

**APPENDIX I. STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE PROMPTS AND  
RUBRICS**

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## Writing Prompts

### Grade 2

#### **Prompt 1 (fall administration):**

You have an afternoon free to do whatever you want. Would you rather read a book, play a sport, draw a picture, or do something else?

- Support your choice with details and reasons.
- Make sure that your writing has a beginning, middle, and end.

#### **Prompt 2 (spring administration):**

Imagine you are going on a trip. Would you rather sail on a boat, take a train, fly in an airplane, or travel another way?

- Support your choice with details and reasons.
- Make sure that your writing has a beginning, middle, and end.

### Grade 3

#### **Prompt 1 (fall administration):**

Before computers and video games, kids used to spend most of their free time outside playing with their friends. Would you rather spend your free time playing outside with your friends or playing video games?

- Support your choice with details and reasons.
- Make sure that your writing has a beginning, middle, and end.

#### **Prompt 2 (spring administration):**

Would you rather take a trip to the beach or the mountains? Use details and reasons to explain your choice.

- Support your choice with details and reasons.
- Make sure that your writing has a beginning, middle, and end.

## **Grade 4**

### **Prompt 1 (fall administration):**

If you could travel in a time machine, would you rather travel back to the past or forward to the future?

- Support your choice with details and reasons.
- Make sure that your writing has a beginning, middle, and end.

### **Prompt 2 (spring administration):**

Would you rather have a car that can fly or a car that can drive itself?

- Support your choice with details and reasons.
- Make sure that your writing has a beginning, middle, and end.

## Grade 2 Opinion Writing Rubric

Opinion-Grade 2 Writing Rubric				
Score	4	3	2	1
Organization/Purpose	<p>The response is clearly organized and consistently focused. The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clearly introduces and communicates the opinion</li> <li>strongly maintains the focus for the purpose and audience</li> <li>effectively uses linking words/phrases to connect ideas and reasons</li> <li>provides an effective concluding statement/section</li> </ul>	<p>The response is adequately organized and generally focused. The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequately states a clear opinion</li> <li>mostly maintains the focus for the purpose and audience</li> <li>adequately uses linking words/phrases to connect ideas and reasons, but some ideas may be loosely connected</li> <li>provides an adequate concluding statement/section</li> </ul>	<p>The response is somewhat organized and is unevenly focused. The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>states an opinion that may be somewhat unclear</li> <li>insufficiently sustains the focus for the purpose and/or audience</li> <li>inconsistently uses linking words/phrases to connect ideas and reasons</li> <li>provides a weak concluding statement/section</li> </ul>	<p>The response lacks organization and/or focus. The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lacks an opinion or the opinion is ambiguous; may be too brief</li> <li>is unfocused and may drift from the purpose and/or audience</li> <li>uses few, if any, linking words/phrases to connect ideas and reasons</li> <li>lacks concluding statement/section</li> </ul>

## Opinion-Grade 2 Writing Rubric

Score	4	3	2	1
<b>Evidence/ Elaboration</b>	<p>The response provides convincing elaboration of the support/evidence for the opinion and supporting idea(s). The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>thoroughly supports opinion with reasons related to the topic</li> <li>skillfully elaborates on reasons with details</li> <li>effectively integrates evidence from experiences/sources</li> <li>effectively uses vocabulary/language appropriate to the task (may mix precise and more general language)</li> <li>effectively uses an appropriate style that enhances the content</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides adequate elaboration of the support/evidence for the opinion. The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequately supports the opinion with reasons related to topic</li> <li>adequately elaborates on reasons</li> <li>adequately integrates some evidence from experiences/sources</li> <li>adequately uses vocabulary/language appropriate to the task (may mix general language with some precise language)</li> <li>adequately uses an appropriate style to support the content</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides inconsistent elaboration of the support/evidence for the opinion. The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provides limited support of the opinion with reasons related to topic</li> <li>provides some elaboration of reasons</li> <li>integrates some evidence from experiences/sources, but may be ineffective, awkward, or vague</li> <li>uses some vocabulary/language appropriate to the task (simplistic language used)</li> <li>attempts to create an appropriate style to support the content, but may be inconsistent or weak</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides very little or no elaboration of the support/evidence for the opinion. The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provides no support of the opinion with reasons related to the topic</li> <li>does not provide any elaboration of reasons</li> <li>integrates evidence from experiences/sources that is incorrect, irrelevant, or evidence is missing</li> <li>uses vague, unclear, or confusing vocabulary/language</li> <li>provides little or no evidence of an appropriate style to support content</li> </ul>

Opinion-Grade 2 Writing Rubric			
Score	2	1	0
<b>Conventions</b>	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions. The response demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions. The response demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limited use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates little or no command of conventions. The response demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>infrequent use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>

**Holistic Scoring:**

**Variety:** A range of errors includes sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling.

**Severity:** Basic errors are more heavily weighted than higher-level errors.

**Density:** The proportion of errors to the amount of writing done well; this includes the ratio of errors to the length of the piece.

\* Refer to the Smarter Balanced-Conventions Chart for further information. Please note that students are responsible for grade-level expectations and standards identified in all previous grades.

## Grades 3 & 4 Opinion Writing Rubrics

### Organization/Purpose

Score	4	3	2	1	NS
Organization/Purpose	<p>The response has a clear and effective organizational structure, creating a sense of unity and completeness. The organization is sustained between and within paragraphs. The response is consistently and purposefully focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion is introduced, clearly communicated, and the focus is strongly maintained for the purpose and audience</li> <li>consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>effective introduction and conclusion</li> <li>logical progression of ideas from beginning to end; strong connections between and among ideas with some syntactic variety</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness. Though there may be minor flaws, they do not interfere with the overall coherence. The organization is adequately sustained between and within paragraphs. The response is generally focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion is clear, and the focus is mostly maintained for the purpose and audience</li> <li>adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>adequate introduction and conclusion</li> <li>adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end; adequate connections between and among ideas</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an inconsistent organizational structure. Some flaws are evident, and some ideas may be loosely connected. The organization is somewhat sustained between and within paragraphs. The response may have a minor drift in focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion may be somewhat unclear, or the focus may be insufficiently sustained for the purpose and/or audience</li> <li>inconsistent use of transitional strategies and/or little variety</li> <li>introduction or conclusion, if present, may be weak</li> <li>uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end; and/or formulaic; inconsistent or unclear connections between and among ideas</li> </ul>	<p>The response has little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may be related to the opinion but may provide little or no focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion may be confusing or ambiguous; response may be too brief or the focus may drift from the purpose and/or audience</li> <li>few or no transitional strategies are evident</li> <li>introduction and/or conclusion may be missing</li> <li>frequent extraneous ideas may be evident; ideas may be randomly ordered or have an unclear progression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient (includes copied text)</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Off-purpose</li> </ul>

### Evidence/Elaboration

Score	4	3	2	1	NS
<b>Evidence/Elaboration</b>	<p><b>The response provides thorough and convincing elaboration of the support/evidence for the opinion and supporting idea(s) that includes the effective use of source material. The response clearly and effectively develops ideas, using precise language:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comprehensive evidence (facts and details) from the source material is integrated, relevant, and specific</li> <li>clear citations or attribution of source material</li> <li>effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques*</li> <li>vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>effective, appropriate style enhances content</li> </ul>	<p><b>The response provides adequate elaboration of the support/evidence for the opinion and supporting idea(s) that includes the use of source material. The response adequately develops ideas, employing a mix of precise with more general language:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate evidence (facts and details) from the source material is integrated and relevant, yet may be general</li> <li>adequate use of citations or attribution to source material</li> <li>adequate use of some elaborative techniques*</li> <li>vocabulary is generally appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>generally appropriate style is evident</li> </ul>	<p><b>The response provides uneven, cursory elaboration of the support/evidence for the opinion and supporting idea(s) that includes partial or uneven use of source material. The response develops ideas unevenly, using simplistic language:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some evidence (facts and details) from the source material may be weakly integrated, imprecise, repetitive, vague, and/or copied</li> <li>weak use of citations or attribution to source material</li> <li>weak or uneven use of elaborative techniques*; development may consist primarily of source summary</li> <li>vocabulary use is uneven or somewhat ineffective for the audience and purpose</li> <li>inconsistent or weak attempt to create appropriate style</li> </ul>	<p><b>The response provides minimal elaboration of the support/evidence for the opinion and supporting idea(s) that includes little or no use of source material. The response is vague, lacks clarity, or is confusing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence (facts and details) from the source material is minimal, irrelevant, absent, incorrectly used, or predominantly copied</li> <li>insufficient use of citations or attribution to source material</li> <li>minimal, if any, use of elaborative techniques*</li> <li>vocabulary is limited or ineffective for the audience and purpose</li> <li>little or no evidence of appropriate style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient (includes copied text)</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Off-purpose</li> </ul>

\*Elaborative techniques may include the use of personal experiences that support the opinion.

## Conventions

Score	2	1	0	NS
Conventions	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limited use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates little or no command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>infrequent use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient (includes copied text)</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> </ul>

### Holistic Scoring:

- Variety:** A range of errors includes sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling.
- Severity:** Basic errors are more heavily weighted than higher-level errors.
- Density:** The proportion of errors to the amount of writing done well. This includes the ratio of errors to the length of the piece.