Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Screenshot of Online Practice Test

Grade 8 English Language Arts Performance Task (Summative)

Task elements:

- Argumentative writing task with real-world application
- Four grade-level source readings provided for student research
- Four writing prompts, including an expository essay, each requiring evidence from source text

**STUDENT DIRECTIONS**

**Penny Argumentative Performance Task**

**Issue:**
In recent years, there has been a heated debate emerging about one aspect of the United States monetary system. This particular debate is not about what we should do to solve the multi-trillion dollar national debt or to fix the recent problems on Wall Street. Surprisingly, it is about whether we should keep producing and using pennies.

This issue is one of the topics of your school’s yearly mock (something meant to look like the real thing) Congressional Session for all 8th graders. You have been appointed as the lead for the subcommittee on financial issues, and you need to research the arguments for and against keeping the penny. As a part of your research, you have found four sources.

After you have reviewed these sources, you will answer some questions about them. Briefly scan the sources and the three questions that follow. Then, go back and read the sources carefully to gain the information you will need to answer the questions and write an argumentative essay.

1. Provide three arguments from the sources you just read that support the position that the penny should be preserved. Be sure to include the title or the number of the source for each argument you provide.

   Type your answer in the space provided.

2. Now provide three arguments from the sources that support the position that the penny should be eliminated. Be sure to include the title or the number of the source for each argument you provide.

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1. Provide three arguments from the sources you just read that support the position that the penny should be preserved. Be sure to include the title or the number of the source for each argument you provide.

2. Now provide three arguments from the sources that support the position that the penny should be eliminated. Be sure to include the title or the number of the source for each argument you provide.

3. One of the areas of dispute in the argument about whether to keep or get rid of the penny is what will happen to prices of goods. The sources answer this question differently. Identify one piece of support and the source for the support for the following view: Prices will not go up because of the elimination of the penny.

PART A

Now provide three arguments from the sources that support the position that the penny should be preserved, but also identify one piece of support and the source for the support for the following view: Prices will not go up because of the elimination of the penny.

3. Provide three arguments from the sources that support the position that the penny should be preserved. Be sure to include the title or the number of the source for each argument you provide.

Task Writing Prompts:

Task (Summative)
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Student Directions for Part 2

You will now review your sources, take notes, and plan, draft, revise, and edit your essay. You may use your notes and refer to the sources. Now read your assignment and the information about how your argumentative essay will be scored. 

Now begin work on your argumentative essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can:

1. Plan your essay
2. Write your essay
3. Revise and edit the final draft of your essay

For Part 2, you are being asked to write a multi-paragraph essay, so please be as thorough as possible. Type your response in the space provided. The box will expand as you type.

Word-processing tools and spell check are available to you.

Argumentative Scoring

Statement of claim and organization:
How well did you state your claim, address opposing claims, and maintain your claim with a logical progression of ideas from beginning to end? How effectively did you integrate relevant and specific information from the sources you have examined? How well did you support your claim with a logical progression of ideas from beginning to end? How well did you maintain a claim with opposing arguments?

Elaboration/evidence:
How well did you integrate relevant and specific information from the sources? How well did you elaborate your ideas? How well did you clearly state ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose?

Conventions:
How well did you follow the rules of grammar usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling?

Your argumentative essay will be scored using the following:

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1. Statement of claim and organization: How well did you state your claim, address opposing claims, and maintain your claim with a logical progression of ideas from beginning to end? How effectively did you integrate relevant and specific information from the sources you have examined? How well did you support your claim with a logical progression of ideas from beginning to end? How well did you maintain a claim with opposing arguments?

2. Elaboration/evidence: How well did you integrate relevant and specific information from the sources? How well did you elaborate your ideas? How well did you clearly state ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose?

3. Conventions: How well did you follow the rules of grammar usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling?

Your essay will be scored based on the following:

Sources you have examined:
Potential counterarguments in your essay and support your claim with information from the sources you have examined. Make sure you address whether or not the penny should be preserved. Your essay should be scored

Your assignment:

Your assignment:

Now that you have read the sources, you will take a position and present your findings at your school’s yearly mock congressional session. For your presentation, analyze the arguments and sources. Now read your assignment and the information about how your argumentative essay will be scored. Now begin your work.

You will now review your sources, take notes, and plan, draft, revise, and edit your essay.