



POWERPREP™ Online

Scored Sample Analytical Writing Issue Tasks on Practice
Tests 1 and 2 with Reader Commentary

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 understanting 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 colobrate with each other we develope ovr nation and different technology. We take a example of "SUNITA VILLIUM" she is a American scientist work in "NASA" basically she is a INDIAN. But she complite study in USA.

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

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

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

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 sureshot 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.