

Prose Constructed Response Writing Guide

Please ensure that students understand the following points before they begin writing responses to the reading and writing standards:

There are three types of prompts: Research Simulation, Literary Analysis, and Narrative. Approximately 50% of the student's ELA total score is derived from the sum of the two writing prompts. It's important to understand the definitions of terms in the standards, such as narrative, compare/contrast, theme, main idea(s), structure, etc.

1. Students should read and reread prompts carefully to fully understand the instructions.
2. Students must address all parts of the prompt by showing an understanding of what is being asked and responding accordingly.
3. In the online testing environment, the answer box expands, so students should aim to write multiple-paragraph responses rather than just a few sentences.
4. Copying and pasting from stimulus material is allowed when quoting text evidence, but students should not rely solely on copying and should use their own words as well. **To copy, students must highlight the desired text, hold down the Control (ctrl) key, and then press C. To paste, students must hold down the Control (ctrl) key, and then press V. *Note: The TestNav platform does not allow copy/paste from video scripts for the 2026 test administration but will have this capability for the 2027 administration.**
5. Students should use all the time allotted.

Best Practices for Students

Plan Your Response: Make an outline or sketch. Be sure to have a blank piece of paper at the start of the test to use for making your outline. Identify and jot down the key points you want to include in your response. Make sure to address each part of the prompt. Then, list the details or reasons you will use to support your claim or topic.

Manage Your Time: Allocate specific planning, writing, and revising time. Try to follow this schedule to ensure you have enough time to fully answer each part of the prompt. A typical time plan would be to spend 20% of your time planning, 70% of your time writing, and 10% of your time revising. For example, if you had 45 minutes to complete your response, approximately 9-10 minutes for planning, approximately 30 minutes for writing the response, and the remaining time for proofreading.

Write your response: Use complete sentences and multiple paragraphs to write the response you planned in the previous step. Ensure that you answer the prompt fully. Remember to structure your writing with clear and coherent paragraphs. Each paragraph should focus on a single idea and provide supporting examples, evidence, and reasoning from the passages or media. Ensure that there is a logical connection between each paragraph. Focus on writing clearly and precisely to effectively communicate your ideas. Use transitional phrases and words to guide the reader through your response.

Proofread your response. Finally, if time allows, review your response. Look for any grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, or inconsistencies. Check that your response presents clear and well-supported ideas.

Links: Rubrics and Evidence Statements

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IAR-ELA-Writing-Rubrics.pdf#search=rubrics>

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Search-Results.aspx?k=evidence%20statements>