

新 GRE Issue 官方范文集

As people rely more and more on technology to solve problems, the ability of humans to think for themselves will surely deteriorate.

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true and explain how these considerations shape your position.

Score 6 Response*

The statement linking technology negatively with free thinking plays on recent human experience over the past century. Surely there has been no time in history where the lived lives of people have changed more dramatically. A quick reflection on a typical day reveals how technology has revolutionized the world. Most people commute to work in an automobile that runs on an internal combustion engine. During the workday, chances are high that the employee will interact with a computer that processes information on silicon bridges that are .09 microns wide. Upon leaving home, family members will be reached through wireless networks that utilize satellites orbiting the earth. Each of these common occurrences could have been inconceivable at the turn of the 19th century.

The statement attempts to bridge these dramatic changes to a reduction in the ability for humans to think for themselves. The assumption is that an increased reliance on technology negates the need for people to think creatively to solve previous quandaries. Looking back at the introduction, one could argue that without a car, computer, or mobile phone, the hypothetical worker would need to find alternate methods of transport, information processing and communication. Technology short circuits this thinking by making the problems obsolete.

However, this reliance on technology does not necessarily preclude the creativity that marks the human species. The prior examples reveal that technology allows for convenience. The car, computer and phone all release additional time for people to live more efficiently. This efficiency does not preclude the need for humans to think for themselves. In fact, technology frees humanity to not only tackle new problems, but may itself create new issues that did not exist without technology. For example, the proliferation of automobiles has introduced a need for fuel conservation on a global scale. With increasing energy demands from emerging markets, global warming becomes a concern inconceivable to the horse-and-buggy generation. Likewise dependence on oil has created nation-states that are not dependent on taxation, allowing ruling parties to oppress minority groups such as women. Solutions to these complex problems require the unfettered imaginations of maverick scientists and politicians.

In contrast to the statement, we can even see how technology frees the human imagination. Consider how the digital revolution and the advent of the internet has allowed for an unprecedented exchange of ideas. WebMD, a popular internet portal for medical information, permits patients to self research symptoms for a more informed doctor visit. This exercise opens pathways of thinking that were previously closed off to the medical layman. With increased interdisciplinary interactions, inspiration can arrive from the most surprising corners. Jeffrey Sachs, one of the architects of the UN Millenium Development Goals, based his ideas on emergency care triage techniques. The unlikely marriage of economics and medicine has healed tense, hyperinflation environments from South America to Eastern Europe.

This last example provides the most hope in how technology actually provides hope to the future of humanity. By increasing our reliance on technology, impossible goals can now be achieved. Consider how the late 20th century witnessed the complete elimination of smallpox. This disease had ravaged the human race since prehistorical days, and yet with the technology of vaccines, free thinking humans dared to imagine a world free of smallpox. Using technology, battle plans were drawn out, and smallpox was systematically targeted and eradicated.

*All responses in this publication are reproduced exactly as written, including errors, misspellings, etc., if any.

Technology will always mark the human experience, from the discovery of fire to the implementation of nanotechnology. Given the history of the human race, there will be no limit to the number of problems, both new and old, for us to tackle. There is no need to retreat to a Luddite attitude to new things, but rather embrace a hopeful posture to the possibilities that technology provides for new avenues of human imagination.

Reader Commentary

The author of this essay stakes out a clear and insightful position on the issue and follows the specific instructions by presenting reasons to support that position. The essay cogently argues that technology does not decrease our ability to think for ourselves, but merely provides "additional time for people to live more efficiently." In fact, the problems that have developed alongside the growth of technology (pollution, political unrest in oil-producing nations) actually call for more creative thinking, not less.

In further examples, the essay shows how technology allows for the linking of ideas that may never have been connected in the past (like medicine and economic models), pushing people to think in new ways. Examples are persuasive and fully developed; reasoning is logically sound and well supported.

Ideas in the essay are connected logically, with effective transitions used both between paragraphs ("However" or "In contrast to the statement") and within paragraphs. Sentence structure is varied and complex and the essay clearly demonstrates facility with the "conventions of standard written English (i.e., grammar, usage and mechanics)," with only minor errors appearing. Thus, this essay meets all the requirements for receiving a top score, a 6.

Score 5 Response

Surely many of us have expressed the following sentiment, or some variation on it, during our daily commutes to work: "People are getting so stupid these days!" Surrounded as we are by striding and strident automatons with cell phones glued to their ears, PDA's gripped in their palms, and omniscient, omnipresent CNN gleaming in their eyeballs, it's tempting to believe that technology has isolated and infantilized us, essentially transforming us into dependent, conformist morons best equipped to sideswipe one another in our SUV's.

Furthermore, hanging around with the younger, pre-commute generation, whom tech-savviness seems to have rendered lethal, is even less reassuring. With "Teen People" style trends shooting through the air from tiger-striped PDA to zebra-striped PDA, and with the latest starlet gossip zipping from juicy Blackberry to teeny, turbo-charged cell phone, technology seems to support young people's worst tendencies to follow the crowd. Indeed, they have seemingly evolved into intergalactic conformity police. After all, today's tech-aided teens are, courtesy of authentic, hands-on video games, literally trained to kill; courtesy of chat and instant text messaging, they have their own language; they even have tiny cameras to efficiently photodocument your fashion blunders! Is this adolescence, or paparazzi terrorist training camp?

With all this evidence, it's easy to believe that tech trends and the incorporation of technological wizardry into our everyday lives have served mostly to enforce conformity, promote dependence, heighten consumerism and materialism, and generally create a culture that values self-absorption and personal entitlement over cooperation and collaboration. However, I argue that we are merely in the inchoate stages of learning to live with technology while still loving one another. After all, even given the examples provided earlier in this essay, it seems clear that technology hasn't impaired our thinking and problem-solving capacities. Certainly it has incapacitated our behavior and manners; certainly our values have taken a severe blow. However, we are inarguably more efficient in our badness these days. We're effective worker bees of ineffectiveness!

If Technology has so increased our senses of self-efficacy that we can become veritable agents of the awful, virtual CEO's of selfishness, certainly it can be beneficial. Harnessed correctly, technology can improve our ability to think and act for ourselves. The first challenge is to figure out how to provide technology users with some direly-needed direction.

Reader Commentary

The language of this essay clearly illustrates both its strengths and weaknesses. The flowery and sometimes uncannily keen descriptions are often used to powerful effect, but at other times this descriptive language results in errors in

syntax. See, for example, the problems of parallelism in the second-to-last sentence of paragraph 2 ("After all, today's tech-aided teens ...").

There is consistent evidence of facility with syntax and complex vocabulary ("Surrounded as we are by striding and strident automatons with cell phones glued to their ears, PDA's gripped in their palms, and omniscient, omnipresent CNN gleaming in their eyeballs, it's tempting to believe..."). However, such lucid prose is often countered by an over-reliance on abstractions and tangential reasoning. For example, what does the fact that video games "literally train [teens] to kill" have to do with the use or deterioration of thinking abilities?

Because this essay takes a complex approach to the issue (arguing, in effect, that technology neither enhances nor reduces our ability to think for ourselves, but can do one or the other, depending on the user) and because the author makes use of "appropriate vocabulary and sentence variety," a score of 5 is appropriate.

Score 4 Response

In all actuality, I think it is more probable that our bodies will surely deteriorate long before our minds do in any significant amount. Who can't say that technology has made us lazier, but that's the key word, lazy, not stupid. The ever increasing amount of technology that we incorporate into our daily lives makes people think and learn every day, possibly more than ever before. Our abilities to think, learn, philosophize, etc. may even reach limits never dreamed of before by average people. Using technology to solve problems will continue to help us realize our potential as a human race.

If you think about it, using technology to solve more complicating problems gives humans a chance to expand their thinking and learning, opening up whole new worlds for many people. Many of these people are glad for the chance to expand their horizons by learning more, going to new places, and trying new things. If it wasn't for the invention of new technological devices, I wouldn't be sitting at this computer trying to philosophize about technology. It would be extremely hard for children in much poorer countries to learn and think for themselves with out the invention of the internet. Think what an impact the printing press, a technologically superior mackine at the time, had on the ability of the human race to learn and think.

Right now we are seeing a golden age of technology, using it all the time during our every day lives. When we get up there's instant coffee and the microwave and all these great things that help us get ready for our day. But we aren't allowing our minds to deteriorate by using them, we are only making things easier for ourselves and saving time for other important things in our days. Going off to school or work in our cars instead of a horse and buggy. Think of the brain power and genius that was used to come up with that single invention that has changed the way we move across this globe.

Using technology to solve our continually more complicated problems as a human race is definately a good thing. Our ability to think for ourselves isn't deteriorating, it's continuing to grow, moving on to higher though functions and more ingenious ideas. The ability to use what technology we have is an example

Reader Commentary

This essay meets all the criteria of a level-4 essay. The writer develops a clear position ("Using technology to solve our problems will continue to help us realize our potential as a human race"). The position is then developed with relevant reasons ("using technology to solve more complicat[ed] problems gives humans a chance to expand their thinking and learning" and "we are seeing a golden age of technology").

Point 1, "using technology," is supported with the simple but relevant notion that technology allows us access to information and abilities to which we would not normally have access. Similarly, point 2, the "golden age," is supported by the basic description of our technologically saturated social condition. Though the overall development and organization of the essay does suffer from an occasional misdirection (see paragraph 3's abrupt progression from coffee pots to the benefits of technology to cars), the essay as a whole flows smoothly and logically from one idea to the next.

It is useful to compare this essay to the level-3 essay presented next. Though both essays entail some surface-level discussion and often fail to probe deeply into the issue, this writer does take the analysis a step further. In paragraph 2, the distinction between this essay and the next one (the level-3 response) can most clearly be seen. To support the notion that advances in technology actually help increase thinking ability, the writer draws a clever parallel between the promise of modern, sophisticated technology (computer) and the actual "impact" of equally "promising" and pervasive technologies of the past (printing press).

Like the analysis, the language in this essay clearly meets the requirements for a score of 4. The writer displays sufficient control of language and the conventions of standard written English. The preponderance of mistakes are of a cosmetic nature ("trying to solve more complicating problems.") There is a sentence fragment ("Going off ...") along with a comma splice ("Our ability ... isn't deteriorating, it's continuing to grow ...") in paragraph 3. However, these errors are minor and do not interfere with the clarity of the ideas being presented.

Score 3 Response

There is no current proof that advancing technology will deteriorate the ability of humans to think. On the contrary, advancements in technology had advanced our vast knowledge in many fields, opening opportunities for further understanding and achievement. For example, the problem of debilitating illnesses and diseases such as alzheimer's disease is slowing being solved by the technological advancements in stem cell research. The future ability of growing new brain cells and the possibility to reverse the onset of alzheimer's is now becoming a reality. This shows our initiative as humans to better our health demonstrates greater ability of humans to think.

One aspect where the ability of humans may initially be seen as an example of deteriorating minds is the use of internet and cell phones. In the past humans had to seek out information in many different environments and aspects of life. Now humans can sit in a chair and type anything into a computer and get an answer. Our reliance on this type of technology can be detrimental if not regulated and regularly substituted for other information sources such as human interactions and hands on learning. I think if humans understand that we should not have such a reliance on computer technology, that we as a species will advance further by utilizing the opportunity of computer technology as well as the other sources of information outside of a computer. Supplementing our knowledge with internet access is surely a way for technology to solve problems while continually advancing the human race.

Reader Commentary

This essay never moves beyond a superficial discussion of the issue. The writer attempts to develop two points: that advancements in technology have progressed our knowledge in many fields and that supplementing rather than relying on technology is "surely a way for technology to solve problems while continually advancing the human race." Each point, then, is developed with relevant but insufficient evidence. In discussing the potential of technology to advance knowledge in many fields (a broad subject, rife with possible examples), the writer uses only one limited and very brief example from a specific field (medicine and stem-cell research).

Development of the second point is hindered by a lack of specificity and organization. The writer creates what might be best described as an outline. The writer cites a need for regulation/supplementation and warns of the detriment of over-reliance upon technology. However, the explanation of both the problem and solution is vague and limited ("Our reliance ... can be detrimental. If humans understand that we should not have such a reliance ... we will advance further"). There is neither explanation of consequences nor clarification of what is meant by "supplementing." This second paragraph is a series of generalizations that are loosely connected and lack a much-needed grounding.

In the essay, there are some minor language errors and a few more serious flaws (e.g., "The future ability of growing new brain cells" or "One aspect where the ability of humans may initially be seen as an example of deteriorating minds"). Despite the accumulation of such flaws, the writer's meaning is generally clear. Thus, this essay earns a score of 3.

Score 2 Response

In recent centuries, humans have developed the technology very rapidly, and you may accept some merit of it, and you may see a distortion in society occured by it. To be lazy for human in some meaning is one of the fashion issues in thesedays. There are many symptoms and resons of it.

However, I can not agree with the statement that the technology make humans to be reluctant to thinkng thoroughly.

Of course, you can see the phenomena of human laziness along with developed technology in some place. However, they would happen in specific condition, not general. What makes human to be laze of thinking is not merely technology, but the the tendency of human that they treat them as a magic stick and a black box. Not understanding the aims and theory of them causes the disapproval problems.

The most important thing to use the thechnology, regardless the new or old, is to comprehend the fundamental idea of them, and to adapt suit tech to tasks in need. Even if you recognize a method as a all-mighty and it is extremely over-spec to your needs, you can not see the result you want. In this procedure, humans have to consider as long as possible to acquire adequate functions. Therefore, humans can not escape from using their brain.

In addition, the technology as it is do not vain automatically, the is created by humans. Thus, the more developed tech and the more you want a convenient life, the more you think and emmit your creativity to breakthrough some banal method sarcastically.

Consequently, if you are not passive to the new tech, but offensive to it, you would not lose your ability to think deeply. Furthermore, you may improve the ability by adopting it.

Reader Commentary

The language of this essay is what most clearly links it to the score of 2. Amidst sporadic moments of clarity, this essay is marred by serious errors in grammar, usage and mechanics that often interfere with meaning. It is unclear what the writer means when he/she states, "To be lazy for human in some meaning is one of the fashion issues in thesedays," or "to adapt suit tech to tasks in need."

Despite such severe flaws, the writer has made an obvious attempt to respond to the prompt ("I can not agree with the statement that the technology make humans to be reluctant to thinking thoroughly") as well as an unclear attempt to support such an assertion ("Not understanding the aims and theory of them [technology] causes the disapproval problems" and "The most important thing to use the thechnology ... is to comprehend the fundamental idea of them"). On the whole, the essay displays a seriously flawed but not fundamentally deficient attempt to develop and support its claims.

(Note: In this specific case, the analysis is tied directly to the language. As the language falters, so too does the analysis.)

Score 1 Response

Humans have invented machines but they have forgot it and have started everything technically so clearly their thinking process is deteriorating.

Reader Commentary

The essay is clearly on topic, as evidenced by the writer's usage of the more significant terms from the prompt: "technically" (technologically), "humans," "thinking" (think) and "deteriorating" (deteriorate). Such usage is the only clear evidence of understanding. Meaning aside, the brevity of the essay (one sentence) clearly indicates the writer's inability to develop a response that follows the specific instructions given ("Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement above and explain your reasoning for the position you take").

The language, too, is clearly level 1, as the sentence fails to achieve coherence. The coherent phrases in this one-sentence response are those tied to the prompt: "Humans have invented machines" and "their thinking process is deteriorating." Otherwise, the point being made is unclear.

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.

Score 6 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 insight-ful 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, where-as 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 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 impliment. 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 furtuition. 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 competivie 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 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 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 they 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 an evil it can inspire someone 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 enemy 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 someone 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 sure-shot approach is by working together." Because of its limited clarity, then, this response earns a score of 3.

Score 2 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 Response

Best way for a society to prepare it's young people for leadership in government, industry, or other fields is by instilling in them a sense of coopertion, 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 it's young people is by instilling in them a sense of cooperation. Other people argue that the best way is through competition. It can be diffi cult 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.

The best ideas arise from a passionate interest in commonplace things.

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement above and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true and explain how those considerations shape your position.

Score 6 Response

Passion is clearly necessary for a truly great idea to take hold among a people—passion either on the part of the original thinker, the audience, or ideally both. The claim that the most lucrative subject matter for inspiring great ideas is “commonplace things” may seem initially to be counterintuitive. After all, aren’t great ideas usually marked by their extraordinary character? While this is true, their extraordinary character is as often as not directly derived from their insight into things that had theretofore gone unquestioned. While great ideas certainly can arise through seemingly pure innovation... say, for example, Big Bang cosmology, which developed nearly all of its own scientific and philosophical precepts through its own process of formation, it is nevertheless equally true that such groundbreaking thought was, and is, still largely a reevaluation of previous assumptions to a radical degree... after all, the question of the ultimate nature of the universe, and man’s place in it, has been central to human thought since the dawn of time. Commonplace things are, additionally, necessary as material for the generation of “the best ideas” since certainly the success among an audience must be considered in evaluating the significance and quality of an idea.

The advent of Big Bang cosmology, which occurred in rudimentary form almost immediately upon Edwin Hubble’s first observations at the Hooker telescope in California during the early 20th century, was the most significant advance in mankind’s understanding of the universe in over 400 years. The seemingly simple fact that everything in the universe, on the very large scale, is moving away from everything else in fact betrays nearly all of our scientific knowledge of the origins and mechanics of the universe. This slight, one might even say commonplace, distortion of tint on a handful of photographic plates carried with it the greatest challenge to Man’s general, often religiously reinforced, conception of the nature of the world to an extent not seen since the days of Galileo. Not even Charles Darwin’s theory, though it created more of a stir than Big Bang cosmology, had such shattering implications for our conceptions of the nature of our reality. Yet it is not significant because it introduced the question of the nature of what lies beyond Man’s grasp. A tremendous number of megalithic ruins, including the Pyramids both of Mexico and Egypt, Stonehenge, and others, indicate that this question has been foremost on humankind’s collective mind since time immemorial. Big Bang cosmology is so incredibly significant in this line of reasoning exactly because of the degree to which it changed the direction of this generally held, constantly pondered, and very ancient train of thought.

Additionally, there is a diachronic significance to the advent of Big Bang cosmology, which is that, disregarding limitations such as the quality of optical devices available and the state of theoretical math, it could have happened at any point in time. That is to say, all evidence points to roughly the same raw intellectual capacity for homo sapiens throughout our history, our progress has merely depended upon the degree of it that a person happens to inherit, a pace that has been increasing rapidly since the industrial revolution. Yet this discovery had to happen at a certain point in time or another—it cannot have been happening constantly or have never happened yet still be present—and this point in time does have its own significance. That significance is precisely the fact that the aforementioned advent must have occurred at precisely the point in time at which it truly could have occurred—that is to say, it marks the point in our history when we had progressed sufficiently to begin examining, with remarkable substantiated acuity, the workings of the universe across distances that would take millions of human lifetimes to reach or to traverse. The point for the success of this advent must necessarily have been, additionally, the point at which the audience concerned was capable and prepared to accept such a radical line of reasoning.

Both factors, a radical, passionate interpretation of the commonplace and the preparedness to accept such an interpretation, are necessary for the formulation of a truly great idea. If the passion is absent from an inquiry by the thinker or by the bulk of an audience, the idea will die out if it comes to fruition at all. If the material is not sufficiently commonplace to be considered by an informed audience of sufficient size, the same two hazards exist. Given these two factors, the idea must still be found palatable and interesting by the audience if it is to hope to gain a foothold and eventually establish itself in a significant fashion.

Reader Commentary

This outstanding response presents a cogent, well-articulated analysis of the complexities of the issue by arguing that (1) great ideas develop from commonplace observations that are interpreted in a radical way; and (2) passion is required of both thinkers and the audience in order for great ideas to take hold.

The argument is based on an extended example (Big Bang cosmology) and has two parts. The first part defines “commonplace things” as universal questions (i.e., the quest to understand the cosmos is commonplace, though complex, because it is an ancient and universal question) and places Big Bang cosmology in context with the scientific breakthroughs of Galileo and the Pyramids of ancient Mexico and Egypt.

The second part explains Big Bang as the result of a convergence of factors: both thinkers and the audience must be ready to reevaluate “previous assumptions” and accept “radical, passionate interpretations.”

The argument’s careful line of reasoning is strengthened by appropriate transitions between paragraphs (“Additionally,” “Both factors, a radical, passionate interpretation of the commonplace and the preparedness to accept such an interpretation, are necessary for the formulation of a truly great idea,” etc.) and within paragraphs (“Not even Charles Darwin’s,” “Yet,” “that is to say,” etc.). Fluent and precise language—advent, rudimentary, diachronic, shattering implications, megalithic ruins—and effective sentence variety also characterize this response as outstanding. Finally, despite the presence of minor errors (overuse of comma and inconsistent use of ellipses in paragraph 1), this response demonstrates facility with the conventions of standard written English.

Score 5 Response

The statement above comes from the perspective that the best thinkers, inventors, and innovators are the way that they are because they explore passionately the interesting things around them. Yes, I would say that this is definitely true. I understand best the things that interest me, but it is only the things with which I am familiar with and understand in my surroundings. It would be difficult to take passionate interest in the things which I did not have available in my environment.

For example, let’s consider some “idea” people in history. The person who invented the basketball hoop, or the game of volleyball, or ice skates, all had interest in those things before they had their brilliant ideas. I do know that the inventor of the basketball hoop used to coach a basketball team of young boys, and they would throw the ball into a fruit basket that was nailed to the wall. Obviously, a basket has a bottom to it, and they would have to fish it out after every successful throw. So he had the brilliant idea of cutting out the bottom of the basket. It seems so simple to us now, but nobody had ever played basketball like that in his day.

The phrase, “commonplace things” can be rather misleading, I believe. I think every person has slightly different “commonplace things” in their environment depending on their interests, their financial status, and availability of items. What is commonplace for one person may never be known by another. I take passionate interest in things having to do with sewing using patterns, fabrics and threads. However, my mother and grandmother are excellent seamstresses and I had the availability of learning from them. It was a “commonplace thing” for me. I have had some wonderful ideas come out of my passion for this kind of art.

Orville and Wilbur Wright had a passionate interest in things having to do with flight, a rather ordinary thing for the sorts of birds who can fly with their wings, but certainly not people. If I had lived during the Wright brothers’ time, I would probably not have had the same passionate interest in figuring out how to make humans fly, because it is not something that I would have thought possible. But their dreams and visionary possibilities were much bigger than mine would have been at that time. They not only had a passionate interest but they were willing to experiment, to risk financial ruin and ridicule, and even put their lives on the line. So while it is true that the best ideas arise from a passionate interest in commonplace things, there also has to be an element of daring to challenge “norms” and not being able to just accept things as they are. There has to be a desire to make things better and to improve on the present.

There also has to be the element of not being afraid of failure. Most ideas do inevitably fail. Einstein is viewed today as being one of the most brilliant thinkers and “idea” people in all of history. But nobody really talks about how many times his ideas failed. The number is quite amazing. Many people are afraid of failure, so even though they make take a passionate interest in something commonplace, and have some great

ideas, they may never carry them through because of uncertainty that they would work. We must be willing to try!

So, yes, it is true that the best ideas arise from a passionate interest in commonplace things, because these are the things that we know, these are the things that we understand, and the things that we want to explore in even more depths. But there must be more elements involved than just taking interest in something. We must be willing to face risks of many kinds in order to separate the ideas that fail from the ones that will triumphantly succeed.

Reader Commentary

This strong response presents a well-considered analysis of the complexities of the issue by arguing that great ideas come, not only from a passionate interest in the commonplace, but also from great imagination and a willingness to succeed.

The logic of the response unfolds very smoothly: paragraph 3 explores the term “commonplace” and offers support for the prompt’s position; paragraphs 4 and 5 discuss the related issues of imagination, willingness to experiment, and overcoming failure. The examples are well chosen and generally well developed.

Paragraph 2 offers a relevant, though predictable, sports example (invention of basketball hoop) to examine how commonplace things/familiarity can spark great ideas. A personal example is used in paragraph 3 to further explore the definition of “commonplace” and illustrate how the term is relative to financial status and availability (though only the concept of availability is developed in this example). Paragraph 2 logically extends into paragraph 3, and the same connection is seen between paragraphs 4 and 5.

In paragraph 4 the Wright brothers are used to argue that great ideas also come from imagination and a willingness to experiment. The final example, in which Einstein is offered to illustrate the necessity of overcoming failure, is not as fully developed as the others. The respondent does not explain what failures Einstein endured or how he overcame them, which makes the example less compelling. Overall, the analysis demonstrated in the examples is “perceptive and clear,” but not “insightful and cogent” as required for a score of 6. While the response expresses ideas clearly, using appropriate vocabulary and sentence variety, it does not use language as fluently and precisely as would a typical 6. Occasional wordiness/ awkwardness could be avoided with more precise diction (e.g., “There also has to be the element of not being afraid of failure,” or “I have had some wonderful ideas come out of my passion for this kind of art”).

Score 4 Response

In agreement with the statement, many great inventions have come from individuals interested in commonplace things. Out of simplicity arises great ideas, and I would consider commonplace things to be simplistic. However, it is hard to say that the “best” ideas arise from passion in commonplace things, because one could argue that the best ideas involve interest in remarkable things, which is what makes them the “best” ideas.

If the statement is viewed from the standpoint of all ideas from the beginning of civilization, then the statement holds true. Examples of commonplace things are food and shelter. If a person had an abundance of food and needed to transport it, they may have the idea to weave a basket or make some sort of tote in order to load more at once. With that idea, eventually the people would think of things to make the first idea more useful, such as adding wheels to your carrying device. With shelter, first people (Cro-Magnon) may have kept out of weather and unsafe territory by using caves as shelter. From passionate interest in the common shelter a person may have come up with brilliant ideas about structures, architecture, and construction.

In concern with the opposing view that the best ideas arise from remarkable things, one could argue that best ideas are medical breakthroughs and all other aspects of Science. Working with substances and molecules and creating ions and isotopes is not a commonplace thing. However, it is what the people who make the scientific breakthroughs have passionate interest in expanding.

Looking at the big picture, I would say that if people did not have “passionate interest in commonplace things”, then the idea that led us to the remarkable things would have never occurred. If that is true then the statement holds true because the best ideas do arise from a passionate interest in commonplace things.

Though some older ideas may seem obsolete now, there was a time that without those ideas, we would still be in the dark ages.

Overall, I agree with the statement. The best ideas do arise from a passionate interest in commonplace things. Though I do not consider medical breakthroughs coming from interest in commonplace things, our species appears to be reaching the point in which cancer and AIDS could be considered a commonplace thing. If that is true, then when someone finds a cure for cancer or AIDS it will be one of the best ideas arising from a passionate interest in a commonplace thing. Once again reinforcing the truth of the statement.

Reader Commentary

This response presents a competent analysis and conveys meaning adequately.

Paragraph 2 offers appropriate and adequately developed examples from “the beginning of civilization” to illustrate how commonplace needs inspire innovation: the need to transport food led to the invention of woven baskets and, eventually, the invention of the wheel; similarly, the need for shelter that drove “Cro-Magnon” to the caves eventually inspired “brilliant ideas about structures, architecture, and construction.”

Paragraph 3, which explores the “opposing view” (the best ideas arise from remarkable things), is less developed. The respondent claims that the best ideas are “medical breakthroughs and all other aspects of Science,” without explaining what is meant by “Science” or why these types of ideas are the “best.” Does “Science” include engineering, computer sciences, and the social sciences? Why are advances in science and medicine better than advances in religion the arts, or philosophy? The response also fails to acknowledge the commonplace interests (e.g., desire to improve quality of life) that drive medical/scientific research. While the response addresses two sides of the issue, it never delves into complexity the way a 5 or 6 would.

In paragraph 4, the response comes to a new conclusion: without initial interest in commonplace things, interest in remarkable things would be impossible. This is an interesting position that, if developed and supported with well-chosen examples, could lead to complex analysis. However, the conclusion is merely stated, loosely supported with generalities, and then further confounded by shaky logic in paragraph 5.

Ideas are expressed with reasonable clarity and the response generally demonstrates control of language. It is lack of complexity and logical development that keep this response from earning a higher score.

Score 3 Response

How do new knowledge came into being? Sometimes it stemmed from existing knowledge. Sometimes it was born all out of sudden. Both ways seem work well. As I see through this question, I believe that what plays a key role in creating new ideas is a passionate interest.

Throughout history, a myriad of examples help prove the importance of interest. Edison, the greatest inventors in the world, possessed a sharp interest ever since his childhood. In his eyes, every common things were full of mysteries. It was his unique interest which helped him look into the mechanism of things around therefore new ideas came into his mind and, changed into concrete machines facilitating our lives. Another famous example is that of Newton. A riped apple from a tree fell onto his head one afternoon. For ordinary people, this kind of trivial instance would slip off their mind at once. However, Newton lost himself in thought of the relation between objects. Finally he found gravitation and opened up a new era of physics.

On the other hand, without interest, the opportunity of great discoveries will pass by. Most people are experiencing ordinary lives everyday. Why don't they come up with great ideas? Because interest is a state of skepticism, a state in which we do not stop to disclose the truth beneath a surface of commonplaces. Interest means the ability to explore the internal correlations. Therefore, with a passionate interest, those commonplace things are no longer commonplace, and new ideas are created.

From what have been discussed above, we can see that interest serves as force to propel the exploration of unknowns, to perfect the structure of human knowledge, and to move towards the ultimate truth.

Reader Commentary

This limited response demonstrates some competence in its analysis and in conveying meaning but is obviously flawed.

The response agrees with the prompt by arguing that a passionate interest allows people to see beyond the commonplace and create new ideas (paragraphs 1 and 3). However, the response is limited in presenting and developing this position.

In paragraph 2 the response offers two relevant but underdeveloped examples to illustrate the importance of interest in generating ideas.

The Edison example is not persuasive because its development is limited to generalities (“common things were full of mysteries...which helped him look into the mechanism of things...therefore new ideas came into his mind and, changed into concrete machines”). The response does not provide specific examples of the common “things” that interested Edison nor does it discuss any of Edison’s particular ideas. Thus, it does little to advance the response’s position. The Newton example is not penalized for historical inaccuracy. However, like the previous example, it is overly general and underdeveloped.

The response also contains an accumulation of language errors (in usage, word choice, and sentence structure) that often result in a lack of clarity. For instance, the rhetorical device used in paragraph 1 contains frequent errors that render it ineffective. The imprecise language use in the Newton example is particularly unsettling: “Newton lost himself in thought of the relation between objects. Finally he found gravitation and opened up a new era of physics.” While these errors do not generally interfere with meaning, they constitute a lack of language control that precludes a score of 4.

Score 2 Response

The above statement reinforces my values and beliefs. I agree that the best ideas arise from a passionate interest. I agree simply because a person must be able to personally relate to a thing in order to become passionate to the idea. The person behind the best ideas are passionate because the commonplace things have affected the person on a personally level or on a mutual level. The relationship between the commonplace thing and the best idea unites a passionate interest to the person who it has affected. A person must have a desire to build on their passion in order to follow through on his or her idea.

Reader Commentary

This response presents a seriously flawed analysis of the issue.

The response agrees with the prompt by arguing that a person must be able to relate to something in order to develop passion for it. (The connection between things one can “relate to” and “commonplace things” is implied.) The response also states that passion is necessary in order for a person to follow through on an idea. However, neither of these claims is supported with relevant reasons or examples.

Furthermore, flawed word choice and other language control problems make the reasoning hard to follow (particularly in sentences 4 and 5: “The person behind the best ideas are passionate because the commonplace things have affected the person on a personally level or on a mutual level. The relationship between the commonplace thing and the best idea unites a passionate interest to the person who it has affected.” In those sentences the respondent attempts to analyze the relationship between commonplace things, passion, and ideas). Nevertheless, this response is not a 1: the respondent does provide evidence of the ability to understand the issue and attempts to present a position on it.

Score 1 Response

This topic can be found to be true in many different areas. The best ideas that people have come up with are usually founded by improving commonplace things. For example in order to improve the efficiency of writing the typewriter was invented, then following that the computer was invented.

Reader Commentary

This response presents a fundamentally deficient discussion of the issue.

The first sentence consists of generic language that can be applied to any prompt. Thus, it neither enhances nor detracts from the analysis. The remainder of the response consists of a statement in support of the prompt and a list of two examples (the typewriter and the computer). The examples offered are potentially relevant but completely undeveloped. Basic errors in usage and grammar are pervasive, but it is primarily the inability to develop an organized response that makes this response a 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.

Score 6 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 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 highpaying 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 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 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 knowledge 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 Response

A nation should teach all its 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 allow young individuals to get a better understanding of all different kinds of religions, culture, and society. All schools 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 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 work in "NASA" basically she is an INDIAN. But she complete 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 happen 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.

The best way to teach is to praise positive actions and ignore negative ones.

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.

Score 6 Response

The recommendation presents a view that I would agree is successful most of the time, but one that I cannot fully support due to the “all or nothing” impression it gives.

Certainly as an educator I agree fully that the best way to elicit positive response from students is to make use of students’ positive energy and then encourage actions that you would like to see repeated. It is human nature that we all want to be accepted and achieve on some level, and when people in authority provide feedback that we have done something well, the drive to repeat the action that was praised is bound to be particularly strong.

This blanket statement would obviously pay dividends in situations in which a teacher desires to have students repeat particular behaviors. For example, if an educator is attempting to teach students proper classroom etiquette, it would be appropriate to openly praise a student who raises his or her hand when wishing to speak or address the class. In such cases, the teacher may also help shape positive behaviors by ignoring a student who is trying to interject without approval from the teacher. In fact, the decision to ignore students who are exhibiting inappropriate behaviors of this type could work very well in this situation, as the stakes are not very high and the intended outcome can likely be achieved by such a method. However, it is important to note here that this tactic would only be effective in such a “low-stakes” situation, as when a student speaks without raising her hand first. As we will discuss below, ignoring a student who hits another student, or engages in more serious misbehaviors, would not be effective or prudent.

To expand on this point, it is important for teachers to be careful when working with the second half of this statement, only ignoring negative actions that are not serious. Take for instance a student who is misbehaving just by chatting with a fellow classmate. This student might not be presenting much of a problem and may be simply seeking attention. Ignoring the student might, in fact, be the best solution. Now assume the negative action is the improper administering of chemicals in a science experiment or the bullying of a fellow student. To ignore these negative actions would be absurd and negligent. Now you are allowing a problem to persist, one that could potentially lead to much bigger and more dangerous issues. In a more serious situation, addressing the negative actions quickly and properly could stop the problem in its tracks. It is for reasons like this that I do not advocate the idea that a teacher can be successful by simply ignoring negative actions.

I do, however, greatly support the idea that the central focus of teaching should be to build on and encourage positive actions. However, the author’s all-encompassing statement leaves too many negative possibilities for the classroom. Perhaps a better way to phrase this statement would be to say, “The best way to teach is to praise positive actions and ignore negative ones that are not debilitating to class efficiency or the safety of any individual”.

Thus, in the original statement, there are indeed some good intentions, and there could be a lot of merit in adopting its basic principles. Data proves that positive support can substantially increase motivation and desire in students and contribute to positive achievements. In fact, most studies of teaching efficacy indicate that praising positive actions and ignoring negative ones can create a more stable and efficient classroom.

It needs to be stressed, however, that this tool is only effective at certain levels of misbehavior. As mentioned above, when the behavior is precipitated by feelings of revenge, power or total self-worthlessness, this methodology will likely not work. It is likely to be very successful, however, when the drive behind the misbehavior is simple attention seeking. In many of these instances, if the teacher demonstrates clearly that inappropriate behavior does not result in the gaining of attention, students are more likely to seek attention by behaving properly. Should the student choose this path, then the ignoring has worked and when the positive behavior is exhibited, then the teacher can utilize the first part of the theory and support or praise

this behavior. Now it is much more likely to be repeated. If the student does not choose this path and instead elects to raise the actions to a higher level that presents a more serious issue, then ignorance alone cannot work and other methods must be employed.

In conclusion, one can appreciate the credo expressed in this instance, but surely we all can see the potential error of following it through to the extreme.

Reader Commentary

This response receives a 6 for its well-articulated, insightful analysis of the issue. Rather than simply rejecting or accepting the prompt, the writer argues that the recommendation made by the prompt can often be true but is too “all or nothing” to be endorsed without qualification. The writer turns this idea into an insightful position by providing examples and evidence to fully and persuasively support its nuanced argument. The response offers nicely detailed situations that provide compelling support for a claim that the recommendation can, in fact, work. At the same time, it also highlights the recommendation’s limits using additional specific, detailed examples. Particularly persuasive is the fourth paragraph, in which the writer compares the impact of ignoring minor behavioral problems like talking in class to the potential costs of ignoring more serious issues like bullying. Thus, the writer recognizes that the prompt’s claim, as well as his/her own, is inevitably dependent on the specific context for its success or failure. Throughout the response, the writer demonstrates the ability to convey ideas fluently and precisely, using effective vocabulary and sentence variety. This sentence demonstrates the level of language facility seen throughout the response: “It is human nature that we all want to be accepted and achieve on some level, and when people in authority provide feedback that we have done something well, the drive to repeat the action that was praised is bound to be particularly strong.”

Score 5 Response

I partially agree with the statement “The best way to teach is to praise positive actions and ignore negative ones”. Children should be rewarded when they perform well; however, they should not be ignored for performing sub-optimally. For purposes of this essay, the term “actions” is defined as behaviors within the classroom.

Utilizing positive reinforcements, such as tangible rewards, can be a good method to teach children. If the teacher praises children for actions that are desirable, then the children are more likely to repeat those actions. For example, a student who completes an assignment on time and does a good job is likely to want to do a good job on the next assignment if he gets positive feedback. Likewise, the children who are not currently engaging in the desirable actions may be more inclined to do so in order to receive the positive reinforcement.

Conversely, children should not be ignored for negative actions. If a child is not exhibiting appropriate behavior in the classroom, then it is the teacher’s responsibility to encourage the child to perform optimally. Ignoring something doesn’t make it go away, actions and consequences do. A student who is being disruptive in class will continue to be disruptive unless the teacher does something about it. However, the teacher’s actions need be appropriate.

Before the teacher attempts to modify a child’s behavior, the teacher needs to try and identify the reason behind the behavior. For instance, children who leave their seat often, stare in to space, or call out of turn may be initially viewed as having poor behavior. However, the teacher may suspect that the child has an attentional problem, and request that the child be tested. If the child does have an attentional problem, then the teacher can work with a related service, such as occupational therapy, to alter the classroom environment in order to cater to the needs of the child. For instance, the teacher could remove some of the stimulating bulletin board displays to make the room more calming to the child. If the child becomes more attentive in class then the teacher was able to assist the child without scolding them or ignoring them. The teacher met the needs of the child and created an environment to enable the child to optimally perform in the educational setting.

On the other hand, if the child is tested, and does not have any areas of concern that may be impacting the educational performance in the classroom, then the negative behavior may strictly be due to defiance. In such a case, the teacher still should not ignore the child, because the negative actions may hinder the learning opportunity for the remaining children in the class. As a result, a child who is being disruptive to the learning process of the class should be set apart from the class so that they do not receive the positive reinforcement of peer attention.

The teacher should not ignore the student who is misbehaving, but that does not mean that the teacher just needs to punish. It is better to address the child privately and make sure the child is aware of the negative actions. Once the child is aware, then the teacher should once again try to determine the reason why the child is behaving in a negative manner. Perhaps the child's parents are in the middle of a divorce and the child is outwardly expressing his frustration in the classroom. Or the academic content of the class may not be challenging enough for the child and so he is misbehaving out of boredom. Whatever the reason behind the behavior, the key factor is that the teacher works with the child to try and identify it. Simply punishing or ignoring the child would not solve the problem, whereas working to create a plan for success in the classroom would. Likewise, rather than punishing and defeating the child, the teacher is working with and empowering the child; a much more positive outcome to the situation.

Reader Commentary

This strong response presents a thoughtful and well-developed analysis of the issue. In this case the writer argues that teachers need to modify their approach based on context and observation, meaning that a blanket approach cannot be successful. The writer supports this position with relevant reasons and examples that present logically sound support. Note that the task instructions ask writers to discuss circumstances in which adopting the recommendation might or might not prove advantageous, and this response does that quite clearly. In the second paragraph, the writer gives an example of a student who completes an assignment on time and receives positive feedback, showing how the recommendation could prove advantageous. Other examples show circumstances in which adopting the recommendation would not be a good idea, and these various points are brought together to support the writer's position that teachers have to look at the context of the situation and cannot rely on simply ignoring negative actions. This response also demonstrates facility with language, using appropriate vocabulary and sentence variety. Sentences like this one demonstrate the writer's command of the conventions of standard written English: "If the child does have an attentional problem, then the teacher can work with a related service, such as occupational therapy, to alter the classroom environment in order to cater to the needs of the child." There are some minor errors, but overall the response demonstrates strong control of language. Although the response is clearly stronger than a 4, which would simply present a clear position on the issue according to the task instructions, it does not reach the level of a 6 because it does not develop its points in a way that creates a cogent and insightful position. It does, however, present a generally thoughtful and well-developed analysis of the issue, leading to a score of 5.

Score 4 Response

I absolutely agree with the first section of the statement above, but find fault with the latter half.

There is no doubt that praising positive actions is an excellent way to teach, and this method is most clearly exemplified when dealing with much younger children. When a young child is learning basic social behavior, it is imperative that he is encouraged to repeat positive actions. For example, when a child voluntarily shares his toys with another, if a teacher rewards that behavior, the child will understand that this is a good practice, and likely share again in the future.

In contrast, if a child displays negative behavior by stealing a toy away from his playmate, it would be very dangerous for the teacher to ignore this action, for then the child may never recognize that this is unacceptable. In this instance, the child has not learned from the situation at all. So what should a teacher do when faced with such a situation? Punishment is not necessarily the optimal choice, either. Rather than scolding a child for mistreating his playmates and sending him off to a corner, a teacher would be wise to demonstrate the positive alternative: to share his toys instead. In this case, rather than ignoring or punishing negative actions, the teacher could seize the opportunity to reinforce positive behavior, and further extend the child's learning experience.

In summary, positive reinforcement is certainly an excellent method for teaching new methods or behaviors, and encouraging a student to learn more. However to ignore, rather than recognize and correct negative actions, would be a disservice to the student, for he would not know what conclusion to draw from his action.

Reader Commentary

This adequate response follows the task directions and presents a clear position on the issue, supporting its main points with examples that are relevant, if only adequately developed. For instance, the discussion in the second paragraph of a teacher who reinforces the positive behavior of sharing a toy is certainly relevant and on-task (i.e., it describes a situation in which adopting the recommendation would be advantageous). However, the development of this idea does

not lead to generally thoughtful or insightful analysis. Instead, it is simply presented as an example. In addition to its adequate development, this response also demonstrates sufficient control of the conventions of standard written English, and its main points are made with reasonable clarity. Some of the sentences demonstrate the syntactical variety normally seen in responses that receive higher scores (e.g., “Rather than scolding a child for mistreating his playmates and sending him off to a corner, a teacher would be wise to demonstrate the positive alternative: to share his toys instead”). However, the overall use of language in this response is merely adequate.

Score 3 Response

Praising positive actions and ignoring negative ones may be a good way to teach but not the best way. Ignoring negative actions could negate all the positive praises given to an individual, having negative actions go unchecked will lead to habits formed that would overwhelm any positive actions that are complementary to an individual's learning process.

For instance, in a classroom full of eight-year old kids; if during a lesson they are making a lot of noise, having this ignored would tell the kids that it is okay to be disruptive in class. The individuals in that class would develop the habit of being disruptive hence hindering their learning process. However if the eight-year old kids were immediately told to stop the disruption then it will never become a habit.

Every action needs to have a related consequence follow in a learning environment. In the early years of education, the way they are taught becomes a lifelong habit which is hard to change in later years. If negative actions are not assigned a related consequence then teaching becomes ineffective because the student's negative actions soon diminish the ability to do well in school. The way positive actions are dealt with should also be done with negative actions rather than being ignored which in turn enhance the learning environment.

Reader Commentary

Although this response has minor errors in its use of language, it receives a 3 primarily for insufficient overall clarity and for the limited development of its claims. The writer does make an attempt to follow the specific task instructions, and the response has a clear position on the issue, arguing that it is not acceptable practice to ignore negative behaviors. However, the development provided in support of that position is limited. The example of “eight-year old kids” making noise during class can be seen as a situation in which following the recommendation is not advantageous. Instead of developing that point in a logically persuasive way, however, the writer proceeds to make an unsupported assertion about the consequences of following the recommendation (“The individuals in that class would develop the habit of being disruptive hence hindering their learning process”). Another issue that keeps this response at the 3 level is a lack of clarity, particularly in the final paragraph. The final sentence demonstrates this problem with clarity: “The way positive actions are dealt with should also be done with negative actions rather than being ignored which in turn enhance the learning environment.” Problems with the structure of this sentence make it difficult to determine the writer's intended meaning.

Score 2 Response

I don't agree with this affirmation, because I think it is very important to praise positive actions but also is important to sign the negative ones, in some situations according to the student's level, grade, etc., could be better to put more emphasis in the positive things and if not ignore all the negative ones, do not give so much importance to them, this is particularly important in the lowest levels of education.

But in another situations you must sign the negative things, trying to avoid that the students can repeat them in the future, because I think you can also learn from the negative situations.

For this reason I believe that it is important to praise positive actions but is also important not to ignore the negative ones, because in a given situation the student can have troubles recognizing what is right and what is wrong. And finally as a conclusion I think that the best way to teach is combination of praise positive things but also to sign the negative ones.

Reader Commentary

This response clearly fits several characteristics of a 2, as defined by the scoring guide. It is seriously limited in its development, organization, and focus. The response repeats itself rather than developing any of its statements, pointing to an inability to organize a response capable of supporting any specific claims with relevant reasons or examples.

Additionally, serious language control problems frequently interfere with meaning. Thus, even though the writer does seem to be making an attempt to respond to the specific task instructions, the response merits a score of 2.

Score 1 Response

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 position, describe specific circumstances in which adopting the recommendation would or would not be advantageous and explain how these examples shape your position.

Author says that The best way to teach is to praise positive actions and ignore negative ones. I agree to this recommendation. Explaining, I strongly believe that the best way to teach is not to praise positive action and ignore negative ones but is making everyone to be a good ones. Specific circumstances lead me which adopting the recommendation as the following:

First, we will lost the good children who have negative maner if we ignore them. Children are future, not all. Praise in negative should not be, teaching to children to best way. I strongly believe adopting this recommeindation would be not advantages.

second, negative ones in today may be a great people in the future. Not only ones behave do worse they are teenage. Teenage in today is not easy for all! Negative ones can not better, if only prainse positive actions, ignore negativeone. Negative ones may not positive be having, but if we praise them only, they not think they should be positive person later.

conclusion, specific circumstances are which adopting the recommendation would not be advantage, I am not agree to the the recommendation. Ignore negative manor when they will not be positive behavrio in futre. But they can, if do not ignore them. we should not ignor negative person but should make them think that they can be a good man future like positive person.

Reader Commentary

This response has severe and pervasive problems in language and sentence structure that, as stated in the scoring guide, consistently interfere with meaning and result in incoherence. The response begins by repeating the prompt, but then the severe problems with language control and organization undermine any evidence of the ability to understand the prompt or to present and develop a clear position. For example, it is not clear what the writer means by the claim that the best way to teach is “makeing everyone to be a good ones.” Severe problems with language control in that sentence and throughout the response prevent it from developing a coherent position on the issue or responding to the specific task instructions. Although the writer makes an attempt at organization, with points marked as first, second, and conclusion, the response actually exhibits little or no evidence of the ability to develop any potential understanding of the prompt into a logical position on the issue.

Some people believe that corporations have a responsibility to promote the well-being of the societies and environments in which they operate. Others believe that the only responsibility of corporations, provided they operate within the law, is to make as much money as possible.

Write a response in which you discuss which view more closely aligns with your own position and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should address both of the views presented.

Score 6 Response

It is not uncommon for some to argue that, in the world in which we live, corporations have a responsibility to society and to the environment in which they operate. Proponents of this view would argue that major environmental catastrophes (e.g., the oil spill in the Gulf) are key examples of the damage that can be wrought when corporations are allowed to operate unchecked. Yet within that very statement lies a contradiction that undermines this kind of thinking — it is necessary for outside forces to check the behavior of corporations, because we do not expect corporations to behave in such a manner. In fact, the expectation is simply that corporations will follow the law, and in the course of doing so, engage in every possible tactic to their advantage in the pursuit of more and greater profit. To expect otherwise from corporations is to fail to understand their purpose and their very structure.

The corporation arose as a model of business in which capital could be raised through the contributions of stockholders; investors purchase shares in a company, and their money is then used as the operating capital for the company. Shareholders buy stock not because they are hoping to better make the world a better place or because they have a desire to improve the quality of life but because they expect to see a return in their investment in this company. The company may itself have generally altruistic goals (perhaps it is a think tank that advises the government on how to improve relations with the Middle East, or perhaps it is a company built around finding alternative forms of energy), but the immediate expectation of the investor is that he himself will see dividends, or profits, from the investment he has made. This is even more true in the case of companies that are purely profit driven and which do not have goals that are particularly directed toward social improvement—a description that applies to the vast majority of corporations.

Is it a bad thing to have a corporation negatively affect the environment (and by extension, its inhabitants)? To pump noxious fumes into the atmosphere as a by-product of its manufacturing processes? Of course, and this is why agencies such as the EPA were established and why governments—federal, state, and local—are expected to monitor such companies to ensure that such practices fall within the boundaries of legal expectations. Any and all corporations should be expected to temper their pursuit of profit with the necessity of following those safeguards that have been legislated as protections. But the assumption that corporations have an inherent obligation or responsibility to go above and beyond that to actively PROMOTE the environment and the well-being of society is absurd.

Engaging in practices to adhere to legal expectations to protect society and the environment is costly to corporations. If the very purpose of a corporation is to generate profits, and the obligation to adhere to safety expectations established by law cuts into those profits, then to expect corporations to embrace such practices beyond what is required is to presume that they willingly engage in an inherently selfdestructive process: the unnecessary lowering of profits. This is antithetical to the very concept of the corporation. Treehuggers everywhere should be pleased that environmental protections exist, but to expect corporations to “make the world a better place” is to embrace altruism to the point that it becomes delusion.

This is not to say that we should reject efforts to hold corporations accountable. In fact, the opposite is true — we should be vigilant with the business world and maintain our expectations that corporations do not make their profits at the EXPENSE of the well-being of society. But that role must be fulfilled by a watchdog, not the corporation itself, and those expectations must be imposed UPON the corporations, not expected FROM them.

Reader Commentary

This response receives a 6 for developing an insightful position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task, skillfully weaving a position that takes into consideration both of the statements in the prompt. Beginning in the first

paragraph, the writer rejects the idea that corporations themselves “have a responsibility to promote the wellbeing of the societies and environments in which they operate.” In the second paragraph, the writer offers compelling reasons for this rejection by discussing the purpose and structure of corporations. The writer then considers the role of government in promoting corporations’ social and environmental responsibility, developing the position fully. A cogent statement of the writer’s position appears at the conclusion of the response: “we should be vigilant with the business world and maintain our expectations that corporations do not make their profits at the EXPENSE of the well-being of society. But that role must be fulfilled by a watchdog, not the corporation itself.” The response as a whole is logically organized, with each paragraph serving as a stepping stone in the development of the writer’s position. It also demonstrates the writer’s ability to convey ideas fluently and precisely, using effective vocabulary and sentence variety. This sentence demonstrates the level of language facility seen throughout the response: “If the very purpose of a corporation is to generate profits, and the obligation to adhere to safety expectations established by law cuts into those profits, then to expect corporations to embrace such practices beyond what is required is to presume that they willingly engage in an inherently self-destructive process: the unnecessary lowering of profits.” Here the writer has skillfully maintained control of complex syntax and diction while making a logically compelling point. The sentence demonstrates the outstanding nature of this response.

Score 5 Response

In order to survive, corporations must make money. Successful corporations try and make as much money as possible. Yet this incentive to make money does not mean that a corporation can be a detriment to the society in which it operates. Corporations have a duty and a responsibility to ensure the well being of the society in which they are a part.

Contributing to the well being of a society is actually beneficial to a corporation in many cases. One of these is making sure that workers are well taken care of. Absenteeism and neglect while on duty are a big problem for corporations, as is attracting the best workers, who hopefully will lower the risks caused by absenteeism and neglect. One way that corporations can attract these workers is by offering them generous benefits. If, for example, an employer includes with employment a good health care plan, they will be able to attract better workers than one that does not, and that will aid the corporation greatly. Health care plans provided by employers mean that these people have at their disposal health coverage, which means that they have the care they need if they get sick. This also might encourage preventive care, something that has been shown to reduce the cost and risk of developing other major ailments.

Another area where corporations providing support for themselves and society is in the creation of human capital. Globalization and increased education means that employers need a better educated workforce more than ever. One way that employers can contribute to this is by sponsoring worker training programs, or paying for their employees to return to school. This creates a more educated workforce for employers, as well as may increase the loyalty of employees to an employer. An employee who received an education sponsored by an employer may be thankful for receiving that education, and may work harder for that employer. This creates a benefit for employers and employees.

The main reason that corporations have a duty to contribute to the well being of society is that they are a part of the society. Even though they have an economic desire to make a profit, corporations also should think long term about actions they take which could hurt their company. A good example of this is BP, after the recent oil spill in the gulf. Their desire to make a profit meant that they did not keep up on all of their safety regulations and standards, and the result of the then faulty equipment caused a massive spill. This cost them huge amounts of money to clean up, as well as the fines they had to pay for causing this. The biggest loss for BP however is that their brand name will be associated in the US and abroad as the company that caused this giant oil spill. As the spill was happening, many people boycotted the company, resulting in lost potential revenue. They may realize that as they lose business to people upset by the spill, that making sure a spill didn’t happen in the first place was cheaper.

Another reason corporations have to ensure the well-being of a society is that by making a society better off, a company may have more consumers. This is especially true for corporations that sell goods for middle and upper class consumers. If a corporation tries to bring people up and increase the overall economic well being of society, they may find that more and more people have to ability to afford their goods. This could generate huge new profits for this corporation, since their pool of potential consumers has gone up considerably. Concentrating on the long term here means that corporations can increase their pool of potential consumers.

By denying responsibility to a society, a corporation is only looking at the possible short term profits, not the potential long term ones. While in the short term it may work for a corporation to ignore their societal responsibility, it is advantageous in the long term for the entire corporation to make sure society is getting better. The potential for new markets, products, production processes and other beneficial factors that come from promoting well being is quite large. This is something that corporations should be ready and willing to take advantage of, and something that society should hold them accountable for.

Reader Commentary

This strong response receives a 5 for its thoughtful, well-developed analysis of the issue. In this case, the writer argues that corporations do indeed have a responsibility to promote the well-being of the societies and environments in which they operate, offering several reasons and well-chosen examples to explain why it is in the interests of corporations to fulfill these responsibilities. The writer clearly follows the task directions by addressing the two views provided by the prompt, both explicitly in the opening paragraph and more subtly throughout the response. While the writer clearly signals at the beginning his or her alignment with the first position (“Corporations have a duty and a responsibility to ensure the well being of the society of which they are a part”), the paragraphs that follow in fact acknowledge the writer’s opening statement (“In order to survive, corporations must make money”). In areas such as employee health care and education, as well as in relation to broader issues such as the environment and the general level of prosperity in society, the writer argues that corporations should strive to meet their social obligations because in the long term, it is economically advantageous to do so. The various reasons and examples offered are brought together to support a thoughtful position that implicitly suggests that the two views are not as mutually exclusive as they might first appear. The response also demonstrates considerable facility with language. There are some minor errors, but overall the writer’s control of language is strong, demonstrating sentence variety and appropriate use of vocabulary. The response lacks the superior fluency and precision of a 6 but nevertheless conveys meaning clearly and well. Discernibly stronger than the adequate level of analysis in a 4, the response has thoughtful, nuanced analysis of the issue that earns it a score of 5.

Score 4 Response

While some people may believe that corporations have a responsibility to protect society, others believe that the only purpose of a corporation is to make money. I agree that making profits is important. In the grand scheme of things, though, all companies have a responsibility to watch out for their customers. Their customers are how they make their money. If they’re not watching out for their customers, they obviously will see a drop in their profits.

Consider light bulbs. This is an invention that has all kinds of potential for serious accidents. It is basically just a glass globe with electricity running through it! If a bulb gets too hot, it could potentially start a fire. Similarly, if someone removed the glass from around the tungsten wire, you’d basically have an exposed electrical wire that could hurt anyone who touched it. Makers of light bulbs know and understand all these dangers. They want consumers to purchase their products, so the first and smartest way to make that happen is to ensure that the products are safe and thus more attractive to the customer base. If everyone who used light bulbs was afraid of getting zapped profits would obviously go down and light bulbs would not be a very profitable enterprise.

This same thinking applies to all major products. The automobile is one of the most dangerous tools man uses. Tens of thousands of automobile drivers die every year in accidents. Insuring that the vehicles contain designs and parts that promote customer safety is a main focus of car manufacturers. Certain parts of cars were built with promoting driver’s well-being in mind. For instance, air bags, anti-lock braking systems, online crash reporting. These features are considered standard now, and they were all developed to increase the safety of consumers. These features were not cheap to develop, but car manufacturers improved their profits anyway because they developed products with public safety in mind, which is what customers expect. If this symbiosis relationship wasn’t true, then we would still have cars without airbags or even seatbelts. Worrying about the safety and actually improving it for customers is not just a basic responsibility of corporations, but it drives their profits, too.

In conclusion, it’s pretty clear that a corporation’s desire to make more profits is in line with a corporation’s responsibility to consumers. Increasing the focus on consumers, worrying about taking care of them and the environment, can only lead to bigger profits and success for corporations in the long run.

Reader Commentary

This adequate response follows the task directions and presents a clear position on the issue. It supports and develops its position competently, using relevant examples. In accordance with the assigned task, the response addresses both of the competing positions. Specifically, its position and the examples it develops argue that businesses can care about both profits and ethical responsibility through the ways they develop products. The development of examples and ideas, while adequate, is not as thoughtful or compelling as would be needed to earn higher scores. For instance, both of the examples the response uses are about product safety; the discussion of automobile design does not advance the position much more than the prior discussion of lightbulb production. Language control in the response is also competent. It demonstrates sufficient control of the conventions of standard written English, and its main points are made with acceptable clarity. The response features a few grammatical and mechanical errors (e.g., “Certain parts of of cars...” and “symbiosis relationship”) and some awkward sentences. However, for the 4 range, GRE raters allow for minor errors in responses like this one that holistically demonstrate sufficient clarity and control. Overall, then, this response demonstrates adequate development and control of language, making the score of 4 appropriate.

Score 3 Response

Corporations can be viewed as both beneficial and bad. This statement addresses both views that many people have about corporations. Views come from personal experiences and is the reason why some people like corporations and why some people do not.

Half of this argument deals with people that like the idea of corporations. Some people believe that corporations help stimulate societies and promote the well being of society. These people are ones that have never encountered a corrupt corporation. Just like in any other aspects of life, people can get images of something as being good if they only brush the outside. It isn't until they are being faced with a problem within a particular corporation where they either work for them or have just dealt with them. Also, people that are benefited from corporations are obviously going to like the idea of an corporation.

The other side of this argument is that many people believe corporations are just money hungry. This can be seen in many corporations throughout America. Many small business owners will side with this argument. The problem lies that this is corporate America and the little businesses are being taking over by larger corporations. As Mark Twain once said, “The vast amount of money is only in a couple of hands”. This statement still lies true today. In addition, corporations are large and with that being said they lead to more lines of corruption. In small buisnesses, the owners can oversee their store entirely. Can these corporation owners really oversee everything that is going on? Ask any employee at a corporate office if they believe their workplace is being ran how they think the corporation would want it. One is likely to find the answer that it is not.

Just like any other issue there are two sides to the story. The problem with this issue is that most will agree that corporations are only there to make money. They don't care about the people that are helping them make money. They only care at the end of the day how much money they made.

Reader Commentary

This response receives a score of 3 primarily because it is limited in focus. Rather than addressing the conflicting views of corporate responsibility given in the prompt, the response instead incorrectly casts the two positions as “people that like the idea of corporations” and people who “believe corporations are just money hungry.” The writer proceeds to develop an explanation of these two positions, citing the various qualities that lead each group of people to their beliefs, but the response concludes by declaring that “there are two sides to the story” without adopting any position of its own. This highlights another limitation of the response, the fact that it does not completely address the specific task directions. Although the response does discuss the two opposing positions, it never discusses which view more closely aligns with the writer's own. The response does contain adequate organization, and the writing demonstrates a sufficient control of language. Sentences such as “Just like in any other aspects of life, people can get images of something as being good if they only brush the outside” are typical of the writing in this response and, despite the presence of some errors, demonstrate a sufficient control of the conventions of standard written English. However, even though the response demonstrates some qualities of a 4, its problems with focus and its failure to develop a clear position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task mean that it merits a score of 3.

Score 2 Response

I think corporations have a responsibility to not only follow the law but also work with the societies and environments they are in. Our societies and environments in this age are affected by corporations' operations. An example of this is BP's accident in the Gulf of Mexico — they might have been following the law and regulations, but once an accident happens, our societies and environments are affected. Many fishermen and businesses around the area have been affected by the accident. Now BP faces so many liabilities and needs to pay money. As a result, they are losing more than they made in the past.

It is also important that corporations make as much as money possible. If they do well, there might be more employment opportunities for people and more taxes for the city, states and federal which help our country's economy better.

However, there are always choices that corporations can take and they can make money by promoting the well-being of the societies and environments. It might cost them more but it will also help to save their expenses.

Reader Commentary

This seriously flawed response attempts to address the task directions by considering both of the views presented in the prompt. The first paragraph seems to embrace the first view given in the prompt when it asserts that “corporations have a responsibility to...work with the societies and environments they are in.” The writer uses the example of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico to demonstrate that “our societies and environments in this age are affected by corporations' operations,” but, apart from restating these same claims, the paragraph provides no real support for this position. Instead, the writer moves on to a discussion of the financial implications of the oil spill for BP. The second paragraph then makes an abrupt transition to a discussion of the prompt's second view and again seems to embrace this position when it claims that “it is also important that corporations make as much as money possible.” This position is supported with a single relevant but undeveloped reason. Although the writer attempts to reconcile the two positions in the last paragraph by arguing that “there are always choices that corporations can take and they can make money by promoting the wellbeing of the societies and environments,” the response provides no support for this position beyond its unsupported and contradictory claim that “it might cost them more but it will also help to save their expenses.” Overall, then, this response provides few examples in support of its claims. The response's poor focus and its very limited support, then, warrant a score of 2.

Score 1 Response

It is certainly true that some people believe that corporations have a responsibility to promote the well being of societies and environments. On the other hand, some other people argue that the only responsibility of corporations, provided they operate within the law, is to make as much money as possible. It is easy to see why it would be difficult for some people to decide between these two positions.

The responsibility of all citizens of a society, including corporate citizens, is ultimately to further the well being of the society as a whole. It takes little more than examining the recent United States financial crisis to see the ill effects suffered by society at large when corporations focus on maximizing profits.

Reader Commentary

This response earns a score of 1 because it provides little evidence of the ability to develop an organized response. The first paragraph begins with a nearly word-for-word restatement of the prompt, which increases the length of the response but does not demonstrate the ability to develop a position on the issue in relation to the specific task instructions. The final sentence in the first paragraph is analytically empty in that it could be applied to any prompt that asks writers to discuss two competing positions. The writer does nothing to relate that sentence to this specific prompt. The second paragraph, then, is all that the writer has provided in terms of original analysis of the issue. Although it does demonstrate understanding of the issue, it fits the “extremely brief” description from the scoring guide description of a 1. Because of the extreme brevity of its analysis, then, this response merits a score of 1.