



GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATIONS®

## **Practice General Test # 3**

Analytical Writing Sample Essays  
and Commentaries

Large Print (18 point) Edition



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# **The Graduate Record Examinations<sup>®</sup> Practice General Test #3**

## **Analytical Writing Sample Essays with Reader Commentaries**

The Analytical Writing portion of the GRE<sup>®</sup> General Test consists of two writing topics, an Issue topic and an Argument topic. This document contains the writing topics for Practice Test #3, the scoring guides for each section, and sample responses with commentaries for each topic.

Note: Sample responses are reproduced exactly as written, including misspellings, wrong choice of words, typographical and grammatical errors, etc., if any.

### ***Analyze an Issue***

#### **Sample Issue Topic Directions**

You will be given a brief quotation that states or implies an issue of general interest and specific instructions on how to respond to that issue. Plan and compose a response in which you develop a position on the issue according to the specific instructions. A response to any other issue will receive a score of zero. Standard timing for an issue topic is 30 minutes.

Make sure that you respond to the specific instructions and support your position on the issue with reasons and examples drawn from such areas as your reading, experience, observations, and/or academic studies.

Trained GRE readers will read your response and evaluate its overall quality according to how well you do each of the following:

- Respond to the specific instructions on the issue
- Consider the complexities of the issue
- Organize, develop, and express your ideas
- Support your position with relevant reasons and/or examples
- Control the elements of standard written English

Before you begin writing, you may want to think for a few minutes about the issue and the instructions and then plan your response. Be sure to develop your position fully and organize it coherently, but leave time to reread what you have written and make any revisions you think are necessary.

## Sample Issue Topic:

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.

## *GRE<sup>®</sup> Scoring Guide: Analyze an Issue*

### **Score 6**

In addressing the specific task directions, a 6 response presents a cogent, well-articulated analysis of the issue and conveys meaning skillfully.

A typical response in this category exhibits the following characteristics:

1. It articulates a clear and insightful position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task.
2. It develops the position fully, with compelling reasons and/or persuasive examples.
3. It sustains a well-focused, well-organized analysis, connecting ideas logically.
4. It conveys ideas fluently and precisely, using effective vocabulary and sentence variety.
5. It demonstrates superior facility with the conventions of standard written English (i.e., grammar, usage, and mechanics) but may have minor errors.

## **Score 5**

In addressing the specific task directions, a 5 response presents a generally thoughtful, well-developed analysis of the issue and conveys meaning clearly.

A typical response in this category exhibits the following characteristics:

1. It presents a clear and well-considered position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task.
2. It develops the position with logically sound reasons and/or well-chosen examples.
3. It is focused and generally well organized, connecting ideas appropriately.
4. It conveys ideas clearly and well, using appropriate vocabulary and sentence variety.
5. It demonstrates facility with the conventions of standard written English but may have minor errors.

## **Score 4**

In addressing the specific task directions, a 4 response presents a competent analysis of the issue and conveys meaning with acceptable clarity.

A typical response in this category exhibits the following characteristics:

1. It presents a clear position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task.
2. It develops the position with relevant reasons and/or examples.
3. It is adequately focused and organized.
4. It demonstrates sufficient control of language to express ideas with acceptable clarity.
5. It generally demonstrates control of the conventions of standard written English but may have some errors.

### **Score 3**

A 3 response demonstrates some competence in addressing the specific task directions, in analyzing the issue, and in conveying meaning but is obviously flawed.

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

1. It is vague or limited in addressing the specific task directions and/or in presenting or developing a position on the issue.
2. It is weak in the use of relevant reasons or examples, or relies largely on unsupported claims.
3. It is limited in focus and/or organization.
4. It has problems in language and sentence structure that result in a lack of clarity.
5. It contains occasional major errors or frequent minor errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that can interfere with meaning.



## **Score 2**

A 2 response largely disregards the specific task directions and/or demonstrates serious weaknesses in analytical writing.

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

1. It is unclear or seriously limited in addressing the specific task directions and/or in presenting or developing a position on the issue.
2. It provides few, if any, relevant reasons or examples in support of its claims.
3. It is poorly focused and/or poorly organized.
4. It has serious problems in language and sentence structure that frequently interfere with meaning.
5. It contains serious errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that frequently obscure meaning.

## **Score 1**

A 1 response demonstrates fundamental deficiencies in analytical writing.

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

1. It provides little or no evidence of understanding the issue.
2. It provides little or no evidence of the ability to develop an organized response (e.g., is disorganized and/or extremely brief).
3. It has severe problems in language and sentence structure that persistently interfere with meaning.
4. It contains pervasive errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that result in incoherence.

## **Score 0**

A 0 response is off topic (i.e., provides no evidence of an attempt to respond to the assigned topic), written in a foreign language, merely copies the topic, consists of only keystroke characters, or is illegible or nonverbal.

## **Sample Responses to the Issue Topic, with Reader Commentaries**

The following are sample responses and commentary on those responses, which explain how each response was scored. There are responses and scoring comments for essays with scores of 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1.

**Reminder:** Sample responses are reproduced exactly as written, including misspellings, wrong choice of words, typographical and grammatical errors, etc., if any.

**The following sample issue response received a score of 6:**

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.

### **Comments on sample essay receiving score of 6:**

This outstanding response earns a score of 6 for presenting an insightful position on the issue and supporting its analysis with compelling reasons and persuasive examples. The response takes the insightful position that competition, though necessary to some aspects of leadership, is less important for young people to learn

because it is inherent in the human condition and can lead to dangerous excesses, whereas cooperation is more difficult to learn but more essential. The response follows the task directions by using counterarguments in the development of its position. For example, the discussion of Lincoln in paragraph 3 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.



**The following sample issue response received a score of 5:**

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

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

a broad group of people. This is where instilling a sense of cooperation in young children is vital. Cooperation is taught at an early age and must be emphasized throughout life to fully embrace the concept.

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

It may be true that an individual can change the world, but only so far as to say that an individual can construct an idea that will inevitably change the world. Once an idea is formulated, it then takes a team of people working collectively towards a common

goal to make sure that the brilliant, life-altering idea makes it to fruition. Without the cooperation of many, an idea could simply remain as a picture on a drawing board. It is because of this possibility that instilling a cooperative demeanor in children is much more important than developing a competitive attitude. Competition is a natural thing that will develop with or without encouragement but the same cannot be said for a sense of cooperation.

### **Comments on sample essay receiving score of 5:**

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 in paragraph 3 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.

**The following sample issue response received a score of 4:**

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.

#### **Comments on sample essay receiving score of 4:**

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.

**The following sample issue response received a score of 3:**

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

Like the say 'when going gets tough the tough gets going'. So there is no point of getting bogged down rather plan more ways to get the work done and one of the sure shot approach is by working together. I believe to the core of my heart that there can be nothing

equal to cooperation and unity in a work field. As simple as it sounds if one can do a work in hermit atmosphere at certain efficiency, a number of brains working together can be more efficient. An atmosphere where everyone works holding hands and when someone falls there are people to make him stand again makes a much better picture in my mind everytime.

Competition is not a evil it can inspire some one to work better and looking to do better can be considered good. But am afraid what fear here is that when you compete with someone you set you limits to that person. So once you do better than him/her you tend to be relaxed and that is where when the real evil creeps in.

With cooperation you have a goal and associated effort to work for the same. Rather than individual petty and competition to be better placed than an friend it would be far more appreciable to keep working for the common goal. That way even the goal gets more defined at some level. So lets all drop all this boundaries of indivisualism 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.



### **Comments on sample essay receiving score of 3:**

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

### **The following sample issue response received a score of 2:**

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 there 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.

### **Comments on sample essay receiving score of 2:**

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.

**The following sample issue response received a score of 1:**

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 difficult for many people to decide between these two choices. There are many arguments that support both sides. I fully agree that the best way is to instilling in them a sense of cooperation, not competition.

**Comments on sample essay receiving score of 1:**

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.

## *Analyze an Argument*

### **Sample Argument Topic Directions**

You will be given a short passage that presents an argument, and specific instructions on how to respond to that passage. Plan and compose a response in which you analyze the passage according to the specific instructions. A response to any other argument will receive a score of zero. Standard timing for an argument topic is 30 minutes.

**Note that you are NOT being asked to present your own views on the subject.** Make sure that you respond to the specific instructions and support your analysis with relevant reasons and/or examples.

Trained GRE readers will evaluate your response for its overall quality based on how well you do each of the following:

- Respond to the specific task instructions
- Identify and analyze features of the argument relevant to the assigned task
- Organize, develop, and express your ideas

- Support your analysis with relevant reasons and/or examples
- Control the elements of standard written English

Before you begin writing, you may want to think for a few minutes about the argument passage and the specific task instructions and then plan your response. Be sure to develop your position fully and organize it coherently, but leave time to reread what you have written and make any revisions you think are necessary.

## Sample Argument Topic:

The argument to be analyzed is as follows:

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

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

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

## *GRE<sup>®</sup> Scoring Guide: Analyze an Argument*

### **Score 6**

In addressing the specific task directions, a 6 response presents a cogent, well-articulated examination of the argument and conveys meaning skillfully.

A typical response in this category exhibits the following characteristics:

1. It clearly identifies aspects of the argument relevant to the assigned task and examines them insightfully.
2. It develops ideas cogently, organizes them logically, and connects them with clear transitions.
3. It provides compelling and thorough support for its main points.
4. It conveys ideas fluently and precisely, using effective vocabulary and sentence variety.
5. It demonstrates superior facility with the conventions of standard written English (i.e., grammar, usage, and mechanics) but may have minor errors.



## **Score 5**

In addressing the specific task directions, a 5 response presents a generally thoughtful, well-developed examination of the argument and conveys meaning clearly.

A typical response in this category exhibits the following characteristics:

1. It clearly identifies aspects of the argument relevant to the assigned task and examines them in a generally perceptive way.
2. It develops ideas clearly, organizes them logically, and connects them with appropriate transitions.
3. It offers generally thoughtful and thorough support for its main points.
4. It conveys ideas clearly and well, using appropriate vocabulary and sentence variety.
5. It demonstrates facility with the conventions of standard written English but may have minor errors.

## **Score 4**

In addressing the specific task directions, a 4 response presents a competent examination of the argument and conveys meaning with acceptable clarity.

A typical response in this category exhibits the following characteristics:

1. It identifies and examines aspects of the argument relevant to the assigned task but may also discuss some extraneous points.
2. It develops and organizes ideas satisfactorily but may not connect them with transitions.
3. It supports its main points adequately but may be uneven in its support.
4. It demonstrates sufficient control of language to convey ideas with acceptable clarity.
5. It generally demonstrates control of the conventions of standard written English but may have some errors.

### **Score 3**

A 3 response demonstrates some competence in addressing the specific task directions, in examining the argument, and in conveying meaning but is obviously flawed.

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

1. It does not identify or examine most of the aspects of the argument relevant to the assigned task, although some relevant examination of the argument is present.
2. It mainly discusses tangential or irrelevant matters, or reasons poorly.
3. It is limited in the logical development and organization of ideas.
4. It offers support of little relevance and value for its main points.
5. It has problems in language and sentence structure that result in a lack of clarity.
6. It contains occasional major errors or frequent minor errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that can interfere with meaning.

## **Score 2**

A 2 response largely disregards the specific task directions and/or demonstrates serious weaknesses in analytical writing.

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

1. It does not present an examination based on logical analysis but may instead present the writer's own views on the subject.
2. It does not follow the directions for the assigned task.
3. It does not develop ideas, or is poorly organized and illogical.
4. It provides little, if any, relevant or reasonable support for its main points.
5. It has serious problems in language and sentence structure that frequently interfere with meaning.
6. It contains serious errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that frequently obscure meaning.

## **Score 1**

A 1 response demonstrates fundamental deficiencies in analytical writing.

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

1. It provides little or no evidence of understanding the argument.
2. It provides little evidence of the ability to develop an organized response (e.g., is disorganized and/or extremely brief).
3. It has severe problems in language and sentence structure that persistently interfere with meaning.
4. It contains pervasive errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that result in incoherence.

## **Score 0**

A 0 response is off topic, written in a foreign language, merely copies the topic, consists of only keystroke characters is illegible or nonverbal.

## **Sample Responses to the Argument Topic, with Reader Commentaries:**

The following are sample responses and commentary on those responses, which explain how each response was scored. There are responses and scoring comments for essays with scores of 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1.

**Reminder:** Sample responses are reproduced exactly as written, including misspellings, wrong choice of words, typographical and grammatical errors, etc., if any.

**The following sample argument response received a score of 6:**

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

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

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

Finally, Super Screen needs to ask what the relationship is between its viewers and the movie reviewers cited in the memo. Using a survey distributed to its target audience, Super Screen could determine if movie reviews have an effect on their audience's decision to go see a movie, whether movie reviewers tended to have the same taste as the target audience and exactly whether or not movie reviews are reaching the audience. Super Screen also needs to consider how its movie choices have affected the separate movie reviewer and audience populations. If the studio has switched from making mega-blockbuster action movies to more nuanced dramas, the general public may be less willing to go see their movies even though movie critics prefer the dramas to the action movies.

Finally the studio must ask whether the percentage of positive reviews is really a relevant way to measure the potential impact of movie reviews. There are dozens of movie reviewers but when deciding whether to not to go to a movie, the general public will



usually pick from among the 10 most popular movie reviews. These are the reviews that will impress the public if they are included in advertising. If the most popular movie reviewers disliked Super Screen movies that a larger number of small time film bloggers reviewed positively, Super Screen needs to think of a new advertising strategy.

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

### **Comments on sample essay receiving score of 6:**

This response clearly identifies aspects of the argument relevant to the assigned task and provides insightful, thoroughly developed analysis. Thus, it earns a score of 6. The response is clearly on task, examining the questions that would need to be answered in order to determine if the recommendation is reasonable. In each case, the writer perceptively explores the nuances of the question, showing different ways in which the answers to those questions might have

an impact on the recommendation. For example, the first body paragraph looks at the issue of overall movie attendance, exploring the possibility that Super Screen might actually be doing better than other production companies. If that is the case, perhaps Super Screen's advertising is already effective, and the proposed plan to increase advertising would not have the intended effect.

Throughout the response, the analysis is detailed and cogent, and the organization of the response is logical both within paragraphs and between paragraphs. In addition, although there are a few misspelled words, the response demonstrates facility with language, conveying ideas fluently and precisely. Sentences like this one demonstrate the superior control of the conventions of standard written English seen throughout this response: "If this is the case and more people are going to see Super Screen Movies than the movies of any other production company, advertising about how fun it is to go to the movie theater may do more to boost Super Screen viewership than advertising promoting its own good reviews." Because of its fluent language and insightful analysis, this response earns a score of 6.

**The following sample argument response received a score of 5:**

While the advertising director clearly aims at relitalizing his production company and ensuring that the public is well informed

about the movies which are available, there are several basic flaws to his argument . There remain some questions that need answering before any steps can be taken with regard to advertising strategies for the Super Screen Movie Production Company.

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

Second, the advertising director should ask himself this; what medium do the majority of his most generous movie reviewers utilize? The writer states that movie reviews were generally positive, but where were these reviews located? On television, newspapers, or the Internet? It is possible that the medium used by the most positive reviewers of Super Screen's movies is one that is not utilized by most of the company's target audiences. If Super Screen produces many family films, but most of the good reviews

are found in late night television shows, then there is a good chance that the reviews are not going to be seen by the target audience. If this is the case, then the company would be better off conducting research as to what medium is most likely to reach their audiences.

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

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

### **Comments on sample essay receiving score of 5:**

This response earns a score of 5 because it presents generally perceptive analysis and maintains facility with language in spite of a few minor errors. The writer clearly identifies aspects of the argument relevant to the assigned task, looking at how

the various points raised might impact the marketing director's recommendation. However, the development of each point is not as insightful as the development seen in the sample 6 (see, for example, the somewhat rudimentary paragraph about Super Screen's advertising media). In general, however, the development is perceptive, as in the exploration of a potential disconnect between the target audience and the media used by the reviewers, so the response rises above the adequate level. Language control in this response is also at the 5 level, as seen in the effective use of sentence variety and appropriate word choice. Take, for example, this sentence, which demonstrates effective control of subordination and complex syntax: "If Super Screen produces many family films, but most of the good reviews are found in late night television shows, then there is a good chance that the reviews are not going to be seen by the target audience." Because of its perceptive analysis and strong control of language, then, this response earns a score of 5.

**The following sample argument response received a score of 4:**

In order to decide whether or not the advertising director's recommendation is reasonable there are a lot more questions that need to be addressed. First of all it is important to look at the bigger

picture. Fundamentally, has anything changed about Super Screen? Has new leadership come into the company? If so, how has that changed business practices?

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

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

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

### **Comments on sample essay receiving score of 4:**

This response does identify questions that need to be answered in order to determine if the recommendation is reasonable, and the development of each point of analysis is adequate. Take, for example, the discussion of how Super Screen might have started making different types of movies this year. The writer notes, “It is important to determine whether or not different movie subjects/topics have influenced audiences. Many times there are discrepancies between how a reviewer rates a movie and how an audience rates a movie.” This discussion is certainly relevant, and it is developed enough to make the point that positive reviews might not lead to more viewers. But the response does not demonstrate the perceptive analysis or the thorough development required for a higher score. As with the analysis, language control in this response is adequate. There are some minor errors, but all the writer’s points are presented with adequate clarity. Because of its adequate analysis and language control, this response earns a score of 4.

**The following sample argument response received a score of 3:**

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

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

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



### **Comments on sample essay receiving score of 3:**

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

### **The following sample argument response received a score of 2:**

It seems like the Super Screen Movie Production Company has good quality movies. However, it did not have enough viewers to see the movies. It is probably because not many people are aware of their movies that being showed. Their problem is how to let people know that their movies are showing. The Super Screen Movie Production Company need to come up with different strategies to

let people know about their movies and has more advertisements done. If the company does the following three ideas, I think they are able to reach the number of prospective viewers. One of them is advertise their movies on television, second is to talk about their new movies on radio, and third is to post poster of their new movies every where that can catch people attention. This will be able to bring their number of viewers higher.

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

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

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

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

### **Comments on sample essay receiving score of 2:**

This response earns a score of 2 because it does not present an examination based on logical analysis. Instead, it agrees with the marketing director's argument and provides advice for how Super Screen could best increase its advertising ("One of them is advertise their movies on television, second is to talk about their new movies

on radio, and third is to post poster of their new movies every where that can catch people attention.”). There are some minor errors in this response, but it does not demonstrate the serious problems in language characteristic of a 2 (language control is more at the 3 level). Instead, this response earns a 2 because it presents agreement and advice instead of logical analysis.

**The following sample argument response received a score of 1:**

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

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

**Comments on sample essay receiving score of 1:**

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

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

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