Pre-Test Writing Assessment

Third Grade

Informative/Explanatory Prompt

Name ____________________________________________
The Founder of Girl Scouts

Source #1

Juliette Gordon Low: A Guiding Light for Girls

Juliette Gordon Low is famous for founding the Girl Scouts organization more than 100 years ago. Her independent personality and her experiences in life help to explain how this popular group came to be.

Juliette was born on October 31, 1860. She grew up in Savannah, Georgia, with five siblings. Juliette was a happy, creative child. She wrote poetry and plays, and she was also very artistic. Juliette loved to draw pictures of the world around her. She had a wonderful sense of humor, as well. Every year on her birthday, Juliette would stand on her head—just to prove she could!

Although Juliette loved the arts, she was also an adventurous child. She was happy to be outdoors exploring. She was a good athlete, too. Juliette was a strong swimmer, played tennis, and was the captain of her rowing team.

When she grew older, Juliette went away to school in Virginia and then New York. These schools were meant to prepare her to be a “proper” young woman of that time period. But Juliette had other ideas. When she graduated, she traveled in the United States and Europe. She wanted to explore the world!

When Juliette was 26 years old, she married an Englishman. Although she moved to England to be with her husband, she still found many reasons to continue traveling and returning to the United States. After all, it was her home.

Then in 1911, Juliette met a man who would change her life forever—Sir Robert Baden-Powell. He was the founder of the Boy Scouts. This was an organization that taught boys a variety of outdoor skills that would help them as they grew older. Juliette loved Robert’s idea and wanted to start her own group for girls in the United States.

She returned to America shortly afterwards and began planning her new group. Juliette wanted it to be an organization in which girls could learn to be independent. She did not want them to have to rely on men to do things for them. Instead, she wanted to teach them skills that would help them become strong, confident women. Juliette’s group taught traditional home skills for girls in that time period. But it also taught professional skills in the arts, sciences, and even business. This was unheard of at that time.

In 1912, Juliette proudly registered her first troop of 18 girls. Her group was called the American Girl Guides. She later changed the name to the Girl Scouts. Juliette’s group went on to become one of the most popular girls’ clubs in America. Currently, more than 59 million people have been members of it!
A Chance Meeting

“He believes that I might make more of my life . . .” Juliette Gordon Low composed these words in her diary shortly after meeting Sir Robert Baden-Powell. Little did she know at the time how right he was!

Juliette was traveling when she happened to meet Robert in 1911. She did not expect to like the war veteran. Juliette had experienced war as a child, and perhaps that had made her feel this way. But when she met Robert, she found that they had a lot in common. They both loved to travel and see the world. They also loved the arts.

In particular, Juliette was interested in a group that Robert had started—the Boy Scouts. He had created the group to help teach survival skills to boys in a fun and kid-friendly way. Juliette did not have a real purpose in life at the time, and she felt as if something was missing. She started thinking, “Why couldn’t I do something like that for girls?”

Perhaps Robert had seen the twinkle in Juliette’s eye, for he seemed to know that she would go on to do great things. Juliette created the Girl Scouts in 1913 and never looked back.
Directions:

The sources talked about Juliette Gordon Low. Write an informative essay in which you explain who Juliette Gordon Low was and why she formed the Girl Scouts organization. Use evidence from the sources to support your answer.

**Manage your time carefully so that you can:**

- Read the passages;
- Plan your responses;
- Write your response; and
- Revise and edit your response.

Be sure to include:

- an introduction
- support for your controlling idea using information from the passages; and
- a conclusion that is related to your controlling idea.

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.
Planning Sheet
Pre-Test Writing Assessment

Third Grade

Opinion Prompt

Name _________________________________________
Musical Instruments in School

Source #1

School Music Programs

Music programs are a part of education in many elementary schools. Often, there is one music teacher who teaches music to every grade. Students may have music class once a week. Schools often have bands or orchestras, too. Students may also learn how to play musical instruments by taking lessons during school time. Then they perform a concert as a group for parents and teachers.

Often, students and their families have a choice about whether they want to play an instrument. Some families may want their children to learn more about music. Playing music has benefits that help students in other subjects in school. So, students are encouraged to play music. Also, kids might feel strongly about wanting to learn to play a certain instrument. They might want to play the flute, for example, or even the tuba.

Other times, families might want their kids to focus more on their schoolwork. Or students might have a lot of activities already. Families do not want them to have too much on their plate. Also, it usually costs money to rent a musical instrument at school. Families must consider this, as well.

Today, school music programs are starting to disappear. Many schools have tight budgets. They have to use their money to pay for things that students need, such as food for lunch and new textbooks. Music teachers and instruments cost money for schools. Some do not think that music is as important as other parts of a student's education.

The future of music programs in schools is still unknown. Only time will tell if schools continue to keep music in our schools or have it become an after-school activity.
In the past, music used to be a big part of every student's education. But today, fewer kids are learning to play musical instruments. This should not be allowed to happen! There are many benefits to playing an instrument. These benefits help kids both in and out of school.

One important reason for kids to play an instrument is that it is good for their brains. Playing music helps kids use and improve memory skills. It gets their brains working in new and important ways. One study of preschoolers shows that kids who took keyboard lessons had more memory skills than kids who did not take lessons. Playing music also helps kids improve their motor skills. These are skills that have to do with their hands and fingers. It makes kids more coordinated. They see the music notes, and they learn to do a certain finger or slide position on their instrument.

In addition, music actually helps students in other parts of their education. Playing an instrument teaches great math and comprehension skills. Kids must learn to count notes and rhythms when they read music. Then they have to understand what to play when they see those notes.

Kids who play instruments are much more organized, too. They learn how to manage their time. Kids need to practice their instruments every week. This teaches them to be more responsible. They also learn to stay with something and improve at it over time. This is an important lesson for kids to learn!

Kids also learn the value of teamwork when they play musical instruments. They must work with other kids who are in the same band or orchestra at school. They have to listen to each other and play music at the same speed to create a song together. This helps to improve listening skills, as well. And kids often make friends while playing in a band or orchestra. Having a common goal as a group builds friendships and improves social skills.

Finally, one of the most important benefits of playing an instrument is that it's fun! Kids who play an instrument feel less stress in their lives. Often, playing an instrument makes them feel happy and good about themselves. For this reason alone, shouldn't every kid be required to play an instrument in school?
Let Kids Have a Choice!

School music programs support the idea that all kids should play a musical instrument. They say that it helps kids improve certain skills. It also helps them enjoy school more. But I disagree. Kids should not be forced to play a musical instrument.

First of all, not all kids are the same. They are at different learning levels in school. They also have different responsibilities at home. Not every student will benefit from being taken out of class in the middle of the school day to learn to play music. Many students need to stay in class. They must work on their reading, writing, and math skills. Also, playing an instrument requires a lot of practice at home. A lot of students need to spend more time studying at home. They do not have time to practice their instruments. They might have other responsibilities, too. It is unfair to add to their responsibilities.

Second, some students might have more musical talent than others. Some kids might try very hard to learn to play an instrument. They might work on it day after day. But they might continue to struggle with it. This can be very stressful because they must do something that is too difficult for them. It might have a negative effect. Soon, these kids might begin to dislike music instead of enjoying it. Forcing a child to play an instrument would have the opposite effect of what the school wants.

Third, it costs money to play an instrument. Families must spend money to rent or buy the instrument. It is unfair to require that every kid play an instrument and then to make the family pay for it. Many families are on tight budgets. They may not be able to afford this activity for their children.

Finally, families should have a say in whether kids play an instrument. Kids should not be forced to do something that is not directly related to regular studies at school. Kids have few choices at school and often at home. They deserve to help decide if they want to spend their free time practicing an instrument or doing something else. Families should be allowed to discuss the idea together. Only then will they know if it is the right choice. For these reasons, schools should not force kids to play a musical instrument.
Directions:

The passages are discussing whether or not students should be required to play an instrument in school. Write an essay in which you give your opinion about requiring every student to learn to play a musical instrument. Use information from the sources in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your responses;
- Write your response; and
- Revise and edit your response.

Be sure to include:

- an introduction
- support for your opinion using information from the passages; and
- a conclusion that is related to your opinion.

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.
Planning Sheet
Pre-Test Writing Assessment

Fourth Grade

Informative/Explanatory Prompt

Name ________________________________
Interesting Materials

Source #1

Tomorrow’s Materials

It is common to see buildings made of wood, spoons made of metal, and clothing made of cotton. All of these materials have been used for many years because they are strong and available in nature. But scientists and inventors are always looking for new materials to make useful objects. Let’s take a look at two of tomorrow’s materials. They just might amaze you.

Our first material of tomorrow is called Neptune balls, also known as sea balls. They are made of Neptune grass, a type of seaweed found in the Mediterranean Sea. Pieces of dead Neptune grass get rolled into balls in the waves, and then the balls wash up on the shore. They are a common sight on the beach, but nobody thought they were useful until recently. Somebody studied Neptune balls closely and decided to try using them as insulation.

Insulation is a material that keeps something from losing heat. People put insulation inside the walls of houses to help keep them warm inside. Neptune balls work very well as insulation. They keep heat from escaping. In addition, they do not rot or grow mold, and they do not catch on fire. Neptune balls are totally natural and found easily on beaches. Nobody uses them for anything else. Today, Neptune balls are collected in the countries of Albania and Tunisia. Then a company in Germany shakes the sand from the balls, chops them into smaller pieces, and sells the material.

Next, we will explore a material that can be found not just in one sea, but all over the world. It’s spider silk! Some people have been using spider silk as a material for centuries. For instance, it has served as fishing line and in bandages for cuts. Scientists are now trying to make a material that acts in exactly the same way. They believe this material would be very profitable. However, nobody has been able to gather large amounts of spider silk for human use. Small amounts will never make much money.

Why do people want to use spider silk? First, it’s extremely strong. A piece of spider silk is about five times stronger than a piece of steel of the same weight. Some experts say that a spider web with strands as thick as a pencil could stop a jumbo jet in flight! Second, spider silk is very flexible. You can stretch a strand by nearly half of its original length. Finally, spider silk is lightweight. Inventors are always searching for materials with these qualities.

Spider silk could be used to make strong but flexible car parts, such as bumpers and airbags. Sponges and long-lasting clothing are other possibilities for this material. These are only a few of the ideas that have come up.

Tomorrow, or perhaps the next day, you just might hear more about Neptune balls or spider silk. In fact, you might have seaweed to thank for keeping you warm inside on a cold day. And you might have a spider to thank for a coat that lasts for years. Stay on the lookout!
Rubber: From Tree to Tire

Rubber is a waterproof, long-lasting material. Like many other materials today, it comes in both natural and man-made forms. The source of natural rubber is latex. This milky fluid is found in many types of plants, including the rubber tree. Latex hardens into rubber. Then it can be dried and pressed into objects such as balls and shoes. Rubber got its name when people started using it to rub pencil marks off paper.

As a material, rubber had some growing pains. Using pure natural rubber can be a problem because it softens in heat, hardens in cold, and begins to rot and smell over time. In 1839, Charles Goodyear invented vulcanization. This process causes rubber to strengthen and then keep its strength and level of hardness. Thanks to vulcanization, Goodyear made a lot of money on a product that still bears his name: tires. Today man-made rubber has replaced natural rubber in many products. About half of the man-made rubber produced in the world is used in tires.

That does not mean people have stopped using natural rubber. Rubber trees still grow on large farms called plantations. The latex is used to make products such as rubber bands and erasers.

No more than 90 percent of the world's rubber comes from farms in Asia. The major rubber-producing countries are Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia. A rubber tree produces about 19 pounds of latex every year.
Directions:

The sources that you read were about different materials. Write an informative essay in which you contrast two interesting materials that you read about and how the materials are used. Use information from the sources in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your responses;
- Write your response; and
- Revise and edit your response.

Be sure to include:

- an introduction
- support for your controlling idea using information from the passages; and
- a conclusion that is related to your controlling idea.

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.
Planning Sheet
Pre-Test Writing Assessment

Fourth Grade

Opinion Prompt

Name _________________________________________
Bikes in Your Community

Source #1

Bike Sharing Programs

Bike sharing programs allow people within a city to use bikes for a fee. People in Europe have been using bike sharing programs for years. Bike sharing stations have started to pop up in many of our own cities, too. This creative idea has been spreading across the country over the past few years. At the beginning of 2013, there were 22 programs running in American cities. Because the idea is so popular, people think that the number of programs will double very soon. These cities have other types of public transportation, too, such as subways and buses.

Bike sharing programs were started so that people would be able to use a bike easily when they needed one. The programs give people the option to use bikes to travel short distances around a big city. There are many bike stations that are set up in the city. People take a bike out of one station, use it for some time, and then return it to another station within the city.

People can use the bikes on any day and at any time. All of the stations are self-service stations. Each “dock,” or area that holds the bikes, has an electronic machine. This machine takes payment from the customer and releases one of the bikes. The machine also starts to track the time that the bike is being used. The machine at the dock where the bike is returned can then calculate the total time the bike was in use.

Many people are using the bicycles in these programs. And cities are welcoming the stations. These are signs that bike sharing programs are a success.
New and exciting programs have started in many cities: bike sharing programs. These innovative programs allow people to borrow and use bikes for a small price. They are a wonderful idea for many reasons.

When you decide to ride a bike to get somewhere instead of driving a car, that decision brings positive changes. One change that happens is that it takes a car off the road. This helps in a few ways. For one thing, it reduces traffic. If more people decided to ride a bike to get to and from work every day, fewer cars would be on the road at the same time. Rush hour traffic might not be that bad if this happened. It also helps to get rid of some of the pollution that cars produce. Over time, having fewer cars on city streets would help the environment greatly. Just think how much cleaner the air would be if this program were successful in all the major cities in the United States!

Bike sharing is also convenient for many of us. People living in a big city might not want to buy their own bicycles. Bikes can be expensive. They are also not easy to store in a small apartment. Unfortunately, bikes often are a target to be stolen. The bike sharing program is a great way to avoid all of these problems. The cost to use the bikes in these programs is low. When you are finished using the bike, you drop the bike off at a docking station. Where you will store the bike is not a problem. Also, if you don’t own the bike, you won’t worry about it being stolen after you have dropped it off.

Riding a bicycle is great exercise. Even short bike trips can help people live a healthier lifestyle. Bike sharing programs make it easier for busy people to be more active. These programs also create jobs. When a bike needs to be fixed, someone will need to fix it. Who will be there to answer any questions the public may have about the programs? People will need to be hired to do these tasks. Because the programs have become so successful, hundreds of jobs have already been created. As the programs spread to other cities, the number of available jobs will increase.

Bike sharing programs add so much value to the city and the people who live and work there. More and more cities are seeing the benefits. Many of them are making plans to start a bike sharing program. It is even possible that we may one day see these wonderful programs in every large city across America!
Bike Sharing: In Need of Repair

Bike sharing involves the use of bikes in a city for a fee. People pick up a bike at a bike docking station and then return it later to any station in the city. The number of cities with bike sharing programs continues to grow. Some of the larger cities have thousands of bikes and hundreds of stations as part of their program. At first, this sounds like a great idea, but unexpected problems have come up. Not everyone sees these programs as a good solution. They were designed to make life easier, but they have actually been causing some big headaches.

First of all, the bike docking stations are self-service, allowing people to use the bikes at any time. This means that an employee is not present at any of the stations. If something does not work properly when you try to take out a bike, nobody is there to help. This has been known to happen quite often. You can try to pay again and see if the bike will unlock the second time. You can also just leave the bike and lose your money. Calling customer service is another option, but that will take time. One of the hopes for these stations is that people will start using bicycles instead of other forms of transportation. If you need to be somewhere at a certain time, waiting to speak to a customer service representative to fix the problem is not something you would want to do. It is certainly easy to see how frustrating this can become.

Secondly, think about the space one or two bicycles take up. Then imagine thousands of them on already-crowded streets and sidewalks. That crowded picture in your head is a reality. These bikes are sitting on the street so that the public can access them. They are sitting in front of stores and apartment buildings where people live. Some docking stations hold up to 50 or 60 bicycles. These docks are taking up a lot of valuable space all over the city.

Finally, if you have ever walked around busy city streets, you know that you need to be alert. You need to watch for cars and buses, and you need to be careful not to bump into anyone walking beside you. Now, add thousands of people on bicycles. This can be a dangerous situation. The people riding the bikes may not always be experienced bike riders, either. As a result, someone could get seriously hurt.

The overall idea of the bike sharing program may be a good one. Is it worth the problems it creates, though? If people want to use a bike to get around, they have options. They can either buy their own or rent one from a bike store. Having a bike sharing program as a third option is simply not necessary.
Directions:
The passages you read were about bike sharing. Write an essay in which you give your opinion about whether or not a bike sharing program would work in your community. Use information from the sources in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your responses;
- Write your response; and
- Revise and edit your response.

Be sure to include:

- an introduction
- support for your opinion using information from the passages; and
- a conclusion that is related to your opinion.

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.
Planning Sheet
Ocean Exploration

Oceans: Earth’s Final Frontier

In the past 50 years, explorers have set their sights on the stars. Our ships have orbited Jupiter, Saturn, Venus, and Mercury. However, many scientists believe explorers should now turn their attention down instead of up. According to these experts, the oceans are Earth’s last unexplored frontier.

Seventy percent of our planet lies under water. This “world ocean” consists of the Pacific, our largest ocean, followed by the Atlantic, Indian, Southern, and Arctic Oceans. We have explored less than 5 percent of these waters. In fact, we have better maps of the surface of Mars than we do of our oceans.

Underwater Geography

What’s so exciting about exploring the bottom of the ocean? Actually, the ocean bottom contains as many different features as our continents.

- **Mountains** - The longest mountain range in the world is completely under water. Called the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, it stretches for more than 35,000 miles. This chain of mountains runs across the Atlantic Ocean and into parts of the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- **Valleys** - The ocean also contains deep valleys. The deepest place on Earth—the Mariana Trench—plunges seven miles below sea level.
- **Seamounts** - The ocean also features unusual forms we do not see on land. Pillars of rock and minerals stretch several stories high. Chimneys spout acid into the water. Seamounts, or underwater volcanoes, spew mud and gas into the sea.
- **Hydrothermal Vents** - These holes on the ocean bottom eject material heated by the earth’s core. Vents warm the surrounding waters from a chilly 37 degrees up to 392 degrees. In addition to the vents, the ocean contains hot springs that shoot out 650-degree water—hot enough to melt lead.
Strange Sea Creatures

Many of these unique habitats have alien-like creatures living there. Scientists have discovered 160-foot jelly creatures living around hydrothermal vents. Living near hot springs are 10-foot-tall tubeworms and giant clams. We have learned of these life forms only recently. Many creatures have yet to be found. This makes sense because the ocean is Earth’s largest habitat.

Many of these creatures live at the greatest depths, which pose the most dangers to human divers. Some, like the frilled shark, may hold clues to our planet’s past.

Measuring more than 5 feet long, the frilled shark swims about 5,000 feet below the surface. Scientists include this creature in a group called “living fossils”—animals similar to those who swam the seas during the time of the dinosaurs.

The deepest ocean-dweller discovered so far might be the fangtooth fish.

Sometimes found only 6,500 feet down, its habitat extends to the icy waters 16,500 feet below the surface. The fangtooth may only be about 6 inches long, but it looks as scary as its name. Its long, pointed teeth are the largest of any other fish its size.

At 8 inches long, the creepy-looking Pacific viperfish has jagged teeth that look like needles. It swims 13,000 feet down into the darkness, luring its prey with luminous dots on its belly. Most creatures living deep in the ocean have a glow-in-the-dark feature. It can be used to communicate, to attract prey, or for defense. This feature is called bioluminescence, a chemical reaction within an organism that produces light.

Exploring the oceans may lead us to discover many new land forms and animals. Scientists also hope it will help us learn more about the planet, and even about ourselves. Studying hot springs and vents could help us discover new ways to produce energy. Other findings could lead to new medical treatments. We could also study creatures that survive in strange habitats—without heat, light, or oxygen. This could help us discover new ways to survive here on Earth—or even among the stars.
DiveTechnology

To explore the oceans, divers have to overcome hazards to human life. These include extreme darkness, freezing cold temperatures, and crushing water pressures. Through the years, inventors have tackled these challenges to make advances in underwater technology.

The Aqualung
In the 1940s, ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau helped invent the Aqualung. This device allowed divers to breathe under water. The Aqualung was a metal oxygen tank attached to a breathing tube that controlled the flow of oxygen. It was strapped with a harness to a diver’s back. Scientists have since improved upon this invention, now known as SCUBA, for Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus.

The Jim Suit
Even the most experienced scuba divers can go down only 130 feet for 10 minutes. To go beyond these limits, inventors created the Jim Suit. Based on astronauts’ space suits, the Jim Suit protects wearers from deadly water pressure and contains built-in oxygen. In 1979, ocean scientist Sylvia Earle tested the Jim Suit in a record-breaking dive. She explored the ocean floor 1,250 feet below the surface for 21/2 hours.

The Deepsea Challenger
In 2012, filmmaker James Cameron introduced his new invention: a one-person submarine called The Deepsea Challenger. Before, the deepest a submarine could travel was 4 miles down. Cameron broke this record when he took The Deepsea Challenger to the bottom of the Mariana Trench. Seven miles down, it is the deepest place on Earth.

Cameron’s design is an example of advanced technology because it sits vertically in the water. This allows the sub to descend faster, rotating as it goes to keep it on course. The Deepsea Challenger has lights, 3-D cameras, and a scooper arm to collect samples. This revolutionary invention could transform ocean exploration.
In 2012, the only vehicle able to take people to the deep sea was almost 50 years old. What would it take to reinvent the submersible\(^1\)? As it turns out, a film director.

James Cameron is most famous for award-winning films like *Titanic* and *Avatar*. He sometimes jokes that he makes blockbuster movies to support his passion for exploring the seas. His filmmaking fortune did help him fund his revolutionary invention: *The Deepsea Challenger*, a one-man submersible that in 2012 traveled to the deepest place on Earth. However, Cameron's passion for ocean technology did not begin here.

In 1989, Cameron directed *The Abyss*, a science fiction movie in which characters traveled to the ocean depths. During filming, he introduced new ways of using cameras under water. Later, he controlled his robotic cameras inside the wreck of the sunken ship *Bismarck*. During the making of *Titanic*, Cameron made many dives to the wreck of the actual ship.

In this way, Cameron has been able to make films and advance underwater technology at the same time. He can use his ideas right away and study the results. Perhaps it is this combination of skill and creative thinking that has allowed Cameron to design submersibles in a new way.

With *The Deepsea Challenger*, Cameron has literally “upended” the design.

Instead of traveling horizontally, his sub moves vertically, like a torpedo. This makes the ship much faster. He replaced the heavy steel shell with a lightweight foam structure. This allows the ship to rise quickly from the bottom. And he put the thrusters on the top, rather than the bottom. This prevents the craft from stirring up the seabed. Now the pilot (and cameras!) can clearly see the ocean floor.

\(^\text{1} \text{submersible} – \text{submarine}\)
Directions:

The passages were about exploring the oceans through technology. Write an informative essay in which you explain how technology has helped explorers overcome challenges related to deep-sea exploration. Use information from the sources in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your responses;
- Write your response; and
- Revise and edit your response.

Be sure to include:

- an introduction
- support for your controlling idea using information from the passages; and
- a conclusion that is related to your controlling idea.

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.
Planning Sheet
Pre-Test Writing Assessment

Fifth Grade

Opinion Prompt

Name ____________________________________________
Water Choices

Source #1

The Bottled Water Industry: A Real Goldmine

The bottled water industry is certainly one to watch. Billions of dollars are spent on bottled water every year. And this industry appears to be growing more powerful around the world.

Every year, people drink more and more bottled water because of its convenience. Studies have shown that people in America buy and drink more bottled water than people in other countries; however, more and more people in other countries are increasing the amount of bottled water they consume. The industry as a whole is growing 10% each year, which means if 100 people bought bottled water last year, then 110 people will buy it this year. That is a huge increase in sales in a relatively short period of time.

In 2011, a study showed that a total of 9.1 billion gallons of bottled water was sold in the United States. If you break that number down, it comes out to almost 30 gallons of bottled water for each person. That means that, on average, every single person in the country drank four bottles of water each week for the whole year—and these numbers are expected to grow. That’s a lot of bottled water that people are drinking!

What makes this industry so interesting? One reason is the fact that people are spending a lot of money on something that they can essentially get for free. Bottled water companies are making huge profits selling a product to people who can get it simply by turning on their faucet. Why? This question causes many debates. People have different opinions about the bottled water industry. But one thing we can all agree on is that bottled water is sold practically everywhere, and people are buying it. It looks like the demand for this product is here to stay.
Bottled Water: The Right Choice

Bottled water is a subject about which people have very different opinions. Some argue that bottling water is a bad idea. But the reality is that bottles of water are being sold everywhere and people continue to buy them. People see the benefits of bottled water; it is a wise alternative to tap water.

One of the biggest advantages of bottled water is the convenience of it. It is important for people to drink plenty of water throughout the day to stay healthy. It becomes even more important to drink water when you exercise or play sports. One rule of thumb is that people tend to drink more water if they are able to get it easily.

It is easy to grab a bottle of water before you leave the house so that you have it with you on your way to school. And taking a bottle of water and putting it in your gym bag on your way to a workout will help make sure that you have enough water while you exercise. Likewise, if you are thirsty and looking at options in a vending machine, a bottle of water offers a healthy choice to quench your thirst.

Many people feel that bottled water also tastes much better than tap water. Each brand of bottled water has a consistently good taste to it, but tap water tastes different depending on where it comes from. Different factors may cause tap water to taste better or worse to different people. Variances in tap water can be a problem when you are in different and unfamiliar places. How do you know how the tap water will taste? How do you know if it is clean enough? Bottled water will always taste the same wherever you buy it.

Another advantage of bottled water is that it can be shipped and stored easily. Sometimes natural events will cause the water supply to become damaged. When this happens, people will not be allowed to drink the water. Because water can be shipped so easily, getting clean water to the people who are affected can be done quickly. When a storm is coming that may cause us to lose electricity for a while, it is important to have enough clean water. We are actually told to have at least a three-day supply of water for each person. One gallon per person per day is the recommended amount. Buying a few cases of bottled water is simple enough to do to be prepared.

People will continue to have their own opinions about bottled water; however, it is hard to deny that some real benefits come from this product that many of us enjoy on a daily basis.
Bottled Water: The Wrong Choice

People all over the world buy bottled water, mainly because it is convenient to do so. Although bottled water does have some conveniences, it also comes with some harmful effects. These negative effects are not worth the ease of purchasing a bottle of water.

First, the bottle that holds the water needs to be made. The process of creating the plastic bottle is actually quite damaging to the environment. We are living in a time when we are all trying our best to limit the greenhouse effect and reduce our use of fossil fuels. The amount of fuel used to run the machines that are making the bottles is tremendous. Then even more fuel is being used by the trucks to deliver the bottles of water all over the world. This is not helping our efforts to reduce our use of fossil fuels.

Then, what do people do with their plastic bottles when they are finished drinking the water? Unfortunately, not enough people are recycling. A study showed that only one out of every six plastic bottles is recycled by Americans. The other five bottles are going to our already-overflowing landfills, where they will sit for years to come, taking up more of our land. It is believed that the people in our country add 24 billion plastic bottles each year to landfills. That is just terrible!

What makes this entire process even more terrible is the fact that we have access to clean, tasty water right in our own homes. Many people incorrectly believe that bottled water is cleaner than tap water. This is actually not true. The water that comes from your sink at home has gone through many different treatments and tests. Water companies are required to follow strict rules to make sure the tap water does not have anything in it that would harm us. Bottled water companies do not have to follow those same strict rules. As a result, the water in the bottles that we pay for may actually contain things that might be harmful to us.

And then there is the matter of the consumer cost of bottled water. It is true that tap water is not free. But although we must pay to have running water in our house, the difference in the cost of bottled water compared to tap water is huge. About 450 gallons of tap water costs the same as just one bottle of water.

The damage to our environment, the possible health risks, and the cost all greatly outweigh the convenience of bottled water. It is time to start filling your washable water bottle with tap water and stop buying bottled water.
Directions:

The passages are about bottled water. Write an essay in which you give your opinion about which system would be better for your school; selling bottled water or buying a water purification system and why the other idea would not be a good choice for your school. Support your opinion with evidence from the sources.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your responses;
- Write your response; and
- Revise and edit your response.

Be sure to include:

- an introduction
- support for your opinion using information from the passages; and
- a conclusion that is related to your opinion.

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.
Planning Sheet
English Language Arts
Text-based Writing Rubrics
Grades 4–5: Informative/Explanatory
**Grades 4–5**

Informative/Explanatory Text-based Writing Rubric

*(Score points within each domain include most of the characteristics below.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)</th>
<th>Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)</th>
<th>Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4     | The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following:  
  - Clearly stated and strongly maintained controlling idea with little or no loosely related material  
  - Skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas  
  - Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end, including a satisfying introduction and conclusion  
|       | The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:  
  - Relevant evidence integrated smoothly and thoroughly with references to sources  
  - Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques (including but not limited to definitions, quotations, and examples)  
  - Clear and effective expression of ideas, using precise language  
  - Academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose  
  - Various sentence structures creating language facility |  |
| 3     | The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has evident organizational structure with a sense of completeness. The response includes most of the following:  
  - Maintained controlling idea, though some loosely related material may be present  
  - Adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify the relationships between and among ideas  
  - Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end, including a sufficient introduction and conclusion | The response provides adequate support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:  
  - Generally integrated evidence from sources, though references may be general, imprecise, or inconsistent  
  - Adequate use of some elaborative techniques  
  - Adequate expression of ideas, employing a mix of precise and general language  
  - Domain-specific vocabulary generally appropriate for the audience and purpose  
  - Some variation in sentence structure |  |

*Continued on the following page*
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<th>Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric)</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience, and task but may include loosely related or extraneous material; and it may have an inconsistent organizational structure. The response may include the following: • Partially focused controlling idea, but insufficiently sustained or unclear • Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety • Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end and may include an inadequate introduction or conclusion</td>
<td>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes partial use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following: • Weakly integrated evidence from sources, and erratic or irrelevant references • Repetitive or ineffective use of elaborative techniques • Imprecise or simplistic expression of ideas • Inappropriate or ineffective domain-specific vocabulary • Sentences possibly limited to simple constructions</td>
<td>The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. The response may include the following: • Some minor errors in usage but no patterns of errors • Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>The response is related to the topic but may demonstrate little or no awareness of the purpose, audience, and task; and it may have little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may include the following: • Confusing or ambiguous ideas • Frequent extraneous ideas impeding understanding • Few or no transitional strategies • Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization</td>
<td>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea, including little if any use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following: • Minimal, absent, erroneous, or irrelevant evidence from the source material • Expression of ideas that is vague, lacks clarity, or is confusing • Limited or inappropriate language or domain-specific vocabulary • Sentences limited to simple constructions</td>
<td>The response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. The response may include the following: • Various errors in usage • Inconsistent use of correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning.</td>
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**Overall Task Description**

Students will read a stimulus about a single topic. A stimulus consists of several texts written on a single topic. The stimulus should consist of informational or literary fiction or nonfiction texts and can cover a wide array of topics. After reading the stimulus, the students will respond to a writing prompt in which they will provide information on a topic or take a stance to support an opinion or argument.

**Stimulus Attributes**

The complexity of the texts used as stimuli should be accessible for the applicable grade. While this is primarily a writing test, a grade-appropriate level of literacy is required. In choosing the text(s), qualitative and quantitative dimensions of text complexity must be balanced by the task considerations required of the reader. Graphics such as infographics, photographs, tables, and diagrams can be included with the stimuli. The graphics used, however, must be purposeful to the task and should supplement the student’s understanding of the topic. During the text review process, Florida educators use professional judgment and experience to determine whether the reading level of each selection is suitable for the grade level.

The stimuli for the informative/explanatory prompts should maintain a clear topical connection but may address diverse concepts and ideas. Stimuli for the opinion/argumentative prompts should present opposing points of view. Each point of view should be equally represented so that a student can take either side of a position. Thorough and convincing support for the controlling ideas must be evident in all stimuli.

Texts used as stimuli should be interesting and appealing to students at the grades for which the selections are intended. They should be conceptually appropriate and relevant and should reflect real-world settings and events that are interesting to students and are not limited to classroom or school-related situations. Texts with controversial or offensive content should not be included. Confusing or emotionally charged subjects should also be avoided. References to trademarks, commercial products, and brand names should be checked by the contractor’s legal department for permission to use. If there is any question about the accuracy of content, the Florida Department of Education may require at least two additional sources to verify the information in the text.

The stimulus will consist of two to four texts. The approximate combined word count of the text sets is listed in the table below.

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<th>Grade Level</th>
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The stimulus will be presented along with a writing prompt that asks students to write an essay about the topic. The students will be required to synthesize information from the text sets and must cite specific evidence from the texts to support their ideas.
For the informative/explanatory writing prompts, students will be required to synthesize and analyze ideas from the stimuli to develop and support a controlling idea.

For the opinion/argumentative writing prompts, students will be required to synthesize and analyze ideas and evidence from stimuli. They will use these ideas to present and support an opinion (grades 4–5) or to argue and support a claim (grades 6–11).

Assessed Standards
The Florida Standards Writing Assessment will assess the following standards from the appropriate grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAFS.W.1.1 or LAFS.W.1.2</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.W.2.4</td>
<td>LAFS.L.1.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>LAFS.W.2.5</td>
<td>LAFS.L.2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>LAFS.L.3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.W.3.9</td>
<td>LAFS.L.3.6</td>
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Directions Template
Grade 4-5

Write an informative essay about . . . . Use information from the passages in your essay.

-OR-

Write an essay in which you give your opinion about . . . . Use information from the passages in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can
• read the passages;
• plan your response;
• write your response; and
• revise and edit your response.

Write (type) your essay in the space provided.

You have ___ minutes to read the passages, and plan, write, revise, and edit your essay.
### Acceptable Text Types

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Text-based Writing Stimulus and Prompt Guidelines

Possible Topics

**Essential Skills**
- Literacy
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Leadership

**Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics**
- Earth/Space Science
- Life Science
- Physical Science
- Concepts of Technology
- Computer Technology
- Information Technology
- Technology Processes
- Concepts of Engineering
- Engineering Tools
- Engineering Design and Testing
- Mathematics

**Health and Physical Education**
- Movement Competency
- Cognitive Abilities
- Lifetime Fitness
- Personal Health
- Health Care

**Business Management and Administration**
- Finance
- Financial Literacy
- Business Plans
- Marketing
- Entrepreneurship
- Transportation of Goods
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Hospitality Industry
- Tourism Industry

**Social Studies**
- U.S. History
- Civics and Government
- Geography
- Economics

**World Languages**
- Cultural Perspectives
- Cultural Comparisons
- Cultural Communities

**Arts**
- Dance
- Music
- Theater
- Visual Arts

**Interests**
- Adventure
- Animals
- Careers
- Entertainment
- Family
- Friendship
- Hobbies/Crafts
- Humor
- Mystery
- School
- Sports/Games
- Trips/Journey
DRAFT

English Language Arts
Text-based Writing Rubrics
Grades 4–5: Opinion

Florida
Standards Assessments
### Grades 4-5
**Opinion Text-based Writing Rubric**
*(Score points within each domain include most of the characteristics below.)*

| Score | Purpose, Focus, and Organization  
|-------|----------------------------------|
|       | **(4-point Rubric)**             | Evidence and Elaboration  
|       |                                  | **(4-point Rubric)**             |
|       | The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following:  
|       | • Clearly stated and strongly maintained opinion with little or no loosely related material  
| 4     | • Skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas  
|       | • Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end with a satisfying introduction and conclusion  
|       | The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the writer’s opinion that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:  
|       | • Relevant evidence integrated smoothly and thoroughly with references to sources  
|       | • Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques (including but not limited to definitions, quotations, and examples)  
|       | • Clear and effective expression of ideas, using precise language  
|       | • Academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose  
|       | • Various sentence structures creating language facility  
|       | The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has evident organizational structure with a sense of completeness. The response includes most of the following:  
| 3     | • A maintained opinion, though some loosely related material may be present  
|       | • Adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify the relationships between and among ideas  
|       | • Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end with a sufficient introduction and conclusion  
|       | The response provides adequate support/evidence for the writer’s opinion that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:  
|       | • Generally integrated evidence from sources, though references may be general, imprecise, or inconsistent  
|       | • Adequate use of some elaborative techniques  
|       | • Adequate expression of ideas, employing a mix of precise and general language  
|       | • Domain-specific vocabulary generally appropriate for the audience and purpose  
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| 2     | The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience, and task but may include loosely related or extraneous material; and it may have an inconsistent organizational structure. The response may include the following:  
  • Partially focused opinion but insufficiently sustained or unclear  
  • Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety  
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  • Inappropriate or ineffective domain-specific vocabulary  
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| 1     | The response is related to the topic but may demonstrate little or no awareness of the purpose, audience, and task; and it may have little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may include the following:  
  • Absent, confusing, or ambiguous opinion  
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  • Few or no transitional strategies  
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| 0     |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                          | The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning. |
Overall Task Description
Students will read a stimulus about a single topic. A stimulus consists of several texts written on a single topic. The stimulus should consist of informational or literary fiction or nonfiction texts and can cover a wide array of topics. After reading the stimulus, the students will respond to a writing prompt in which they will provide information on a topic or take a stance to support an opinion or argument.

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The complexity of the texts used as stimuli should be accessible for the applicable grade. While this is primarily a writing test, a grade-appropriate level of literacy is required. In choosing the text(s), qualitative and quantitative dimensions of text complexity must be balanced by the task considerations required of the reader. Graphics such as infographics, photographs, tables, and diagrams can be included with the stimuli. The graphics used, however, must be purposeful to the task and should supplement the student’s understanding of the topic. During the text review process, Florida educators use professional judgment and experience to determine whether the reading level of each selection is suitable for the grade level.

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The stimulus will be presented along with a writing prompt that asks students to write an essay about the topic. The students will be required to synthesize information from the text sets and must cite specific evidence from the texts to support their ideas.
Text-based Writing Stimulus and Prompt Guidelines

For the informative/explanatory writing prompts, students will be required to synthesize and analyze ideas from the stimuli to develop and support a controlling idea.

For the opinion/argumentative writing prompts, students will be required to synthesize and analyze ideas and evidence from stimuli. They will use these ideas to present and support an opinion (grades 4–5) or to argue and support a claim (grades 6–11).

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Grade 4-5

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-OR-

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- read the passages;
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Text-based Writing Stimulus and Prompt Guidelines

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- Communication
- Teamwork
- Leadership

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- Life Science
- Physical Science
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- Information Technology
- Technology Processes
- Concepts of Engineering
- Engineering Tools
- Engineering Design and Testing
- Mathematics

**Social Studies**
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- Civics and Government
- Geography
- Economics

**World Languages**
- Cultural Perspectives
- Cultural Comparisons
- Cultural Communities

**Arts**
- Dance
- Music
- Theater
- Visual Arts

**Health and Physical Education**
- Movement Competency
- Cognitive Abilities
- Lifetime Fitness
- Personal Health
- Health Care

**Interests**
- Adventure
- Animals
- Careers
- Entertainment
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- Friendship
- Hobbies/Crafts
- Humor
- Mystery
- School
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- Trips/Journey

**Business Management and Administration**
- Finance
- Financial Literacy
- Business Plans
- Marketing
- Entrepreneurship
- Transportation of Goods
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Hospitality Industry
- Tourism Industry