ARCHITECTURE
OF THE CLA TASKS

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A NOTE TO HIGH SCHOOLS

While this document refers, by and large, to the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), high schools using or investigating the College and Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA) may rest assured that many of the sections of this document—and particularly those which refer to the Performance Task—are equally relatable to their audience(s).

INTRODUCTION

The CLA consists of three types of prompts within two types of task: the Performance Task and the Analytic Writing Task. Most students take one task or the other. The Analytic Writing Task includes a pair of prompts called Make-an-Argument and Critique-an-Argument.

The CLA uses direct measures of skills in which students perform cognitively demanding tasks from which quality of response is scored. All CLA measures are administered online and contain open-ended prompts that require constructed responses. There are no multiple-choice questions. The CLA tasks require that students integrate critical thinking and written communication skills. The holistic integration of these skills on the CLA tasks mirrors the requirements of serious thinking and writing tasks faced in life outside of the classroom.

This document provides you with an excerpted example of a retired Performance Task and an example of an Analytic Writing Task. The Crime Reduction Performance Task was delivered as part of the CLA from fall 2005 through spring 2007, after which it was retired. The Make-an-Argument and Critique-an-Argument prompts presented here to represent the Analytic Writing Task were not delivered as part of the CLA, but they were developed by our measurement scientists and underwent initial field-testing. They remain in the same spirit, format, and construction as our "live" Make-an-Argument and Critique-an-Argument prompts.

Please note that these examples were not chosen to represent the range in CLA prompt topics. Rather, they reflect how prompts with different scenarios can assess similar concepts (e.g., the concept of causation versus correlation appears in both the Crime Reduction Performance Task and the Weddings Critique-an-Argument prompt) as well as how prompts with different main concepts can be presented through similar scenarios (e.g., both the Crime Reduction Performance Task and the Government Funding Make-an-Argument prompt present crime as a policy issue).

TASK DESCRIPTION

PERFORMANCE TASK

Each Performance Task assesses analytic reasoning and evaluation, problem solving, writing effectiveness and writing mechanics by asking students to answer several open-ended questions about a hypothetical but realistic situation. In addition to directions and questions, each Performance Task also has its own Document Library that includes a range of information sources, such as letters, memos, summaries of research reports, newspaper articles, maps, photographs, diagrams, tables, charts, and interview notes or transcripts. Students are instructed to use these materials in preparing their answers to the Performance Task's questions within the allotted 90 minutes.

The first portion of each Performance Task contains general instructions and introductory material. The student is then presented with a split screen. On the right side of the screen is a list of the materials in the Document Library. The student selects a particular document to view by using a pull-down menu. On the left side of the screen are a question and a response box. The response box does not have a character limit. When a student completes a question, he or she then selects the next question in the queue.

No two Performance Tasks assess skills in the same exact way. Some ask students to identify and then compare and contrast the strengths and limitations of alternative hypotheses, points of view, courses of action, etc. To perform these and other tasks, students may have to weigh different types of evidence, evaluate the credibility of various documents, spot possible bias, and identify questionable or critical assumptions.

Performance Tasks also may ask students to suggest or select a course of action to resolve conflicting or competing strategies and then provide a rationale for that decision, including why it is likely to be better than one or more other approaches. For example, students may be asked to anticipate potential difficulties or hazards that are associated with different ways of dealing with a problem, including the likely short- and long-term consequences and implications of these strategies. Students may then be asked to suggest and defend one or more of these approaches. Alternatively, students may be asked to review a collection of materials or a set of options, analyze and organize them on multiple dimensions, and then defend that organization.

Performance Tasks often require students to marshal evidence from different sources; distinguish rational from emotional arguments and fact from opinion; understand data in tables and figures; deal with inadequate, ambiguous, and/or conflicting information; spot deception and holes in arguments made by others; recognize information that is and is not relevant to the task at hand; identify additional information that would help to resolve issues; and weigh, organize, and synthesize information from several sources.

All of the Performance Tasks require students to present their ideas clearly, including justifying their points of view. For example, they might note the specific ideas or sections in the Document Library that

support their position and describe the flaws or shortcomings in the arguments' underlying alternative approaches.

ANALYTIC WRITING TASK

Students write answers to two types of essay prompts, namely: a Make-an-Argument question that asks them to support or reject a position on some issue; and a Critique-an-Argument question that asks them to evaluate the validity of an argument made by someone else. Both of these tasks measure a student's skill in articulating complex ideas, examining claims and evidence, supporting ideas with relevant reasons and examples, sustaining a coherent discussion, and using standard written English.

A Make-an-Argument prompt typically presents an opinion on some issue and asks students to write, in 45 minutes, a persuasive analytic essay to support a position on the issue. Key elements include: establishing a thesis or a position on an issue; maintaining the thesis throughout the essay; supporting the thesis with relevant and persuasive examples (e.g., from personal experience, history, art, literature, pop culture, or current events); anticipating and countering opposing arguments to the position, fully developing ideas, examples, and arguments; crafting an overall response that generates interest, provokes thought, and persuades the reader; organizing the structure of the essay (e.g., paragraphing, the ordering of ideas and sentences within paragraphs); employing transitions and varied sentence structure to maintain the flow of the argument; and utilizing sophisticated grammar and vocabulary.

A Critique-an-Argument prompt asks students, in 30 minutes, to critique an argument by discussing how well-reasoned they find it to be (rather than simply agreeing or disagreeing with the position presented). Key elements of the essay include: identifying a variety of logical flaws or fallacies in a specific argument; explaining how or why the logical flaws affect the conclusions in that argument; and presenting a critique in a written response that is grammatically correct, organized, well developed, logically sound, and neutral in tone.

TASK DEVELOPMENT

A team of researchers and writers generate ideas for Make-an-Argument and Critique-an-Argument prompts and Performance Task storylines, and then contribute to the development and revision of the prompts and Performance Task documents. Tasks are created through an iterative development process.

For Analytic Writing Tasks, multiple prompts are generated, revised and pre-piloted, and those prompts that elicit good critical thinking and writing responses during pre-piloting are further revised and submitted to more extensive piloting.

During the development of Performance Tasks, care is taken to ensure that sufficient information is provided to permit multiple reasonable solutions to the issues present in the Performance Task. Documents are crafted such that information is presented in multiple formats (e.g., tables, figures, news articles, editorials, letters, etc.).

While developing a Performance Task, a list of the intended content from each document is established and revised. This list is used to ensure that each piece of information is clearly reflected in the document and/or across documents, and to ensure that no additional pieces of information are embedded in the document that were not intended.

During revision, information is either added to documents or removed from documents to ensure that students could arrive at approximately three or four different conclusions based on a variety of evidence to back up each conclusion. Typically, some conclusions are designed to be supported better than others.

Questions for the Performance Task are also drafted and revised during the development of the documents. The questions are designed such that the initial questions prompt the student to read and attend to multiple sources of information in the documents, and later questions require the student to evaluate the documents and then use their analysis to draw conclusions and justify those conclusions.

After several rounds of revision, the most promising of the Performance Tasks and the Make-an-Argument and Critique-an-Argument prompts are selected for pre-piloting. Student responses from the pilot test are examined to identify what pieces of information are unintentionally ambiguous, what pieces of information in the documents should be removed, etc. After revision and additional pre-piloting, the best-functioning tasks (i.e., those that elicit the intended types and ranges of student responses) are selected for full piloting.

During piloting, students complete both an operational task and one of the new tasks. At this point, draft scoring guides are revised and tested in grading the pilot responses, and final revisions are made to the tasks to ensure that the task is eliciting the types of responses intended.

SCORING PROCESS

Each task type requires students to use a different set of critical thinking and written communication skills. The Analytic Writing tasks measure analytic reasoning and evaluation, writing effectiveness, and writing mechanics. The Performance Task assesses problem solving in addition to the skills assessed by the Analytic Writing tasks. These skills are measured slightly differently by each type of task. For example, in the context of the Performance Task and the Critique-an-Argument Task, analytic reasoning and evaluation involves interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating the quality of information. In the Make-an-Argument Task, analytic reasoning and evaluation involves stating a position, providing valid reasons to support the writer's position, and considering and possibly refuting alternative viewpoints.

Starting with the fall 2010 administration of the CLA, students and institutions began receiving subscores in each category assessed. Students are scored on a scale of one to six in each category, with one being the lowest and six being the highest. For all task types, blank responses or responses that are entirely unrelated to the task (e.g., writing about what they had for breakfast) are assigned a 0 and are flagged for removal from the school-level results. General scoring rubrics are available in the Appendix.

Because the prompts differ in the possible arguments and pieces of information students can or should raise in their responses, prompt-specific guidance is given to scorers in addition to the general scoring rubrics.

SCORING PROCEDURE

During the 2007-2008 CLA assessment cycle, all scoring was conducted by trained scorers. Since fall 2008, a combination of automated and human scoring has been used. Beginning in fall 2010, we moved to automated scoring exclusively, using Pearson's Intelligent Essay Assessor (IEA). IEA is the automated scoring engine developed by Pearson Knowledge Technologies to evaluate the meaning of text, not just writing mechanics. Pearson has trained IEA for the CLA using real CLA responses and scores to ensure its consistency with scores generated by human raters. To learn more about IEA, visit the product website: http://www.knowledge-technologies.com/prodIEA.shtml.

Though the majority of scoring is handled by IEA, some responses are scored by trained human raters. First, IEA identifies unusual responses, which are automatically sent to the human scoring queue. Second, ten percent of responses will be scored by humans in order to continually evaluate the quality of scoring. All scorer candidates undergo rigorous training in order to become certified CLA scorers. Training includes an orientation to the prompts and scoring rubrics, repeated practice grading a wide range of student responses, and extensive feedback and discussion after scoring each response.

After participating in training, scorers complete a reliability check where they score the same set of student responses. Scorers with low agreement or reliability (determined by comparisons of raw score means, standard deviations and correlations among the scorers) are either further coached or removed from scoring.

PERFORMANCE TASK: CRIME REDUCTION

In this section, we present you with excerpts from a retired CLA Performance Task called "Crime Reduction." We will go in-depth with the first of the three Crime Reduction questions, explaining the scoring guidance associated with the first question and providing you with three actual student responses to the question, accompanied by a brief explanation of what characterizes one response as a "high" response, one as a "moderate" response, and one as a "low" response.

INTRODUCTION

Students are provided with the following instructions when taking the Performance Task:

> You will have 90 minutes to complete this task. This task will ask you to analyze a collection of different types of information. You will then use your analysis to prepare answers to a series of questions. Although you may not be familiar with some of the topics covered, you should be able to prepare appropriate answers by carefully using and thoughtfully reflecting on the information given to you. Your answers should clearly state what you mean. Please do your best.

DOCUMENT LIBRARY

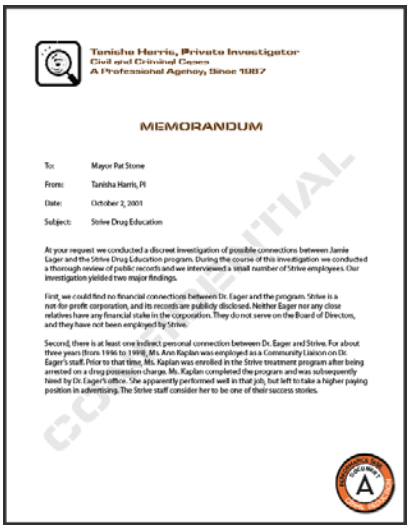
Here, we provide brief descriptions of each of the documents that students needed to examine in order to answer all three of the Crime Reduction questions.

Scenario

> Pat Stone is running for reelection as mayor of Jefferson, a city in the state of Columbia. Mayor Stone's opponent in this contest is Dr. Jamie Eager. Dr. Eager is a member of the Jefferson City Council. You are a consultant to Mayor Stone.
>
> Dr. Eager made the following three arguments during a recent TV interview: First, Mayor Stone's proposal for reducing crime by increasing the number of police officers is a bad idea. Dr. Eager said "it will only lead to more crime." Dr. Eager supported this argument with a chart that shows that counties with a relatively large number of police officers per resident tend to have more crime than those with fewer officers per resident.
>
> Second, Dr. Eager said "we should take the money that would have gone to hiring more police officers and spend it on the STRIVE drug treatment program." Dr. Eager supported this argument by referring to a news release by the Washington Institute for Social Research that describes the effectiveness of the STRIVE drug treatment program. Dr. Eager also said there were other scientific studies that showed the STRIVE program was effective.
>
> Third, Dr. Eager said that because of the strong correlation between drug use and crime in Jefferson, reducing the number of addicts would lower the city's crime rate. To support this argument, Dr. Eager

showed a chart that compared the percentage of drug addicts in a Jefferson zip code area to the number of crimes committed in that area. Dr. Eager based this chart on crime and community data tables that were provided by the Jefferson Police Department.

Mayor Stone has asked you to prepare a memo that analyzes the strengths and limitations of each of Dr. Eager's three main points, including any holes in those arguments. Your memo also should contain your conclusions about each of Dr. Eager's three points, explain the reasons for your conclusions, and justify those conclusions by referring to the specific documents, data, and statements on which your conclusions are based.



Tanisha Harris, Private Investigator
Civil and Criminal Cases
A Professional Agency, Since 1987

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Pat Stone

From: Tanisha Harris, PI

Date: October 2, 2001

Subject: Strive Drug Education

As your request we conducted a discreet investigation of possible connections between Jamie Lager and the Strive Drug Education program. During the course of this investigation we conducted a thorough review of public records and we interviewed a small number of Strive employees. Our investigation yielded two major findings.

First, we could find no financial connections between Dr. Eager and the program. Strive is a not-for-profit corporation, and its records are publicly disclosed. Neither Eager nor any close relatives have any financial stake in the corporation. They do not serve on the Board of Directors, and they have not been employed by Strive.

Second, there is at least one indirect personal connection between Dr. Eager and Strive. For about three years (from 1996 to 1999), Ms. Ann Kaplan was employed as a Community Liaison on Dr. Eager's staff. Prior to that time, Ms. Kaplan was enrolled in the Strive treatment program after being arrested on a drug possession charge. Ms. Kaplan completed the program and was subsequently hired by Dr. Eager's office. She apparently performed well in that job, but left to take a higher paying position in advertising. The Strive staff consider her to be one of their success stories.

CONFIDENTIAL

A

Document 1: Investigator's Memo

This is a memorandum written by a private investigator hired by Mayor Pat Stone to look into any possible connections between Dr. Eager and the STRIVE drug treatment program.

Jefferson Daily Press

Evening Edition — TUESDAY, September 11, 2001 — $1.50

Smart-Shop Robbery Suspect Caught

Drug-Related Crime on the Rise in Jefferson

By PETRA SURJC

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP — On Monday police arrested a man suspected of robbing the Smart-Shop grocery store of $125. The arrest came less than six hours after Esther Hong, the owner of the Smart-Shop store, reported the robbery.

The suspect, Chris Jackson, was found just a few blocks from the store and he put up no resistance when police arrested him. He was apparently high on drugs he had purchased with some of the money taken from the store.

Ms. Hong told reporters that Mr. Jackson came into the store just after it opened and demanded all the money from the cash register. He threatened the owner with a knife, and Ms. Hong gave him all the cash she had. The suspect fled, and Ms. Hong called the police.

A few hours later, police responded to a telephone complaint and found Mr. Jackson in an alley a few blocks from the store. The arresting officer said he appeared to be stoned and did not attempt to evade arrest. The officers found a syringe and other drug paraphernalia in Jackson's pocket. He was charged with armed robbery and possession of drugs.

This is the fifteenth drug-related arrest in Jefferson this month, and the police are calling it an epidemic. Sergeant Heather Engelmann said "Drugs are now the number one law enforcement problem in Jefferson. Half of our arrests involve drugs."

Mayor Stone has called for more money to hire more police officers to reduce the growing crime rate in Jefferson. But the Council is divided on what to do.

City Council members Alex Nemeth and Leigh-Ann Rodd called a press conference to demand that the rest of the council support an increase in the police budget. "If we put more cops on the street," they said, "we will show that criminals are not welcome in Jefferson."

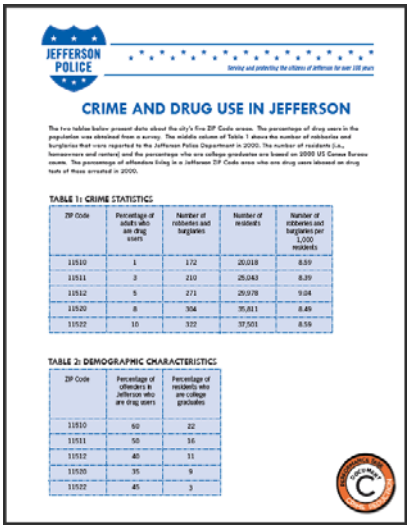
Mayoral candidate Dr. Jamie Eager called for a different approach. "More police won't make a difference, we need more drug treatment programs," Eager said. "The problem is not crime, per se, but crimes committed by drug users to feed their habits. Treat the drug use, and the crime will go away."

The Council is slated to debate the proposed budget increase for police at its next meeting.

B

Document 2: Newspaper Story

This is an article in the local paper, Jefferson Daily Press, entitled, "Smart-Shop Robbery Suspect Caught: Drug-Related Crime on the Rise in Jefferson." The article describes a robbery that occurred at a Smart-Shop store where the suspect was arrested within hours of it being reported by the owner. According to the article, the suspect appeared to be "high on drugs he had purchased with some of the money taken from the store."



JEFFERSON POLICE

CRIME AND DRUG USE IN JEFFERSON

TABLE 1: CRIME STATISTICS

ZIP Code	Percentage of adults who are drug users	Number of robberies and burglaries	Number of residents	Number of robberies and burglaries per 1,000 residents
11510	1	172	20,018	8.59
11511	3	210	25,043	8.39
11512	5	271	29,978	9.04
11520	8	304	35,811	8.49
11522	10	322	37,501	8.59

TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

ZIP Code	Percentage of offenders in Jefferson who are drug users	Percentage of residents who are college graduates
11510	60	22
11511	50	16
11512	40	11
11520	35	9
11522	45	3

C

Document 3: Police Tables

Two tables are presented from the Jefferson Police Department. They provide data for the city's five zip code areas. Table 1 presents crime statistics: percentage of adults who are drug users; number of robberies and burglaries; number of residents; and number of robberies and burglaries per 1,000 residents. One sees that as the percentage of drug users increases, the number of robberies and burglaries increases; thus it appears that Dr. Eager may be correct. However, if you look at the percentage of drug users against the number of robberies and burglaries per 1,000 residents, you see that there is no relationship. Table 2 presents demographic characteristics: percentage of offenders living in Jefferson who are drug users; and percentage of residents who are college graduates.

RESEARCH BRIEF

WASHINGTON INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

Strive drug treatment program works in Clarendon

Clarendon is a typical small city in which a very atypical event has occurred. An aggressive drug treatment effort is working to reduce the incidence of drug use.

Three years ago the city expanded its drug treatment program, nearly tripling the number of spaces available for drug users. Rather than continuing with the home-grown program operated by the health department, they contracted with the Strive drug treatment to launch a new effort. A recent survey has indicated that most everyone in Clarendon is happy with the new program.

Reported incidence of drug use has dropped by 39% since the program began. The program has had its greatest impact on the use of crack cocaine, which surveys show has dropped 41% in three years. Furthermore, the crime rate has come down. During the past three years there have been fewer robberies, burglaries and assaults. These are crimes that are often associated with drug use. The drop in the rates for these crimes is as great as 29%.

Strive was founded by researchers from the University of Plymouth and Northside University. It began operations in Plymouth in 1999 focusing on a single neighborhood near one of the university campuses. The program was so successful in this neighborhood that it was expanded to cover the whole city.

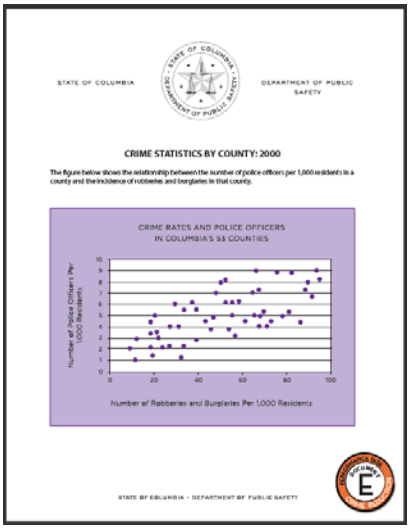
The program uses a combination of approaches but focuses on social networks and their influence on drug use. Participants engage in group therapy, individual consultation, and outreach to their own peer group. James Padilla, the founder of the program, says that research demonstrates that a high proportion of drug use is a social phenomenon, growing out of peer pressure and negative group norms. By attacking those features directly, Strive helps the drug user address the factors that are likely to lead back into drug use.

The results in Clarendon confirm the wisdom of this approach. Not only is overall drug use down in the city, but repeat use is down even further. Those who complete the treatment stay off drugs longer than the national average, and many of the original participants appear to be drug-free two years later.

D

Document 4: Report on STRIVE

This is a research brief from the Washington Institute for Social Research titled, "STRIVE drug treatment works in Clarendon." It highlights the effectiveness of the STRIVE drug treatment in the small city of Clarendon.



STATE OF COLUMBIA — DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

CRIME STATISTICS BY COUNTY: 2000

The figure below shows the relationship between the number of police officers per 1,000 residents in a county and the incidence of robberies and burglaries in that county.

CRIME RATES AND POLICE OFFICERS IN COLUMBIA'S 53 COUNTIES

Number of Police Officers Per 1,000 Residents

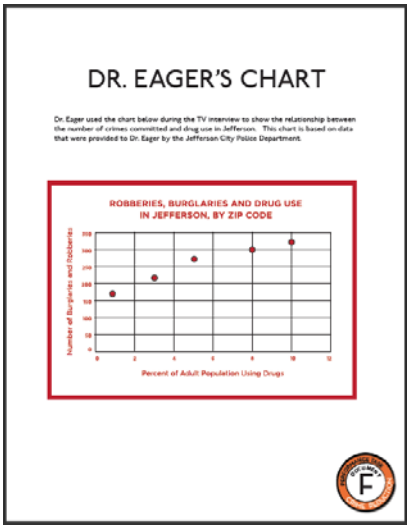
Number of Robberies and Burglaries Per 1,000 Residents

STATE OF COLUMBIA - DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

E

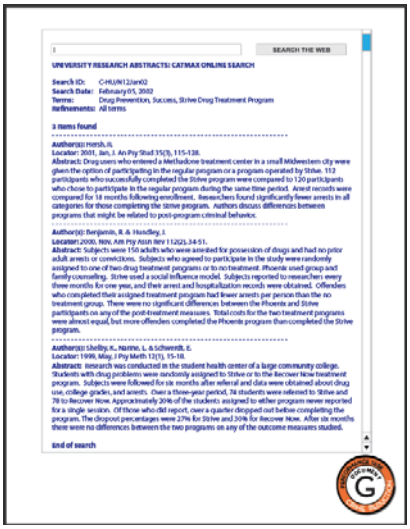
Document 5: Crime Statistics

This figure comes from the State of Columbia's Department of Public Safety. It looks at crime statistics by county for the year 2000. There are 53 counties in Columbia. The figure plots the relationship between the number of police officers per 1,000 residents in a county (y-axis) against the number of robberies and burglaries per 1,000 residents (x-axis). Overall, there is a positive relationship.



Document 6: Dr. Eager's Chart

This is the chart that Dr. Eager used during the TV interview to show the relationship between the number of crimes committed and drug use in Jefferson. The chart is based on data that were provided to Dr. Eager by the Jefferson City Policy Department. Specifically, the chart was created from the data in Table 1 of Document 4.



Document 7: Research Abstracts

This document contains three research abstracts gathered from an online search where the search terms are: drug prevention, success, STRIVE Drug Treatment Program. After reading the three research abstracts, students might point out specific strengths and weaknesses (i.e., in research design) in each of the three studies.

QUESTIONS

This section provides an in-depth look at Question 1 of Crime Reduction. Here, we provide you with actual student responses to Question 1 from students who took the Crime Reduction Performance Task online as part of the CLA. These student responses represent different levels of performance (high, moderate, and low) as well as the characteristics of these responses that qualify them for a particular level. We did not modify the student responses for content or length, nor did we make edits for spelling or grammar.

Question 1

Mayor Stone has asked you to evaluate each of Dr. Eager's three main points. The Document Library on the right side of the screen contains materials that you should use in preparing your analysis of Dr. Eager's points. Please take a few minutes now to skim through these documents.

Document 6 contains the chart Dr. Eager used to support the claim that Mayor Stone's proposal for reducing crime "will only lead to more crime." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Use the box below to explain why you reached this conclusion. In other words, why do you believe Dr. Eager's statement regarding this matter does or does not make sense? Be specific as to the strengths and limitations of Dr. Eager's position on this matter and the information in the documents (and any other factors you considered) that led you to this conclusion.

Central Aim of the Question

The question is trying to ascertain whether the student agrees or disagrees with Dr. Eager's statement that hiring police will only lead to more crime. To be correct, the student should disagree with Dr. Eager on this point. Why? The main concept here is correlation versus causation. Can the student distinguish between the two concepts? The contention that communities with more police have more crime is specious. It implies that police cause crime. It is more plausible that communities with more crime have hired more police to deal with the problem. You cannot draw anything conclusive from Dr. Eager's chart (Document 6); you cannot know anything with certainty simply based on the chart. A student might argue that the points on the plot are too scattered to infer any linear relationship – this is incorrect.

SCORING

A scorer would be coached to keep several prompt-specific issues in mind while evaluating student responses to this question. First, if the student agrees with Dr. Eager on this specific point (the relationship between crime and police), this should raise a red flag as it indicates that the student may not correctly understand the relationship between correlation and causation.

The scorer should give credit if the student does not agree with Dr. Eager because more crime might necessitate more police. "Might" is a key word here; the student should express uncertainty rather than a certainty in the explanation.

- Some strong responses: "a more likely explanation might be" or "this could be the cause"
- Some weak responses (these are ones stated with certainty): "obviously this is what happened" or "clearly"

The student should also distinguish between correlation and causation. He or she must grasp that concept, even if the exact words "correlation does not imply causation" are not used. It is important to emphasize intent because students may not always use the correct technical terminology of the concept that they are trying to express (such as "correlation"), but they can express this concept adequately.

- Example of intent expressed: "Two things might go together, but this one doesn't lead to the other"

The scorer must also recognize an instance where the student proposes a third variable not covered by the documents, allowing the student to entertain different, feasible explanations for the association between crime and police. The third variable suggestion must make sense. In a very basic response, the student might just reference the possibility of a third variable. In a higher-level response, the student

might provide an example and an explanation for including this third variable. (NOTE: Students infrequently mention the possibility of a third variable, It is important for students to distinguish between a third variable that might cause crime and police to increase or decrease together and an intervening variables—one that explains why more police might cause more crime or vice versa).

- An example of a third variable: "Wealthy communities can afford to hire more police and also attract more crime"

HIGH QUALITY RESPONSE AND CHARACTERISTICS

I do not agree with Dr. Eager's claim that Mayor Stone's proposal for reducing crime "will only lead to more crime." His only support for the claim hinges on the document 6 chart that shows a weak correlation between the number of police officers per 1000 residents and the number of robberies and burglaries per 1000 residents. However, Dr. Eager is mistaking correlation for causation and failing to understand the alternate explanations for such a correlation. More than likely higher volumes of robberies and burglaries per 1000 residents are occurring in concentrated urban areas or poorer neighborhoods with crime problems. As a result more officers will naturally be allocated to these areas rather than to other areas with low crime rates. However, that does not mean that the increase in police officers in these areas is causing the extra crime. By only observing correlation and not examining the underlying circumstances, Dr. Eager is being shortsighted in his analysis. If anything the problem is that even though more police officers have been allocated to high crime areas, these problem areas still simply do not have enough police personnel to adequately deal with the problems. As such Mayor Stone's proposal possesses merit that Dr. Eager's claims fail to observe.

Characteristics of this high quality response:

- Evaluates the evidence
- Provides analysis and synthesis of the evidence (e.g., understands correlation versus causation and suggests an alternative reason for the relationship between crime and police officers)
- Draws appropriate conclusions (e.g., there is not necessarily a causal relationship between the variables displayed on the chart)
- Writes with clear organization, and the response is easy to follow
- Shows strong command of writing mechanics

MODERATE QUALITY RESPONSE AND CHARACTERISTICS

While it seems strange to say that an larger police presence will in fact lead to higher crime. In the case of Dr. Eager's argument, there in fact may be a valid point in that a higher police presence may address short term issues such as arresting the criminal who commits a robbery or burglary but may not take care of the long-term problem as to why that person commits that crime in the first place. In the case of document 6 which is the crime rates and police officers chart. There does appear to be a correlation between the number of police officers and the number of crimes committed. However, this chart can be misleading as it doesn't take into account other factors that wuold be important to consider in an issue such as this one. For example, the chart doesn't taken into account where these crimes are being committed and what the police presence is in those areas. It could be argued that the higher police presence is in response to a rise in crime in a particular area. We do not have any idea how long the crimes have been going on nor see the effect of having more police officers in one area does to that area's crime rate. The graph also doesn't take into account that higher population areas would have higher a

higher number of police officers and a higher crime rate. This graph combines all the counties and creates this one standard in which areas with a small number of police officers, which probably would have lower crime rates along with lower populations are made to appear that fewer police officers leads to fewer crimes. This graphs takes these numbers out of context and makes an extremely flawed argument that if taken into practice would lead to extremly detrimental results. That's why Dr. Eager's statement about more police leading to more crime is flawed and it presents an opportunity for the mayor to counter the Doctor's argument.

Characteristics of this moderate quality response:

- Evaluates the evidence
- Provides analysis and synthesis of the evidence (e.g., understands correlation versus causation and suggests other possible factors leading to the relationship, such as population or the possibility that the higher police presence is in response to a rise in crime in a particular area)
- Shows good command of writing mechanics (e.g., fragments)

LOW QUALITY RESPONSE AND CHARACTERISTICS

I understand Dr. Eager's statement about crime. It is a valid statement that makes sence. Jefferson does appear to have a high percentage of crime rates caused by drug addicts. A successful drug treatment program would lower the crime rate, however, I believe that crime will always be out there. No matter what a city, state or country does, crime will always exist. Drugs and crime are always a bad combination. In this case, the charts report the greater the population using drugs, crime was on the rise. There are many great programs out there that will treat drug abuse; hence, a cut in crime rates. When they are appropriatly funded they are statistically proven to work. The university research abstracts conclude that 27% of people dropped out of the STRIVE Drug Treatment plan, whereas 30% dropped out from the I Can plan. There were fewer arrests for those that completed the STRIVE plan.

Characteristics of this low quality response:

- Accepts the document as it is (without critique) and does not interpret the information correctly (e.g., agrees with Dr. Eager, thus confusing correlation with causation)
- Interjects response with personal opinion, often without supporting evidence
- Interjects response with other information, though it is unclear why this information is presented (It should be noted that in the subsequent responses to the two other questions in this task, the student continues to use less relevant or significant document to support statements)

MAKE-AN-ARGUMENT: GOVERNMENT FUNDING

In this section, we present you with a Make-an-Argument prompt called "Government Funding," sample responses at different levels of performance (high, moderate, and low), and characteristics of responses at each of those levels.

INTRODUCTION

Students are provided with the following instructions when taking Make-an-Argument:

> You will have 45 minutes to plan and write an argument on the topic on the next screen. You should take a position to support or oppose the statement. Use examples taken from your reading, coursework, or personal experience to support your position. Your essay will be evaluated on how well you do the following:
>
> - State your position
> - Organize, develop, and express your ideas
> - Support your ideas with relevant reasons and/or examples
> - Address counterarguments to your position
> - Control the elements of standard written English
>
> Before you begin writing, you may want to take a few minutes to decide on a position and to plan a response. Be sure to develop your ideas fully and organize them coherently, but leave time to reread what you have written and make any revisions you think are necessary.

PROMPT

> Government funding would be better spent on preventing crime than in dealing with criminals after the fact.

SCORING

Each Make-an-Argument response is assessed specifically on logic and argumentation. For analytic reasoning and evaluation, scorers are instructed to identify the writer's position, look for reasons and examples that the writer uses to support that position, and assess the depth of the writer's consideration of the complexity of the issue. When evaluating writing skill, they also consider the organization and flow of the information presented, as well as the level and sophistication of vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammar. Students can argue either side of the argument. Students can also argue that both have merit or neither has merit. No penalty is given for the perspective they take; however, they are expected to take a clear position on the issues in the prompt and support it.

HIGH QUALITY RESPONSE AND CHARACTERISTICS

Government imposes order upon its citizens to pursue generally agreed-upon goals in society. An important function of American government, for example, is to protect the "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" of its citizens, a premise upon which the U.S. was founded more than two centuries ago. Guaranteeing this "inalienable right" through government action is easier said than done. In general, government does so by collecting taxes, enacting laws, and enforcing laws consistent with goals. Violating these laws, by definition, are crimes and the people who commit crimes are criminals. But the meaning of laws and the causes of crime are complicated. In all, there is no simple formula for investing taxpayer dollars and the statement oversimplifies the challenge of dealing with crime. While investing public dollars in crime prevention may have certain advantages, it is not necessarily "better spent" than "dealing with criminals after the fact."

Laws are reflections of moral beliefs of society, that is, what we collectively believe to be right or wrong. These beliefs often change over time, and even by communities within broader society. Furthermore not all laws, or crimes, receive the same levels of enforcement. For example, while we might universally agree that certain violent acts (e.g., murder, rape, armed robbery) are indeed crimes that ought to be prevented at high dollar cost, we might not agree that others (e.g., underage drinking, jaywalking) deserve the same attention. And certain laws which may have been important at the time or in the jurisdiction where they were written, they may no longer be relevant, although they may remain on the books. Given different interpretations, severity and changing nature of crime, it might be quite difficult (and costly) to create a program that effectively prevents crime in all its variety. Doing so would run the risk of addressing those crimes that either do not pose significant threat to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" or, in the future, are no longer crimes at all. By contrast, dealing with criminals after the fact has the advantage of focusing resources on those who have indeed violated existing laws in society, in particular those laws society has chosen to enforce. This approach also allows society to reconsider laws for relevance in present-day society (i.e., through the courts) as violations occur, so that criminal behavior may be redefined as concepts of morality may change.

Furthermore, preventing crime requires that we understand why crimes occur, so that we may know how to intervene. But crime is complex, stemming from many, many conditions pertaining to society and its members. These factors may divide along lines of the classic debate in biology over "nature vs. nurture" as determinants of behavior. Interpreting crime in this way, we might ask: Are criminals the result of the influence of their environment? Or are criminals born to commit crimes? If criminals are products of their environment, then crime prevention programs should address root causes of crime in society. But what are these root causes, and can they be disentangled from a combination of other factors? Are all people susceptible to the same causes, or does a crime prevention program need to accommodate all individual differences so that none will become criminals? Investing in a comprehensive crime prevention program that addresses all causes and all individuals would appear to be a costly proposition. It is difficult to imagine a program that could effectively do so, at any cost. Furthermore, addressing a root cause of crime would likely trigger a series of other causes that would need to be addressed. If, for example, robbery is related to high incidence of poverty and drug abuse, then crime prevention requires effective programs to address problems of poverty and substance abuse. But these, too, are complex problems related to issues of education, discrimination, mental health, and so forth. Where would the crime prevention program (and government investment) stop? By contrast, according to the "nature" argument, criminals are social deviants from birth. Addressing crime becomes a simple matter of identifying these individuals and removing them from society according to the crimes they commit, without any need to address social or environmental concerns. So long as the number of

criminals is few, the cost of separating these individuals from society (e.g., by sending them to prison) will also be relatively small, and government funding might be "better spent" on this approach.

But my understanding is that the "nature vs. nurture" argument rages on, leading me to believe that neither determines an individual's behavior by itself. Sending individuals to prison, because they were born criminals, assumes that these people cannot become productive members of society. It denies these individuals their own "inalienable right," a reason many have come to the America in the first place. Whether or not this is the case, keeping these individuals imprisoned assumes further that laws, and therefore the definition of crime, never changes. Unjust imprisonment in the name of dealing with criminals can never be government funding "better spent" in the United States.

Neither investment in crime prevention nor investment in dealing with criminals by themselves can easily address the problem of crime in our society. Instead, some combination, along with investments in other societal improvements will be required to address problems of crime. More generally, how government funding should be spent to address the complex challenge of protecting citizen's rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" is best determined by the continued interaction of lawmakers, law enforcement officials, the courts, and the citizenry, just as it has for more than 200 years.

Characteristics of this high quality response:

- Clearly elucidated thesis
- Well-organized
- Sophisticated use of vocabulary and mechanics
- Sophisticated, in-depth treatment of the issues
  - Acknowledges and discusses issues on both sides of the prompt
  - Raises uncommon points (e.g., the changing conception of crime)
  - Clarifies the different meanings and purposes of key terms (e.g., government, crime, prevention)
  - Supports points with helpful examples
  - Applies concepts from their education (e.g., nature vs. nurture, laws are reflections of societal moral beliefs)
  - Considers the consequences of their suggestions
  - Logically developed; each idea builds upon the last

MODERATE QUALITY RESPONSE AND CHARACTERISTICS

Government funding would be better spent on dealing with criminals after the fact as opposed to investing in programs intending to prevent crime. I say this because there will always be those who can outsmart the government. Criminals will always find new opportunities and means to commit criminal acts, even though the government will win occasional battles in the war on crime,.

Technology plays a central role in this ongoing battle between government and criminals. New weapons and tools in particular, increase the capabilities of those who commit crimes. Often these weapons and tools are more readily available to criminals than to the crime fighters! For example, criminals armed with so-called "assault rifles" enjoy a distinct advantage over cops who are not allowed to carry them. In some ways, our system of government hinders our ability to defend our society against clever and well-

equipped criminals. While our system does change over time—police are now allowed to carry more powerful weapons in some locales—change occurs slowly.

Government can never get far enough ahead of criminals to anticipate criminal behavior and prevent crime because criminals will also have better weapons than crimefighters, Thus investing in crime prevention cannot be the best use of government funding. Instead, government funding should be spent on dealing with criminals after the fact.

Characteristics of this moderate quality response:

- Clear but limited thesis that focuses on a narrow aspect of crime (technology and weapons of criminals)
- Sentence structure is unvarying (subject, verb, object)
- Some arguments are unclear, or not clearly related to thesis. For example:
  - In paragraph 3, how do criminals having better weapons make it hard for police to anticipate them or their crimes?
  - Argument about criminals and technology is not clearly related to how funding should be spent. It is not clear whether or not the writer is suggesting that if police are equipped with better weapons, they will be better able to defend society from criminals
  - Does not attempt to counter potential objections to the argument (e.g., the greater resources of the police force relative to a single individual criminal)

LOW QUALITY RESPONSE AND CHARACTERISTICS

Crime is a huge problem around the globe, and mostly in America. Crime effects our everyday lives more than we even know and is the black hole into which billions and billions of dollars are sunken into each year on security products for people, and legal and justice cost.

About security products, we buy expensive alarm systems for our homes, bars for our windows, locks for our doors. We hire security guards to patrol our neighborhoods. If that was not enough, we store our valuables in banks and rent safety deposit boxes! And when we put "decorative" bars on our windows and fences around our yards, nobody will want to buy a home that needs so much security!

We carry mace in our purses, whistles on our key rings, we plan our schedules and routes to work to avoid certain neighborhoods. We get escorts to our cars in parking lots after dark. All of this costs money. And the only ones benefiting from all of this are the manufacturers of the products, the security guards and the lawyers.

Our great country deals with this dilemma in almost backwards fashion. The government could easily use these billions and billions of dollars spent on people stealing bread for there family to eat, to just provide bread for the families so they won't have to steal. Also, the funds could be used to develop programs in which people are trained to get jobs. Instead of force people into crime and forget about them, the U.S. government should uplift its own people into something greater, so that allot of these issues and crimes would cease to exist.

Characteristics of this low quality response exemplified in this sample:

- Thesis is undeveloped
- Writing is adequate, but contains awkward constructions and mistakes in vocabulary and tense
- Does not address the main issues in the prompt
  - Argument is largely about our fear of crime
  - Never takes or supports a position about prevention vs. dealing with criminals
- Uses some good examples (e.g., bars on our windows), but largely to support our fear of crime
- Critical thinking is poor
- Unclear why manufacturers, guards, and lawyers are the only ones to benefit from security devices
  - Does not try to counter the position that security devices can be effective in crime reduction
  - Opening contention is hyperbolic (billions and billions of dollars spent on security devices)

CRITIQUE-AN-ARGUMENT: WEDDINGS

In this section, we present you with a Critique-an-Argument prompt called "Weddings," sample responses at different levels of performance (high, moderate, and low), and characteristics of responses at each of those levels.

INTRODUCTION

Students are provided with the following instructions when taking Critique-an-Argument.

There is something wrong with the argument presented below. It is your job to explain what is wrong with the argument. Discuss:

- Any flaws in the argument
- Any questionable assumptions
- Any missing information
- Any inconsistencies

What we are interested in is your critical thinking skills and how well you write a response. You will have 30 minutes to respond to the argument. You will be judged on how well you do the following:

- Explain any flaws in the points the author makes
- Organize, develop, and express your ideas
- Support your ideas with relevant reasons and/or examples
- Control the elements of standard written English

Do not discuss the structure of the argument. We do not want sentences like the following:

- "The argument needs a better introductory sentence."
- "This argument has some facts that help support its ideas, but the ideas are somewhat unorganized."
- "The argument needs more details, more evidence to get its points across."
- "The argument does a great job of recommending a solution and a way to fix the problem."

Your essay should be about what the argument says, not how it's organized.

PROMPT

The number of marriages that end in divorce keeps growing. A large percentage of them are from June weddings. Because June weddings are so popular, couples end up being engaged for a long time just so that they can get married in the summer months. The number of divorces gets bigger with each passing year, and the latest news is that more than 1 out of 3 marriages will end in divorce. So, if you want a marriage that lasts forever, it is best to do everything you can to prevent getting divorced. Therefore, it is good advice for young couples to have short engagements and choose a month other than June for a wedding.

SCORING

For the Critique-an-Argument, scorers are instructed to identify the number of valid critiques provided by the student. The possible critiques are prompt-specific, and they cover a variety of common critical thinking concepts. For this prompt, some examples of critiques include:

- Number and proportion are not the same thing
  - The population and hence the number of weddings are growing, so the increase in the number of divorces may simply reflect an increase in population, and nothing more
  - A more appropriate measure is the proportion of marriages that end in divorce now compared to the past, or the proportion of June weddings ending in divorce compared to the proportions of weddings in other months that end in divorce
- Correlation is not causation
  - Getting married in June may not cause people to get divorced
  - June weddings may not cause long engagements
  - Long engagements may not cause divorce, even if June weddings do cause divorce

HIGH QUALITY RESPONSE AND CHARACTERISTICS

There are several problems with this author's argument for avoiding divorce by shortening engagements and avoiding June weddings. One problem is that just because the number of divorces is going up, divorces are not necessarily a bigger problem now than they were last year or the year before. Every year there are more people in the United States (and on the planet) so that means that each year there are more marriages and probably more divorces. If the number of divorces goes up and the number of people on the planet also goes up by the same amount, then it means that the percentage of divorces would be the same. The writer doesn't tell us whether the percentage of divorces has gone up, down or stayed the same.

The author assumes that because so many divorces are from June weddings, it means that June weddings cause the divorces, or make the divorces more likely. Because we don't know whether the percentage of divorced couples has gone up, down or stayed the same, we don't know if divorces are more, less, or equally likely to happen these days. If more weddings happen in June (because as the writer points out, June weddings are so popular) we might also expect more divorces from weddings in June. If, for example, 80 percent of weddings happen in June, then we might expect 80 percent of divorces to happen to people who were married in June too. If the author is correct that 1 in 3 marriages end in divorce, then it may be the case that 1 in 3 June weddings end in divorce, 1 in 3 February weddings end in divorce, 1 in 3 July weddings end in divorce and so on.

Another problem is that the writer assumes that couples end up being engaged for a long time just so that they can get married in the summer months (like June). But couples might be engaged for long periods of time for a lot of other reasons too. For example, couples might stay engaged for a long time so that they can get to know each other better, and not rush into something too quickly. Or maybe they have lengthy engagements because weddings take a long time to plan. Both my parents and grandparents had long engagements and were married in winter, so clearly not all people are having a long engagements just so they can wait to get married in the summer months. Furthermore, my parents and grandparents both married young and are still married, probably because of the greater understanding for one another that they developed during their engagement. If this is true, then the writer's argument that couples should have short engagements to prevent divorces may not be justified.

The last problem that I see in the paragraph is that the author argues that avoiding June weddings will prevent divorce. But simply changing a wedding to May or July or any other month should not have any affect on whether or not a couple gets divorced. Divorce is caused by many complex issues in a relationship including communication, love, caring, respect, supportiveness, compromise, compatibility, and above all hard work at maintaining the relationship. If a couple wants to try to prevent getting divorced, they should work on these things, not simply avoiding a June wedding as the author suggests. My brother is divorced. Yes, he was married in June. But in my opinion the date of their wedding was the least of their problems.

Characteristics of this high quality response:

- Information is well-organized. The reader knows exactly which part of the prompt is being critiqued at every point in the response
- Uses complex sentence structure and varied vocabulary
- Uses examples (e.g., reasoned hypothetical examples and common knowledge) to support and illustrate valid points
- Identifies numerous flaws (complex and subtle)
- Explanation/justification: The response not only mentions numerous flaws throughout the argument, but also explains the flaws clearly, completely, and convincingly for the reader
- Demonstrates solid understanding of several important critical thinking concepts. For example:
  - The difference between interpreting proportions versus just raw numbers in statistics and how doing so can lead to different conclusions
  - Correlation is not causation

MODERATE QUALITY RESPONSE AND CHARACTERISTICS

At first glance the paragraph that couples should avoid June marriages sounds well grounded in factual evidence. However, there is no information provided for the total number of weddings in each month. Minus the statement that June weddings are "popular" how can you tell if those June weddings are more common than May weddings? Or August weddings? The article implies that more weddings in June end up in divorce. Well, if there are twice as many June weddings, which seems to be supported by that June is the most desirable month, then one can reasonably assume that there will be twice as many June weddings that end in divorce as well. We cannot conclude, from the data or arguments that being married in June ends up in divorce any more than being married in other months.

The argument for the shortening of engagements is also flawed. Short engagements likely mean less time to think about the decision of marriage. How can this be a good thing when ultimately the argument is for avoiding divorce? The paragraph seems to say that at people must avoid June weddings and that somehow length of engagement matters too. What if the couple gets engaged in April? Should they hasten their plans and get married in May to avoid the dreaded June? The paragraph suggests that doing so is better than waiting until July, or longer. What is the right amount of time to be engaged in order to avoid divorce? What is the best month to get married? Given differences among people, and therefore couples, and a lot of other factors, I think it depends on many things. But we can't conclude from the information or argument given that the answer is brief engagement leading to a wedding in a month other than June.

Characteristics of this moderate quality response:

- Writing is clear and somewhat organized
- Makes some substantive points
  - Divorce rates between years and months cannot be compared without knowing the total number of weddings per month
  - Notes the logical flaw with having brief engagement periods, and highlights with an extreme example
- Barely touches on other flaws
- Mentions the complexity of marriage and how what is right for one couple may not be right for another couple. Does not develop this point at all
- Points are partially, but not fully developed. The use of rhetorical questions and hypothetical examples is somewhat effective at illustrating their point; however, the rhetorical questioning is overused. The response would benefit from use of more varied examples to support points, and greater development of points

LOW QUALITY RESPONSE AND CHARACTERISTICS

MY BROTHER GOT MARRIED LAST JUNE. I WAS THE BEST MAN, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THEY SHOULD HAVE A JUNE WEDDING AGAIN OR NOT. WE HAD A GREAT PARTY AFTERWERD, SO IT WAS STILL A LOT OF FUN DANCING, BUT I AGREE THAT JUNE WEDDINGS AREN'T A GOOD IDEA. OTHER MONTHS THAT ARE COOLER WOULD BE BETTER FOR DANCING. I THINK THAT MY BROTHER AND HIS WIFE HAVE A GOOD MARRIAGE, BUT THEY HAVE ONLY BEEN GOING OUT FOR A YEAR.

Characteristics of this low quality response:

- Lack of content: No critical evaluation of the logical argument presented. Appears to not fully understand how to critically evaluate an argument
- Writing is simple: short sentences, basic vocabulary

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Nationwide there has been renewed attention to ensuring that college graduates have the critical thinking and written communication skills necessary for personal and professional success in the 21st century. The Performance Task Academy –a component of the national CLA program – provides faculty development opportunities for creating curricular tools that can be used to help students develop these key higher-order skills.

During the two-day workshop, through presentations, discussion and hands-on work, participants will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of authentic assessment tools and rubric-based assessment as they relate to teaching and learning
- Work in groups to create a complete Performance Task that can be used in a course to help students develop and practice their thinking, reasoning and problem-solving skills
- Have opportunities to interact with faculty and teaching and learning staff from other institutions, disciplines and departments
- Share strategies to improve pedagogical practices as they relate to higher-order skill development

LEARN MORE ABOUT CLA IN THE CLASSROOM

To learn more about CLA in the Classroom, please visit our website at http://www.claintheclassroom.org or email classroom@cae.org.

APPENDIX

SCORING CRITERIA: PERFORMANCE TASK

	Analytic Reasoning & Evaluation Interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating the quality of information. This entails identifying information that is relevant to a problem, highlighting connected and conflicting information, detecting flaws in logic and questionable assumptions, and explaining why information is credible, unreliable, or limited.	Writing Effectiveness Constructing organized and logically cohesive arguments. Strengthening the writer's position by providing elaboration on facts or ideas (e.g., explaining how evidence bears on the problem, providing examples, and emphasizing especially convincing evidence).	Writing Mechanics Facility with the conventions of standard written English (agreement, tense, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) and control of the English language, including syntax (sentence structure) and diction (word choice and usage).	Problem Solving Considering and weighing information from discrete sources to make decisions (draw a conclusion and/or propose a course of action) that logically follow from valid arguments, evidence, and examples. Considering the implications of decisions and suggesting additional research when appropriate.
6	• Identifies most facts or ideas that support or refute all major arguments (or salient features of all objects to be classified) presented in the Document Library. Provides analysis that goes beyond the obvious. • Demonstrates accurate understanding of a large body of information from the Document Library. • Makes several accurate claims about the quality of information.	• Organizes response in a logically cohesive way that makes it very easy to follow the writer's arguments. • Provides valid and comprehensive elaboration on facts or ideas related to each argument and clearly cites sources of information.	• Demonstrates outstanding control of grammatical conventions. • Consistently writes well-constructed, complex sentences with varied structure and length. • Displays adept use of vocabulary that is precise, advanced, and varied.	• Provides a decision and a solid rationale based on credible evidence from a variety of sources. Weighs other options, but presents the decision as best given the available evidence. When applicable: • Proposes a course of action that follows logically from the conclusion. Considers implications. • Recognizes the need for additional research. Recommends specific research that would address most unanswered questions.
5	• Identifies several facts or ideas that support or refute all major arguments (or salient features of all objects to be classified) presented in the Document Library. • Demonstrates accurate understanding of much of the Document Library content. • Makes a few accurate claims about the quality of information.	• Organizes response in a logically cohesive way that makes it fairly easy to follow the writer's arguments. • Provides valid elaboration on facts or ideas related to each argument and cites sources of information.	• Demonstrates very good control of grammatical conventions. • Consistently writes well-constructed sentences with varied structure and length. • Uses varied and sometimes advanced vocabulary that effectively communicates ideas.	• Provides a decision and a solid rationale based largely on credible evidence from multiple sources and discounts alternatives. When applicable: • Proposes a course of action that follows logically from the conclusion. May consider implications. • Recognizes the need for additional research. Suggests research that would address some unanswered questions.
4	• Identifies a few facts or ideas that support or refute all major arguments (or salient features of all objects to be classified) presented in the Document Library. • Briefly demonstrates accurate understanding of important Document Library content, but disregards some information. • Makes very few accurate claims about the quality of information.	• Organizes response in a way that makes the writer's arguments and logic of those arguments apparent but not obvious. • Provides valid elaboration on facts or ideas several times and cites sources of information.	• Demonstrates good control of grammatical conventions with few errors. • Writes well-constructed sentences with some varied structure and length. • Uses vocabulary that clearly communicates ideas but lacks variety.	• Provides a decision and credible evidence to back it up. Possibly does not account for credible, contradictory evidence. May attempt to discount alternatives. When applicable: • Proposes a course of action that follows logically from the conclusion. May briefly consider implications. • Recognizes the need for additional research. Suggests research that would address an unanswered question.
3	• Identifies a few facts or ideas that support or refute several arguments (or salient features of all objects to be classified) presented in the Document Library. • Disregards important information or makes minor misinterpretations of information. May restate information "as is." • Rarely, if ever, makes claims about the quality of information and may present some unreliable evidence as credible.	• Provides limited or somewhat unclear arguments. Presents relevant information in each response, but that information is not woven into arguments. • Provides elaboration on facts or ideas a few times, some of which is valid. Sources of information are sometimes unclear.	• Demonstrates fair control of grammatical conventions with frequent minor errors. • Writes sentences that read naturally but tend to have similar structure and length. • Uses vocabulary that communicates ideas adequately but lacks variety.	• Provides or implies a decision and some reason to favor it, but the rationale may be contradicted by unaccounted for evidence. When applicable: • Briefly proposes a course of action, but some aspects may not follow logically from the conclusion. • May recognize the need for additional research. Any suggested research tends to be vague or would not adequately address unanswered questions.
2	• Identifies very few facts or ideas that support or refute arguments (or salient features of all objects to be classified) presented in the Document Library. • Disregards or misinterprets much of the Document Library. May restate information "as is." • Does not make claims about the quality of information and presents some unreliable information as credible.	• Provides limited, invalid, overstated, or very unclear arguments. May present information in a disorganized fashion or undermine own points. • Any elaboration on facts or ideas tends to be vague, irrelevant, inaccurate, or unreliable (e.g., based entirely on writer's opinion). Sources of information are often unclear.	• Demonstrates poor control of grammatical conventions with frequent minor errors and some distracting errors. • Consistently writes sentences with similar structure and length, and some may be difficult to understand. • Uses simple vocabulary, and some vocabulary may be used inaccurately or in a way that makes meaning unclear.	• Provides or implies a decision, but very little rationale is provided or it is based heavily on unreliable evidence. When applicable: • Briefly proposes a course of action, but some aspects do not follow logically from the conclusion. • May recognize the need for additional research. Any suggested research is vague or would not adequately address unanswered questions.
1	• Does not identify facts or ideas that support or refute arguments (or salient features of all objects to be classified) presented in the Document Library or provides no evidence of analysis. • Disregards or severely misinterprets important information. • Does not make claims about the quality of evidence and bases response on unreliable information.	• Does not develop convincing arguments. Writing may be disorganized and confusing. • Does not provide elaboration on facts or ideas.	• Demonstrates minimal control of grammatical conventions with many errors that make the response difficult to read or provides insufficient evidence to judge. • Writes sentences that are repetitive or incomplete, and some are difficult to understand. • Uses simple vocabulary, and some vocabulary is used inaccurately or in a way that makes meaning unclear.	• Provides no clear decision or no valid rationale for the decision. When applicable: • Does not propose a course of action that follows logically from the conclusion. • Does not recognize the need for additional research or does not suggest research that would address unanswered questions.

APPENDIX

SCORING CRITERIA: MAKE-AN-ARGUMENT

	Analytic Reasoning & Evaluation Stating a position, providing valid reasons to support the writer's position, and demonstrating an understanding of the complexity of the issue by considering and possibly refuting alternative viewpoints.	Writing Effectiveness Constructing an organized and logically cohesive argument. Strengthening the writer's position by elaborating on the reasons for that position (e.g., providing evidence, examples, and logical reasoning).	Writing Mechanics Facility with the conventions of standard written English (agreement, tense, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) and control of the English language, including syntax (sentence structure) and diction (word choice and usage).
6	• Asserts an insightful position and provides multiple (at least 4) sound reasons to justify it. • Provides analysis that reflects a thorough consideration of the complexity of the issue. Possibly refutes major counterarguments or considers contexts integral to the issue (e.g., ethical, cultural, social, political).	• Organizes response in a logically cohesive way that makes it very easy to follow the writer's argument. • Provides valid and comprehensive elaboration on each reason for the writer's position.	• Demonstrates outstanding control of grammatical conventions. • Consistently writes well-constructed, complex sentences with varied structure and length. • Displays adept use of vocabulary that is precise, advanced, and varied.
5	• States a thoughtful position and provides multiple (at least 3) sound reasons to support it. • Provides analysis that reflects some consideration of the complexity of the issue. Possibly considers contexts integral to the issue (e.g., ethical, cultural, social, political).	• Organizes response in a logically cohesive way that makes it fairly easy to follow the writer's argument. • Provides valid elaboration on each reason for the writer's position.	• Demonstrates very good control of grammatical conventions. • Consistently writes well-constructed sentences with varied structure and length. • Uses varied and sometimes advanced vocabulary that effectively communicates ideas.
4	• States a clear position and some (2-3) sound reasons to support it. • Provides some careful analysis, but it lacks consideration of the issue's complexity.	• Organizes response in a way that makes the writer's argument and its logic apparent but not obvious. • Provides valid elaboration on reasons for the writer's position several times.	• Demonstrates good control of grammatical conventions with few errors. • Writes well-constructed sentences with some varied structure and length. • Uses vocabulary that clearly communicates ideas but lacks variety.
3	• States or implies a position and provides few (1-2) reasons to support it. • Provides some superficial analysis of the issue.	• Provides a limited or somewhat unclear argument. Presents relevant information, but that information is not woven into an argument. • Provides valid elaboration on reasons for the writer's position a few times.	• Demonstrates fair control of grammatical conventions with frequent minor errors. • Writes sentences that read naturally but tend to have similar structure and length. • Uses vocabulary that communicates ideas adequately but lacks variety.
2	• States or implies a position and provides vague or very few reasons to support it. • Provides little analysis, and that analysis may reflect an oversimplification of the issue.	• Provides limited, invalid, overstated, or very unclear argument. May present information in a disorganized fashion or undermine own points. • Any elaboration on reasons for the writer's position tend to be vague, irrelevant, inaccurate, or unreliable (e.g., based entirely on writer's opinion).	• Demonstrates poor control of grammatical conventions with frequent minor errors and some distracting errors. • Consistently writes sentences with similar structure and length, and some may be difficult to understand. • Uses simple vocabulary, and some vocabulary may be used inaccurately or in a way that makes meaning unclear.
1	• States an unclear position (if any) and fails to provide reasons to support it. • Provides very little evidence of analysis. May not understand the issue.	• Fails to develop a convincing argument. The writing may be disorganized and confusing. • Fails to provide elaboration on reasons for the writer's position.	• Demonstrates minimal control of grammatical conventions with many errors that make the response difficult to read or provides insufficient evidence to judge. • Writes sentences that are repetitive or incomplete, and some are difficult to understand. • Uses simple vocabulary, and some vocabulary is used inaccurately or in a way that makes meaning unclear.

APPENDIX

SCORING CRITERIA: CRITIQUE-AN-ARGUMENT

	Analytic Reasoning & Evaluation Interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating the quality of information. This entails highlighting conflicting information, detecting flaws in logic and questionable assumptions, and explaining why information is credible, unreliable, or limited.	Writing Effectiveness Constructing organized and logically cohesive arguments. Strengthening the writer's position by elaborating on deficiences in the argument (e.g., providing explanations and examples).	Writing Mechanics Facility with the conventions of standard written English (agreement, tense, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) and control of the English language, including syntax (sentence structure) and diction (word choice and usage).
6	• Demonstrates accurate understanding of the complete argument. • Identifies many (at least 5) deficiencies in the argument and provides analysis that goes beyond the obvious.	• Organizes response in a logically cohesive way that makes it very easy to follow the writer's critique. • Provides valid and comprehensive elaboration for each identified deficiency.	• Demonstrates outstanding control of grammatical conventions. • Consistently writes well-constructed, complex sentences with varied structure and length. • Displays adept use of vocabulary that is precise, advanced, and varied.
5	• Demonstrates accurate understanding of much of the argument. • Identifies many (at least 4) deficiencies in the argument.	• Organizes response in a logically cohesive way that makes it fairly easy to follow the writer's critique. • Provides valid elaboration for each identified deficiency.	• Demonstrates very good control of grammatical conventions. • Consistently writes well-constructed sentences with varied structure and length. • Uses varied and sometimes advanced vocabulary that effectively communicates ideas.
4	• Demonstrates accurate understanding of several aspects of the argument, but disregards a few. • Identifies several (at least 3) deficiencies in the argument.	• Organizes response in a way that makes the writer's critique and its logic apparent but not obvious. • Provides valid elaboration on identified deficiencies several times.	• Demonstrates good control of grammatical conventions with few errors. • Writes well-constructed sentences with some varied structure and length. • Uses vocabulary that clearly communicates ideas but lacks variety.
3	• Disregards several aspects of the argument or makes minor misinterpretations of the argument. • Identifies a few (2-3) deficiencies in the argument.	• Provides a limited or somewhat unclear critique. Presents relevant information, but that information is not woven into an argument. • Provides valid elaboration on identified deficiencies a few times.	• Demonstrates fair control of grammatical conventions with frequent minor errors. • Writes sentences that read naturally but tend to have similar structure and length. • Uses vocabulary that communicates ideas adequately but lacks variety.
2	• Disregards or misinterprets much of the information in the argument. • Identifies very few (1-2) deficiencies in the argument and may accept unreliable evidence as credible.	• Provides limited, invalid, overstated, or very unclear critique. May present information in a disorganized fashion or undermine own points. • Any elaboration on identified deficiencies tends to be vague, irrelevant, inaccurate, or unreliable (e.g., based entirely on writer's opinion).	• Demonstrates poor control of grammatical conventions with frequent minor errors and some distracting errors. • Consistently writes sentences with similar structure and length, and some may be difficult to understand. • Uses simple vocabulary, and some vocabulary may be used inaccurately or in a way that makes meaning unclear.
1	• Disregards or severely misinterprets important information in the argument. • Fails to identify deficiencies in the argument or provides no evidence of critical analysis.	• Fails to develop a convincing critique or agrees entirely with the flawed argument. The writing may be disorganized and confusing. • Fails to provide elaboration on identified deficiencies.	• Demonstrates minimal control of grammatical conventions with many errors that make the response difficult to read or provides insufficient evidence to judge. • Writes sentences that are repetitive or incomplete, and some are difficult to understand. • Uses simple vocabulary, and some vocabulary is used inaccurately or in a way that makes meaning unclear.