



Evidence-Based Writing
Should Begin with ABE Students

COABE 2018


Session Objectives



- Overview the performance expectations for CR items and scoring




- Explore teaching key aspects of constructed response that should begin with ABE students



- Present a structured approach to tackling a writing task
- Share resources

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Sharing Findings

Test-Taker Performance: What We've Found


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Why Are Students Struggling?

- Refuse to use an outline or plan from which to write
- Ignore the value of a structured approach to the task
- Do not write enough to be scored
- Do not use the available time

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What is the Skills' Gap?

Reasoning—both qualitative and quantitative

- Analysis of written material—including the role of details, main ideas, thematic support, and relationships within written sources;
- Extraction of evidence (e.g. facts, statistics, examples, or expert testimony) from written material and the ability to draw logical inferences or develop valid claims;
- “Connecting the dots”: understanding relationships (between people, places, things like processes and events, etc.) and the analysis of cause-and-effect relationships, both simple and complex

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What do students do?

Sample Response 1

The Press Release from the office of U.S. Representative Melody Walls has many could intentions, they want to make Highway 17 a four-lane highway instead of the two-lane highway it is now. Ms. Walls believes it will ease traffic congestion and create new job opportunities during and after construction. She also believes the highway will bring in more traffic, due to the new four-lane highway and a increase in travelers from around the state. It attract more hotels and restaurants which will give people permanent jobs. Another reason she brought up was how the highway will help eighteen-wheeler traffic in the town. She says that because of the amount of traffic. This new highway will also save money on repairs because they won't have to be spending money on repairs. She says that money on other expenses the town needs. In all of these reasons she would be best for the town to allow the new highway to be built. She says that the economy of the towns near the highway. If they were to build this highway it would be better than they already have. It would greatly improve the economy of the towns near the highway. She says that they have a chance to find a job close to home and give them more money. She says that they have to worry about losing their jobs because there are many people who are unemployed. She says that the new business would always be busy with trucks. She says that this means more money for the business and the workers.

The letter to the editor talks about issues with this new four-lane highway. The person that wrote this letter says that the new highway would totally bypass there town and they would lose business because of this. The letter also stressed that yes the highway will bring in new jobs but the high paying jobs will be temporary and the minimum wage jobs will be permanent, which concludes that there towns economy will take a big hit over the years. Lastly, the letter stressed that the tax payers would be paying for this highway and it won't even benefit them as much as the other towns and cities around the area. In all, both of these have pros and cons, but they should do what's best for the group and that would be to pay for the highway to be built. It would bring in more jobs for the people in the surrounding areas and the towns that won't really benefit might just have to think about changing jobs so they can be employed for years to come.

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From Struggling to Successful

	Struggling Writers	Successful Writers
Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are unaware of purpose or process of writingHave little or no knowledge of the text structure of an essayHave difficulty developing plans and staying focused on the topicExperience greater writing anxiety and decreased motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze the taskUnderstand and apply all the elements of an essayCreate goals for their writingDevelop plans to achieve their goalsDiscuss how and why a plan will work
Organize	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Produce fewer ideasFail to organize their thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop multiple ideasOrganize their ideas
Draft/write	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan what they are going to say as they writeUse imprecise and nonspecific vocabularyStruggle to convey their thoughts, ideas, and opinionsWrite fewer sentencesFocus on mechanics rather than on clarity and organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Write using an organized plan, but adjust goals when obstacles ariseUse vocabulary accuratelyExperience fewer difficulties with the elements of an essayGenerate sentences that support their ideas
Edit and Revise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Experience problems with grammar, punctuation, and spellingPlace words and letters too close or too far from each otherDo not review and make correction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Edit spelling, capitalization, and punctuationMake more content revisionsCorrect overall appearance

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Getting Started with Evidence-Based Writing

Moving students from "I think, I feel, I believe"

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"The goal of making an argument is to convince an audience of the rightness of the claims being made, using logical reasoning and relevant evidence..."

— Source: National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers, College & Career Ready Standards for Reading, Writing and Communication

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But First . . .



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Different Types of Evidence

Type of Evidence	Definition
Factual	Truthful statements that cannot be denied. Statements that the average person may know or which can be proven.
Statistics or Data	Numerical facts; can be presented in raw numbers, percentages, or fractions.
Examples or Anecdotes	Real-life situations, events, or experiences that illustrate a position; anecdotal stories that help explain an author's claim.
Expert Testimony	The observations or conclusion of someone who is considered highly knowledgeable because he/she is an expert in a particular field of study or occupation; someone who has firsthand knowledge and experience.
Logical Reasoning	An explanation which draws conclusions that the reader can understand; a discussion which helps the reader understand or make sense out of facts or examples offered.
Emotional Appeal	Use of sympathy, fear, loyalty, etc. to persuade; manipulates the reader's emotions — ethos, pathos, logos.

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What-Why-How

What What is the claim?	Why Why is that claim made?	How How do you know?
This is the claim.	These are the reasons for the claim.	This is the evidence or example that supports that claim.

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What-Why-How

WHAT	WHY	HOW		
This is the claim	These are the reasons	This is your evidence or example		
Even though they lived with Vegman's, Public is the best grocery store in America.	Locate items	WHAT This is the claim Even though they lived with Public, Vegman's is the best grocery store in America.	WHY These are the reasons Specialty departments	HOW This is your evidence or example
	Fast checkouts			
	Clean stores			

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Could you develop an evidence-based argument?

Could you develop an evidence-based argument?	
Claim	
Evidence 1	
Evidence 2	
The Other Side	
Conclusion	

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Where do you begin?

- Introduce the idea of developing an evidence-based argument
- Use real-life situations
- Start with personal opinion supported by evidence
- Move to more complex situations or real-life articles

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Let's Brainstorm

- In your groups, think of some real-life situations that you could use to provide practice for students.
- Share your ideas!

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What is the Next Step?

Bring on the Source Text

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Identify Source Text

- Find text that is interesting to students
- Best Source – Newsela
 - Range of topics
 - Adjustable reading levels
 - Supporting activities

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Use a Graphic Organizer

- What-Why-How
- Both Sides Now

WHAT This is the claim	WHY These are the reasons	HOW This is your evidence or example

Both Sides Now	
Evidence that Supports	Evidence that Opposes

Question or statement
Which position is better supported?

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Look for Evidence

Facts

Stats or Data

Expert Testimony

Emotional Appeal

Examples/Anecdotes

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Analyze the Text

Underline the evidence supporting driverless cars.

Circle the evidence opposing driverless cars.

PROCON: Is the idea of driverless cars gaining popularity?
9/14/2016

Autonomous cars could make roads safer, but they also raise concerns about jobs and privacy. As the technology advances, it's becoming clear that driverless cars are coming faster than we think.

Autonomous cars could make roads safer, but they also raise concerns about jobs and privacy. As the technology advances, it's becoming clear that driverless cars are coming faster than we think.

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List the Evidence

Both Sides Now	
Evidence that Supports	Evidence that Opposes

Question or statement
Which position is better supported?

- List the Pros
- List the Cons
- Think about the differences between the arguments



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Make a Decision

Based on the text, which of the arguments is best supported?




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Explain Why

- Use the evidence from the article
- Explain why that evidence supports your argument
- Avoid giving your own opinion



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Develop Your Claim

Decision (Claim)


Reasons (Analysis/Evaluation)

In deciding which side was better supported, I asked myself...

- Was it based on evidence?
- What evidence was the strongest?
- Why was the evidence strongest?

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Keep the Structure Simple

Beginning


Middle

Ending

- The introduction states the main idea or position. It begins with a topic sentence/thesis statement. The beginning restates the question and sets the stage to answer the prompt.
- Answer the question first.
- Provide important information the author stated and meant. This is where you go to the text(s) and provide examples/evidence and important details to support the answer.
- Sample phrases to introduce each text reference include: ... stated; in the text ...; for example ...
- Include background information as required through the prompt.
- Write a closing that summarizes the position taken or restates the thesis statement in a different way.

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Get Started in ABE Classes

Beginning Literacy and ABE Level

- Use Real-Life Situations (What-Why-How)
- Short passage – one position
 - If required, read the text to students
 - Have students listen for evidence
 - List the evidence on the board for students
 - Together, construct a paragraph that explains how the author made his/her point

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Move from Level to Level

Low Intermediate ABE Level

- Short passage (appropriate level) – one position
 - Have students read source text
 - Have students post evidence using What-Why-How
 - Discuss evidence
 - Independently, have them write a paragraph

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Move from Level to Level

High Intermediate ABE Level

- Lengthier passage (appropriate level) – two positions
 - Have students read source text(s)
 - Provide students with a writing prompt
 - Have students use *Both Sides Now* and analyze text
 - Discuss evidence and come to a decision
 - Discuss why
 - Independently, have students write a multi-paragraph response

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All Roads Lead to the GED® Constructed Response

What drives (no pun intended) argumentative writing? Evidence!

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- [illegible]



Session	Activities
1	Warm up with What-Why-How Use real-life scenario Talk about evidence (different types of evidence)
2	Analyze the prompt Preview the text Determine position each is taking (based on title or quick scan) Discuss type of evidence authors may use
3	Read the text Underline/circle evidence from each author
4	Fill in Both Sides Now Discuss the evidence as a group
5	Make personal decision about which side is best supported Explain why Decide which pieces of evidence will be used
6	Write a claim Draft the response

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Setting the Claim (statement of stance)

This . . .

Instead of . . .

Between the two positions in this article, the one against Daylight Savings Time is better supported because of the stronger research used.

Between the two positions arguing whether or not Daylight Saving Time (DST) is useful in terms of energy consumption and safety, the argument in favor of DST is better supported because it uses more factual evidence.

They say daylight savings time is a great thing.

The changing to daylight saving time twice a year is quite confusing to a lot of people, especially at the time right before and after the change.

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Students Earn Points By . . .

- Analyzing the issue or the quality of the argument through which both sides are presented
 - Evidence cited must support overall message **and** must be analyzed in some way
- Demonstrating that the test-taker has engaged with the text and has created a text-based argument

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Analyze, (evaluate), and engage

This . . .

Instead of . . .

In the argument for daylight savings time, it seems that the pro daylight savings time position has won. The first article brings up several improvements in the daily lives of Americans which daylight savings time brings about. The article then uses studies and large scale research to support its position. In the second article, only smaller scale studies are used, and the writer uses arguments with no factual basis to support anti-daylight savings positions.

The changing to daylight saving time twice a year is quite confusing to a lot of people, especially at the time right before and after the change. A person can become upset when they forget to change their clock each time. More accidents can also happen in rushing, when you forget to change all of your clocks.

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What Students Need to Avoid

Responses should not

- Be composed of a summary of the passage or authors' positions
- Include personal information (e.g., opinion)
- Be written in first person (let's discuss why)

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Examples

Summarization

Personal Information

If those are the arguments that are made, then people just need to be more responsible if they are having trouble adjusting with the time change.

Back when it was thought of it made sense – but times have changed and now its time to not have it.

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Know What is Expected

When you write . . .

- determine which position presented** in the passage(s) is **better supported** by evidence from the passage(s)
- explain why the position you chose is the better-supported one**
- remember, the better-supported position is not necessarily the position you agree with**
- defend your assertions with multiple pieces of evidence** from the passage(s)
- build your main points thoroughly**

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Don't Forget the Little Stuff

Expose students to a structured approach to the writing task and help them understand that they need to:

- Write a complete response, not just a short paragraph (300-500 words)
- Provide commentary on the evidence cited (explain the "why")
- Fully develop two or three ideas, rather than mention a lot of things without detail
- Leave five minutes at the end for proofreading—that is one of the things evaluated

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"Stuff to Teach"

- Writing about what is read (Hint: Practice, practice, practice!)
- Using a plan (e.g., a graphic organizer or an outline) for organizing the information from the reading and then writing about it
- Bringing good grammar to the writing task
- Answering the question that is asked

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Know that Students Can Do This!

Sample Response 2

I believe that Highway 17 should be expanded from a two lane highway to a four lane highway due to the better support it has. There are many benefits of extending the highway and although it may seem negative at times, we need to look at the broader picture as well as some specifics. Overall, expanding the highway will create new jobs in communities, benefit the economy, and also will help decrease traffic congestion.

With an increase in unemployment in the 17' district after two major factories closed down, there is also hopes for new businesses to arise as well as for the unemployed to receive jobs. With a need to improve highways, jobs will be created for construction workers. They will therefore help the community get back on its feet and to help the community's economy. Some of the road construction jobs which are created while creating the road may be temporary, however there is room for permanent positions. Roads always will need upkeep and fixing up, which is why some will need to stick around to do the job after the creation of the road.

With roads being completed, this will allow more tourists to come visit the area. It will now be easier for people to travel from far distances and there will be an increase of travelers. This will bring money to the area temporarily, benefiting restaurants and motels as well as the old school motels for tourism. This will then allow people who work at those places to spend their money they are making within the community to help everyone living in it. These businesses also will be doing well, perhaps expanding and hiring more workers. This will mean permanent jobs for residents.

Eighteen whenever traffic in towns will be eliminated through towns. Noise will become a minimal issue as well as traffic congestion. It will also reduce road maintenance costs, which will help the city economically.

Although the expansion of Highway 17, federal taxes will be used to pay for the road. This will not have a direct effect on solely one community. Money will be used, given by the government which would come from everyone living in the United States.

Although the new highway will bypass four cities in the district, there is still a lot of room for advertisement. Travelers will be able to easily get to the four cities by the highway and come from longer distances. Although there is no guarantee tourists won't stop in the city, with advertising and networking with national media and restaurants, they may be able to suggest ones in the four cities.


Overall there seems to be stronger evidence that building the new highway will help communities and decrease traffic congestion.



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A FEW WORDS OF ADVICE

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Test-Taking Tips for RLA CR

- **Always** complete the constructed response! (You cannot use the 45 minutes provided for any other part of the test.)
- Read and analyze the prompt first.
- Closely read the source texts, analyzing and evaluating the evidence before determining your claim.
- Use the highlighting tool and the erasable note boards for planning.
- Plan your time
 - Use the entire 45 minutes to write your response
 - Spend 10-15 minutes for reading and planning
 - Save 4-5 minutes to proofread your response

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"Practice isn't the thing you do once you're good. It's the thing you do that makes you good." - Malcolm Gladwell

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