



# **Grade 7 Writing**

## **Expository Scoring Guide**

**April 2018**

# Grade 7 Writing Expository Prompt

**READ** the information in the box below.

According to surveys, only eight percent of Americans keep their New Year's resolutions. In fact, nearly half of Americans break their promises within the first month of the year.

**THINK** carefully about the following statement.

It is hard for some people to keep a promise, even one they make to themselves.

**WRITE** an essay explaining why it is important to keep the promises you make.

Be sure to —

- clearly state your controlling idea
- organize and develop your explanation effectively
- choose your words carefully
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentences

## **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 explanatory 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 topic specified in the prompt, but the controlling idea is missing, unclear, or illogical. The writer may fail to maintain focus on the topic, 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 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 essay is ineffective because the writer uses details and examples that 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 expository writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the expository purpose and does not establish a tone appropriate to the task. The 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 age-appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Serious and persistent errors create disruptions in the fluency of the writing and sometimes interfere with meaning.

Don't you just love New Years?  
It's where a lot of dreams come  
true. Writting resolutions, and  
deciding to either throw them  
away, or keeping them as  
past memories. Why do most  
people throw them away?  
I'm guessing because of how  
they might not be true?  
I think most people know  
how much you will regret  
ever throwing your promises  
away. This is a chance you can  
change your life, and become  
who you want to be! So  
keep your wishes and promises,  
because they can do you good,  
Maybe bad.., but who knows!  
Keep your precious.....

**Score Point 1**

In this essay the writer provides the vague controlling idea that it is important to “keep your wishes and promises, because they can do you good.” The writer attempts to equate New Year’s resolutions to promises. While this is an acceptable approach, the writer does not provide a clear explanation of why it is important to keep these resolutions. Instead of developing the idea that resolutions can “change your life,” the writer focuses on the nature of New Year’s resolutions and considers why some people might “throw them away.” Awkward sentences (“I think most people know how much you will regret ever throwing your promises away”) further contribute to the vagueness of this very limited writing performance and weaken its effectiveness.

Its very important to keep the promises you make, whether its to yourself or to someone else. Keeping promises when your young helps you when you grow older and to deal with real like situations. If you dont keep the promises you make then you simply did not make them because if your going to promise to make a promise you obviously didnt promise hard enough to step out of your way to make someone happy or yourself happy.

I think its important to keep your promises because it just describe who you are if you keep them or not.

**Score Point 1**

Instead of providing a clear controlling idea, the writer of this essay provides several disconnected ideas about promises (keeping promises when you are young benefits you when you are older; if you make a promise, you need to try to keep it; the ability to keep a promise shows “who you are”). The ideas are difficult to follow because repetition and wordiness regarding the need to keep promises (“if your going to promise to make a promise you obviously didnt promise”; “. . . keep your promises because it just describe who you are if you keep them or not”) disrupt the flow of the essay. In addition, information is only briefly presented about the benefits of keeping promises when you are young and the need to “step out of your way to make someone happy or yourself happy.” This causes the writer’s ideas to be undeveloped at times, impeding the quality and clarity of this very limited writing performance.

It's hard to keep a Promise even if you made it for your self. It's hard to keep a Promise probably because you just might be shy or scared to do it or your maybe lazy and you forget about the whole thing well the promise you made is not a promise anymore because you just didn't do it or your just lazy like me and I just don't want to do stuff the next day that I promise myself that I would do it the next day so if your like me just don't promise anything that you do or what you say so just don't, because you probably won't do it.

**Score Point 1**

Although the writer of this essay addresses the topic of promises, the controlling idea is missing. Instead of focusing on the importance of keeping promises, the writer shares observations about why “it’s hard to keep a promise” and uses a personal example to discourage readers from making promises. The essay is insubstantial because the writer provides examples and ideas that are insufficiently developed and are only weakly linked to the prompt (“you just might be shy or scared . . . or your maybe lazy and you forget about the whole thing”; “the next day . . . I [promised] myself that I would do it”), demonstrating the writer’s lack of understanding of the expository task. Additionally, vague word choice, such as “I just don’t want to do stuff,” along with a lack of command of sentence boundaries (“ . . . forget about the whole thing well the promise you made is not a promise anymore . . .”) impedes the clarity and quality of this very limited writing performance.

To start with, Promises are not to be broken at first, if you tell a person you promise, you better keep the promise you said.

At first, I would promise to a lot of people but I didn't keep my promises I would say. One day when I was at school I told my Bestfriend we were no longer bestfriends no more, she said "Why", but I didn't answer her. Time past by and I made a new bestfriend, Well it came out that my new bestfriend didn't like my old bestfriend, and my new bestfriend made me promise to her that I would never talk to my old bestfriend again, so I promised her that and I stopped talking to my old bestfriend for a while, but later on I started talking to my old bestfriend again, and my new bestfriend found out and told me i thought you promised me you weren't gonna talk to her no more, I said "I know I did but how would you expect me to not talk to her the next day and she got sad and started to cry, and I felt really bad so I went up to her and told her, "OK this time I promise not to talk to her, she told me "YOU PROMISE, I said yes "I PROMISE".

SO IT'S better to not promise when you can't keep a promise.

### Score Point 1

The writer of this essay states that “if you tell a person you promise, you better keep the promise” and provides a confusing anecdote about how a broken promise led to an argument with a friend. The anecdote is linked to an implied but unclear controlling idea (making promises leads to problems). Extraneous information (“ . . . she said ‘Why’, but I didn't answer her”; “I felt really bad so I went up to her and told her, ‘OK this time I promise not to talk to her, she told me ‘YOU PROMISE, I said yes ‘I PROMISE’”) and wordiness (“At first, I would promise to a lot of people but I didn't keep my promises I would say”; “my new best friend made me promise to her that I would never talk to my old best friend again, so I promised her . . .”) contribute to a weak progression of ideas that limits the focus of the essay. The development is weak because the details in the anecdote do not develop an explanation for why keeping promises is important. Instead, the details tell only what happened as the writer moves through time from breaking the promise to vowing to keep it in the future. Furthermore, little command of sentence boundaries (“Time past by and I made a new best friend, ‘Well it came out that my best friend didn't like my old best friend . . .’”; “i started talking to my old best friend again, and my new best friend found out and told me i thought you promised me you weren't gonna talk to her no more, I said ‘I know I did but . . .’”) hinders the development of ideas, resulting in 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 expository task.
- ❑ Most ideas are generally related to the topic specified in the prompt, but the writer's controlling idea is weak or somewhat unclear. The lack of an effective controlling idea 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 essay is superficial because the writer uses details and examples that 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 expository writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer's word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the expository purpose but does little to establish a tone appropriate to the task. The 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 age-appropriate 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.

Only eight percent of America's population keeps their New Year's resolutions. Not a lot of people. Within the first few months, more than half of the population breaks their New Year's resolutions plans. Sure, they're just silly little lists that we make, but we should still keep them!

First of all, it's rude to break promises. Even ones we've made to ourselves. They may be things big or kind of small but we should still keep the promises. We say we'll stick to them but then we break that promise as well.

Second of all there are children watching us. They look up to you and they're listening to you. If you promise something in front of them then break it, they'll think it's okay to break promises.

In conclusion, promises are important. They teach kids responsibility and how to be truthful. It also would be good to see people actually keeping promises. You

### Score Point 2

The writer presents a controlling idea in the last paragraph that states promises are important because of what they teach kids and because seeing people keeping promises is a good thing. Although the introductory paragraph is only topically connected to the rest of the response, most examples presented in the essay are related to the controlling idea (people need to keep promises to themselves and others; adults should model keeping promises; keeping promises helps children become more responsible and honest). The writer attempts to support the controlling idea by presenting two reasons (“it’s rude to break promises”; if you break promises, children will “think it’s okay to break promises”); however, the essay is superficial because the reasons are too minimally developed (“We say we’ll stick to them but then we break that promise . . .”; “They look up to you and they’re listening to you”). Overall, this response represents a basic writing performance.

Promises

"Give an impression that you can keep". In the book the "Hunger Games" Katniss promises her sister that she would survive. And she survived and won the game.

Then in the movie "Black Hawk Down" the General gave his word that he would not leave a single soldier behind on the brutal battlefield. At the end he brought everyone back and won the war.

Also there is a famous historical event which was when Abraham Lincoln ended all of slavery. Because at the beginning of being a president he gave his word about ending slavery.

What I learned was that keeping promises are honor's, because they can effect others future. And they might even change the world.

**Score Point 2**

The writer of this response presents the controlling idea that "keeping promises are honor's, because they can effect others future. And they might even change the world." To support the controlling idea, the writer lists examples of people from books, movies, and history (*The Hunger Games*; *Black Hawk Down*; Abraham Lincoln) who kept their promises. While the ideas are generally related to the prompt, the development of ideas remains superficial because the examples are too partially presented. For example, the writer references *The Hunger Games*, but only provides a brief summary related to the topic ("In the book the 'Hunger Games' Katniss promises her sister that she would survive. And she survived and won the game"). Overall, this response represents a basic writing performance.

It is hard for some people to keep their promises, even ones they make to themselves. Keeping promises may be hard, but there are many reasons why it is important.

First, it builds good relationships. It shows that you can be trusted. This can make people want to trust you more, creating good relationships.

Also, keeping promises can show strength and determination. It can prove to others that you can always keep your word, even if you're in a tough situation. It can show, and build extremely good character.

Finally, it builds trust. Keeping promises can help build trust between people. This way the other person knows you have kept their promises in the past, so they will trust you in the future.

Keeping promises can build good relationships, shows determination, and builds trust. It may be hard along the way, but in the end there are good outcomes to your actions.

**Score Point 2**

In this response the writer uses a generalization (“It is hard for some people to keep their promises”) to introduce the controlling idea that keeping promises leads to “good outcomes.” To support the controlling idea, the writer presents three effects of keeping promises (developing good relationships, showing determination, and building trust). The progression of ideas is not well controlled due to wordiness and repetition of ideas (“it builds trust. Keeping promises can help build trust between people. This way the other person knows you have kept their promises in the past, so they will trust you in the future”), which causes minor disruptions in the flow of the essay. Furthermore, the writer’s partial presentation of details, such as “First, it builds good relationships. It shows that you can be trusted. This can make people want to trust you more, creating good relationships,” results in an essay that is only minimally developed. Repetitious and general word choice (“hard”; “good”) impedes the quality and clarity of the essay. Holistically, this essay represents a basic writing performance.

Many people don't keep their promises. I wonder why? Is it that hard to keep a promise? People need to start keeping their promises whether it be to themselves or to others. If people don't start keeping them maybe people would stop trusting them.

Some people who don't keep their promises should consider keeping them. Many promises are for a cause either to change a habit or doing something. And it would make them a better person if they kept them. People would start to trust them, because they know they would keep their promise.

Many people would trust you if they knew you kept your promises. People would tell you more and more things, because they will trust for you. If you made a promise to your friend and you kept it that would build a stronger relationship between you and your friend. Therefore that's why it's important to keep your promises.

### Score Point 2

In this response the writer provides the controlling idea that keeping promises makes people trust you; however, repetition of the controlling idea and the idea that you need to keep promises weakens the progression of ideas in the essay. In addition, the development of ideas is minimal throughout the essay. For example, in the second paragraph, the writer provides brief and mostly general references to the types of promises a person could make, such as changing a habit, and how following through with these promises builds trust. The writer elaborates further on this idea in the next paragraph through an appropriate hypothetical example of friends confiding in you and building stronger relationships because of proven trustworthiness. However, the details are too briefly presented to add substantive development. General word choice (“either to change a habit or doing something”; “People would tell you more and more things”) also weakens the effectiveness of the basic writing performance. Overall, this response demonstrates a basic understanding of the expository task.

## **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 expository task.
- ❑ The writer establishes a clear controlling idea. Most ideas are related to the controlling idea and are focused on the topic 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 because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and appropriate, adding some substance to the essay.
- ❑ 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 expository 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 expository purpose and establishes a tone appropriate to the task. The word choice usually contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay.
- ❑ Sentences are varied and adequately controlled, for the most part contributing to the effectiveness of the essay.
- ❑ The writer demonstrates an adequate command of sentence boundaries and age-appropriate 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.

It starts with the pinky promise, then it progresses to the promise, and eventually the oath. It is very easy to break a promise. But it is important to not break the promise and keep it.

When you make a promise the person you promised is trusting you. When you break the promise, you lose that trust. One of the most clear examples are the politicians. When politicians run for an office they make a lot of promises that sound great. Voters believe them and vote for them. While they are in office many of them keep their promises. The one who don't however, lose their supporters who voted for them. After their term has expired they can run for reelection. Nobody will vote for them now because they lied before and voters will vote for the other candidate.

As a kid, breaking a promise might not seem like a big deal. But if you get into the habit of making fake promises, it could effect your future. A promise may be just a few words, but it is also a commitment to other people.

### Score Point 3

This response begins with a progression of the definition of a promise from a “pinky promise” to a general promise to an oath. The writer emphasizes the importance of keeping a promise with an implied controlling idea that promises are “a commitment to other people” and breaking them may have serious consequences. The writer uses an appropriate cause-effect organizational structure to demonstrate the connection between broken promises and a loss of trust. The development of ideas is sufficient because the writer includes specific and appropriate examples (the tendency for politicians to break promises results in them being voted out of office; kids breaking promises can lead to future impact) and thoughtful observations (“Nobody will vote for them now because they lied . . .”; promises are more than “just a few words”). Additionally, word choice is, for the most part, clear and specific. Phrases such as “lose their supporters,” “big deal,” and “get into the habit of making false promises” emphasize the importance of keeping promises, reflecting an awareness of the expository purpose and contributing to the effectiveness of this satisfactory writing performance.

Sometimes we need to rely on others. Obviously there is not a way to completely trust someone, so we formed the faith of the promise. Promises are an emotional contract made between two people. One of them gives the other a task and expects them to complete it. It's important to keep these promises because they trusted you with something and your friendship reputation is on the line. When you make a promise, you must stay true to your word.

For example, faith is an important part of a promise. If you are in a group project and someone promises to write the first page of a report, you decide to trust them. When they don't complete it, you're either stuck with a horrible grade, or more work. Everyone is disappointed in that person and since they didn't utilize their promise, everyone in the group suffers.

In addition, you'll be less trustworthy and not well liked. If you promise to bring someone their paperwork and you forgot, then they'll have a bad impression of you. "I've lost my faith in humanity," says Jane "I don't think I can rely on anyone anymore." Most likely, they won't ask you again the next time.

To summarize, promises are important because you either completely trust someone, or they completely trust you. As you agree to make a promise, remember that it's necessary to keep it, as well as someone's faith.

### Score Point 3

The writer of this response begins with the analogy that "promises are an emotional contract made between two people" and then introduces the controlling idea that keeping promises is important because others put their trust in you. The progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled with sentence-to-sentence connections ("It's important to keep these promises because . . ."; "When they don't complete it . . ."; "If you promise to bring someone their paperwork and you forgot . . .") that sufficiently support the flow of the essay and show how trust is lost by broken promises. The writer develops the controlling idea with a specific and appropriate hypothetical example (a group project at school) followed by thoughtful descriptions of the possible consequences of breaking a promise (you will lose the trust of your peers; people will not ask you to join their group the next time). Additionally, the writer's word choice is, for the most part, clear and specific ("reputation is on the line"; "stuck with a horrible grade"; "everyone in the group suffers"; "bad impression"). The word choice highlights the negative effects of breaking promises and contributes to the quality of this satisfactory writing performance.

Every year, tons of Americans make their New Year's resolutions. But according to surveys, only eight percent of Americans keep those resolutions. It's often difficult for people to keep promises because other things get in the way and they don't want to commit to it.

Other things often get in the way when you keep a promise. Imagine if someone promised to spend more time with their family and pets. But before they could do that, they'd have to do their homework, clean their room, and go to soccer practice. It'd be difficult for them to cram all of that in, and still spend time with their family and pets.

Another reason people don't keep their promises are because they don't want to commit to it. For example, if someone promised to lose weight, but they didn't want to work out, they wouldn't get anything done. If you don't commit to your promise, nothing will get done.

The reason people don't keep their promises is because they either don't want to put in commitment, or other things get in the way. Those are two of the many reasons why nearly half of Americans break their New Year's resolutions within the first month of the year. If everyone would follow through with their promises, we'd get a lot more done.

### Score Point 3

In this essay the writer presents the controlling idea that following through with promises helps you “get a lot more done.” The writer uses an appropriate compare-contrast organizational structure to explain why people break well-intentioned promises (other things get in the way; lack of commitment). The writer’s development is sufficient because descriptions of people’s struggles to keep promises to spend more time with family and pets or lose weight (“But before they could do that, they’d have to do their homework, clean their room, and go to soccer practice”) are specific and appropriate. In addition, varied sentence structures (“For example, if someone promised to lose weight, but they didn’t want to work out, they wouldn’t get anything done”) further contribute to the quality of this satisfactory writing performance.

Are you good at keeping promises? Well, According to surveys, only eight percent of Americans keep their new years resolutions. In fact, nearly half of Americans break their promises within the first month of the year! Keeping promises is very vital in life. Not only in friendships, but businesses too! It is important to keep promises because they make you trustworthy, and overall, a good person.

Imagine if your friend was telling you their deepest secret, And you promise to keep it and dont? Youre not only breaking A promise, youre also breaking that friends trust. Being trustworthy is extremely important nomatter what.

Keeping promises also affects how people see you. If youre honest and keep your promises, even if theyre only to yourself. People will look up to you and think of you as a good person. It works Visa-versa, If you tell people other peoples secrets and break promises, Evergbody will look down on you and not trust you. That is why it is important to keep promises, nomatter who theyre to.

• Promises are made every day. At weddings, at work, at home. Very few people can keep them even though they are very important in our every day lives. So next time you think about giving up on something dont breaking a promise. Think about how people would see you in their own eyes.

**Score Point 3**

The writer begins this essay with a rewording of the information from the prompt page and then offers the controlling idea that “it is important to keep promises because they make you trustworthy, and overall, a good person.” The writer takes a philosophical approach to present a hypothetical situation about how keeping and sharing secrets can affect a friendship. The essay reflects some thoughtfulness because in the second and third paragraphs, the writer develops the idea that being perceived as trustworthy is important and then challenges the reader to “think about how people would see you in their own eyes” the next time you are considering breaking a promise. In addition, the writer’s varied sentences (“Are you good at keeping promises?”; “In fact, nearly half of Americans break their promises . . .”; “Imagine if your friend . . .”; “Keeping promises also affects . . .”) contribute to the quality and clarity of this satisfactory writing performance by emphasizing the impact of broken promises. Overall, the writer’s response to the prompt demonstrates a good understanding of the expository writing task.

## **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 expository task.
- ❑ The writer establishes a clear controlling idea. All ideas are strongly related to the controlling idea and are focused on the topic 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 effective because the writer uses details and examples that are specific and well chosen, adding substance to the essay.
- ❑ The essay is thoughtful and engaging. The writer may choose to use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing or to connect ideas in interesting ways. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the expository writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- ❑ The writer’s word choice is purposeful and precise. It reflects a keen awareness of the expository purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the task. The 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 age-appropriate 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.

"Don't make promises that you can't keep" is an old saying that all should follow. Regardless, many in historical and modern times forget to abide by this quote. It is important to keep your word because oathbreakers lose others' trust, and a broken promise overshadows the instances where you stayed faithful to your guarantees.

People don't trust those who break their vows. Whether you fail to satisfy a promise to an employer or a loved one, the same consequences remain: both your dignity and their faith in you is lost. When my brother was in his teens, he and my parents had a deal that he was allowed freedom of the car as long as he returned by a certain time. He repeatedly came home past the curfew, and my parents were forced to disregard his assurances of better behavior and confiscate his keys. Broken promises hurt many, but the most damage is done to yourself.

When you don't keep your word, people tend to ignore all the instances in which you stayed loyal to your guarantees. A broken promise can cast a black mark on a previously clear record, obliterating all hopes of redemption. For example, Benedict Arnold was once an American hero who would fight and win battles under the Stars and Stripes. However, today's citizens remember him as a notorious turncoat—the ultimate symbol of a man who broke his vows of loyalty and patriotism. By renegeing on his promises, Arnold effectively erased his former heroic deeds. Your collective honored promises are of no concern if you break a vow, even if it only happens once.

It is vital to live up to assurances, because those who break promises lose trust, and unfulfilled guarantees blot out occurrences where you kept your word. In today's world, filled with backstabbing, and betrayal, it's nice to see a simple promise being kept.

#### Score Point 4

In this skillfully crafted essay, the writer offers a clear controlling idea (“It is important to keep your word because oathbreakers lose others’ trust and a broken promise overshadows the instances where you stayed faithful to your guarantees”) in the opening paragraph and maintains focus on the controlling idea throughout the essay. Meaningful transitions and the inclusion of strong sentence-to-sentence connections (“When you don’t keep your word”; “By renegeing on his promises”) allow the writer’s train of thought to be easily followed as the writer moves through examples of broken promises. The development of ideas is effective because the writer uses examples that are specific and well chosen, an anecdote about a brother losing driving privileges after repeatedly breaking curfew and a historical example about Benedict Arnold. With these examples the writer is able to thoroughly and thoughtfully explain why it is important to keep promises. Furthermore, expressions such as “cast a black mark on a previously clear record,” “obliterating all hopes of redemption,” and “notorious turncoat” emphasize the damage created by broken promises and reflect the writer’s keen awareness of the expository purpose of the essay. Overall, this response represents an accomplished writing performance.

Last Saturday, it was cold and rainy. I wanted to stay in my warm cozy bed, and sleep the morning away. But I knew I had to grab my tennis shoes and go for a run. Why? Because I had made a promise to myself to become a healthier person, I know I had to work on that promise each and every day to meet my goal.

I wasn't always that motivated. Sure, I knew what I SHOULD eat and how much I SHOULD exercise, but instead of eating right, and getting proper amounts of exercise, I made excuses. When the doctor told me I was pre-diabetic, I knew it was time to make some changes to my lazy lifestyle, and poor eating habits. I didn't want to end up like my diabetic uncle, he has to take insulin shots and worry about kidney failure. It was time to prioritize my health.

I started packing fresh fruits and vegetables for lunch, and eating foods with less sugar. I got plenty of sleep each night, so I didn't drink cokes to keep me up. I joined the track team. Before long, I lost pounds, and my fatigue. In return, I gained muscles, stamina, confidence, and some first place ribbons! By keeping my promise to improve my health, I put myself on the path to leading the life I wanted, one full of energy and good health! Along the way, I gained respect from my family and friends. When they saw how hard I was working to improve my health, they made positive changes in their lives too.

It's not always easy to keep promises to yourself, especially on cold and rainy days. When I am tempted to break a promise to myself I ask myself "would you break a promise to a friend?" The answer is always "no"! Well, you have to be a friend to yourself too! Believe me, you'll thank yourself later on for it!

#### Score Point 4

This skillfully crafted essay has an implied controlling idea that keeping promises helped the writer “become a healthier person.” The writer uses an anecdotal approach focused on one example to demonstrate how a commitment to better health led to the desired outcome. This organizational strategy is well suited to the expository task and serves to unify the composition. In the second and third paragraphs, the writer supports the controlling idea by discussing the need to prioritize health (“When the doctor told me I was pre-diabetic, I knew it was time to make some changes to my lazy lifestyle, and poor eating habits”) and the steps taken to achieve a healthier lifestyle (“I started packing fresh fruits and vegetables for lunch . . . I got plenty of sleep each night, so I didn't drink cokes to keep me up. I joined the track team”). The writer adds substance to the essay by explaining how changes made to eating habits and activity level puts the writer “on the path” to leading a life “full of energy and good health!” Sentences are purposeful and precise as the writer thoughtfully considers the journey to better health (“I wasn't always that motivated . . . I made excuses”; “I didn't want to end up like my diabetic uncle, he has to take insulin”; “I gained muscles, stamina, confidence, and some first place ribbons”). Although some spelling errors are evident (“diabetic”; “suger”; “stamina”), they do not detract from the fluency of the writing or the clarity of this accomplished writing performance.

"Actions speak louder than words." That means your actions show what's important to you. They define your character. So if you are a person who follows through with promises, you have integrity and are trustworthy. If you don't you are an uncaring person who lets people down and causes hurt.

Promises are seen every day in life. When someone lies a lot or doesn't follow through with their promises, problems occur. In marriages, broken promises lead couples to get divorced. That's what happened with my parents, it caused me a lot of pain. I couldn't understand why my Dad didn't keep his promises to my Mom. Not doing work around the house or showing up for things led to arguments and made us feel unimportant to him. I was mad at him for a long time.

When my Mom got remarried, I didn't want anything to do with my new Stepdad. I thought he'd let me down too. But my new Stepdad slowly earned my trust. He'd tell me he'd be at my soccer games and I'd hear him cheer for me from the sideline. He went to my Parent-Teacher Conferances with my Mom. When I struggled with Math, he promised me he'd tutor me. He did and as a result, my grades improved. I began to see that he was a "man of his word". It felt good to know he was in my corner. A year later, when my baseball team needed a Coach, he was there for me too. He showed up for all of our games and spent hours helping me master my pitches. Because my Stepdad always kept his promises, our relationship improved. My trust in him grew. I started going places with him. Now I think of him as part of my family. When I have a wife and kids one day, I will try to be a man like him. Someone who knows the importance of following through with promises because it makes the people around you feel special.

#### Score Point 4

In this essay the writer establishes the controlling idea ("When someone lies a lot or doesn't follow through with their promises, problems occur"; "following through with promises . . . makes the people around you feel special"). The writer maintains a compare-contrast organizational structure through the presentation of two anecdotal examples of how a father loses the trust of the writer and how a stepfather gains the trust of the writer. Meaningful sentence-to-sentence connections ("But my new Stepdad slowly earned my trust"; "He'd tell me . . ."; "I began to see . . ."; "Now I think of him as part of my family") and the statement "When I have a wife and kids one day, I will try to be a man like him" in the conclusion help the writer sustain focus on his improving relationship with his stepfather. The development of ideas is effective because it includes specific and well-chosen details about the stepfather's efforts to build trust ("I'd hear him cheer for me from the sideline"; "He went to my Parent-Teacher Conferances with my Mom"; "he promised me he'd tutor me . . . and as a result, my grades improved"; "when my baseball team needed a coach, he was there for me too"). Moreover, purposeful and precise word choice ("integrity"; "man of his word"; "spent hours helping me") contributes to the quality and clarity of the writing piece by stressing the importance of trustworthiness in healthy relationships. Holistically, the essay demonstrates a thorough understanding of the expository task.

What is a promise? A promise is test of commitment and a test of loyalty. But a broken promise is a broken dream because others are depending on you to keep your word.

Imagine a world where no one kept their promises. Car companies would make cars out of cheap materials. Theaters would cancel movies. Sports teams would cheat. None of this happens now because car companies sign agreements to make safe vehicles, movie theaters have posted schedules, and sports teams play by a set of rules. In other words, our world runs smoothly because people keep their promises.

The ability to honor a promise says a lot about a company. More importantly, it says a lot about you. Breaking a promise will not only disappoint the people around you, it will disappoint you because you gave up on your goal. Once you get into the habit of disappointing others, it's very difficult to regain their trust. Soon, you will lose the confidence to set new goals, and you will get a reputation as someone who quits. You will have to work very hard before anyone has confidence in your ability to keep a promise.

When everyone keeps promises, the world is a predictable, safe place where people can reach their goals. In a world without promises, there is only chaos and mistrust. Which would you choose?

#### Score Point 4

The writer of this philosophical response uses a hypothetical situation (“Imagine a world where no one kept their promises”) to introduce the controlling idea that “our world runs smoothly because people keep their promises.” The writer first employs the hypothetical approach to establish various scenarios (cars made of cheap materials; canceled movies; cheating sports teams) that are clearly linked to the topic. The writer uses these scenarios to develop the controlling idea by explaining how “our world runs smoothly because people keep their promises” and by emphasizing the importance of individuals keeping their promises. The writer concludes the essay with the thoughtful observation that “When everyone keeps their promises, the world is a predictable, safe place where people can reach their goals.” Inside each paragraph the writer is able to maintain an expository tone by using precise and purposeful word choice (“a test of loyalty”; “a broken promise is a broken dream”; “confidence in your ability”). For these reasons, the essay represents an accomplished writing performance.



127516-115091 • Y718E.505 • Printed in U.S.A.

806484

