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Scored Sample Analytical Writing Tasks with Reader
Commentary for Practice Tests 1 & 2

Scored Sample Analytical Writing Tasks with Reader
Commentary for Practice Test 1

Issue Topic – Practice Test 1

“A nation should require all of its students to study the same national curriculum until they enter college.”

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the recommendation and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, describe specific circumstances in which adopting the recommendation would or would not be advantageous and explain how these examples shape your position.

Note: All responses are reproduced exactly as written, including errors, misspellings, etc., if any.

Score 6

Essay Response

Nations should not require that all students study the same national curriculum. If every child were presented with the same material, it would assume that all children learn the same and that all teachers are capable of teaching the same material in the same way. In addition to neglecting differences in learning and teaching styles, it would also stifle creativity and create a generation of drones. The uniformity would also lend itself to governmental meddling in curriculum that could result in the destruction of democracy. If every teacher is forced to teach a certain text, the government need only change that text to misinform an entire generation. Lastly, a standardized curriculum would also adversely affect students who come from lower income families or families who have little education as they might not have as many resources for learning outside of school.

Children all learn in very different ways. If the curriculum is standardized completely, it leaves little room for exploratory learning. One child may learn how to spell from reading, another may learn from phonics. If the curriculum is standardized, suppose one aspect is dropped, that may exclude certain children from learning adequately. This is not to say of course that there shouldn't be requirements, but they should be general requirements, not something so specific as a curriculum. Especially at the high school level this would be detrimental to the variety of subjects that a student can learn. Standards and the “No Child Left Behind” act in America are already forcing the reduction in programs such as art and music that have a less defineable curriculum. Additionally, education systems are rarely funded well enough to achieve the general goal of educating children. If a national curriculum were implemented, would it come with a significant increase in financial support? History suggests that it would not.

Teachers also have different methods of teaching; if say, the English curriculum of all high schools were standardized, then a book that one teacher teaches excellently and therefore inspires students to read more and learn on their own might be eliminated, and although that teacher ought to be capable enough to teach the curriculum books, his or her students will still be missing out on what might have been a great learning experience. It also limits how much of the teacher's unique knowledge he or she can bring to the classroom. It is these inspirational books or experiences that allow teachers to reach students; if they are put in a mold, the quality of teaching and learning will go down.

Learning should be enjoyable and children and adolescents should be taught not only the curriculum in school, but that the body of knowledge that exists in the world today is enormous and that you can learn your whole life. Having a national curriculum implies that there is a set group of things worth learning for every person. Maybe this is true, but for students, it sets up a world where there is a finite amount of knowledge to be acquired for the purpose of regurgitating it on a test. Teaching a standard curriculum doesn't encourage inquiries; it doesn't make students ask questions like, "Why?" and "How?" School's real purpose is teaching people to learn, not just teaching them a set group of facts. By teaching them to learn, students can continue doing so, they can extend skills from one area of knowledge to another. This type of learning fosters creativity that can be used not only in math or science or English, but in art or music or creative writing. Teaching a brain to go beyond being a file cabinet for facts is the best way to teach creativity. Creativity is too often assumed to be something only for the arts. It is creativity that results in innovation and it is innovation that has resulted in the greatest achievements of humanity in the sciences and humanities alike.

Finally, the education system of a country is designed to put all children on a level playing field. Though this is only an ideal, it is a noble ideal. If the school curriculum becomes standardized, children who have highly educated parents, or more money to buy books outside of school, or more resources for tutors or private schools will immediately gain a foothold. Poorer students from uneducated families in the current American school system are already at a disadvantage, but at least now there is hope through variety that something can reach out to them and inspire them. There is hope that they can find a class that interests them. If the curriculum becomes rigid and standardized, it is these disadvantaged students who fall through the cracks.

There are many reasons not to standardize the curriculum. The uniqueness of students and teachers is the most obvious, but students from less educated backgrounds will suffer the most. The creativity of a nation as a whole would fall with a standardized curriculum. Most importantly though is the question of who and what? Who chooses the curriculum? What is important enough that it must be taught? These questions assume that there is some infallible committee that can foresee all and know what knowledge will be important in everyone's lives. There is no person, no group, no committee capable of deciding what knowledge is necessary. Curriculum should have standards, not be standardized and education should be as much about knowledge as it about learning to learn.

Reader Commentary

This outstanding response develops an articulate and insightful position rejecting the prompt's recommendation of a national curriculum. The writer understands a national curriculum to mean both the material that is taught and the way it is taught. The essay offers a wide-ranging discussion of the practical and theoretical implications of a national curriculum for students, for teachers, and for a nation. For example, the response argues that prescribing particular content and teaching methods might make it more difficult for teachers to tailor lessons to students with different learning styles and might also force effective teachers to adopt teaching methods that are less effective for them and their students. Although the essay clearly rejects the recommendation for a national curriculum, the writer does concede that there is a need for educational standards that are flexible enough to allow for individual, socioeconomic, and regional differences.

The response maintains a well-focused, well-organized discussion, developing each point fully and connecting ideas logically without relying on obvious transitional phrases. The writing is fluent, despite minor errors in grammar and mechanics; sentence structure is varied and diction is effective. In sum, this response meets all of the criteria for a score of 6.

Score 5

Essay Response

While it may be to the advantage of a nation that all its students learn the same basic information, this can be accomplished without going to the lengths of having a national curriculum. By requiring that all students know a certain amount in basic areas of knowledge without specifying the details, a nation can achieve the same benefits of a national curriculum without unduly denying the freedom of teachers to teach as they see fit. A system of simple national standards is good enough. To go further and create a full-fledged national curriculum would gain nothing and impair the ability of teachers.

It is important to ensure that all students learn the fundamentals of different subject areas. In order to graduate from high school, for example, all students should have a good understanding of algebra, of basic concepts in science and history, and an ability to read critically. These are skills that will benefit people in all kinds of different careers. Even if you never manipulate an equation after graduating from high school, you will have a far better understanding of the world around you if you know simple facts of math and science. Fields such as English and history are even more important, as they are absolutely necessary to maintain an informed citizenry capable of making important decisions that all citizens of a democracy are called upon to make. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to have national standards of education. Most teachers are very capable of imparting knowledge on students, and most school boards are similarly well-intentioned. Nevertheless, without national standards, some students are bound to fall through the cracks, and some school boards, under pressure from groups of parents, may eliminate certain subject matter from schools, as has happened recently with the teaching of evolution in conservative areas of the United States. In order to ensure that all students learn all that they need to know as functioning adults, some kind of national standards should be in place.

These national standards, however, need not go so far as to constitute a single national curriculum. No one knows a class of students better than its teachers, and no one else can shape a curriculum for their maximum benefit. A national curriculum would necessarily mean a one-size-fits-all approach, and what is appropriate in one classroom may not be in another. Partly this is a result of the intellectual levels of the students in question: some may be able to learn far more about a particular subject than others. But it is also a question of student goals. The desire for specialization begins before college. A student who wants to become an auto mechanic should be able to take auto shop classes, classes which would not be of interest to a future lawyer or scientist. This notion may sound unacceptably elitist in today's climate in which a college education has become almost an automatic goal of education, but it does not need to be this way. Students with limited interest in higher education should be able to opt out, to follow another curriculum that is more likely to lead to happiness later in life. As a society, we should not discourage them, but rather ensure that there are enough high-paying jobs available for skilled laborers with high school diplomas.

Everyone needs certain basic knowledge in order to function in society today. To this extent, we need national standards of instruction for students. But we do not need to cram every student into the same classes and force them to learn what we think is best for them.

Reader Commentary

This strong response presents a generally thoughtful, well-developed analysis of the issue and conveys meaning clearly. The introductory paragraph clearly disagrees with the prompt's recommendation: "By requiring that all students know a certain amount in basic areas of knowledge without specifying the details, a nation can achieve the same benefits of a national curriculum without unduly denying the freedom of teachers to teach as they see fit." The writer supports this position by first arguing for the necessity of national standards, citing the individual's need for fundamental knowledge in core areas, and by asserting that such knowledge makes for an informed, thoughtful citizenry. The discussion furthers this argument by examining some of the disadvantages of a rigid national curriculum, namely the inability of a national curriculum to accommodate students' individual needs and interests.

The response develops its position with strong reasons and examples, though these reasons and examples are not always fully developed. For example, the response asserts that knowledge of English and history is "absolutely necessary to maintain an informed citizenry" and that "in order to achieve this, it is necessary to have national standards of education," but it never really explains how or why national standards would result in better-informed citizens than regional standards or a national curriculum would.

The response maintains a clear focus and organization with clear and logical transitions. Although the response conveys ideas clearly and demonstrates facility with standard written English, it lacks the precision of expression necessary for the highest score. In sum, this response demonstrates all of the characteristics required to earn a score of 5.

Score 4

Essay Response

As an educator, this topic is quite controversial to me. By having one set curriculum in the entire nation, students would be taught the same material. Students from the rural Texas will study the same thing as students in Brooklyn, NY and suburban Chicago. If they move from state to state, they will have covered the same material and they would be able to participate in class right away. You could also say that all students should have learned the same material, for which they should all be equal and should have the same opportunities. But it is unrealistic. I disagree with a national curriculum because all students are not the same, they have different interests, and this curriculum would not permit teachers to explore and teach to students interests.

First, a curriculum that becomes nation wide is supposed to teach all students the same material and perhaps the same way. All seventh graders will have to solve algebraic equations and then they will all be the same. But students are not the same. All children develop at different rates, they have different abilities. One cannot expect a child from Uptown Manhattan to be doing the same thing as the kids in southern Illinois. The conditions are different, they

have different funding and quality of teachers. Parents involvement in their childrens education is different and that would affect what the students learn.

Besides having different abilities, the students have different interests or necessities. In one part of the nation it may be important to learn trigonometry and calculus because it is a high tech area. They use many computers and there might be a big market for careers in that field, but in another part of the country it might be more important to learn about farming and erosion. That the interest would be different. Teachers also need the freedom to teach what the students are interested in. If the kids want to know about the Chicano Movement, they should have the opportunity to learn about it, instead of learning about African American Civil Rights Movement. City kids are interested in different things than kids rural areas, as well as kids from the East Coast and the West Coast.

For these reasons I would have to disagree with a national curriculum. Children are different and they should have the right to learn about things they are interested in. Teachers should have the freedom to teach what he/she thinks is more important or interesting to their students. Teachers should teach their students, not a curriculum.

Reader Commentary

This response presents a competent analysis of the issue and conveys meaning with acceptable clarity. The writer begins by acknowledging some of the perceived strengths of a national curriculum but then disagrees with the prompt, arguing that “all students are not the same, they have different interests, and this curriculum would not permit teachers to explore and teach to students interests.” The writer supports this position by suggesting that a standardized approach to education will fail to address the different types of students who make up a nation’s youth; for instance, students in two different geographical areas may be subject to different socioeconomic conditions as well as different cultural attitudes toward the role of education. The writer continues exploring the role of geography by pointing out that different areas naturally emphasize different aspects of curriculum based upon regional concerns and that a national curriculum would unfairly homogenize education.

The response is adequately focused and organized, and although it contains some errors, it demonstrates sufficient control of language in order to express its ideas.

Score 3

Essay Response

Until now, many countries have mandatory course for their students until they enter the college. It is beneficial to students to have same amout knowledge in their schools. Also, I agree this recommendation because these reasons.

Even if students have extraordinary abilities to study, it just will be some specific parts of academic fields. Generally, most ordiany students have abilities to follow their study through their courses. For all students, if people want to be had same knowlege and same academic background, the national curriculum is essential. Of course, some people don’t want to follow their mandatoyr courses so that someone takes privite classes in their house or takes a different class in other substituted schools. However, if students want to enter the college, they have to take a national test, for example, SAT. Like this test will require generalized knowledge until in

the high school. For preparing this test, every students have to study requisited courses of SAT. Even though some students take privite courses, they also have to prepare these classes. Because of this, national curriculum is needed. If they do not need to take a test to enter the college, they won't prepare these classes. However, until now, every college wants to accept to be experimented students so that they need standarized test for everybody. Recently, even though national curriculum is becoming a social issue to criticize its efficiency, if governments don't change their policy about thier educational programs, it has to exist in the education.

However, the same national curriculum has some troubles. If one student doesn't follow the same curriculum, this student will be fale to enter the college. The mandatory curriculum does not allow individual characteristics, some students who have surprisingly abilities for other fields, for example, playing chess, singing the classic song, and operating computer systems, will not enter the college. So, we should consider this problem in the same national curriculum.

Nevertheless, the system of the education will not change to allow other possibilities, a nation has to require all of their students to study the same courses, until the college. It is related to educational systems so that it is difficult to decide whatever is right. However, while the current educaitonal system exist a nation, the country should require the same curriculum to its students.

Reader Commentary

This response demonstrates some competence in analyzing the issue and in conveying meaning, but it is obviously flawed. The writer adopts a position of agreement with the prompt, arguing that since higher education requires students to pass standardized exams, a curriculum which emphasized the same education for all students would be more conducive to passing college entrance exams and tests such as the SAT. In the course of this argument, the writer does consider that the implementation of a national curriculum would remove the opportunity for students to explore areas of study outside their core coursework but argues that this loss can be made up during the students' university coursework.

The response presents a clear position on the issue and develops that position with relevant reasons and examples, but it fails to convey ideas with acceptable clarity; it has problems in language and sentence structure that result in a lack of clarity. These frequent minor errors and occasional major errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics preclude the response from receiving an upper-half score. In order to merit a score of 4, this response would need to demonstrate better control of the conventions of standard written English.

Score 2

Essay Response

A nation should teach all it's students the same national curriculum until they enter college so that can prepare for college. Allowing everyone to learn the same curriculum will teach our society how to communicate with one another. This is a nation of equal opportunity and should be treated and taught equally. I believe that this would allows young individuals to get an better understanding of all different kinds of religions, culture, and society. All school teach the

same history, but some may focus more on what they feel is important than depending on where you are from.

Reader Commentary

After agreeing with the prompt's recommendation, this brief essay presents a series of unsupported claims about education and culture. The discussion fails to develop any of these claims with relevant reasons and/or examples or to make logical connections between them; as a result, the discussion is disorganized and unfocused. The final sentence states that all schools "teach the same history, but some may focus more on what they feel is important than depending on where you are from." As a result of the response's frequent errors in language and sentence structure, it isn't at all clear whether this statement is intended as an observation of current practices or a recommendation that history curricula should be flexible enough to account for regional interests.

Though this response does contain frequent errors and lacks sentence variety, these flaws serve more to impede clarity than to interfere significantly with meaning. The essay is scored a 2 primarily because it is "seriously limited in addressing the specific task directions and in presenting or developing a position on the issue."

Score 1

Essay Response

No i disagree with recommendation because it is not compulsory to student to study same national curriculum until they enter college.

Each and every student is own idea and family dream so, could not say like that student study the same nation curriculum until they enter college. we create a environment to all student are go and come in different country so we share over idea and comfortably leave with each other.

It is very necessary to collaborate with each other we develop our nation and different technology. We take an example of "SUNITA VILLIUM" she is an American scientist who works in "NASA" basically she is an INDIAN. But she completed study in USA.

So, it is not necessary to study in own national Curriculum. but we develop environment to student study with different country and develop nation name and over parents name.

Also develop support position it is very advantageous for student. some time what happens student is intelligent but he/she not able to study well we develop some kind of facility to student study well and he/she develop over country.

To conclude "A nation should not require all of its student to study the same national curriculum until they enter college."

Reader Commentary

Although this essay is obviously attempting to respond to the prompt's recommendation, its

severe problems in language and sentence structure and its pervasive grammar, usage, and mechanics errors make it impossible to discern whether the writer understands the recommendation made in the prompt.. In fact, the only clear phrases in the response are those that are borrowed from the prompt. These fundamental deficiencies in analytical writing warrant a score of 1.

Argument Topic – Practice Test 1

The following is a memorandum from the business manager of a television station.

“Over the past year, our late-night news program has devoted increased time to national news and less time to weather and local news. During this time period, most of the complaints received from viewers were concerned with our station’s coverage of weather and local news. In addition, local businesses that used to advertise during our late-night news program have just canceled their advertising contracts with us. Therefore, in order to attract more viewers to the program and to avoid losing any further advertising revenues, we should restore the time devoted to weather and local news to its former level.”

Write a response in which you discuss what specific evidence is needed to evaluate the argument and explain how the evidence would weaken or strengthen the argument.

Note: All responses are reproduced exactly as written, including errors, misspellings, etc., if any.

Score 6

Essay Response

The decision to restore the time devoted to weather and local news to its former level is one that should be made with more careful consideration of evidence, data, and viewer/client feedback by the business manager of this television station. Many assumptions have been made on the business manager’s part about the exact cause of the problems with the program. He or she should approach the idea of making changes with more caution.

The memorandum stated that more complaints received from viewers were concerned with the station’s coverage of weather and local news, but it did not state the nature of the complaints. The viewers may have been complaining about the accuracy or quality of the weather and local news rather than the shortened length of the segments. More specific information about the complaints—including whether they were about the late-night edition or about other news programs during the day--would support the argument because it would show if there was a relationship between the shortened length of the segments in the late-night news program and the viewers’ dissatisfaction with these particular segments. Sometimes it is the personalities and the chemistry of the news anchors that govern people’s decisions about which station’s news they watch. The business manager will never know unless he asks the viewers exactly why they do or do not enjoy watching his news program.

Additionally, stated in the memorandum was the fact that local businesses had just canceled their advertising contracts with the station. An assumption being made is that the reason businesses were pulling their ads was directly related to the shortened segments of the weather and local news. Considering the fact that more than one business just pulled their ad, other factors could have been involved, such as any controversy that the station’s national news may have recently brought up. Janet Jackson’s notorious wardrobe malfunction comes to mind. Though that incident happened during a national sporting event, there are many controversial national news topics that have the potential to create such a stir with the local

public. If the manager could establish that businesses discontinued advertising contracts specifically because they were displeased with the change in news coverage, and that the remaining advertisers are on the verge of leaving if coverage of weather and local news is not increased, that information would help eliminate other possible explanations.

Evidence that research had been conducted to find specific ways to attract viewers to a news program would also strengthen the argument. Moreover, findings from research about what viewers would like to see on the program may help. Assuming that they would like to see more weather and local news does not seem safe. Perhaps they are looking for something besides national news, local news, and weather all together. Or possibly they are tuning into another station that has something in their program that draws their attention. Data about which ratings are highest and what people are watching would assist the business manager in his or her decision about how to change the program.

The station cannot expect to go back to the programming it once had and be successful. Obviously, something about the previous programming must not have been working; otherwise they would not have changed their structure the last time. They cannot expect to see different results if they go back to the same structure. Careful analysis of all the factors I have presented is the best first step to making a change in the structure of their news program.

Reader Commentary

This outstanding response clearly identifies specific evidence necessary to evaluate the argument, and explains lucidly why the evidence is necessary. This response does a particularly nice job of both identifying specific evidence that would strengthen the prompt's argument and identifying evidence that would undermine the argument. For example, the response notes that while the argument assumes that lost advertising contracts are the result of the station's decreased attention to weather and local news, myriad factors, this assumption is unsupported by specific evidence. The response then provides a cogent and thorough discussion of the kinds of evidence needed to examine this assumption and how the evidence might strengthen or weaken the prompt's argument. Each paragraph here is fully and cogently developed, and the response as a whole is organized logically. Finally, the response consistently demonstrates fluency and skillful use of language. For these reasons, the response earns a score of 6.

Score 5

Essay Response

As the business manager of the television station, I would be concerned with two things; the fact that there are fewer advertisers during the late-night news, and the increased complaints recieved from viewers about weather and local news. To support the argument that the station should restore the time devoted to weather and local news, I would carefully analyze the reasons for these factors.

In regards to the complaints recieved, I would gather specific accounts that address both the issue of weather and local news. Several recorded phone calls, emails, or letters would suffice

to show first-hand data that there is concern among some viewers. Next, I would do a thorough study into what percent of complaints are about news and weather, as opposed to other content of the program. If content complaints as well as specific weather and local-news related complaints are up, this would not support my argument.

If historical evidence about viewership and number of written grievances could be gathered, this would be even better. The station could look at the specific complaints, and number of comments from the previous year and compare them to this year's. Next, I would conduct surveys of viewers to understand the reasons why they watch the late- night news. I would also look at trends and variations among viewers of morning, evening, and late-night news. There is a chance that the demographics of individuals watching at these various times are completely different. A broad large-scale survey could be conducted to determine viewer interests. If other stations have taken such measures, perhaps this station could get a copy of results, to look at larger trends in the country. Before we assume that bringing back more local news and weather will increase our viewership, we need to understand why those individuals are not happy right now.

In terms of a stations success, funding from advertisers is very important. A station can run if they lack the audience, but have a financial backing; not the other way around. I would ask the advertisers who have dropped their contracts with the station why they did so. If the reasoning was because the receptionist was rude to them last time they called the station, then we could address that problem instead of rearranging our programing. We could also analyze what kinds of local advertisers are leaving. It could be that they have found more of an audience for their product advertising on another time-slot, or more specific special-interest cable channel that speaks more to their market. It would also be beneficial to speak with the advertisers as their marketing people may have better insight into the viewership of the late-night news than the station has. The previously mentioned viewer survey could have already been done by the local business advertisers, and this could help the station realign itself with the market. Though it might be difficult to coordinate, it would definitely be advantageous to contact other local station to inquire about their contract status with the local businesses. A general lackluster response from community business could be a result of a larger-scale economic downturn, rather than the change in programing of one station. If the station wants the support back from local business advertisers, it can't just make assumptions about what is driving contracts with television stations.

Lastly, if all evidence seemed to suggest that the decreased coverage of local news and weather was the reason for increased complaints from viewers and dropped contracts of local business advertisers, then there could be a test pilot week or month of heavier coverage of weather and local news during the late-night broadcasting. If complaints are still pouring in, it might be time to fire the news anchor- or at least to thoroughly analyze the possible consequence of and reasons for doing so.

Reader Commentary

This strong response offers a generally thoughtful and well-developed discussion of the specific evidence needed to evaluate the prompt's argument. In particular, the essay cites the need to obtain evidence detailing the nature and scope of the complaints, the preferences of the

audience, and the reasons for the cancelled advertising contracts. Although this response sometimes lacks the full and cogent development of a 6, it does indicate how and why different types of evidence are necessary for a thorough evaluation of the argument. The response also occasionally digresses from its discussion of the evidence needed to evaluate the argument into specific strategies the television station might use to gather the needed evidence. On the whole, the essay conveys ideas clearly and demonstrates facility with standard written English but the response does lack the fluency and precision of language necessary for a 6. For these reasons, the response warrants a score of 5.

Score 4

Essay Response

In order for this argument to be strengthened, specific details about the viewers complaining and the businesses that pulled advertising need to be elucidated.

First, the station should be concerned about what the viewers are specifically complaining about in regards to the weather and local news coverage. It is possible that the viewers were complaining for various reasons, which may include the following: the anchorperson or weatherperson, and their physical appearance, or delivery of the news/weather, the quality of the graphics being used during these segments, or the quality or choice of the stories covered. The television station needs to determine the exact complaints, for it would strengthen the above argument if the complaints were specifically about the time spent on the local news and weather.

Along the lines of clarity, the station needs to determine the reasons why local businesses cancelled their advertising contracts. Alternative reasons for this may include another station offering cheaper air time during the same time slot, the local economy going bad, leading to these companies needing to cut costs in advertising, or consumer reports for the companies that detail better times to advertise to their customers. The television station may be losing these advertising contracts for other reasons than time devoted to local news and weather.

Finally, a closer look at viewer numbers might strengthen the argument that time spent on local news and weather is affecting this aspect. Support for this memorandum would come in the form of viewer percentages dropping the after the time devoted to national news increased. The business manager should make sure that the viewer numbers did not increase over the past year because of the increase in national news coverage. This would invalidate the argument in regards to attracting more viewers.

In conclusion, to strengthen or support the argument that restoring the time devoted to local news and weather would attract new viewers and avoid losing contracts, the business manager needs to outline that the complaints from viewers and cancelling of advertising contracts specifically occurred because of the shift to increased national news coverage.

Reader Commentary

This response earns a score of 4 by demonstrating competence both in its analysis of the argument and in its control of language. The response opens by noting the need for “specific details about the viewers complaining and the businesses that pulled advertising.” It goes on to discuss how evidence suggesting alternative explanations for the viewer complaints and loss of advertising would undermine the argument. Although the essay provides some satisfactory

support for and development of its analysis, the analysis as a whole is competent rather than generally thoughtful. Similarly, the response conveys meaning with only acceptable clarity.

Score 3

Essay Response

The aforementioned argument is a quality assessment of a potentially costly situation. In order for the news agency to ensure its continued success at the level that they once were it is absolutely necessary that they return to the level of local news that they once had. The argument that has been presented to me seems to be logical one. There is a clear statement of the problem and there is a significant amount of detail that leads readers to see that the decline in the amount of business that the station does is directly related to the dereliction that it is given to the local news.

However, in order to make this argument stronger than it already is, I think that there are certain things that could be added to bolster the information that is already here. First of all, it may be necessary to include some sort of survey results from both the community and local businesses to ensure that the reason that they have withdrawn their business is because of the program's focus shift. It may be possible that this station is merely doing a bad job at delivering the news and that this is the reason for the decline.

It is important to make sure the motivation for changing formats is the correct one.

Secondly, it should be noted that it is important to examine the complaints that were received during this time period. The information provided does not specify whether there was a spike in the amount of complaints that were coming in, or whether it was merely the same amount as usual. This would also be a point that needs to be examined closely before any definite decision could be made.

All in all, I think that the information that has been provided here is a sound and logical argument for returning the news back to the original format. However, I also feel that if the suggestions that I made were taken seriously, then it may be possible to make this argument even better than it originally was.

Reader Commentary

Although the response seems largely to accept the argument's claims, it demonstrates some competence in addressing the task by noting the need for information that could "bolster the information that is already there." The response goes on to question whether advertisers might have withdrawn for other reasons and whether the level of viewer complaints was any different from the usual, but the discussion does not go much beyond emphasizing the need for information. Moreover, though the discussion *implies* how particular pieces of evidence would strengthen the response, it does not articulate an explanation. Organization here is adequate, and control of language, though somewhat uneven, is sufficient to convey ideas with acceptable clarity. In short, the response's organization and control of language might be sufficient to warrant an upper-half score, the response must receive a score of 3 due to its limited development of relevant analysis.

Score 2

Essay Response

In this passage, it is evident that the problem began when the formation of the station time had changed. There is a need for local and weather news in the late-night news programs. What is being targeted here is that if the late-nightly news is for local viewer, than local veiwers should get the local news and weather followed by the world news. As Americans were are affected by what is happening in the world, but the most affected news is of what is happening in the 'back yard.'

There has to be a compromise in news watching. There may be news that affects us in afar instead of up close. Most Americans want to know what happened near by, while others want to know what happened far away. Before the circulatioin had changed, the news station should have given a pole of all the late-night viewers to determine which program would be more beneficial to them, world news or local/weather news.

In late-night news, the only viewers who would view this are the viewers who would be up late, which means these people work through the afternoon and evenings and miss the news broadcast at this time. The early day viewers usually watch the news during the morning and evening news. Even though the late-night views are watching the news, they still want to see what tomorrow will bring as far as controversy in the neighborhood or rain. Advertisements should be played mostly during the evening and the nightly news for better response to the ads. Most Americans work morning to evening and watch the evening and nightly news.

With this news program playing in the late-night, most views are not affected by it. When the news is playing and there is crucial information that needs to be heard, there are some Americans who rarly want to look at local adverisment, especially since they may be sleeping or working during the regular business hours of the advertisee.

There are many points that can be argued on the late-night news mainly because it is late-night. It does not affect the majority of the American population because they are mostly sleeping. For a company who is advertising during this time frame, there should be an inclusion in the contract with the news company that states the advertisement that plays on late-night news should also play on the morning news or on the evening news. With this exposure, the contract would be satisfied.

Reader Commentary

Rather than identifying specific evidence needed to evaluate the prompt's argument, this response consists largely of a lengthy discussion of why and when people watch news programs. The essay's only acknowledgement of the assigned task appears in the second paragraph where the writer suggests that the station "should have given a pole" to determine what kind of information late-night viewers want. However, this call for additional evidence is not developed or supported in any way. The response also suffers from errors in usage, grammar, and syntax that can interfere with meaning (for example, in such sentences as "When the news is playing and there is crucial information that needs to be heard, there are some Americans who rarly want to look at local adverisment, especially since they may be sleeping or working during the regular business hours of the advertisee"). Although these errors are not frequent or serious enough to rule out a score of 3, the response must, nevertheless, receive a score of 2 because it largely disregards the specific task directions.

Score 1

Essay Response

The viewers concern local news. The local businesses want advertising.

I think the business manager should decrease national news for a television station will increase weather and local news. The local Advertising will be come back. The programs should have national news, local news, weather and advertising. The manager must be look for the stucture of the TV time.

In conclusion, I think the manager should restores the time to national news and talk with local business advertising for a television station.

Reader Commentary

Although this response suggests some slight understanding of the argument's content and provides some visual cues that suggest organization, it suffers from pervasive errors in grammar and sentence structure that result in near-incoherence. Thus, the appropriate score is a 1.

Scored Sample Analytical Writing Tasks with Reader
Commentary for Practice Test 2

Issue Topic – Practice Test 2

The best way for a society to prepare its young people for leadership in government, industry, or other fields is by instilling in them a sense of cooperation, not competition.

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the claim. In developing and supporting your position, be sure to address the most compelling reasons or examples that could be used to challenge your position.

Note: All responses are reproduced exactly as written, including errors, misspellings, etc., if any.

Score 6

Essay Response

Whenever people argue that history is a worthless subject or that there is nothing to be gained by just “memorizing a bunch of stupid names and dates,” I simply hold my tongue and smile to myself. What I’m thinking is that, as cliché as it sounds, you do learn a great deal from history (and woe to those who fail to learn those lessons). It is remarkable to think of the number of circumstances and situations in which even the most rudimentary knowledge of history will turn out to be invaluable. Take, for example, the issue at hand here. Is it better for society to instill in future leaders a sense of competition or cooperation? Those who have not examined leaders throughout time and across a number of fields might not have the ability to provide a thorough and convincing answer to this question, in spite of the fact that it is crucial to the future functioning of our society. Looking closely at the question of leadership and how it has worked in the past, I would have to agree that the best way to prepare young people for leadership roles is to instill in them a sense of cooperation.

Let us look first at those leaders who have defined themselves based on their competitiveness. Although at first glance it may appear that a leader must have a competitive edge in order to gain and then maintain a leadership position, I will make two points on this subject. First, the desire to compete is an inherent part of human nature; that is, it is not something that needs to be “instilled” in young people. Is there anyone who does not compete in some way or another every single day? You try to do better than others in your school work or at the office, or you just try to do better than yourself in some way, to push yourself. When societies instill competitiveness in their leaders, it only leads to trouble. The most blatant example in this case is Adolf Hitler, who took competition to the very extreme, trying to prove that his race and his country were superior to all. We do not, however, need to look that far to find less extreme examples (i.e., Hitler is not the extreme example that disproves the rule). The recent economic meltdown was caused in no large part by the leaders of American banks and financial institutions who were obsessed with competing for the almighty dollar. Tiger Woods, the ultimate competitor in recent golfing history and in many ways a leader who brought the sport of golf to an entirely new level, destroyed his personal life (and perhaps his career - still yet to be determined) by his overreaching sense that he could accomplish anything, whether winning majors or sleeping with as many women as possible. His history of competitiveness is well documented; his father pushed him from a very early age to be the

ultimate competitor. It served him well in some respects, but it also proved to be detrimental and ultimately quite destructive.

Leaders who value cooperation, on the other hand, have historically been less prone to these overreaching, destructive tendencies. A good case in point would be Abraham Lincoln. Now, I am sure at this point you are thinking that Lincoln, who served as President during the Civil War and who refused to compromise with the South or allow secession, could not possibly be my model of cooperation! Think, however, of the way Lincoln structured his Cabinet. He did not want a group of “yes men” who would agree with every word he said, but instead he picked people who were more likely to disagree with his ideas. And he respected their input, which allowed him to keep the government together in the North during a very tumultuous period (to say the least). My point in choosing the Lincoln example is that competitiveness and conflict may play better to the masses and be more likely to be recorded in the history books, but it was his cooperative nature that allowed him to govern effectively. Imagine if the CEO of a large company were never able to compromise and insisted that every single thing be done in exactly her way. Very quickly she would lose the very people that a company needs in order to survive, people with new ideas, people ready to make great advances. Without the ability to work constructively with those who have conflicting ideas, a leader will never be able to strike deals, reach consensus, or keep an enterprise on track. Even if you are the biggest fish in the pond, it is difficult to force your will on others forever; eventually a bigger fish comes along (or the smaller fish team up against you!).

In the end, it seems most critical for society to instill in young people a sense of cooperation. In part this is true because we seem to come by our competitive side more naturally, but cooperation is more often something we struggle to learn (just think of kids on the playground). And although competitive victory is more showy, more often than not the real details of leadership come down to the ability to work with other people, to compromise and cooperate. Getting to be President of the United States or the managing director of a corporation might require you to win some battles, but once you are there you will need diplomacy and people-skills. Those can be difficult to learn, but if you do not have them, you are likely to be a short-lived leader.

Reader Commentary

This outstanding response earns a score of 6 for presenting an insightful position on the issue and supporting its analysis with compelling reasons and persuasive examples. The response takes the insightful position that competition, though necessary to some aspects of leadership, is less important for young people to learn because it is inherent in the human condition and can lead to dangerous excesses, whereas cooperation is more difficult to learn but more essential. The response follows the task directions by using counterarguments in the development of its position. For example, the discussion of Lincoln explores conflicting sides of his Presidency (the “competition” of the Civil War and the “cooperation” within his Cabinet). In fact, the response skillfully explores the nuances of both cooperation and competition, building its position of agreement with the prompt by looking closely at many sides of both concepts. Additionally, the response demonstrates superior facility with language. There are a few minor errors, mainly typos, but in general the response demonstrates excellent sentence variety and diction. This sentence is typical of the quality of the writing throughout

the response: “My point in choosing the Lincoln example is that competitiveness and conflict may play better to the masses and be more likely to be recorded in the history books, but it was his cooperative nature that allowed him to govern effectively.” In this complex sentence, the writer makes skillful use of parallel structure and subordination. Because of its fluent writing and insightful development, then, this response earns a score of 6.

Score 5

Essay Response

Cooperation, the act of working as a group to achieve a collective goal, is an important value for young children to learn. Another vital life lesson children can learn is how to be competitive, which is a mindset in which a person feels the need to accomplish more than another person. Both are necessary to become well rounded individuals, but concerning preparing for a future in government, industry or various other fields, a sense of cooperation is much more important.

While not all children are overly competitive in nature, every person has some level of competitive drive inside them. This is a natural thing and is perfectly normal. Unfortunately, if this competitive nature is emphasized, the child will have problems relating socially to other children, and subsequently, will have issues interacting with adults later in life. A fierce competitive drive will blind an individual, causing them to not see situations where group effort will be more greatly rewarded than an individual effort. Take for instance the many teams of people working for NASA. If the people that make up these teams were all out to prove that they were superior to others, our entire space program would be jeopardized. One needs to look beyond the scope of what is best on an individual level and learn to look at what will most benefit a broad group of people. This is where instilling a sense of cooperation in young children is vital. Cooperation is taught at an early age and must be emphasized throughout life to fully embrace the concept.

In the world of sports a competitive drive is vital; unfortunately, life is not a sports game that simply leads to a winning or losing score. Life is far more complex than this simple idea and there is no winner or loser designation to accompany it. We all have to work together to come to a conclusion that will assist not just ourselves, but others and future generations. In every scenario there will be individuals that have brilliant ideas, but those ideas require other people to build upon, perfect and implement. Take for instance Bill Gates; Bill Gates is responsible for the Microsoft corporation which he invented in his garage. His competitive drive assisted in building his idea, but it was the collaborative effort of many people that helped propel his invention into the world known product it is today. Without the cooperation of others, his genius invention might never have made it out of his garage.

It may be true that an individual can change the world, but only so far as to say that an individual can construct an idea that will inevitably change the world. Once an idea is formulated, it then takes a team of people working collectively towards a common goal to make sure that the brilliant, life-altering idea makes it to fruition. Without the cooperation of many, an idea could simply remain as a picture on a drawing board. It is because of this possibility that

instilling a cooperative demeanor in children is much more important than developing a competitive attitude. Competition is a natural thing that will develop with or without encouragement but the same cannot be said for a sense of cooperation.

Reader Commentary

Arguing that cooperation is less natural and more important for leadership, this response develops a thoughtful position on the issue and conveys meaning clearly and well. For these reasons it earns a score of 5. Note that it does not develop its reasons and examples as thoroughly as the sample 6 does, but it still presents thoughtful analysis using well chosen examples. For example, the discussion of Bill Gates is thoughtful, exploring the ways that both competition (the “competitive drive” that led him to found a company) and cooperation (the “collaborative effort of many people” is what made the company work) were essential to his success as a leader. Throughout the response, then, counterarguments are used to create a nuanced position on the issue. The writer looks at conflicting aspects of competition, which is vital but insufficient for life because life is “more complex” than a sporting event, and cooperation, which is critical but more difficult to learn. In addition, the writer conveys meaning clearly, demonstrating sentence variety and a facility with language that is more than adequate. There are a few minor errors, mainly typos and misspelled words, but language control in this response is more than adequate (e.g., “One needs to look beyond the scope of what is best on an individual level and learn to look at what will most benefit a broad group of people.”). Because of its facility with language and its thoughtful position on the issue, this response earns a score of 5.

Score 4

Essay Response

When the generation of today matures, it is important for them to succeed and become the successful leaders in government, industry and other fields. There are many traits that leaders must possess, and cooperation is one of these very important characters. Nonetheless it is important for leaders to have a sense of competition, so as to prevent themselves from being complacent with their position.

Cooperation is needed in order to be a functional person in society, while still adhering to social standards. Most leaders in society, did not start out as such. A person cannot isolate themselves from others with demeanor and attitude and expect to become an executive. While there may be leaders that have developed this ill attitude towards others, they did not get there by being that way. A person who is able to effectively cooperate with others, will subsequently develop a nexus of supporters. Through collaboration, people are able to develop their studies further and better themselves.

However, it is still important for there to be a sense of competition. Competition is the root of motivation for most. It drives us to become stronger, smarter, and to want more. Nonetheless, the spirit of competition must also be reigned in, and not be allowed to run wild.

Competitiveness can lead to abuse of power and distasteful actions, which is quite the opposite of someone who displays cooperativeness.

Some may argue that competition is not needed. That those that are meant to be leaders will not become complacent, because they have their own internal drive to lead. If there was no competition, there would be no world records. Michael Phelps may not be a leader of government or industry, but he is certainly educated on the technique of swimming, and leader in his field. Would he be as good as he is today if there was not competition? Would the leaders of Microsoft have been motivated to create Bing if there was no Google?

Cooperation helped many leaders get where they are today, and will continue to do so in the future. But leaders, as well as those that aspire to be one, all need to have a sense of competition as well.

Reader Commentary

This adequate response presents a clear position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task, arguing that both competition and cooperation are important for leaders. The response uses counterarguments both in the construction of its overall position (comparing the value of both competition and cooperation) and in its discussion of the positive and negative aspects of competition. However, the development of ideas in this response is not as thorough or as persuasive as one would expect to see in a response that earns a score of 5 or 6. For instance, the example of Microsoft inventing Bing to compete with Google is certainly relevant, but it is not developed with any thoughtfulness. It is simply stated. Other examples are somewhat more fully developed, but there is also some tangential material (e.g., even the writer seems to understand that Michael Phelps does not quite fit into a discussion of leadership). In addition to its adequate development, this response displays adequate control of language. This response does not have the sentence variety or the skillful diction seen in a response that earns a higher score. There are some minor errors present, but nothing that interferes with clarity. Because this response presents a clear position on the issue, expressing meaning with adequate clarity, it earns a score of 4.

Score 3

Essay Response

Leadership is a tough task to master. To be a leader means you must be better than a bunch of folks and work with them to accomplish a greater goal. Leadership in any field needs cooperative effort and a leader must be able to inspire and make the human resource at hand to work better. In doing so there is a far cry of an immense responsibility. I therefore stand by taking help from inmates to do the same.

Like the say 'when going gets tough the tough gets going'. So there is no point of getting bogged down rather plan more ways to get the work done and one of the sure shot approach is by working together. I believe to the core of my heart that there can be nothing equal to cooperation and unity in a work field. As simple as it sounds if one can do a work in hermit atmosphere at certain efficiency, a number of brains working together can be more efficient. An atmosphere where everyone works holding hands and when someone falls there are people to make him stand again makes a much better picture in my mind everytime.

Competition is not a evil it can inspire some one to work better and looking to do better can be considered good. But am afraid what fear here is that when you compete with

someone you set your limits to that person. So once you do better than him/her you tend to be relaxed and that is where when the real evil creeps in.

With cooperation you have a goal and associated effort to work for the same. Rather than individual petty and competition to be better placed than an friend it would be far more appreciable to keep working for the common goal. That way even the goal gets more defined at some level. So let's all drop all these boundaries of individualism and keep working for a common goal, and if you want to compete then compete with yourself and get better than what you were yesterday.

Reader Commentary

This response displays some competence in presenting a position according to the task directions, but it earns a score of 3 because frequent minor errors do interfere with clarity. The writer agrees with the prompt that cooperation is more important, and it explores some counterarguments in its assertion that competition “can inspire some one to work better and looking to do better can be considered good.” However, almost every sentence in this response has at least one minor error. Some of the errors are typos or minor mechanical problems like missing spaces after punctuation. But other errors have more impact on meaning. Missing words, incorrect sentence boundaries, and improper verb forms contribute to a lack of clarity throughout the response. This sentence is typical of the limited language control seen throughout this response: “So there is no point of getting bogged down rather plan more ways to get the work done and one of the sureshot approach is by working together.” Because of its limited clarity, then, this response earns a score of 3.

Score 2

Essay Response

Both a sense of cooperation and competition is needed to be a good leader. If one is focused on competition and ignores or refuse to work with others then there would be problems for that leader. A leader needs to be able to get along, cooperate and know how to interact with others and allies. Treaties and allies require cooperation. Trade agreements and aid as well. A leader cannot achieve much alone.

Competition is also needed to encourage people to be the best. If no one does their best to obtain a goal how would a leader be chosen. What kind of leader would that make? The best way for a society to prepare its young is to instill a sense of both competition and cooperation.

Reader Commentary

This response earns a score of 2 for its seriously limited development. There is a clear position on the issue, as the writer argues that the “best way for a society to prepare its young is to instill a sense of both competition and cooperation.” However, the writer provides few, if any, relevant reasons or examples to support and develop this position.

The discussion of cooperation is supported only by very generic assertions like the notion that “treaties and allies require cooperation.” And there is even less development in the discussion

of competition. In order to receive a higher score, the response would need to provide more support for its position. Language control in this response is adequate, but the response earns a score of 2 because of its seriously limited development.

Score 1

Essay Response

Best way for a society to prepare its young people for leadership in government, industry, or other fields is by instilling in them a sense of cooperation, not competition. This statement is very true, whether we mean leadership in government, industry, or any other fields.

For leadership in government, industry, or other fields some people argue that the best way for society to prepare its young people is by instilling in them a sense of cooperation. Other people argue that the best way is through competition. It can be difficult for many people to decide between these two choices. There are many arguments that support both sides. I fully agree that the best way is to instilling in them a sense of cooperation, not competition.

Reader Commentary

This response earns a score of 1 because it demonstrates little evidence of the ability to develop a position on the issue. Instead of developing a position, the response simply repeats the language of the prompt, adding some generic language that could be applied to any Issue prompt. For example, consider these sentences: “It can be difficult for many people to decide between these two choices. There are many arguments that support both sides.” This is a totally generic analytical framework that has not been filled in with any specific exploration related to this prompt. The writer is clearly making an attempt to respond to the prompt, and the final sentence does seem to indicate a position on the issue. So the response does not merit a score of 0. However, the vast majority of the response is simply repetition of language from the prompt and/or generic material. Thus, it earns a score of 1.

Argument Topic – Practice Test 2

The following is taken from a memo from the advertising director of the Super Screen Movie Production Company.

“According to a recent report from our marketing department, during the past year, fewer people attended Super Screen-produced movies than in any other year. And yet the percentage of positive reviews by movie reviewers about specific Super Screen movies actually increased during the past year. Clearly, the contents of these reviews are not reaching enough of our prospective viewers. Thus, the problem lies not with the quality of our movies but with the public's lack of awareness that movies of good quality are available. Super Screen should therefore allocate a greater share of its budget next year to reaching the public through advertising.”

Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be answered in order to decide whether the recommendation and the argument on which it is based are reasonable. Be sure to explain how the answers to these questions would help to evaluate the recommendation.

Note: All responses are reproduced exactly as written, including errors, misspellings, etc., if any.

Score 6

Essay Response

The advertising director of the Super Screen Movie production company believes that increasing the amount of advertising the company does will increase the amount of people attending Super Screen produced movies. He believes this because during the past year fewer people than ever before attended Super Screen produced movies, yet the percentage of positive reviews about specific Super Screen produced movies increased over the past year. Ostensibly the extra advertising would tout the good reviews written about Super Screen movies. Before this plan is implemented, however, Super Screen needs to address some questions about its possible flaws.

First of all, the company needs to ask what the actual number of people attending its movies as compared to the movies of other production companies is. The number of people going to movies may have been in universal decline. If this is the case and more people are going to see Super Screen Movies than the movies of any other production company, advertising about how fun it is to go to the movie theater may do more to boost Super Screen viewership than advertising promoting its own good reviews.

Secondly, the company needs to ask what the actual original number of positive reviews was. If Super Screen movies recieved 1% positive reviews last year and this year they recieved 2% positive reviews, getting that message to viewers is not going to increase Super Screen attendance. Making better movies would be much more likely to increase attendance rates.

Finally, Super Screen needs to ask what the relationship is between its viewers and the movie reviewers cited in the memo. Using a survey distributed to its target audience, Super Screen could determine if movie reviews have an effect on their audience's decision to go see a

movie, whether movie reviewers tended to have the same taste as the target audience and exactly whether or not movie reviews are reaching the audience. Super Screen also needs to consider how its movie choices have affected the separate movie reviewer and audience populations. If the studio has switched from making mega- blockbuster action movies to more nuanced dramas, the general public may be less willing to go see their movies even though movie critics prefer the dramas to the action movies.

Finally the studio must ask whether the percentage of positive reviews is really a relevant way to measure the potential impact of movie reviews. There are dozens of movie reviewers but when deciding whether to not to go to a movie, the general public will usually pick from among the 10 most popular movie reviews. These are the reviews that will impress the public if they are included in advertising. If the most popular movie reviewers disliked Super Screen movies that a larger number of small time film bloggers reviewed positively, Super Screen needs to think of a new advertising strategy.

In conclusion, there are many questions Super Screen needs to answer before using this advertising director's plan. They need to look carefully at actual numbers, both of viewership and of positive reviews. They also need to identify the relationship that their target audience has with movie reviewers and determine how their target audience feels about their movies. Finally they need to take a nuanced look at the movie reviews that they use in their advertising.

Reader Commentary

This response clearly identifies aspects of the argument relevant to the assigned task and provides insightful, thoroughly developed analysis. Thus, it earns a score of 6. The response is clearly on task, examining the questions that would need to be answered in order to determine if the recommendation is reasonable. In each case, the writer perceptively explores the nuances of the question, showing different ways in which the answers to those questions might have an impact on the recommendation. For example, the first body paragraph looks at the issue of overall movie attendance, exploring the possibility that Super Screen might actually be doing better than other production companies. If that is the case, perhaps Super Screen's advertising is already effective, and the proposed plan to increase advertising would not have the intended effect. Throughout the response, the analysis is detailed and cogent, and the organization of the response is logical both within paragraphs and between paragraphs. In addition, although there are a few misspelled words, the response demonstrates facility with language, conveying ideas fluently and precisely. Sentences like this one demonstrate the superior control of the conventions of standard written English seen throughout this response: "If this is the case and more people are going to see Super Screen Movies than the movies of any other production company, advertising about how fun it is to go to the movie theater may do more to boost Super Screen viewership than advertising promoting its own good reviews." Because of its fluent language and insightful analysis, this response earns a score of 6.

Score 5

Essay Response

While the advertising director clearly aims at relitalizing his production company and ensuring that the public is well informed about the movies which are available, there are several basic flaws to his argument . There remain some questions that need answering before any steps can be taken with regard to advertising strategies for the Super Screen Movie Production Company.

First among these questions is this; were ticket sales of the entire movie industry down? This is an essential question because it helps to pinpoint the cause of the writer's problem. If the industry as a whole is undergoing poor revenues, then perhaps the issue is not Super Screen's advertising company but rather the country's economy. In times of economic strife, it is only natural that people would be less willing to spend money on luxuries such as movie tickets. If this is the case, it might better suit the production company to cut costs rather than refunneling them into a different part of the company.

Second, the advertising director should ask himself this; what medium do the majority of his most generous movie reviewers utilize? The writer states that movie reviews were generally positive, but where were these reviews located? On television, newspapers, or the Internet? It is possible that the medium used by the most positive reviewers of Super Screen's movies is one that is not utilized by most of the company's target audiences. If Super Screen produces many family films, but most of the good reviews are found in late night television shows, then there is a good chance that the reviews are not going to be seen by the target audience. If this is the case, then the company would be better off conducting research as to what medium is most likely to reach their audiences.

One last question would be this; what advertising is currently being used by the Super Screen company? If the company advertises using only one medium, such as in newspapers, perhaps the solution is not to double the amount of newspaper space but to branch out and try other forms of advertising. The writer fails to mention exactly how the company currently advertises their movies, and this absence detracts from his argument.

In conclusion, the advertising director would be better served by first answering these questions and evaluating the resulting answers before pouring millions of dollars into his solution. It is possible that an alternative solution exists, perhaps one that will not be as expensive nor as risky.

Reader Commentary

This response earns a score of 5 because it presents generally perceptive analysis and maintains facility with language in spite of a few minor errors. The writer clearly identifies aspects of the argument relevant to the assigned task, looking at how the various points raised might impact the marketing director's recommendation. However, the development of each point is not as insightful as the development seen in the sample 6 (see, for example, the somewhat rudimentary paragraph about Super Screen's advertising media). In general, however, the development is perceptive, as in the exploration of a potential disconnect between the target audience and the media used by the reviewers, so the response rises above the adequate level. Language control in this response is also at the 5 level, as seen in the effective use of sentence

variety and appropriate word choice. Take, for example, this sentence, which demonstrates effective control of subordination and complex syntax: “If Super Screen produces many family films, but most of the good reviews are found in late night television shows, then there is a good chance that the reviews are not going to be seen by the target audience.” Because of its perceptive analysis and strong control of language, then, this response earns a score of 5.

Score 4

Essay Response

In order to decide whether or not the advertising director's recommendation is reasonable there are a lot more questions that need to be addressed. First of all it is important to look at the bigger picture. Fundamentally, has anything changed about Super Screen? Has new leadership come into the company? If so, how has that changed business practices?

Leadership changes or other changes within the company might have led Super Screen to choose to make different types of movies this year than it has in the past. It is important to determine whether or not different movie subjects/topics have influenced audiences. Many times there are discrepancies between how a reviewer rates a movie and how an audience rates a movie. It is important to determine whether or not the audiences are pleased with the products coming out of Super Screen, not just the movie reviewers.

Another question to ask is whether or not advertising has significantly changed over the past year. Has there been any less advertising this year than years before? If not, then again, the problem probably does not lie in advertising alone. If there have been some differences in the way movies were advertised, it would be important to look at some of those decisions and determine how they affected movie audiences. Perhaps the right audiences were not targeted for the right movies. If a childrens movie was released and all the advertising went into adult magazines, this would present an obvious problem.

In conclusion, it would not be a good idea to only up the advertising budget next year in an attempt to reach audiences. It is important to look at differences, if any, throughout the whole company and then determine the best course of action.

Reader Commentary

This response does identify questions that need to be answered in order to determine if the recommendation is reasonable, and the development of each point of analysis is adequate. Take, for example, the discussion of how Super Screen might have started making different types of movies this year. The writer notes, “It is important to determine whether or not different movie subjects/topics have influenced audiences. Many times there are discrepancies between how a reviewer rates a movie and how an audience rates a movie.” This discussion is certainly relevant, and it is developed enough to make the point that positive reviews might not lead to more viewers. But the response does not demonstrate the perceptive analysis or the thorough development required for a higher score. As with the analysis, language control in this response is adequate. There are some minor errors, but all the writer's points are presented with adequate clarity. Because of its adequate analysis and language control, this response earns a

score of 4.

Score 3

Essay Response

There are a battery of questions that should be asked when deciding whether or not the advertising director's recommendation is reasonable. One of the most prevalent being "How many people actually take into account movie reviews when they are deciding which movie to watch?" For, if no one reads movie reviews before making these decisions, then the proposed plan from the movie director may not guarantee anything.

The second question would be this: "who exactly is doing the movie reviews?" For instance, if there is but one or two reviewers who are doing such work, can we be sure that such a small sample would be representative of our target market?

The director's argument is not necessarily fallacious. However, there is certain evidence that would have to be put forward to consider his proposal further. First of all, we need to know how our target market takes movie reviews into account. And lastly, we need to know who, and how many people, are conducting the reviews. Only then, can we make a maximally informed decision regarding the reviews.

Reader Commentary

This response earns a score of 3 because of the limited development of its critique. The points that the writer makes are certainly relevant, and there is some attempt made to analyze the impact on the recommendation of the questions the writer raises. However, the response provides little support for each point. For example, the discussion of "who exactly is doing the movie reviews" is supported only by the fairly generic notion that the sample size might be too small to be meaningful. This response uses repetition instead of developing its analysis, as seen in the final paragraph, which simply repeats the points made earlier in the response. Language control in this response is adequate, but it earns a score of 3 for limited development.

Score 2

Essay Response

It seems like the Super Screen Movie Production Company has good quality movies. However, it did not have enough viewers to see the movies. It is probably because not many people are aware of their movies that being showed. Their problem is how to let people know that their movies are showing. The Super Screen Movie Production Company need to come up with different strategies to let people know about their movies and has more advertisements done. If the company does the following three ideas, I think they are able to reach the number of prospective viewers. One of them is advertise their movies on television, second is to talk about their new movies on radio, and third is to post poster of their new movies every where that can catch people attention. This will be able to bring their number of viewers higher.

Television is a very popular electronic that no one can live without. After a long working hours, everyone watches television to relax such as the News, movies, soap opera, and so on. If the Super Screen Movie Production Company has their movie's advertisement during this hour, people will be able to see and know that there is a good quality movie around the corner. They will come and see the movie.

Everyone has to go to work. They have to drive in a car where they listen to their radio. This is the best time for the Super Screen Movie Production Company to talk about their new released movie. This give people a chance to hear about their new movie and decide whether to go see it or not.

Seeing a poster is worth more than a thousand words. Many students do not like to look at a paper with a lot of words, but if they see a poster with picture, they will stop and look right away. This is also helping the Super Screen Movie Production to increase their viewers. Not only students, the adults are the same. There are some people do not know how to read, so seeing a poster of the new movie will help them out a lot.

After discussing three different ways for the Super Screen Movie Production Company to advertise their movie to reach enough number of prospective viewers, I believe that their movies will get many more viewers to come see their movies. What easy ways to let people know about their movies by advertise them on television, talk about the movies on radio, and put posters of their movies up everyone that people can see.

Reader Commentary

This response earns a score of 2 because it does not present an examination based on logical analysis. Instead, it agrees with the marketing director's argument and provides advice for how Super Screen could best increase its advertising ("One of them is advertise their movies on television, second is to talk about their new movies on radio, and third is to post poster of their new movies every where that can catch people attention."). There are some minor errors in this response, but it does not demonstrate the serious problems in language characteristic of a 2 (language control is more at the 3 level). Instead, this response earns a 2 because it presents agreement and advice instead of logical analysis.

Score 1

Essay Response

Acoording to this memo, It seems to be wrong things are not exist about Super Screeb Movie Production Company. That's it.

There are advantage of both ways - by listening to advice through personal experience. But I prefer to learn about the thing. Yes sure. in my country monumentally yes or not for his or her. i couldn't understand about terrable things Why did you sent me a reply I can not imagine that oh no

Reader Commentary

This incoherent response earns a score of 1. There is some evidence of an attempt to respond to the assigned topic ("It seems to be wrong things are not exist about Super Screeb Movie Production Company."), but there is little or no evidence of understanding the argument. There

is also little or no evidence of the ability to develop an organized response. In addition, the response contains pervasive errors that result in incoherence. For all these reasons, then, the response earns a score of 1.