



Building Success on the RLA Extended Response

It's All About the Claim!

**Information, Resources, and Strategies
for the Classroom**

August 27, 2019 – GED® Tuesdays for Teachers

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What Students See!

The screenshot displays a digital test interface. At the top, a blue header bar contains the text 'QAReview - Candidate Name' on the left and 'Question 6 of 15' on the right, with a 'Flag for Review' icon below it. Below the header, there are two tabs: 'page 1' and 'page 2', with 'page 2' being the active tab. The main content area is split into two columns. The left column contains the following text:

Instructions

Read

- On the **page 2 tab above**, you will **read two texts** presenting **different views** on the same topic.
- **Both writers argue** that **their position** on the issue is **correct**.

Plan

- **Analyze** the two texts **to determine** which writer presents the **stronger case**.
- **Develop your own argument** in which **you explain** how one position is **better supported** than the other.
- **Include** relevant and specific **evidence** from **both sources** to support your argument.

Write

- **Type** your response in the **box on the right**.
- Your response should be approximately **4 to 7 paragraphs of 3 to 7 sentences each**.
- **Remember** to allow a few minutes **to review and edit your response**.

You have up to **45 minutes** for reading, planning, writing, and editing your response.

The right column is a large, empty white box for writing, with a blue header bar at the top containing icons for 'Cut', 'Copy', 'Paste', 'Undo', and 'Redo'. At the bottom of the interface, a blue navigation bar includes an 'End Test' button on the left, and 'Previous', 'Navigator', and 'Next' buttons on the right.

2014 GED® Test RLA – Sample Stimulus Material

“Taxation and Revenue” – Test Bank Item 18101, Stimulus and Prompt

Press Release from the Office of U.S Representative Melody Walls

United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC

*Representative Walls Announces Economic Boost for 12th District
July 17, 2013*

Washington, DC – Representative Melody Walls announced that Congress passed the highway and transit bill today.

“This bill funds the expansion of Highway 17 from a two-lane highway to a four-lane thoroughfare. It will positively affect the town of Oak Falls,” Walls said. As part of the expansion, Highway 17 will move two miles east of the town of Oak Falls. The bill will ease traffic congestion and create job opportunities during and after construction.

Last year, Representative Walls held town hall meetings to gather opinions from her constituents about revitalizing the economy in the 12th District. Two years ago, Turnaround Motors and Bell Camera closed their factory doors. The result has been high unemployment with no immediate prospects for new businesses. Representative Walls heard residents’ concerns for jobs in the district.

Improving the highway means jobs for local construction workers. Once completed, the highway will bring more long-distance travelers into the area. Some officials anticipate a 30% increase in highway traffic due to the ease of traveling on the improved Highway 17. An increase in travelers will attract national motel and restaurant chains along the highway route. These national businesses will mean permanent jobs for residents.

In the future, historical features in Oak Falls and Gaston, such as brick streets built by early settlers and the old wheat mill, will likely become popular tourist attractions. More visitors will increase business for local shops and restaurants.

The improved highway will eliminate eighteen-wheeler traffic through towns, a major source of traffic congestion and noise. A 2001 study in Texas showed that bypasses reduce traffic through towns by as much as 75%. Eliminating eighteen-wheeler traffic will also reduce road maintenance costs.

The improvement of Highway 17, funded by federal tax allocations, is an important investment in the area.

Oak Falls Gazette

Letter to the Editor

I am a small-business owner living in Representative Walls's congressional district. A bill has been passed to expand Highway 17 from a two-lane highway to a four-lane thoroughfare. This change includes plans to move Highway 17 two miles to the east, which means it will now bypass our town completely. I find this unacceptable.

The *Gazette* reports that because Highway 17 runs through six states, construction will be paid for with federal road funds. That means some of our federal taxes will pay for a road that I believe will harm our town. I also believe that few residents of Oak Falls will use the road. Our town and district will lose money as a result of this highway bypass paid for by our tax dollars.

The road construction jobs are only a temporary bandage on the wound made by our two manufacturers closing their doors. Once the road construction is finished, only minimum wage jobs will remain.

In fact, the highway will bypass four cities in our district alone. Each of these towns will lose business because fewer travelers will pass through them and eat, stay overnight, or purchase gas. There is no guarantee that tourists will drive an extra two miles into our town if national chain motels and restaurants are built at the highway exits. The 2001 study Representative Walls references does show that bypasses reduce traffic and noise in towns, but the study also shows they have a negative impact on local businesses.

If this project were paid for with state tax money alone, angry voters would have struck it down. Representative Walls held town hall meetings to hear residents' opinions about the local economy, but obviously she did not listen to the concerns they voiced. Please consider local concerns about this federal project.

Prompt:

Analyze the arguments presented in the press release and the letter to the editor.

In your response, develop an argument in which you explain how one position is better supported than the other. Incorporate relevant and specific evidence from both sources to support your argument.

Remember, the better-argued position is not necessarily the position with which you agree. This task should take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

Evidence, Evidence, Evidence



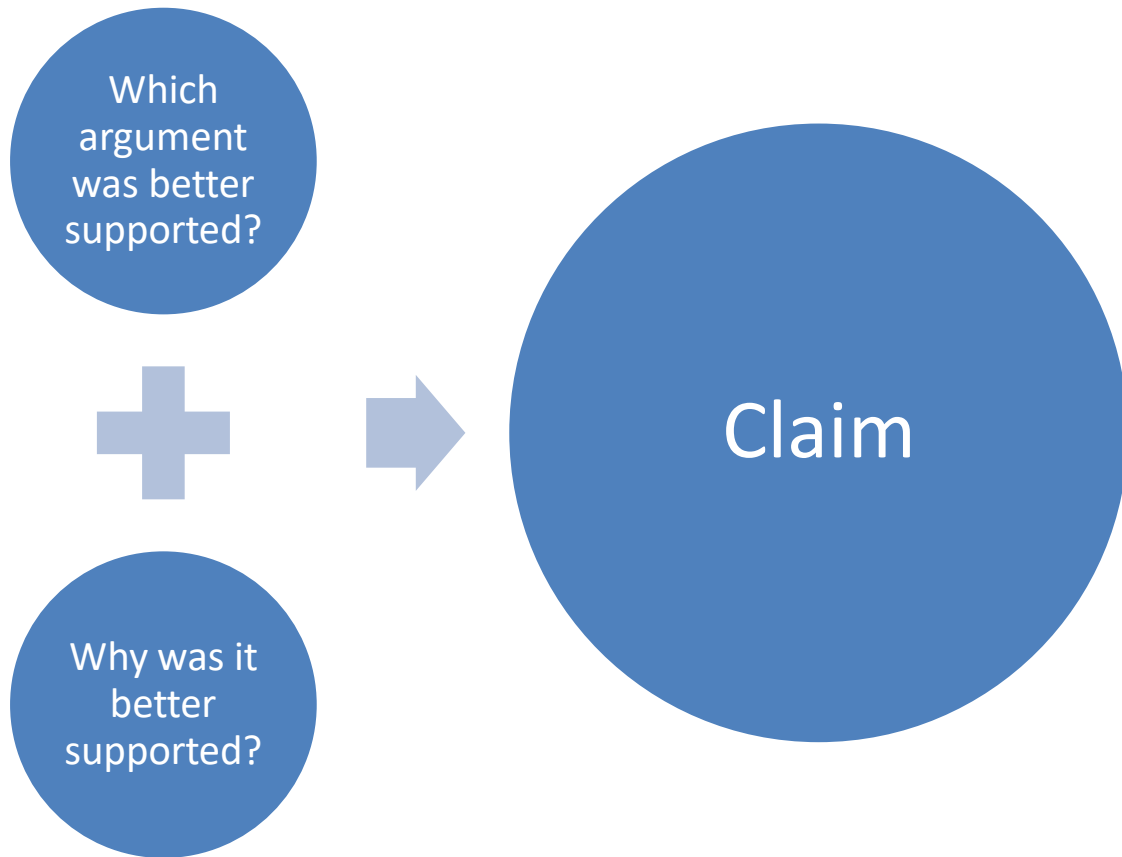
Read and Find

Both Sides Now		
Evidence that Supports		Evidence that Opposes
	Question or statement Which position is better supported?	
Decision (Claim)		
Reasons (Analysis/Evaluation)		

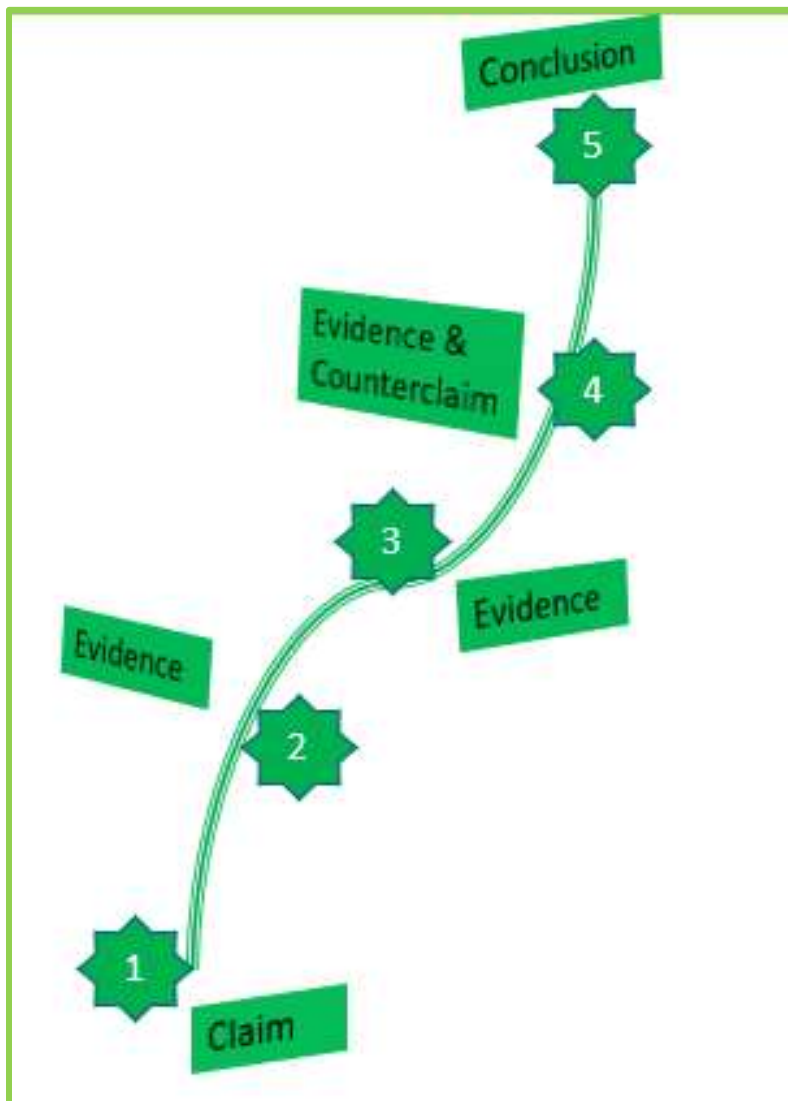
Analysis Complete! Time to Evaluate!

Both Sides Now		
Evidence that Supports		Evidence that Opposes
Will ease traffic congestion	Which position regarding the building of a new road is better supported?	Will bypass town and harm it
Will create jobs		Road paid for with federal funds
Improving highway means jobs for construction workers		Few residents will use road
Will bring more long-distance travelers to area		Will lose money because of bypass
30% increase in traffic that won't impact city roads		Construction jobs are only temporary
Will attract national motel and restaurant chains		Minimum wage jobs will remain
Will eliminate truck traffic through city by as much as 75%		Highway will bypass four cities in one district, so fewer travelers will stop in the cities
Will reduce road maintenance costs		2001 study shows bypasses have negative impact on local businesses
Representative held town meetings		Representative did not listen to local concerns in her town meetings

Build a Claim



It's a Roadmap!



Because...

Synonym	Meaning
Due to	Preposition – because of something
Whereas	Conjunction – because of a particular fact that has been considered
Given	Preposition – because of a particular fact
In view of something	Phrase – because of something
On account of	Phrase – because of someone or something
Thereby	Adverb – because of, or by means of, what has just been mentioned
Through	Adjective – happening because of someone or something
With	Preposition – because of the situation that exists

Student Response

The first argument from Melody Walls states that they want to expaned Highway 17 from twolane highway to a four-lane highway. It will move two miles east of the town of Oak Falls. The bill is suppose to ease the traffic congestion and create jobs for during and after construction. Melody Walls feel once the highway is completed it will bring in more long distance travelers into the area. With that being said it will attract national motels and restaurant chains along the highway route. This will mean permanent jobs for the residents. Melody Walls feel like as far as Oak Falls and Gaston, since they have that old "feel" to it because it was built by early settlers it would be a nice tourist attraction which will bring in more business for local shops and restaurants. The improved highway will eliminate the traffic of the eighteen wheelers through towns which is a major source of noise and traffic congestion. A study in Texas showed that the highway reduced traffic through towns by as much as 75% stopping them from having traffic and will reduce road maintence. Melody Walls feel it will be a good investment to the area.

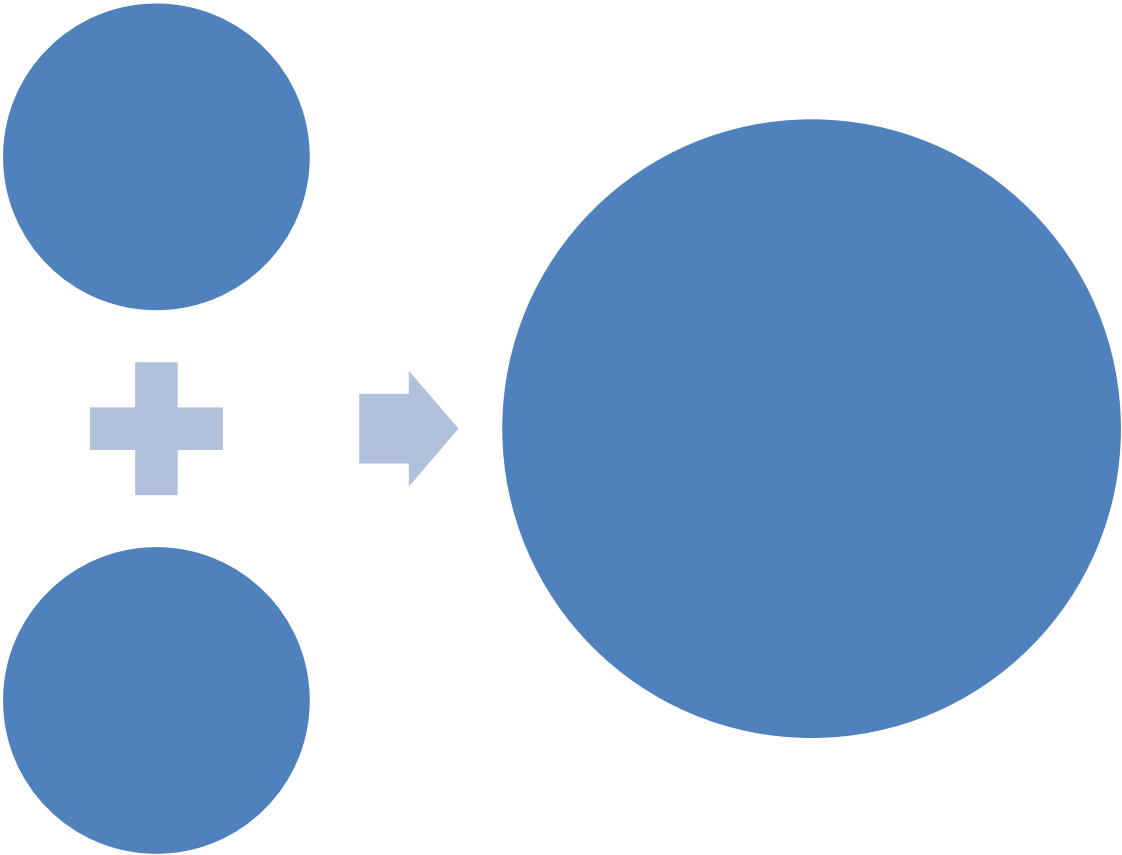
Alice Jenkins feels different because she, first off, is a native of Oak Falls. Alcie Jenkins is a small town buisness owner living in the district. Seeing how Melody Walls plans on moving it two miles east that means it will now bypass there town completely and she does not agree with that at all. Alice Jenkins feels since the new highway runs through six states the construction will be paid with federal road funds that means that the city will have to pay for some of that which she thinks will hurt the town especially if there is no business coming in. Alice Jenkins feels that after the construction is finished that there will be minimum wage jobs remaining, towns will lose business because fewer travelers will pass by rather than come through. Alice Jenkins feels that travelers will not want to come back an extra two miles just to see what they town has to offer meaning no one but the town will shop in the town. No one will get hotel rooms are not even gas mainly because everything is going to be on the exit route. Alice Jenkins agrees that it will be less noise but deffently bad for business.

I feel that Representative Walls position was better supported because she had a lot of good points. Its always good to expand a freeway because of the reasons of a faster comute and less traffic. Anytime that they expand are build something that is going to cause a comotion. There is always a little town somewhere in the world and you cant make everyone happy. It will bring in more jobs and decrease the noise and on top of that it might be a little safer without the eighteen wheelers going through the back roads keeping children a little safer. I feel maybe they can agree to disagree and maybe take time out to make some type of brochure showing what Oak Falls has to offer. Meaning everyone wins, buisness flows, quieter, no more trucks and noise and people get to work quicker or where ever they have to go. Representative Walls has my support.

Now I Have My Roadmap...

Claim	Representative Walls and Alice Jenkins have different views on expanding a nearby highway from two to four lanes. Both present good arguments about the impact on the town of expanding the nearby highway. Representative Walls' position is better supported because it is more logical and is backed by data from the study.
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ease traffic congestion; use data from study – 75% reduction in traffic and road maintenance • Create jobs • Create nice tourist attraction; bring in more travelers; attract national motels and restaurants • Create nice tourist attraction
Bridge	Explain how the pieces of evidence are connected to the claim.
Counterclaim	Use evidence from letter - "fewer travelers will pass by"
Rebuttal	Use press release evidence - Create nice tourist attraction; bring in more travelers; attract national motels and restaurants
Conclusion	Convince the reader that the claim is the best position on the issue.

Claim Graphic Organizer



Sample Thesis/Claim Frames

A thesis is an answer to a specific question. A thesis statement makes a claim or proposition that reflects a specific point of view. The thesis statement should recognize both sides of a question, yet focus on two to three specific points (discussion points) sometimes called points of analyses. A thesis statement is the roadmap for the written response. The placement of the thesis statement is generally located in the introduction and summarized in the conclusion of a writing sample.

The general argument made by _____ in his/her work _____ is that _____ because _____.

Although _____ (believes, demonstrates, argues) that _____, _____ supports/provides the clearest evidence _____.

A key factor in both _____ can be attributed to _____.

When comparing the two positions in this article, _____ provides the clearest evidence that _____.

Looking at the arguments regarding _____, it is clear that _____.

In discussion of _____, one controversial issue has been _____ believes that _____ On the other hand, _____ asserts that _____ is clearly the best supported argument on the issue of _____.

Model: Organizing and Drafting Routines

Claim	States what is being argued and what points are being made. An effective claim is debatable, narrow enough to deal with in a writing, and has valid evidence to support it.
Evidence	Supports the claim; not personal opinions, but, information from reliable sources (texts).
Bridge	The logical connection between the evidence and the claim - explains how the pieces of evidence are connected to the claim.
Counterclaim	A claim that negates or disagrees with the claim.
Rebuttal	Evidence that negates or disagrees with the counterclaim.
Conclusion	Closes the essay and once more attempts to convince the reader that the claim is the best position on the issue.

Drafting Graphic Organizer

Claim	
Evidence	
Bridge	
Counterclaim	
Rebuttal	
Conclusion	

Connecting Ideas – Using Transitional Words and Phrases

Transitional words and phrases create a link between your ideas when you are speaking and writing. They help your audience understand the logic of your thoughts. When using transitional words, make sure that it is the right match for what you want to express. Remember, transition words work best when they are connecting two or more strong ideas that are clearly stated. The following is a list of transitional words and phrases that you can use for different purposes.

Add Related Information	Give an Example or Illustrate an Idea	Make Sure Your Thinking is Clearly Understood	Compare Ideas or Show How Ideas Are Similar	Contrast Ideas or Show How They Are Different
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • furthermore • moreover • too • also • again • in addition • next • further • finally • and, or, nor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to illustrate • to demonstrate • specifically • for instance • as an illustration • for example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that is to say • in other words • to explain • i.e., (that is) • to clarify • to rephrase it • to put it another way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the same way • by the same token • similarly • in like manner • likewise • in similar fashion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nevertheless • but • however • otherwise • on the contrary • in contrast • on the other hand
Explain How One Thing Causes Another	Explain the Effect or Result of Something	Explain Your Purpose	List Related Information	Qualify Something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • because • since • on account of • for that reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • therefore • consequently • accordingly • thus • hence • as a result 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in order that • so that • to that end, to this end • for this purpose • for this reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, second, third... • First, then, also, finally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • almost • nearly • probably • never • always • frequently • perhaps • maybe • although

From Odell Education

The Electronic Scoring Tool

The screenshot shows the 'Extended Response Scoring Tool' interface. At the top left is the GED Testing Service logo. At the top right is a 'Chat' button with a speech bubble icon. The main heading is 'Extended Response Scoring Tool'. Below it is a paragraph explaining that the GED Ready® Practice Test for language arts gives students a chance to practice their writing skills by completing an Extended Response (ER) question. This tool is designed to help you score and provide meaningful feedback to your students about their written response, located in their GED Ready Score Report. A second paragraph states that although this tool is complementary to the GED Ready Practice Test, it can be used with other practice questions in your classroom.

How to use this tool

This tool guides you in scoring your student's Extended Response based on three traits and provides feedback in a printable report.

1. Download the prompts and passages used in the GEDReady. As you read your student's response, you should be able to determine which one they were given.
2. Enter your student's name and test date (or date of response) to personalize their report.
3. For each trait, read your student's response and select the skill descriptors that best describe the response (you will read the response at least three times).
4. View the feedback report and print it to review with your student.

Candidate Name: Test Date:

[START SCORING](#)

https://ged.com/educators_admins/teaching/classroom_materials/er_scoring_tools/

Keep in Mind

- Each test-taker receives three scores – one for each trait in the rubric
- Each trait is determined holistically
- Each trait score is determined by the *quality of the writing*
- A response that receives a 2 on Trait 1 may have a few elements that seem consistent with a 1-level response. However, the response may be so strong in other elements, it can still receive an on-balance score of 2
- The test-taker response must be read and scored separately for each trait – in other words, read and score, read and score, read and score.

Extended Response Answer Guidelines – RLA Test

Please use the guidelines below as you answer the Extended Response question on the Reasoning Through Language Arts test. Following these guidelines as closely as possible will ensure that you provide the best response.

1. **Please note that this task must be completed in no more than 45 minutes.** However, don't rush through your response. Be sure to read through the passage(s) and the prompt. Then think about the message you want to convey in your response. **Be sure to plan your response before you begin writing.** Draft your response and revise it as needed.
2. As you read, think carefully about the **argumentation** presented in the passage(s). "Argumentation" refers to the assumptions, claims, support, reasoning, and credibility on which a position is based. Pay close attention to **how the author(s) use these strategies to convey his or her positions.**
3. When you write your essay, be sure to:
 - **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**
 - **put your main points in logical order** and tie your details to your main points
 - **organize your response carefully** and consider your **audience, message, and purpose**
 - **use transitional words and phrases** to connect sentences, paragraphs, and ideas
 - **choose words carefully** to express your ideas clearly
 - **vary your sentence structure** to enhance the flow and clarity of your response
 - **reread and revise your response** to correct any errors in grammar, usage, or punctuation

Earning Points on the Extended Response

Simply attempting a written response on the Extended Response items doesn't always mean you will receive points for your work. Your responses are scored against specific criteria shown in the Extended Response Scoring Rubrics. You can also refer to the "Extended Response Answer Guidelines." Here are a few tips for helping you earn points for your written responses:

1. **Write a complete essay.** The ER prompts are designed to give you enough information to analyze so that you can make a statement that answers the prompt and then provide evidence from the source texts to develop your ideas in your own words. If you create a very brief essay, your response may not provide enough evidence of your writing skills

to receive any points. Also, fully answering an ER prompt often requires 4 to 7 paragraphs of 3 to 7 sentences each – that can quickly add up to 300 to 500 words of writing! A response that is significantly shorter could put you in danger of scoring a 0 just for not showing enough of your writing skills.

2. **Give commentary on quotations from the source texts.** While you are encouraged to cite specific evidence (phrases and even complete sentences) from the passages that accompany the prompts, you are scored on not just how well you can quote from the passages, but also on whether you can express your own thoughts about your chosen evidence. So you should explain **why** the evidence you've chosen helps you make the point you want to make. Also, if too large a portion of your response is material from the source text, you may receive a 0 because that material is someone else's writing, not yours. Copied text contributes to your score only if you fully explain how that text illustrates a point you are making.
3. **Develop ideas.** One way to earn points on the ER item is for you to pick two or three main ideas and really explain them fully. A full explanation may require several sentences, each containing related thoughts, to fully develop a main idea. Some responses that briefly mention several ideas but do not build upon them may not score very highly.
4. **Save 4 to 5 minutes at the end to quickly proofread.** Written responses are not evaluated for spelling, but a quick check for the following grammar and usage issues can go a long way toward earning points:
 - a. vary your sentence structures
 - b. coordinate the parts of your sentences
 - c. avoid wordiness and awkwardness
 - d. use transitional words to make your ideas logical and clear
 - e. avoid run-on sentences and sentence fragments
 - f. use the right homophone to mean what you say (for example, "to," "too" or "two)
 - g. make your subjects agree with your verbs
 - h. use the correct form of a pronoun
 - i. place your words in the correct order
 - j. capitalize appropriately
 - k. use apostrophes to make nouns possessive
 - l. use punctuation correctly

Retrieved from the World Wide Web at: https://ged.com/wp-content/uploads/extended_response_quick_tips.pdf

RLA Resources from the World Wide Web

National Council for Teachers of English. This site provides lessons and strategies for teaching nonfiction text. <http://www.ncte.org/>

Newsela. A site with nonfiction articles available in 4-5 different Lexile Levels with many of them providing a quiz that is aligned to a specific anchor standard. It is necessary to sign up for the free account to see the different level of articles. <https://newsela.com/>

PBS Teacher Source. Lesson plans and lots of activities are included in the teacher section of PBS. <http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/>

ProCon.org. A website that provides both sides of the argument. Useful for use in teaching argumentative writing. <http://www.procon.org/>

Purdue University's OWL. One of the most extensive collections of advice about writing found on the web. <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

ReadWorks.org. Written for the K-12 program, many of these nonfiction texts and lessons are usable in the adult basic education program. <http://www.readworks.org/>

ReadWriteThink. From the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English, this site has great resources. <http://www.readwritethink.org/>

Teach 4 Results. A list of resources for teaching the writing process. http://iteach4results.wikispaces.com/*Writing

Teaching That Makes Sense. A K-12 site with lots of free resources and graphic organizers from Steve Peha. <http://ttms.org/>

The Writing Studio – Colorado State University. A step-by-step guide for argumentative writing. <http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=58>