

# 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Assessment Instructions 2009-10

Foster / Hill / Hirsch

## Directions and requirements

1. You will have **one hour** to read the text (two pages) and write your response.
2. Read and annotate the entire text carefully.
3. We recommend that you briefly outline your ideas before you begin writing.
4. Write an analytical response that answers the question you will be given. Your response may be one or more paragraphs, but should include all of the components of an analytical response.
5. Please follow these guidelines as you write:
  - Write your **teacher's name** and your **student number** (but not your name) on the **upper right corner** of each page.
  - You may use pencil or pen. Please **write legibly** and make corrections as neatly as possible.
  - Write on **one side** of the paper only.
6. Reread your writing, editing for content and style.
7. You may refer to this "10th Grade Writing Assessment Instructions" sheet during the assessment.

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## Components of an analytical response

### • Topic Sentence

- Identifies the **subject** of the essay and makes a clear, concise, arguable **claim** about it
- Includes the **title & author**

### • Context / Evidence / Analysis

- Each piece of **evidence** should include
  - **context** information (who, when, where) about the passage or example that follows
  - the **evidence**: quotation, example, etc.
  - appropriate MLA **citation** of evidence source (usually, the page # in parentheses)
  - **analysis** that explains & analyzes the evidence and connects to the claim (See notes about analysis below.)
  - a **transition** into the next piece of evidence
- The number of evidence choices you include depends on the scope of your thesis
- Your evidence should be arranged in a **logical, coherent order**

### • "Clincher" or Concluding Sentence(s)

- Answers "**so what?**"
- Wraps up your discussion and leaves us with a final understanding of the importance of these thoughts.

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## Tips and reminders

**Emphasize analysis:** Your task in a literary analysis essay is to make an interpretation about some aspect of the text, not to merely summarize what the text is about. Most of your essay should be your comments about the text. (Explaining and analyzing the evidence, interpreting word choices and imagery, explaining how the evidence supports your claim.)  
Approximate analysis to evidence ratio = 3 to 1.

**Use effective language skills:** Be concise and precise. Vary your sentence structure and word choice. Choose sophisticated yet unpretentious vocabulary. Use transition phrases that help lead us logically through each step of your discussion. Use present tense when discussing literature.

**Effectively incorporate evidence:** Embed quotations smoothly into your discussion. Use MLA citations.

Full sentence quotation: *The author illustrates Tom's perfectionism with the description, "He only wore polished shoes" (45).*

Partial quotation: *The author describes Tom's "polished shoes" (45), emphasizing his perfectionism.*

A string of partial quotations: *Tom is described as wearing "polished shoes" (45) and "never leaving the house without shaving first" (47), emphasizing his perfectionism.*

## **Writing Assessment Scoring Guide**

IN HOLISTIC READING, raters assign each essay to a scoring category according to its dominant characteristics. The categories below describe the characteristics of six different levels of competence.

**The 6 paper** commands attention because of its insightful development and mature style. It presents a cogent response to the prompt with strong critical thinking, elaborating that response with well-chosen examples and persuasive reasoning. The 6 paper shows that its writer can choose words aptly, use sophisticated sentences effectively, and observe the conventions of written English.

**The 5 paper** is clearly competent. It presents a thoughtful response to the prompt, elaborating that response with appropriate examples, sensible reasoning, and critical thinking. A 5 paper typically has a less fluent and complex style than a 6, but does show that its writer can usually choose words accurately, vary sentences effectively, and observe the conventions of written English.

**The 4 paper** is satisfactory, sometimes marginally so. It presents an adequate response to the prompt, elaborating with sufficient examples, acceptable reasoning, and critical thinking. Just as these examples and this reasoning will ordinarily be less developed than those in 5 papers, so will the 4 paper's style be less effective. Nevertheless, a 4 paper shows that its writer can usually choose words of sufficient precision, control sentences of reasonable variety, and observe the conventions of written English.

**The 3 paper** responds satisfactorily in some ways but is unsatisfactory in one or more of the following ways. It may respond to the prompt inadequately; it may lack coherent structure or elaboration with examples; it may reflect an incomplete understanding of the prompt. Its prose is usually characterized by at least one of the following: frequently imprecise word choice; little sentence variety; occasional major errors in grammar and usage, or frequent minor errors.

**The 2 paper** shows serious weaknesses, ordinarily of several kinds. It frequently presents a simplistic, inappropriate, and incoherent response to the prompt, one that may suggest some significant misunderstanding of the text or the topic. Its prose is usually characterized by at least one of the following: simplistic or inaccurate word choice; monotonous or fragmented sentence structure; many repeated errors in grammar and usage.

**The 1 paper** suggests severe difficulties in reading and writing conventional English. It may disregard the topic's demands, or it may lack any appropriate pattern of structure or development. It may be inappropriately brief. It often has a pervasive pattern of errors in word choice, sentence structure, grammar, and usage.

**A 0 paper** completely disregards the topic.