

See a Perfect Scoring GED® Test Extended Response

Getting ready to take the GED® test? Use this guide to prepare for the extended responses that you'll be writing on the Reasoning Through Language Arts.

- **Step 1: Read the instructions for the Extended Response task.**
- **Step 2: Read the two passages.**
- **Step 3: Review the sample extended response that received full score points (6 points out of 6 possible)**
- **Step 4: Understand the reasons why the response received full score points.**

Step 1: Read the instructions

Extended Response Instructions:

Read

- You will **read two texts** presenting **different views** on the same topic.
- **Both writers argue that their position** on the issue is **the right one**.

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.

Step 2: Read the two passages, A and B

Passage A

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.

Passage B

**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.

Step 3: Review the sample response

Sample Response:

Both the press release and the letter to the editor offer positions that are supported by both fact and opinion. The press release seeks to exhort the new bill for expansion of Highway 17, while the letter argues that the passing of the bill could prove detrimental to the district. While both sides make an acceptable case, the latter provides a stronger argument.

One example of the letter's stronger argument is the explanation that federal tax dollars pay for the road, as it will incorporate six different states, therefore eliminating this particular state's ability to strike the bill down. This proves, with factual information, that the district did not have a fair say in the bill. The notion that few residents will use the road that their tax dollars are providing is an opinion. However, a resident and small-business owner in the town is more credible in the awareness of the town's concern, as compared to a representative who attended a few meetings in the town hall.

Another example of the better supported argument in the letter is the reference to the construction jobs as temporary. The press release praises the new jobs created by the highway construction, as this is a valid point. However, the author of the letter is correct in the fact that the jobs will not create a boom in the district's economy, or fill in the gap caused by the closures in the manufacturing plants, as the press release leads listeners to believe. The road construction does not solve the long-term issue of unemployment in the town. In addition, the author of the letter counters the argument that new motels, restaurants, and gas stations along the highway will create permanent jobs for the residents of the town. She explains that, "...only minimum wage jobs will remain." This is a valid argument also, as unemployed residents that need enough income to support a household would not be much better off. Providing restaurant or motel jobs is very unlikely to feed or support an entire family. It will not pick up the laid-off employees of the manufacturing plants, who may have worked for many years towards promotions and a pension.

Another example of the letter's stronger argument is the author's explanation of the 2001 study. She concedes that the representative is correct in citing that bypasses are proven to reduce noise and traffic in town, but she argues that the study shows a negative effect on local businesses. This piece of the study was not mentioned by Representative Walls or the press release, and it is a proven fact. This draws more credibility to the argument in the letter.

(Note: Response continues on the next page)

Sample Response (continued):

Also, although it is a speculation, it is more reasonable that traveler's will stick to the main highway and not venture miles off their path into small town when chain gas stations, restaurants, and motels are conveniently located directly at the highway exits. It is less likely that old roads in the towns will become historical locations, attracting tourists and boosting small business sales.

Despite the argument and evidence given by the press release, it appears that the letter to the editor offers a stronger case. The author's ideas are backed up by logical explanations and facts with a few speculations. Though the press release offers some fact, it is mainly specked with anticipations and hopes, driven to overshadow any doubts and quell any concerns. The letter is penned by a resident of the town and owner of a business, subject to first-hand opinions of the citizens of the district. The press release is pushed by an elected representative who, upon visiting the town a number of times and consulting a small percentage of the constituents, is convinced she understands the majority. Although both parties may very well have the best interests of the district in mind, and either position could be correct, it is clear that the letter provides a better-supported argument.

Step 4: Understand the Reasons why this response earned full score points

Trait 1 (2 score points out of 2 possible): The writer developed an argument using evidence from the passages as support

- The writer clearly stated his/her argument - *“the letter provides a better-supported argument.” (pg. 5)*
- The writer uses specific details from the text to decide which passage is more credible - *“a resident...is more credible...as compared to a representative.” (pg. 4)*
- The writer supports his/her argument by showing how one passage has “factual information” to strengthen the arguments - *“...correct in the fact [and] ...backed by logical explanations and facts with a few speculations.” (pg. 5)*
- The writer points out how the opposing point of view is not supported and counters weak points of the opposing point of view with facts - *“...mainly specked with anticipation and hopes”; “...the author of the letter counters the argument.” (pg. 5)*

Trait 2 (2 score points out of 2 possible): The writer develops his/her ideas in an organized way

- The writer begins with an introduction to the topic that clearly expresses his/her argument and develops that argument logically over the following paragraphs.
- Each paragraph begins with a transition, helping to keep a logical flow to the response - *“One example...”, “Another example...” (pg. 4)*
- Each paragraph includes evaluation and analysis of specific points from the two passages - *“She concedes...but she argues”. (pg. 4)*
- The writer concludes by restating his/her argument within an analysis of the credibility of each text.
- The writer maintains a formal style and appropriate tone throughout.

Trait 3 (2 score points out of 2 possible): The writer follows the rules of the English Language

- The writer uses correct sentence structure and a variety of sentence structures.
- The writer’s language makes his/her response clear and easy to understand.
- The writer follows the standard rules of the English language.
- The writer avoids wordiness and awkward sentences for the most part.
- The writer uses punctuation appropriately and demonstrates mastery of mechanics.
- Overall, the response is at an appropriate level for on-demand draft writing.