

ACT Aspire Grade 10 Analytical Expository Writing

	<i>Analysis</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Language Use</i>
Score: 6 Responses at this scorepoint demonstrate effective skill in writing an analytical essay	The writer generates an analysis that critically engages with the expository writing task. The response presents a complex analysis by critically addressing (a) implications and complications of the issue and/or (b) underlying values.	Ideas are thoroughly explained, with skillful use of supporting reasons and specific details. The writer's claims and specific support are well integrated.	The response exhibits a purposeful organizational strategy. Connections between and within paragraphs consistently clarify the relationships among ideas. A logical progression of ideas increases the effectiveness of the writer's argument.	The response demonstrates the ability to effectively convey meaning with clarity. Word choice is precise. Sentence structures are varied and clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the analytical purpose and are maintained throughout the response. While a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics may be present, they do not impede understanding.
Score: 5 Responses at this scorepoint demonstrate capable skill in writing an analytical essay	The writer generates an analysis that capably engages with the expository writing task. The response presents a somewhat complex analysis by discussing (a) implications and complications of the issue and/or (b) underlying values.	Ideas are capably explained, with purposeful use of supporting reasons and specific details. The writer's claims and specific support are sometimes integrated.	The response exhibits a clear organizational strategy. Connections between and within paragraphs clarify the relationships among ideas. A logical sequencing of ideas contributes to the effectiveness of the writer's argument.	The response demonstrates the ability to capably convey meaning with clarity. Word choice is sometimes precise. Sentence structures are often varied and clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the analytical purpose and are maintained throughout most of the response. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics may be present, they do not impede understanding.
Score: 4 Responses at this scorepoint demonstrate adequate skill in writing an analytical essay	The writer generates an analysis that adequately responds to the expository writing task. The response presents a clear but mostly simple analysis that may only recognize (a) implications and complications of the issue and/or (b) underlying values.	Ideas are adequately explained, with satisfactory use of supporting reasons and specific details.	The response exhibits a clear but simple organizational structure. Connections between and within paragraphs clarify the relationships among ideas. Ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates the ability to adequately convey meaning. Word choice is usually clear. Sentence structures are occasionally varied and usually clear. Voice and tone are appropriate for the analytical purpose, but may be inconsistently maintained. While errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, they rarely impede understanding.
Score: 3 Responses at this scorepoint demonstrate some developing skill in writing an analytical essay	The writer generates a somewhat appropriate analysis in response to the expository writing task. The response may present analysis that is simplistic and somewhat imprecise.	Explanations of ideas are limited, but include some use of supporting reasons and relevant details.	The response exhibits some evidence of organizational structure. Connections between and within paragraphs sometimes clarify the relationships among ideas. Some ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates some developing ability to convey meaning. Word choice is general and occasionally imprecise. Sentence structures show little variety and are sometimes unclear. Voice and tone are somewhat appropriate for the analytical purpose but are inconsistently maintained. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they sometimes impede understanding.
Score: 2 Responses at this scorepoint demonstrate weak or inconsistent skill in writing an analytical essay	The writer generates an unclear or incomplete analysis in response to the expository writing task. The response demonstrates an unclear or partial understanding of the expository writing task.	Explanations of ideas are unclear or incomplete, with little use of supporting reasons or relevant details.	The response exhibits only a little evidence of organizational structure. Connections between and within paragraphs are often missing or poorly formed. Few ideas are logically grouped.	The response demonstrates a weak ability to convey meaning. Word choice is rudimentary and frequently imprecise. Sentence structures are often unclear. Voice and tone may not be appropriate for the analytical purpose. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they impede understanding.
Score: 1 Responses at this scorepoint demonstrate little or no skill in writing an analytical essay	The writer does not generate an analysis that responds to the expository writing task. The response demonstrates little or no understanding of the expository writing task.	Ideas lack explanation, with virtually no use of supporting reasons or relevant details.	The response exhibits no evidence of organizational structure. Connections between and within paragraphs are rare. Ideas are not logically grouped.	The response demonstrates little or no ability to convey meaning. Word choice is imprecise and difficult to comprehend. Voice and tone are not appropriate for the analytical purpose. Sentence structures are mostly unclear. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are pervasive and significantly impede understanding.
Score: 0 Unscorable	The response is blank, voided, off-topic, illegible, or not written in English.			

Sample Prompt

This section presents a sample prompt, a written explanation of the task, a task-specific scoring rubric, and sample student responses. The sample task has been developed to DOK level 3.

Early High School Analytical Expository Writing

Most of us want the freedom to decide how to live our own lives, but independence requires us to take personal responsibility for our actions. Write an essay in which you explain both the value and the challenge of personal independence. Be sure to support your analysis with reasons and examples.

Common Core State Standards expect students to write proficiently in the expository mode (CCRA.W2). The ACT Aspire Early High School Writing test, which is an expository writing exercise, affords students the opportunity to meet this expectation. This writing task expands the expository mode by asking students not just to explain a topic or subject, but to arrive at insight and deeper understanding by way of exploration and analysis.

The Early High School Writing test marks the third appearance of the expository mode in the ACT Aspire suite of writing assessments. This sample task asks students to explain the benefits and drawbacks of personal independence. While expository tasks at grades 4 and 7 accommodate developing writers by making use, to varying degrees, of scaffolding techniques, this task offers only a sentence of context to stimulate thinking and writing about the topic (*Most of us want the freedom to decide how to live our own lives, but independence requires us to take personal responsibility for our actions.*). Even in its brevity, this sentence models an analytical approach to the larger subject and works to facilitate critical engagement with the task.

Rubric for Early High School Analytical Expository Writing

(continued)

	Analysis	Development	Organization	Language Use
<p>Score: 3 Responses at this score point demonstrate some developing skill in writing an analytical essay.</p>	<p>The response is somewhat appropriate to the task, with an analysis that is oversimplified or imprecise. Implications or complications are only somewhat clear or relevant. Specific details and generalized ideas are somewhat connected.</p>	<p>Explanations of ideas are limited, but include some use of supporting reasons and/or relevant examples.</p>	<p>The response exhibits some evidence of organizational structure. Some ideas are logically grouped. Transitions between and within paragraphs sometimes clarify the relationships among ideas.</p>	<p>The response demonstrates some developing ability to convey meaning. Word choice is general and occasionally imprecise. Sentence structures show little variety and are sometimes unclear. Voice and tone are somewhat appropriate for the analytical purpose but are inconsistently maintained. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they sometimes impede understanding.</p>
<p>Score: 2 Responses at this score point demonstrate weak or inconsistent skill in writing an analytical essay.</p>	<p>The response demonstrates a rudimentary understanding of the task, with weak or inconsistent skill in presenting an analysis. Implications or complications are not clearly relevant. Any connections between specific details and generalized ideas are unclear or incomplete.</p>	<p>Explanations of ideas are unclear or incomplete, with little use of supporting reasons or examples.</p>	<p>The response exhibits only a little evidence of organizational structure. Logical grouping of ideas is inconsistent or unclear. Transitions between and within paragraphs are often missing, misleading, or poorly formed.</p>	<p>The response demonstrates a weak ability to convey meaning. Word choice is rudimentary and frequently imprecise. Sentence structures are often unclear. Voice and tone may not be appropriate for the analytical purpose. Distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are present, and they impede understanding.</p>
<p>Score: 1 Responses at this score point demonstrate little or no skill in writing an analytical essay.</p>	<p>The response demonstrates little or no understanding of the task. The response lacks connections between specific details and generalized ideas.</p>	<p>Ideas lack explanation, with virtually no use of supporting reasons or relevant examples.</p>	<p>The response exhibits no evidence of organizational structure. Ideas are not logically grouped. Transitional devices may be present, but they fail to relate ideas.</p>	<p>The response demonstrates little or no ability to convey meaning. Word choice is imprecise and difficult to comprehend. Voice and tone are not appropriate for the analytical purpose. Sentence structures are mostly unclear. Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are pervasive and significantly impede understanding.</p>
<p>Score: 0 Unscorable</p>	<p>The response is blank, voided, off-topic, illegible, or not written in English.</p>			

Sample Essay 2

Score: 2223

I think personal independence is a good thing that sometimes gets misused. I think this because not many people understand that because they have a choice doesn't mean there will be no consequences. With having independence there are now responsibilities and challenges that you will face. One is now you can choose right from wrong. And now you must accept whatever comes with your choice. Also you think for yourself. You can not blame your actions on another individual. Independence also has some upsides. You are able to think what YOU want. Do what YOU want to do. And say what YOU want to say. Also you are in charge of you. No one else which means that you are in charge of YOUR life. You do not need someone to make your decisions for you. You are also allowed to make mistakes without being punished for them. In conclusion, personal independence is a wonderful thing but sometimes gets mistreated.

Score Explanation

Analysis (2)

The response demonstrates a rudimentary understanding of the expository writing task, with weak skill in presenting an analysis. The writer briefly addresses the values (*you can choose right from wrong*) and challenges of personal independence. Implications are briefly addressed (*And now you must accept whatever comes with your choice*).

Development (2)

Some supporting ideas that the writer offers are incomplete and lack explanation (*You are also allowed to make mistakes without being punished for them*).

Organization (2)

The response exhibits little evidence of organizational structure. The writer attempts to use transitions between ideas to create connectivity (*Also you; You are also*) and provides a brief concluding statement (*In conclusion, personal is a wonderful thing but sometimes gets mistreated*).

Language Use (3)

The response demonstrates some developing ability to convey meaning. The student uses language in an attempt to emphasize certain ideas (*Do what YOU want to do. And say what YOU want to say*). While word choice is occasionally precise (*blame your actions; make mistakes; punished; mistreated*), the writer's language is predominantly general and repetitive. Sentences lack variety.

Development (3)

Explanations of ideas are limited (*You should want to do all the good stuff in your life. The challenging part of our personal independence is that you have to make some hard decisions in your life*) but include some relevant examples (*You have to go to work so you can pay for bills and have food. Then once you have kids you have to take care of them*).

Organization (3)

The response exhibits some evidence of organizational structure. Some ideas are logically grouped. The writer attempts to use transitions between ideas to create connectivity (*When you are a teen; So there are many challenging things*).

Language Use (3)

The response demonstrates some developing ability to convey meaning. The writer's language is predominantly general and repetitive (*stuff*). Sentence structures lack variety (*You get; You should; You will*). Errors do not impede understanding.

Lastly, the best part of being independent is being able to be anything you want to be. You won't have those terrible things you have to do in order to become independent anymore, like taking those huge tests in high school that will basically determine your future, or getting a good GPA to actually be able to become something in life, and all of that other stuff. You have the freedom to be an artist, musician, teacher, firefighter, and etc. because from that point and forward, it's your own life and you finally have your own complete control over it. It's going to be a bumpy road at first but if you work hard for your goals you can accomplish anything.

Score Explanation

Analysis (4)

The student provides a clear analysis in response to the task. Values and challenges (*Firstly, independence means you'll have to work to stay dependent in your life*) of personal independence are offered. The writer recognizes the complications and implications that come with independence (*The thrill of being on your own without an authority watching your every move can be exciting, but most of the time you aren't quite ready for it*).

Development (4)

Ideas are adequately explained with supporting details and relevant examples (*You'll need money to live your life the way you want, because without money, you'll get nowhere. Money is basically the root of everything you do, meaning there's not a whole lot that's free in this world for you to take for granted*).

Organization (4)

The response exhibits evidence of a simple organizational structure. Ideas are logically grouped and sequenced within paragraphs. The student includes an introduction that presents the ideas that will follow in the essay, as well as a brief concluding statement in the final paragraph. The writer uses formulaic transitions between (*Firstly; Secondly; Lastly*) and topic sentences within the paragraphs to clarify the relationships among ideas.

Language Use (4)

The response demonstrates the ability to clearly convey meaning. The writer's language is generally precise (*maturity; required; root of everything; Travelling the world; shelter; life-changing decisions; consult other people; determine your future*). Sentence structures are varied and mostly clear. Errors are present but do not impede understanding.

the main reason that responsibility should be reinforced just as much as the right to independence is.

Responsibility seems to have a negative impact when talked about. Many teenagers do not understand responsibility, depending on their upbringing and their parents' role in their life so far. A lot of teens do not know how to take responsibility for their actions, and this may be because they have never had the chance to experience it themselves as a child. This is why it is important for parent and child to have trust in each other, and it is the perfect example as to why having a strict control on the child/ teen can cause problems for the teen down the road to adulthood.

Responsibility should be enforced and talked about just as much as the right to independence is because doing so allows the teen the most benefits of growing up. They will learn not only the importance of independence and freedom, but also the responsibilities that come with it. It is not good to shelter a child up to teenhood and then let them go into adulthood without first teaching them throughout their lives what comes with independence. This can cause stress on both the teen and the parents. Perhaps the most important lesson to teach a child or teen is the importance of responsibility that comes with new independence, because then a teen will be prepared and know what to expect in the real world.

Score Explanation

Analysis (5)

The response engages with the task by going beyond values and challenges to discuss the difficulties of wanting freedom while simultaneously learning the responsibility that goes with it. Implications and complications of this tension (*This can cause stress on both the teen and the parents; they may use their independence and freedom in a negative, unproductive way*) are discussed through the purposeful movement between specific details (*Perhaps that is why parents sometimes feel the need to be so strict, because they fear that their teen will take advantage of growing up*) and general ideas (*This causes a lot of trust issues between parent and child, and is the main reason that responsibility should be reinforced just as much as the right to independence is*).

Sample Essay 6

Score: 6666

At first the concept of independence sounds only positive. It connotes freedom, the ability to make our own choices, and the feeling that what we have and have accomplished was earned entirely by us, without having to share the credit with others. However, what many people don't realize when they declare their desire for independence is that freedom is also synonymous with responsibility. While the benefits of independence are bountiful, they require taking responsibility for the consequences of that freedom. So what is beneficial also comes with challenges. Ultimately, though, people who are willing to accept the responsibility that comes with independence are the people we need to make a positive difference in the world.

The benefits of independence are extremely appealing, both in an immature way and in a meaningful way. To the immature mind, independence means freedom: you make your own choices, and nobody can tell you what to do. You get to live your life in the way you see fit, making choices according to your own judgment and personal desires. Independence as a state is in sharp contrast to the dependent stage of a person's life (childhood), in which, while you receive comfort, shelter, and sustenance from loving parents, it seems that your whole life is decided for you. Your time is spent at school, doing work, doing chores, etc., with intervals of free time that are never enough to satisfy the innate desire for personal independence. Independence is always the dream and goal of childhood, and to a child it appears to be the green pasture of a bright future. Independence to an adult who may already live on her own and make some basic choices for herself may be a bit more abstract. It means that everything in your life is yours. Your accomplishments, property, and achievements are all made by and can be attributed to you. A child gets complimented for his attributes, but credit also goes to the parents, teachers, and other mentors. When the child grows up and becomes independent, he can have a pride in his life and in all that he has that he never could have before. To the mature adult, being

Score Explanation

Analysis (6)

The response critically engages with the task by not only analyzing the value and challenges of independence but also by fully addressing the historical and cultural implications of independence and the responsibility it requires (*But despite the difficulties of independence, the world needs people who are free to make the kind of bold decisions that drive progress and make the world a better place. It also needs these same people to think about the consequences of their choices*). Specific details about teen and adult life move skillfully to general ideas about the nature of independence.

Development (6)

Ideas in the response are thoroughly explained (*Independence to an adult who may already live on her own and make some basic choices for herself may be a bit more abstract. It means that everything in your life is yours. Your accomplishments, property, and achievements are all made by and can be attributed to you*). Claims and support, including detailed examples, are well integrated (*When it comes right down to it, as independent as we may feel, our actions will always affect someone else. Even when a teen gains the freedom to drive a car on his own, he has to take responsibility to drive safely so that others on the road stay safe*).

Organization (6)

A skillful organization strategy is evident in this response, as the writer is able to weave together the experiences both children and adults have with independence, pointing out their similarities and differences simultaneously while keeping the thread of independence versus responsibility intact. The response logically progresses to the wider world in the last paragraph, which makes the previous analysis more effective.

Language Use (6)

The response demonstrates the ability to effectively communicate ideas with clarity. Word choice is consistently precise (*Independence as a state is in sharp contrast to the dependent stage of a person's life*). A few errors consistent with first-draft writing are present but do not impede understanding. Sentence structures are varied and clear (*Hopefully practicing taking responsibility for driving and taking pride in that independence in a mature, responsible way will prepare him for the day he has teens of his own or leads a team of people in a risky adventure. Maybe this adventure will lead to the discovery of a plant that will cure cancer. Who knows?*).