Session Objectives

• Review the performance expectations for RLA Extended Response
• Explore teaching key aspects of constructed response that should begin with ABE students
• Present a structured approach to tackling a writing task
• Share resources

What the Research Findings Tell Us

Test-taker Performance
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

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
What do students do?

Sample Response 1

The Press Release from the office of U.S. Representative Melody Walls has many potential 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 an increase in travelers from around the state. It will attract more hotels and restaurants which will give people permanent jobs. An anonymous listening brought up was how the highway will help eighteen-wheeler traffic, in the town of Quad Cities because they won't have to be spending money on repairs. The town would save money on other expenses the town needs. In all, it would be best for the town to allow the new highway to be built. This is the opinion of the towns near the highway. If they were to build this highway and provide more jobs than they already have. It would greatly improve the town's economy. The town will have a chance to find a job close to home and give them more money. They won't have to worry about losing their jobs because there won't be any. The managers know that the new business would always be busy with truckers. They also worry that the new business would always need more money for the business and the workers.

The letter to the town expressed issues with this new four-lane highway. The person who wrote this letter said that the new highway would totally bypass their 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 the town's economy will take a big hit over the years. Lastly, the letter stated that the taxpayers 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.

From Struggling to Successful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Struggling Writers</th>
<th>Successful Writers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan</strong></td>
<td>• Are unaware of purpose or process of writing</td>
<td>• Analyze the task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have little or no knowledge of the text structure of an essay</td>
<td>• Understand and apply all the elements of an essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have difficulty developing plans and staying focused on the topic</td>
<td>• Create goals for their writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Experience greater writing anxiety and decreased motivation</td>
<td>• Develop plans to achieve their goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Discuss how and why a plan will work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organize</strong></td>
<td>• Produce fewer ideas</td>
<td>• Develop multiple ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fail to organize their thoughts</td>
<td>• Organize their ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Draft/write</strong></td>
<td>• Plan what they are going to say as they write</td>
<td>• Write using an organized plan, but adjust goals when obstacles arise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use imprecise and nonspecific vocabulary</td>
<td>• Use vocabulary accurately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Struggle to convey their thoughts, ideas, and opinions</td>
<td>• Experience fewer difficulties with the elements of an essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Write fewer sentences</td>
<td>• Generate sentences that support their ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on mechanics rather than on clarity and organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Edit and Revise</strong></td>
<td>• Experience problems with grammar, punctuation, and spelling</td>
<td>• Edit spelling, capitalization, and punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Place words and letters too close or too far from each other</td>
<td>• Make more content revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do not review and make correction</td>
<td>• Correct overall appearance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The IRIS Center Vanderbilt Peabody College
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
First, look at the multi-dimensional scoring rubric – a quick review

Candidate responses will be scored based on three dimensions:

• Trait 1: Creation of arguments and use of evidence
• Trait 2: Development of ideas and structure
• Trait 3: Clarity and command of standard English conventions
Trait 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait 1</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Develop the argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cite relevant evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Explain how the evidence is connected to the argument and why it is important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-acceptable Responses (Score of 0/4: Failing Criteria)
- Response relies on evidence from sources not cited in or prompted
- Response contains no evidence or information relevant to the prompt
- Response is not in English
- Response has not been attempted (blank)

Trait 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait 2</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Provide fully developed ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Use a structure that is logical and conveys message and purpose of the response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Maintain formal style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Use words to express ideas clearly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-acceptable Responses (Score of 0/4: Failing Criteria)
- Response relies on evidence from sources not cited in or prompted
- Response does not convey that test taker has read the prompt or is on topic
- Response is not in English
- Response has not been attempted (blank)
### Trait 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4.0   | Demonstrates high-level command of Standard English Conventions:  
- Use varied sentence structure that provides a level of fluency in the response  
- Demonstrate competency of conventions  
- Limit errors in mechanics and usage by editing as needed |
| 3.5   | Demonstrates medium command of Standard English Conventions:  
- Use varied sentence structure that provides a level of fluency in the response  
- Demonstrate competency of conventions  
- Limit errors in mechanics and usage by editing as needed |
| 3.0   | Demonstrates limited command of Standard English Conventions:  
- Use varied sentence structure that provides a level of fluency in the response  
- Demonstrate competency of conventions  
- Limit errors in mechanics and usage by editing as needed |
| 2.5   | Demonstrates minimal command of Standard English Conventions:  
- Use varied sentence structure that provides a level of fluency in the response  
- Demonstrate competency of conventions  
- Limit errors in mechanics and usage by editing as needed |
| 2.0   | Demonstrates minimal control over language:  
- Use varied sentence structure that provides a level of fluency in the response  
- Demonstrate competency of conventions  
- Limit errors in mechanics and usage by editing as needed |
| 1.5   | Demonstrates minimal control over language:  
- Use varied sentence structure that provides a level of fluency in the response  
- Demonstrate competency of conventions  
- Limit errors in mechanics and usage by editing as needed |
| 1.0   | Demonstrates minimal control over language:  
- Use varied sentence structure that provides a level of fluency in the response  
- Demonstrate competency of conventions  
- Limit errors in mechanics and usage by editing as needed |
| 0.5   | Demonstrates minimal control over language:  
- Use varied sentence structure that provides a level of fluency in the response  
- Demonstrate competency of conventions  
- Limit errors in mechanics and usage by editing as needed |
| 0.0   | Demonstrates minimal control over language:  
- Use varied sentence structure that provides a level of fluency in the response  
- Demonstrate competency of conventions  
- Limit errors in mechanics and usage by editing as needed |

**One Step at a Time**

- Analyze the prompt
- Closely read and interact with text
- Analyze/evaluate the evidence
- Plan/organize the essay
  - Craft a claim
  - Identify and connect evidence
  - Determine counterclaim/rebuttal
- Craft a conclusion
- Write the draft - Put it all together
- Revise and edit
- Publish
Stimulus Material

Unpacking the 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. Your response should contain 4 – 7 paragraphs of 3 to 7 sentences each, about 300 – 500 words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do</th>
<th>What</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Arguments presented in texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>How one position is better supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Relevant and specific evidence from both sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take</td>
<td>About 45 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
…in reality, good argument begins with looking at the data that are likely to become the evidence in an argument and that gives rise to a thesis statement or major claim.

— G. Hillocks (2010)
Teaching Argument for Critical Thinking and Writing: An Introduction

Modeling – Citing the Evidence

• Question: Will the highway and transit bill be beneficial?
• As a class, we will read the two stimulus items.
• As we read, we will highlight in yellow (or underline) the evidence that supports the benefits of the highway and transit bill. We will highlight in blue (or circle) the evidence supporting that the highway and transit bill will be detrimental.

The goal is for students to be able to cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
But First . . .

Different Types of Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Evidence</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td>Truthful statements that cannot be denied. Statements that the average person may know or which can be proven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics or Data</td>
<td>Numerical facts; can be presented in raw numbers, percentages, or fractions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples or Anecdotes</td>
<td>Real-life situations, events, or experiences that illustrate a position; anecdotal stories that help explain an author’s claim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Testimony</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical Reasoning</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Appeal</td>
<td>Use of sympathy, fear, loyalty, etc. to persuade; manipulates the reader’s emotions – ethos, pathos, logos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It’s Your Turn! Interact with Text – Identify the Evidence

Underline the evidence that supports the benefits of the highway and transit bill.

Circle the evidence supporting that the highway and transit bill will be detrimental.

Interact with Text – Analyze

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose/Context</th>
<th>What is the text about?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What type of text is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What overall purpose does the text serve?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Who is the author of the text?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What qualifies him/her to write on this subject?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Where does the text appear?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What does the author expect the reader to do or think based on the argument/information presented?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proof/Evidence</th>
<th>What type of evidence is provided? Is more than one type of evidence provided?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is evidence provided for both sides of an argument?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization/Structure/Style</th>
<th>What is the organization of the text?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the tone?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What type of sentence structure/complexity, figurative language, rhetorical questions are used?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Modeling – Analyzing and Evaluating

Question: Will the highway and transit bill be beneficial?

- As a class, we will list the evidence that supports the bill and the evidence that is against the bill.
- Then, we evaluate the evidence to determine which side is better supported.
- Finally, we will determine “why” one side is better supported than the other.

The goal is for students to be able to analyze and evaluate evidence in order to develop a strong claim.

Analyze and Evaluate the Evidence

Now, I will . . .
- List the evidence that supports
- List the evidence that opposes
- Evaluate the evidence
- Select the position that is better supported
Analyze and Evaluate the Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence that Supports</th>
<th>Evidence that Opposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will ease traffic congestion</td>
<td>Will bypass town and harm it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will create jobs</td>
<td>Road paid for with federal funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving highway means jobs for construction workers</td>
<td>Few residents will use road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will bring more long-distance travelers to area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% increase in traffic that won’t impact city roads</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will attract national motel and restaurant chains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will eliminate heavy traffic through city by as much as 75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will reduce road maintenance costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative held town meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which position regarding the building of a new road is better supported?

Now, I will . . .
• List the evidence that supports
• List the evidence that opposes
• Evaluate the evidence
• Select the position that is better supported

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?
### What reasons led to your decision?

**Decision (Claim)**
When comparing the two positions, Representative Walls has the better supported position.

**Reasons (Analysis/Evaluation)**
The press release provides a stronger argument because it provides more factual and valid evidence instead of opinions.

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?

### Or I could take the other side . . .

**Decision (Claim)**
When looking at both arguments, the writer of the letter to the editor has the better supported argument.

**Reasons (Analysis/Evaluation)**
The letter to the editor provides a stronger argument because the writer is a resident and more credible and uses more factual evidence.

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?
Explaining and Connecting the Evidence

Connected Evidence
One example of the pro column's stronger argument is the explanation that the improved highway can have long term benefits, because the completed highway will lead to new, national businesses coming to the Oak Falls area and that will lessen the unemployment rate that is devastating to the town.

Cite the Evidence

Evidence
. . . federal tax dollars pay for the road, as it will incorporate six different states. . .
Explaining and Connecting the Evidence

Connected Evidence

. . . federal tax dollars pay for the road, as it will incorporate six different states . . .

This means that residents and business owners did not have a say in this bill even though the local small business owner would be more credible than a representative who does not reside in the area

THE COUNTERCLAIM AND REBUTTAL
For every claim, there is a counterclaim and rebuttal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counterclaim</th>
<th>Rebuttal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• One might object that . . .</td>
<td>• Nevertheless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It might seem that . . .</td>
<td>• But</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• According to the research . .</td>
<td>• However</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Admittedly . . .</td>
<td>• Otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Of course . . .</td>
<td>• On the contrary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Although . . . , there is evidence to support . . .</td>
<td>• In contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The other side states that . . .</td>
<td>• On the other hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Although . . . , research supports . . .</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Counterclaim and Rebuttal

The letter to the editor argues that the jobs created will be temporary or will provide poor salaries. **However,** the author of the letter to the editor provides no evidence or factual backing to support her claim.
Where Are Students Likely to Get Stuck?

• Identifying different types of evidence
• Determining the best supported argument
• Providing a rationale for why the argument was best supported
• Bringing in “outside” information through evaluation of why evidence connects
• Opting for personal opinion not reasoned judgment

Now I’m ready . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>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.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Supports the claim; not personal opinions, but, information from reliable sources (texts).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>The logical connection between the evidence and the claim - explains how the pieces of evidence are connected to the claim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterclaim</td>
<td>A claim that negates or disagrees with the claim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebuttal</td>
<td>Evidence that negates or disagrees with the counterclaim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Closes the essay and once more attempts to convince the reader that the claim is the best position on the issue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Just use the decision and reasons from *Both Sides Now!*

**Decision (Claim)**
When comparing the two positions, Representative Walls has the better supported position.

**Reasons (Analysis/Evaluation)**
The press release provides a stronger argument because it provides more positive and factual evidence.
Write Your Claim and Evaluate

The assertion you are making + The reason you are making it = Claim

While both sides make an acceptable case, Representative Walls provides a stronger argument for the road construction bill because the press release provides more factual and valid evidence.

• Is it debatable?
• Is the focus narrow enough for the writing required?
• Does it establish the argument?
• Is it valid?

Problems with Claims? Incorporate Writing Frames

Although ____________ (believes, demonstrates, argues) that ____________, ______________ supports/provides the clearest evidence because ______________.

When comparing the two positions in this article, ____________ provides the clearest evidence that ________________ because ____________.

Looking at the arguments regarding ____________, it is clear that ________________.
Cite the Evidence and Connect It!

Cite and Connect

Evidence (Cite)
- Supports the claim
- From the text
  - Quotation
  - Paraphrase
  - Summary

Bridge (Connect)
- Explains how the evidence connects to the claim

Remember, there are different types of evidence!
State – Cite – Explain

After you read and find the information from the text that will help you to develop your claim, you will use the graphic organizer entitled: *State*, *Cite*, *Explain*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Cite</th>
<th>Explain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the highway and transit bill beneficial?</td>
<td>The bill will prove advantageous because the research provides strong arguments supporting it.</td>
<td>“Improving the highway means jobs for local construction workers and for workers after the road is completed.”</td>
<td>Although the construction jobs are temporary, the road expansion will bring in more tourists and new businesses which will provide local people with long-term job opportunities and lower the unemployment rate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cite the Evidence

**Evidence**

Oak Falls has a high unemployment rate due to the closing of two large employers.
Now It’s Time to Write!

Structure for Constructed Response

- **Beginning**
  - The introduction states the main idea or position. It sets the stage or context for the position that is being argued and provides a “hook” to get the reader’s attention. The beginning introduces the claim or thesis.

- **Middle**
  - Answer the question first.
  - Offer data (reasons/evidence) to support the claim.
  - This is where you go to the text(s) and provide examples/evidence and important details to support the answer.
  - Show connections between the evidence and the claim.
  - Provide a counterclaim and rebuttal supported by evidence.
  - Include background information as required by the prompt.

- **Ending**
  - Write a closing that summarizes the position taken or restates the claim or thesis statement in a different way. Share the significance of the claim and what the reader should “take away”
### Model: Organizing and Drafting Routines

Sample organizing/drafting routines

- Use a graphic organizer
- Apply an outline
- Create a draft

### Model: Organizing and Drafting Routines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>While both sides make an acceptable case, Representative Walls provides a stronger argument for the road construction bill because the press release provides more factual and valid evidence.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence and Support</td>
<td>Highway expansion will produce more jobs. Transit bill will provide immediate jobs to construction workers. Increase in travelers will attract national motel and restaurant chains which will result in more job opportunities to residents of the town. An improved highway will eliminate 18-wheeler traffic through town. This will result in less traffic congestion and noise. Less truck traffic will mean less road maintenance for the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterclaim and Rebuttal</td>
<td>Road bypass will harm local businesses because travelers will not have to come through town. Letter says that bypass would harm local businesses because travelers would not travel the extra distance. However, she provides no evidence to support her concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>There are always concerns when a new road is built; however, Walls argued a better, evidence-supported stance that benefits everyone, rather than just one group of people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Time to Write!

First drafts don't have to be perfect. They just have to be written.

The Tools of Revision and Editing
But What If My Students Don’t Write at a “Two” Level?

Claim
“Overall, expanding the highway will create new jobs...helping economically, and also will help decrease traffic congestion.”

Analysis/Evaluation
Somewhat simplistic and limited

Evidence
“jobs will be created”
“Noise will become a minimal issue as well as traffic congestion.”
“...it will also reduce road maintenance costs, which will help the city economically.”

Counterclaim
“Although the new highway will bypass four cities, there is still room for advertisement.”
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
Extended Response Videos

• Eight episode series
• Deeper dive into skills and expectations
Need Resources for Source Texts?

- Sample Extended Response Passages and Prompts for Classroom Practice – RLA
- Newsela https://newsela.com/
- Pro/Con http://www.procon.org/
Thank you!

communications@GED.com