and conveys ideas imprecisely. Overall, this response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

Conventions: 1

The writing demonstrates an inconsistent command of grade-level-appropriate conventions. In both sentences in which the writer attempts to incorporate quoted text ("The noises that he heard . . . 'the grunting and chattering increased'"; "He wanted to find the forktail . . . 'and stood up suddenly'"), there are sentence construction errors. Errors with grammar and usage occur ("the author actions"; "Ruskin Bond the author, he travels"; "at an another time"; "the forktail home"; "an plan"), and other errors in wording ("the author strange through his daily walks") make the meaning unclear. There are also some minor misspellings ("bulid," "encouter," "vistor") and missing or misplaced commas. Despite the errors that are present, the reader can understand the writer's thoughts.

Response 3

In the excerpt, the author uses the language eerie and foreshadowing to build a creating of suspense in the story, with the encounter of the leopard.

When the narrator first encounters the leopard, in paragraph 6, "It was not looking towards me, but had its head thrust attentively forward, in the direction of the ravine". This creates the narrator to at least make an idea or diversion so that the leopard doesn't see them as prey. But it still causes the narrator to have a spooked feeling of what could have happen if the narrator later on didn't scare the leopard by sharply clapping their hands together.

Then in paragraph 10, it says, "I looked around nervously and saw two bright eyes staring at me from the thicket. I stood still, my heart banging against my rib". The foreshadowing in this has the narrator in a suspenseful position, which gives an explanation that even when they went to the forest during the day and made themselves known in presence to the leopard that they were there. The narrator still is scared of the leopard. And still in paragraph 10, "Then the eyes danced away, and I realized that they were only fireflies". This makes the narrator relieved from the interaction of the eyes misinterpreted.

In conclusion, the author wanted to add a bit of suspense in the story of what encounters and adventures the narrator has along its journey and that it's not always safe in the forests unless you make it aware of your presence, to make it safe. But it was all just a cause of foreshadowing and eerie feeling to have on the narrator, of how they truly felt as the story keeps going.

Organization and Development of Ideas: 2

The writer presents a thesis that the author, Ruskin Bond, uses an eerie feeling and foreshadowing to build suspense into the story of his encounter with the leopard, but the thesis is only partially developed. The response has a clear structure with an introduction and a conclusion, and the ideas follow the chronological progression of the narrative, but the final encounter with the leopard is never addressed, weakening the focus. The writer includes quoted textual evidence from paragraphs 6 and 10 of the story, but the explanations ("it still causes the narrator to have a spooked feeling of what could have happen"; "foreshadowing in this has the narrator in a suspenseful position"; "narrator still is scared of the leopard") are insufficient to fully establish the eeriness and foreshadowing that are claimed to be key to the buildup of suspense. The written expression does not always convey the ideas clearly. Some sentences and phrases ("the author uses the language eerie"; "it still causes the narrator to have a spooked feeling of what could have happen if the narrator later on didn't scare the leopard"; "makes the narrator relieved from the interaction of the eyes misinterpreted") interfere with the intended meaning and reduce the clarity of the message. Overall, this response reflects a partial understanding of the writing task.

Conventions: 1

The writing demonstrates an inconsistent command of grade-level-appropriate conventions. Sentence construction errors due to grammar and usage problems are frequent ("to build a creating of suspense in the story"; "This creates the narrator to at least make an idea"; "to have a spooked feeling of what could have happen"; "which gives an explanation"; "made themselves known in [presence] to the leopard"; "makes the narrator relieved from the interaction of the eyes misinterpreted"; "it was all just a cause of foreshadowing and eerie feeling to have on the narrator"). Additionally, misspellings are also frequent ("foreshadowing," "leopard," "around," "suspenseful," "presence," "fireflies," "relieved"). Despite the errors, the reader can still understand the writer's thoughts.

Score Point 4

Response 1

The author uses language throughout the excerpt to build towards the encounter with the leopard in paragraph 19 using strong imagery as well as similes to describe the events leading up to the encounter.

Similes in the excerpt can be used to describe the behavior of the wildlife surrounding the author. Lines like “the young ones scuffled and wrestled like boys” convey the behavior of the younger animals around him that he observes. The author paying attention to these details of the other wildlife contributes to the encounter later on.

Figurative language is used quite often throughout the excerpt to illustrate the author’s interactions with his surroundings. For example, the line “I decorated myself with bracken fronds” as well as the rest of paragraph 16 describe events from right before the encounter with the leopard. This gives context as to how the author was even able to see it!

Throughout *The Leopard*, the author continuously uses imagery & and similes to describe events leading up to his encounter with the leopard in paragraph 19.

Organization and Development of Ideas: 2

The response begins with the thesis that the author, Ruskin Bond, uses “strong imagery as well as similes to describe the events leading up to the encounter” with the leopard in paragraph 19. The thesis is present but partially developed, and the focus may not always be consistent. The essay has a purposeful structure that includes an introduction and a conclusion, but those are more perfunctory than effective because they simply state and reiterate the thesis. However, the organization is limited because the structure may not always support the logical development of the thesis. In the second paragraph, the writer presents a piece of quoted text (“scuffled and wrestled like boys”) that is evidence of Bond using a simile “to describe the behavior of the wildlife.” In the third paragraph, evidence of figurative language (“decorated myself with bracken fronds”) or imagery is quoted “to illustrate the author’s interactions with his surroundings.” The response includes some text-based evidence, but the explanations of the evidence in both paragraphs are insufficient because it is not clear how the similes and imagery build toward the encounter in paragraph 19 or contribute to the effectiveness of the story. The explanations of the evidence in both paragraphs are insufficient because it is not clear how similes and imagery build toward the paragraph 19 encounter with the leopard or contribute to the effectiveness of the story. Nevertheless, the writer does show a better-than-limited understanding of a literary analysis by attempting to examine Bond’s use of literary devices in the story, even if that examination is not fully developed. Additionally, the expression of ideas is basic, and the writer uses some more specific word choices appropriate to the task (“imagery,” “similes,” “convey,” “Figurative language,” “illustrate,” “context”). In the end, this response reflects a partial understanding of the writing purpose.

Conventions: 2

The writer demonstrates a consistent command of grade-level-appropriate conventions. The response has a few errors, but those errors do not impact the clarity of the writing.

Response 2

In the story, *from The Leopard*, by Ruskin Bond, the author uses such thrilling language when leading up the main event. Some ways the author shows his uniqueness in the excerpt is providing animals noise in the background, relating personal experience, and showing how his actions affect the way the environment responded. Bond use such creative language to show how things are affect and it can explain to the audience the importance of living creatures and their ecosystem.

In the story, Bond demonstrates language when he inserts sounds of the wild creatures. For an example, Bond writes "I heard the cry of the barking deer." (Paragraph 3). Though deers don't acutally bark, the audience understands the meaning of what he is trying to present We understand that when it the right time of day you might hear the call of a deer from the distance. This helps lead up to the story so we get an idea of all the wild noises and their connection in the forest.

When trying to use certain language in the text, it is important you can relate back to yourself. Bond highlights this by giving personal expxerience and his feeling towards the environment so we see the first person point of view. The first person point of view is shown when he use this language saying, "I saw pine martens and a handsome red fox, and I recognized the footprints of a bear." (Paragraph 3). The author can make a connecton with the animals in the forest by the way they walk. He relates his perosnal experience by the reconition of the bears and other wild lives footprints.

The way someone acts send a response. No matter if your a human or a creature we all have a reaction. One way the author uses language was by the way his certain actions affected the animals. He shows this by saying, "I clapped my hands sharply, the leopard sprang away into the thickets." (Paragraph 7). Bonds actions connect to the environment by there reactions. This is important when leading up the the event because it allows us to understand how he affects the animals.

The author in the excerpt uses language that connects the story. The language he uses helps make the story follow and it build up leading to the main event. Whe author is introduce to the leopard he understand the approach needed to form a connective bond and not compeletly set the wild life off balance.

Organization and Development of Ideas: 3

This response begins with the thesis that the author, Ruskin Bond, uses language in the story in three ways “providing animals noise in the background, relating personal experience, and showing how his actions affect the way the environment responded”. The focus is consistent throughout, creating a response that is unified and easy to follow. A purposeful structure that includes an effective introduction and conclusion is evident, and the organizational structure is appropriate and effectively supports the development of the thesis as the writer addresses each of the three thesis ideas in turn but also has an overall connecting theme of how Bond is relating to nature. The writer includes a conclusion (“he understand the approach needed to form a connective bond and not compeletly set the wild life off balance”). The response includes specific, well-chosen, and relevant text-based evidence that is clearly explained and consistently supports and develops the thesis. The writer fully develops and supports the thesis with relevant, quoted text evidence and clear explanations. In the second paragraph, the writer explains how Bond is becoming familiar with all the animal sounds in the forest (“I heard the cry of the barking deer”). In the third paragraph, the writer explains how Bond is making a personal connection with his surroundings (“can make a connection with the animals in the forest by the way they walk”). And in the fourth paragraph, the writer explains how Bond can influence animals (“I clapped my hands sharply, the leopard sprang away”). The overall effect is a clear analysis of how Ruskin Bond uses language to help readers become immersed in the story and appreciate “the importance of living creatures and their ecosystem.” The expression of ideas is clear and effective because the writer’s word choice is specific and purposeful, and sentences and phrases are effectively crafted to convey the writer’s ideas and contribute to the overall quality of the response and the clarity of the message. With the strengths shown in organizing and developing ideas that respond well to the task, this essay reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

Conventions: 1

The writing demonstrates an inconsistent command of grade-level-appropriate conventions. Even though a missing period in the second paragraph creates a run-on sentence (“Though deers don’t actually bark . . . from the distance”), sentence construction is mostly correct. A few sentences are difficult to read due to missing words (“The language he uses helps make the story follow and it build up”). Several grammatical errors, mostly relating to verb tense, are present (“use[s],” “affect[ed],” “send[s],” “build[s],” “introduce[d],” “understand[s]”), creating awkwardness in the writing. In addition, there are several spelling errors (“unquiness,” “escerpt,” “demostrates,” “deers,” “acutally,” “perosnal,” “reconition,” “your [you’re],” “there [their],” “compeletly”), but the misspellings are more minor in nature. Capitalization and punctuation are both more consistently correct with errors limited to missing apostrophes in possessive nouns (“animals noise,” “wild lives footprints,” “Bonds actions”). The response has several errors, but the reader can understand the writer’s thoughts.

Score Point 5

Response 1

Every author has their own way of building up to the climax of the plot. In the excerpt, "The Leopard" by Ruskin Bond, the author encountered a particular animal he has not met before in the familiar stream he went to. The author uses language throughout the excerpt to build toward the encounter with the leopard in paragraph 19 by creating a sense of familiarity and suspense.

When Bond started to visit the stream, the animals weren't always inviting. Later, though, the animals got used to his presence. In paragraph 4, Bond said that "the birds and animals soon grew accustomed to my presence." This indicates that after visiting the same stream for a while, the animals in the habitat familiarized themselves with him. Again in paragraph 4, Bond said that "my approach did not disturb them." While animals are usually alarmed with strangers, this shows that Bond isn't considered a stranger to them since he is now known by the animals residing by the stream.

Before Bond met the leopard, there was a sense of suspense approaching the paragraph. For example, in paragraph 5, it was said: "I heard them chattering in the trees, and I knew I was not the cause of their excitement." This shows that while Bond was someone important to the animals in the habitat, this time, another visitor had arrived and directed a lot of attention to himself. Another example is in paragraph 6, "as though the langoors were trying to warn me of some hidden danger." At this point, the suspense has been built up by making the reader curious of what the possible hidden danger could be and what was causing the environment to be so different.

All in all, the author created the plot by using the help of the familiar animals around him. Starting off as strangers, Bond was able to build a connection with the animals by the foothills of the Himalayas and having them introduce them to someone foreign. The connection between Bond and the environment is unbeatable, similar to the story he brought and the experience he shared.

Organization and Development of Ideas: 3

This response begins with the thesis that “to the climax of the plot . . . by creating a sense of familiarity and suspense.” The introduction and conclusion are more effective than those that simply state and reiterate the thesis because they bring the reader into and out of the essay with a sense of completeness. The organization within the second and third paragraphs is logical. Transitions aid the reader and make the analysis easy to follow (“Later, though”; “In paragraph 4”; “This indicates”; “Again in paragraph 4”; “For example”; “This shows”; “At this point”; “All in all”). Support for the thesis is fully developed in the second and third paragraphs. The writer cites four pieces of well-chosen, relevant text from paragraphs 4 through 6 of the story that clearly show how Ruskin Bond became familiar to the animals in the forest, and then how suspense was created by the chattering “langoors” alerting him to an unknown danger. The explanations of the evidence are sufficiently elaborate to clearly show how the evidence connects back to the thesis ideas of creating familiarity and then building suspense around an unknown threat. Additionally, the writer presents a well-written essay. The expression of ideas is clear and effective because word choices (“the climax of the plot”; “a particular animal”; “habitat”; “usually alarmed”; “residing by the stream”), interesting phrasing (“he has not met before in the familiar stream”; “the animals weren’t always inviting”; “this time, another visitor had arrived”; “Starting off as strangers, Bond was able to build a connection”), and well-crafted sentences enhance the quality of the response. Even though the writer focuses on Bond’s first encounter with the leopard rather than the one in paragraph 19, the other strengths of the response are enough to offset that miscue. Overall, this response reflects a thorough understanding of the writing purpose.

Conventions: 2

The writing demonstrates consistent command of grade-level-appropriate conventions. Although a few errors do occur, such as the writer misusing “themselves” instead of “themselves”, these errors do not impact the clarity of the writing.

Response 2

Language is an extremely powerful tool. When used to describe, words and their tone can sway one's perception about any subject. In this excerpt from "The Leopard" by Ruskin Bond, the author uses curiously observant and suspenseful language to build up to the encounter with the leopard in paragraph 19.

Although the main encounter with the leopard is in paragraph 19, it is not the first one. In paragraph 6, after hearing the "[animals] chattering in the trees" and knowing that "[the author] was not the cause of their excitement", the leopard makes its first appearance. While the build up to this meeting was suspenseful, there is even more afterwards. The leopard "sprang away... making absolutely no sound as it melted into the shadows", leaving the reader wondering where the leopard has gone and what its intentions were. The author does not see the leopard for weeks, but describes how they are aware of its presence. This further makes the reader think about the leopard's intentions and what it will do on their next meeting. Because the author guaranteed another encounter with the leopard after its first off-putting appearance, it is clear that suspenseful language is used throughout the excerpt to build up to the final encounter.

To pair with the suspenseful language, the author is also curiously observant during the entire excerpt. Since the first paragraphs, the author describes the animals they see and how they react. An example of this is right before the author's second meeting with the leopard- what the build up has been leading to. While attempting to discover a certain bird's nest, the author says their intentions themselves- "...I was simply curious to see its home." Their intentions match up with their actions as they "[sit] perfectly still for about ten minutes" in hopes to see the bird's home. The author is dedicated to observing the bird's home, so much so that they summoned their reserves of patience to sit still for longer than they usually would. Right after this, the leopard encounter ensues, and the author's curiosity remains apparent.

Through the author's curiosity and suspenseful language, the build up to the final encounter with the leopard becomes satisfying. The reader has been left to wonder about the leopard's location and intentions since the beginning of the excerpt, and the author's curious dedication to find the bird's home leads straight into it. With different words and tone, readers could have been afraid of the second encounter with the leopard and not want it to happen- but with the author's build up strategy, the reader craves to see it.

Organization and Development of Ideas: 3

This response begins with the thesis that the author builds up to the final encounter with the leopard by using language that is “curiously observant and suspenseful.” The two ideas in the thesis are fully developed with a thorough examination of Ruskin Bond’s two encounters with the leopard in the story. The essay has a clear organizational structure with an especially effective conclusion that both summarizes the previous ideas and briefly discusses how Bond’s use of language affects the reader. Transitions are employed throughout the writing to connect ideas and create a logical flow (“Although”; “While the”; “This further makes”; “Because . . . it is clear that”; “To pair with”; “Since”; “An example of this is”; “so much so that”; “Right after this”). Quoted text is used sparsely but effectively by being embedded in the writer’s explanations of how Bond uses language. The explanations are fully developed and show complete understanding of the task. In the second paragraph, the writer explains how the surprising encounter with the leopard in paragraph 6 creates suspense in the story (“makes the reader think about the leopard’s intentions and what it will do”), and how Bond assures that the leopard will make a return appearance. In the third paragraph, the writer explains how Bond’s own descriptions of his curiosity build up to the climax. Bond is not searching for the leopard but rather has “summoned [his] reserves of patience” to observe a bird’s home, but when he tries to surprise the bird, he is surprised by the leopard. The writer’s analysis shows insight into how Bond has constructed his story and uses language to affect the reader. Additionally, the expression of ideas is very effective. Specific and purposeful words and phrases (“extremely powerful tool”; “can sway one’s perception”; “curiously observant”; “there is even more afterwards”; “its first off-putting appearance”; “reserves of patience”; “remains apparent”; “the reader craves”) enhance the quality of the response. Overall, this response reflects a thorough understanding of the task and writing purpose.

Conventions: 2

The writing demonstrates a consistent command of grade-level-appropriate conventions. The response contains a few errors, but these errors do not impact the clarity of the writing.

Condition Code: Off Topic

During the scoring process, the Automated Scoring Engine (ASE) assigns a “condition code” to student responses that are determined to be non-scorable by the ASE. The following student responses included language patterns that reflected an off-topic response and received the associated condition code. Responses that do not address the prompt receive a score of zero.

Response 1

i like when it is warm during the summer months like end of may june july August and September and not when cold during the winter months like december janrey February i like when it is warm outside

Response 2

I love when readers put powreful words i fell like there so beutifull to read about and to learn about sometimes when you read stories it feels like your in it if you just close your eyes and lisen thats what i love about readeing stories there so peaceful.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Email: Friend or Foe?

- 1 Email is dominating our time at work. Many of us begin each day by checking email, responding to email, and sending new email. Over the course of our workday, we get frequent notifications about email arriving in our inboxes. These notifications send a subliminal message to our brains that we had better stop what we're doing and check our email. The constant interruptions can be frustrating and reduce our productivity. When the idea of using email was first developed in the 1970s, it seemed like a groundbreaking business practice. But too much of a good thing has made dealing with email an overwhelming chore for many people. Even so, email continues to be the primary workplace communication method, with stuffed inboxes taking up a large part of our time.
- 2 The burden imposed by email is painfully apparent in the workplace. The average employee sends or receives over 100 email messages a day. What began as a tool to improve communication has become the opposite—a never-ending stream of distracting and time-consuming email. In a 2021 *New Yorker* article, one worker said, "I'm frazzled—just keeping up" with the constant flow of email. Another felt "an almost uncontrollable need" to stop work and check email. The newer generations favor the use of technological tools such as instant messaging and videoconferencing to collaborate with others. Workers don't even have to be in the office anymore. To increase worker satisfaction and productivity, companies should replace the urgent demands of the inbox with newer communication tools.
- 3 Proponents of email assert that it is the best way to communicate. They argue that email is fast and convenient. It is easily accessible to everyone and inexpensive to use. Email reaches recipients immediately, and the same information can be sent to multiple people. It also provides the sender with a permanent record of transactions and communications that phone calls and video conferences may not. While email is faster and often more convenient than traditional mailed letters and scheduled, in-person meetings, the argument for using it fails to establish that it is better than newer technologies.
- 4 In fact, members of Generation Z (Gen Z), or people born between 1997 and 2012, prefer using technology such as videoconferencing along with text and voice messaging. They believe that these tools make them more productive and balanced in

their work and personal lives. According to a 2021 *New York Times* article, email preferences change with age. A 2020 study from the consulting firm Creative Strategies found that “there’s a generational gap in primary work tools.” For those over 30, email was their primary way to communicate. But for those under 30, “Google Docs was the app workers associated most with collaboration, followed by Zoom and iMessage.”

- 5 Gen Z business owner Adam Simmons, 24, thinks that email is outdated. He prefers communicating with customers and colleagues using “literally anything but email.” Simmons claims that email puts “all your stressors in one area . . . that’s a really negative way to live your life.” For him, instant messaging or phone calls and texts work better and are less frustrating than email. Other Gen Z workers agree with Simmons. A recent survey by consulting firm Deloitte about the effects of extensive emailing on younger workers showed that “46 percent of Gen Z respondents feel stressed all or most of the time.” Email interrupts the flow of their day and makes it easy to lose track of other tasks. Harrison Stevens, 23, started a vintage clothing company while in college. He gives his clients his personal phone number or uses texts. “I think a lot of people find it easier and more convenient to send a text than compose an email,” Stevens says. “There’s something less formal about using your fingers and thumbs on a phone keyboard, rather than a computer keyboard.”
- 6 Companies that are working to reduce email are seeing improvements in the workplace. A *Harvard Business Review* article describes the case of Atos, a global technology company with over 100,000 employees. CEO Thierry Breton noticed that his employees were constantly distracted by email. He thought that this was having adverse effects on his company’s productivity, so he decided to eliminate as much email communication as possible. Breton “built a social network for the entire enterprise.” The network contains 7,500 communities, representing all the projects that require collaboration. Employees enter discussions when it’s convenient for them, and email has been reduced by 60 percent company-wide.
- 7 Let us adopt the practices that are improving working environments today. For our own well-being and productivity, we should encourage those who manage our work lives to replace outdated technology with newer, more efficient methods of communication.

English II Reading Short Constructed Response

Prompt

Read the question carefully. Then enter your answer in the box provided.

How does the author support the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

Item-Specific Rubric

Score: 2

A complete response may include, but is not limited to, one of the following responses about the author's support for the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace:

- Workers are often overwhelmed by the number of emails they need to read and send.
- Sending fewer emails leads to more productivity in the workplace.

A complete response will include at least one piece of supporting evidence from the text.

A complete response may include, but is not limited to, the following evidence cited or paraphrased from the text:

- *"I'm frazzled---just keeping up"* (paragraph 2)
- *They believe that these tools make them more productive and balanced in their work and personal lives.* (paragraph 4)
- *For him, instant messaging or phone calls and texts work better and are less frustrating than email.* (paragraph 5)

Evidence is accurately used to support the response.

The response and the evidence to support it are based on the text.

Score: 1

A partial response may include one of the answers expected in the complete response. However, the evidence included does not support the answer stated, or no evidence is provided.

A partial response may cite or paraphrase relevant text evidence, but the student does not include an accurate answer about the author's support for the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace.

Score: 0

- The response is incorrect.
- The response is not based on the text.
- No response is provided.

Sample Student Responses

Score Point 0

Response 1

Emails have a negative affect ona workplace. It all depends on what you say, how you say something, and if your talking proffesionlally.

The writer does not provide an accurate answer about how the author supports the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace (“Emails have a negative affect ona workplace. It all depends on what you say, how you say something, and if your talking proffesionlally”), and no relevant text evidence from the selection is provided.

Response 2

i think the author was saying that email has negative effects on the workplace because all of their stuff can be hacked easily by the right person

The writer does not provide an accurate answer about how the author supports the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace (“i think the author was saying that email has negative effects on the workplace because all of their stuff can be hacked easily by the right person”), and no relevant text evidence from the selection is provided.

Response 3

A Harard Business Review article describes the case of Atos, a global technology company with over 100,000 employees.

The writer does not provide an accurate answer about how the author supports the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace. The writer provides irrelevant text evidence that does not support an accurate answer, (“A Harard Business Review article describes the case of Atos, a global technology company with over 100,000 employees”).

Response 4

he supports it because when your working and you dont check your email you could miss out on alot of things.

The writer does not provide an accurate answer about how the author supports the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace (“he supports it because when your working and you dont check your email you could miss out on alot of things”), and no relevant text evidence from the selection is provided.

Score Point 1

Response 1

“ 46 percent of the gen z respondents feel stressed all or most of the time”

In this partial response, the writer does not provide an accurate answer about how the author supports the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace. However, the writer provides relevant text evidence (“46 percent of the gen z respondents feel stressed all or most of the time”).

Response 2

The author claims that email has a negative effect on the workplace. the author supports this claim by stating, “What began as a tool to improve communication has become the opposite- never- ending stream of distracting and time consuming email.” this is evidence of the authors claim that emails have a negative effect on the workplace.

In this partial response, the writer does not provide an accurate answer about how the author supports the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace. However, the writer provides relevant text evidence (“What began as a tool to improve communication has become the opposite—never-ending stream of distracting and time consuming email”).

Response 3

they have to stop at what their job is and view the email taking up time

In this partial response, the writer does not provide an accurate answer about how the author supports the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace. However, the writer paraphrases relevant text evidence (“they have to stop at what their job is and view the email taking up time”).

Response 4

the author in order to back up his claim that email has negative effects on the workplace gives clear examples of workplaces which have seen improvements in the company through minimizing the use of email company wide.

In this partial response, the writer provides an accurate answer about how the author supports the claim (“the author . . . gives clear examples . . . through minimizing the use of email company wide”) but does not provide relevant text evidence from the selection to support the answer.

Score Point 2

Response 1

The author supports the claim that email has a negative effect by giving examples of how stressed people are when using email. *"In a 2021 New Yorker article, one worker said, 'I'm frazzled-just keeping up' with the constant flow of email".* (pg2). This gives the reader an idea of how stressed out answering all those emails can be on top of trying to do your job.

In this complete response, the writer provides an accurate answer about how the author supports the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace ("by giving examples of how stressed people are when using email"). The writer supports this answer with relevant text evidence (*"In a 2021 New Yorker article, one worker said, 'I'm frazzled-just keeping up' with the constant flow of email"*).

Response 2

The author support the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace because email can distract us from doing what were and reply and affect our working time and with newers method of communicating is faster and effective and it doesn't take a lot of our time like email which distract us and it outdated. It was said that the newer generations liked anything but email because they feels frustrated, outdated and takes too much of out time to respond back and checking our emails.

In this complete response, the writer provides an accurate answer about how the author supports the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace ("because email can distract us . . . and it outdated"). The writer supports this answer with relevant paraphrased text evidence from the selection ("the newer generations . . . checking our emails").

Response 3

The author of "Email: Friend or Foe?" develops the idea that email negatively affects people's work and mental state. In the passage, it is stated that "46 percent of Gen Z respondents feel stressed all or most of the time." This statement highlights the degrading impacts email can have on one's mental state. It is also said that "The constant interruptions can be frustrating and reduce our productivity." This emphasizes the lack of work that is able to get done with the distraction of email. Ultimately, the author suggests that email causes more harm than good.

In this complete response, the writer provides an accurate answer about how the author supports the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace ("This emphasizes the lack of work that is able to get done with the distraction of email"). The writer supports this answer with relevant text evidence ("46 percent of Gen Z respondents feel stressed all or most of the time").

Response 4

The author supports the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace by articulating that many feel overwhelmed by the “never-ending stream of distracting and time-consuming email”, which can cause workers to lose morale as a result. Since more email messages are constantly flowing in, it can make it appear as though there is more to do than there really is and distract workers from doing their job.

In this complete response, the writer provides an accurate answer about how the author supports the claim that email has a negative effect on the workplace (“Since more email messages are constantly flowing in, it can make it appear as though there is more to do than there really is and distract workers from doing their job”). The writer supports this answer with relevant text evidence from the selection (“never-ending stream of distracting and time-consuming email.”)

Read the next two selections and answer the questions that follow.

Passage 1:

The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation

- 1 The word *meditation* stems from the Latin term *meditatum*, meaning “pondering.” Meditation is an ancient practice in which people learn to focus their attention and calm themselves. It has been practiced in most of the world’s religions for thousands of years. The oldest surviving images of meditation come from India and date from 5000 to 3500 BCE. The oldest surviving written texts pertaining to meditation, also from India, date from around 1500 BCE. Meditation first began to be popular in the West in the 1700s, after philosophical texts with references to meditation were translated by Europeans.
- 2 The sixteenth-century French philosopher Michel de Montaigne is quoted as saying, “The greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to oneself.” Daily scheduling and time demands can make it difficult to slow down and consciously think about wants and needs. In today’s active and high-stress world, many secular practitioners use meditation for relaxation and stress reduction.
- 3 There are many forms of meditation: spiritual, focused, mantra, and progressive, to name just a few. But they all have the same goal of achieving a calm state of mind. One frequently used meditation technique is mindfulness. The American Psychological Association describes this practice as “training your attention to achieve a mental state of calm concentration and positive emotions.” People practicing mindfulness meditation can achieve a mentally clear and emotionally peaceful state. There is clinical evidence that mindfulness has many health benefits as well. Stress has a significant negative impact on health and immunity. Researchers believe mindfulness meditation works by calming the body’s response to stress, reducing its negative impact on health and immunity.

The Practice of Mindfulness Meditation

- 4 Mindfulness meditation can be practiced anywhere, at any time. It requires only that people be aware of what they are feeling and sensing in the moment. Participants must slow down enough to

notice things around them and engage all of their senses—touch, sound, sight, smell, and taste. Those who practice mindful meditation intentionally focus on their breathing and what they are doing in the moment. In this way, they are often able to distance themselves from negative thoughts and find contentment. According to the article “What Is Mindfulness Meditation?,” this practice guides and encourages practitioners to examine their thoughts objectively: “It’s about noticing what’s happening without trying to change it.” Mindfulness meditation focuses on attention and acceptance.

- 5 Practicing mindfulness meditation outdoors provides an added bonus. When meditating in nature, practitioners are aware of everything around them—sounds and smells, air and light—because their faculties of perception are elevated. An article from *Psychreg Journal of Psychology*, “4 Benefits of Meditating in Nature,” states that the natural world can draw our attention to our surroundings and enhance our awareness. This sharpened awareness can have immediate restorative effects. Many people who meditate outdoors report feeling more relaxed, more balanced, and more prepared to cope with the stresses of everyday life. Research has shown that meditating in nature can even increase mental acuity. When people are meditating in nature, their hearing feels sharper, their skin receptors feel more sensitive, and their perception of smell is enhanced.

Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation

- 6 The health benefits gained through the practice of mindfulness meditation have long been lauded. Meditation has been studied in many clinical trials. According to the Mayo Clinic, “the overall evidence supports the effectiveness of meditation for various conditions.” People who meditate can better manage their negative feelings. Their imagination and creative abilities increase, as do their forbearance and tolerance levels. People who meditate regularly are able to improve their stress-management skills. Meditation has even been shown to help lower blood pressure, improve sleep quality, and aid in controlling a variety of medical conditions. The Mayo Clinic states that meditation should not be used to replace medical treatment. But it can often be used in combination with traditional medicine to support treatment and help people feel better.
- 7 Anyone, at any age, can practice mindfulness meditation. It requires no expensive equipment, and it is easy to begin. The most challenging part of practicing meditation may be finding a quiet setting and uninterrupted time to focus. Prioritizing these things is important. People can practice mindfulness meditation on their own, use guided meditation recordings and apps, or even attend

meditation classes. People often say they experience immediate improvement in both their physical and their emotional well-being. Best of all, if it is done regularly, the perks of meditation extend further. As meditation expert Tara Brach says in the *New York Times* "How to Meditate" guide, "The purpose of mindfulness meditation is to become mindful throughout all parts of our life, so that we're awake, present and openhearted in everything we do."

Prompt

Read the question carefully. Then enter your answer in the box provided.

What is the thesis of the article “The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation”? Support your answer with evidence from the article.

Item-Specific Rubric

Score: 2

A complete response may include, but is not limited to, one of the following responses explaining the thesis of the article, “The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation.”

- The thesis of the article is that people must take time to self-reflect as a way to deal with stress.
- The thesis of the article is that people can use mindfulness meditation to improve mental and physical health.

A complete response will include at least one piece of supporting evidence from the text.

A complete response may include, but is not limited to, the following evidence cited or paraphrased from the text:

- *In today’s active and high-stress world, many secular practitioners use meditation for relaxation and stress reduction.* (paragraph 2)
- *Mindfulness meditation can be practiced anywhere, at any time. It requires only that people be aware of what they are feeling and sensing in the moment.* (paragraph 4)
- *Many people who meditate outdoors report feeling more relaxed, more balanced, and more prepared to cope with the stresses of everyday life.* (paragraph 5)
- *Meditation has even been shown to help lower blood pressure, improve sleep quality, and aid in controlling a variety of medical conditions.* (paragraph 6)
- *The most challenging part of practicing meditation may be finding a quiet setting and uninterrupted time to focus, so prioritizing these things is important.* (paragraph 7)

Evidence is accurately used to support the response.

The response and the evidence to support it are based on the text.

Score: 1

A partial response may include one of the answers expected in the complete response. However, the evidence included does not support the answer stated, or no evidence is provided.

A partial response may cite or paraphrase relevant text evidence, but the student does not include an accurate answer that explains the thesis of the article.

Score: 0

- The response is incorrect.
- The response is not based on the text.
- No response is provided.

Sample Student Responses

Score Point 0

Response 1

meditation could be used in many different ways and how many different effects.

The writer does not provide an accurate answer to the question in the prompt nor sufficient textual evidence to support a correct answer. The writer provides a vague overall summary of the passage, but this answer is not an acceptable answer. The statement “many different effects” does not mention “positive” effects, which would have added specificity to the response.

Response 2

The article “The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation” is interesting because it explains in an informative tone about different types of meditation and the many effects it can have, as well as providing informational text from other people and the said effects it has had on them.

The writer does not provide an accurate answer to the question in the prompt and does not provide sufficient textual evidence to support a correct answer. The writer explains the passage’s tone and types of meditation with only a vague reference to a correct rubric answer. “Many effects it can have” is not as precise as “positive effects it can have” and does not receive credit.

Response 3

The thesis of the article “The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation” is, “the word meditation stems from the latin term meditatum, meaning “pondering.” I know that this is the thesis for this article, because it opens the passage up and prepares the audience for what they are about to read about.

The writer does not provide an accurate answer to the question in the prompt nor offer sufficient textual evidence to support a correct answer. The writer provides a definition and the root of the word “meditation,” followed by a comment on how to find the “thesis” and how to read the passage.

Response 4

The Thesis of the article "The Art and practice of mindfulness Meditation would be found in paragraph 1 as the very last sentence."Meditation first began to be popular in West in the 1700s, after philosophical texts with references to meditation were translated by Europeans."This shows how meditation first became popular. Which sets up the rest of the text to be in chronological order.

The writer does not provide an accurate answer to the question in the prompt and does not provide sufficient textual evidence that would support a correct answer. The writer mentions a thesis from paragraph 1 ("Meditation first began to be popular in the West in the 1700s, after philosophical texts with references to meditation were translated by Europeans"). This answer is not an acceptable answer. The remainder of the response provides information that is not relevant to the prompt.

Score Point 1

Response 1

Meditation is something that is used to clear your mind of stress and heal your spirit.

In this partial response, the writer provides an accurate answer (“used to clear your mind of stress and heal your spirit”) to the question posed in the prompt. However, the writer does not provide any evidence from the passage, either by directly quoting or paraphrasing, that could support the correct answer.

Response 2

Meditation is really helpful to people, especially that there is many forms of meditation to help us humans be relieved of stress.

In this partial response, the writer does include an accurate answer (“helpful to people . . . help us humans be relieved of stress”). However, the writer does not provide any evidence from the passage, either by directly quoting or paraphrasing, that could support the correct answer.

Response 3

Everyone can enjoy one thing many different ways, “There are many different forms of meditation... But they all have the same goal of achieving a calm state of mind.”

In this partial response, the writer offers an answer that is vague and does not receive credit (“Everyone can enjoy one thing many different ways”). However, the writer provides evidence from the passage by direct quotation that could support the correct answer.

Response 4

The thesis of the article “The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation” is “Meditation is an ancient practice in which people learn to focus their attention and calm themselves.” This sentence is a great thesis, it gives the a theme to the story which is Meditation, and also gives examples of how the story tells you how to calm yourself.

In this partial response, the writer provides an accurate answer for a thesis using the definition of meditation from paragraph 1 (“Meditation is an ancient practice in which people learn to focus their attention and calm themselves”). However, the writer does not provide evidence from the passage, either by directly quoting or paraphrasing, that could support the correct answer. The remainder of the response is development in support of the thesis.

Score Point 2

Response 1

The thesis of this article is that meditation is an ancient practice that's been proved to be beneficial in lowering stress and reducing health risks. This is explained further in paragraph 6 by stating that "meditation has even been shown to help lower blood pressure, improve sleep quality, and aid in controlling a variety of medical conditions."

In this complete response, the writer provides an accurate answer ("that meditation is an ancient practice that's been proved to be beneficial in lowering stress and reducing health risks") and offers evidence by direct quotation ("in paragraph 6 by stating that 'meditation has even been shown to help lower blood pressure, improve sleep quality, and aid in controlling a variety of medical conditions'").

Response 2

Meditation can be used for people who deal with stress and is good for your health. You can see why this is good for your health in paragraph 4, "When people are meditating in nature, their hearing feels sharper, their skin receptors feel more sensitive, and their perception of smell is enhanced."

In this complete response, the writer provides an accurate answer ("Meditation can be used for people who deal with stress and is good for your health") and direct quotation ("in paragraph 4, 'When people are meditating in nature, their hearing feels sharper, their skin receptors feel more sensitive, and their perception of smell is enhanced'").

Response 3

The thesis of the article "The Art and Practice of Mindful Meditation" is people practicing mindfulness meditation can achieve a mentally clear and emotionally peaceful state. In studies it is shown that people "who meditate can better manage their negative feelings" (Paragraph 6). The article proves that there are health and mental benefits to mindful meditating. When someone mediates, they are more relaxed and face stress in a better way, than if their mind was not as calm.

In this complete response, the writer offers an accurate answer ("people practicing mindfulness meditation can achieve a mentally clear and emotionally peaceful state") and provides evidence by directly quoting the passage ("'who meditate can better manage their negative feelings' [Paragraph 6]").

Response 4

Meditation, no matter the form, is used to achieve a “calm state of mind,” create an overall more positive mindset, and benefit us physically. Meditation is known to “help lower blood pressure, improve sleep quality, and aid in controlling a variety of medical conditions.” It relieves stress and enhances our senses to create a sense of “calmness.”

In this complete response, the writer offers an accurate answer (“Meditation, no matter the form, is used to achieve a ‘calm state of mind,’ create an overall more positive mindset, and benefit us physically”) and provides evidence by directly quoting the passage (“help lower blood pressure, improve sleep quality, and aid in controlling a variety of medical conditions”).

English II Writing Short Constructed Response

English II Writing Short Constructed Response

Passage: "First Job"

Original Paragraph:

(12) One morning as he was dejectedly eating cereal at the kitchen table, his mom mentioned a sign she had seen about a job opening at the local bookstore. (13) Jonah scoffed at the idea. (14) His least favorite subject was English, and he hated to read. (15) He would rather be active and spend his time outdoors. (16) Why would he ever want to work at a bookstore? (17) His mom reminded him that nothing else seemed to be working out gently.

Prompt

Sentence 17 needs to be revised. In the space provided, rewrite sentence 17 in a clear and effective way.

Item-Specific Rubric

Score: 1

The response is a complete sentence that expresses the ideas in a clear and effective way.

Score: 0

The response is not a complete sentence or does not express the ideas in a clear and effective way.

Sample Student Responses

Score Point 0

Response 1

His mom reminded him that nothing else seemed to be working.

The writer does not revise the sentence successfully and omits a required original element that must be repositioned, the adverb (“gently”) or a synonym of this word, in a successful revision.

Response 2

His mom reminded him that not everything will work out gently in the end.

The writer does not revise the sentence in a clear and effective way. The adverb remains misplaced in the subordinate clause, modifying the incorrect verb (“work out gently”). Also, the writer’s verb shift to the future (“will work out”) changes the meaning of the sentence in a confusing way.

Response 3

Since nothing else seemed to be working out gently, his mom reminded him.

The writer does not revise the sentence in a clear and effective way. The adverb remains misplaced, modifying the incorrect verb in the subordinate clause (“to be working out gently”). The change in sentence order and structure does not affect the score.

Response 4

His mom informed him that nothing else seemed to go smoothly.

The writer does not revise the sentence in a clear and effective way. The adverb remains misplaced, modifying the incorrect verb in the subordinate clause (“to go smoothly”).

Score Point 1

Response 1

His mom gently reminded him that nothing else seemed to be working out.

The writer revises the sentence in a clear and effective way. The adverb is repositioned to modify the correct verb in the independent clause ("gently reminded").

Response 2

Gently, his mom reminded him that nothing else semmed to be working out.

The writer revises the sentence in a clear and effective way. The adverb is repositioned to modify the correct verb in the independent clause ("Gently, his mom reminded"). The misspelling "semmed" is considered an editing error that does not affect the score of this revision task.

Response 3

His mom kindly pointed out that he was running out of options, hoping he would take the hint.

The writer revises the sentence in a clear and effective way. The writer crafts an extensive sentence revision without a change in meaning. A synonym of the adverb is positioned to modify the correct verb in the independent clause ("kindly pointed out"). The revised word choices are acceptable substitutions, and the additional wording ("hoping he would take the hint") contributes to a successful performance of this revision task.

Response 4

However, Jonah's mother gently reminded him that he seemed to have no other prospects at the moment.

The writer revises the sentence in a clear and effective way. The writer crafts an extensive sentence revision without a change in meaning. The adverb is repositioned to modify the correct verb in the independent clause ("gently reminded"). The word changes are acceptable substitutions, and additional wording ("However") contributes to an effective performance of this revision task.