Guide to Writing the English Exit Exam
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A Guide to Passing the English Exit Exam

- Pay particular attention to your English teacher's advice, especially when he or she offers you an opportunity to write an Exit Exam simulation.

- Attend a workshop on the English Exit Exam, given by The Learning Centre and the English Department. Watch Vanier This Week for dates.

- Make sure you thoroughly read the Tip Sheet for the English Exit Exam (page 4). The information, particularly about word count, is crucial.

- Ensure that you understand a number of the techniques and devices listed so that you will be able to describe the author's use of two or three of them in your essay.

- Read the given texts. Underline the key points. Make sure you have found several techniques and devices that you could discuss.

- Familiarise yourself with the Instructions (page 12) and Writing Guidelines (page 14).

- Consider the possible organizational plans that have been given in this guide. Of course, you do not have to follow either plan; on the other hand, your four hours on the exam will go quickly. You do not want to spend an excessive amount of time trying to figure out a structure for your essay.

- Practice writing at least one essay. Then check your work against the sample student essays that have been given. Note that for “A Scientist: 'I Am the Enemy,'” “Finding Evidence” and “Finding a Nationality That Fits,” sample essays have been included and Assessment Forms have been filled out.

- If you do not have time to write essays on all three texts, at least read them; then read the sample student essays and note the grading. You should note that analysing a short story is different from analysing an essay. Choose the form you are most comfortable with and make sure that the techniques you choose match the form.
Additional Suggestions:

✅ To develop your reading skills, read and discuss articles from the newspaper every day. Read as many novels and magazines as you can.

✅ Get yourself a very good and up-to-date dictionary. It is more likely to have the word you want, and hopefully will use it in a sentence to give you a better sense of how it should be used.

✅ To develop your organization skills in writing, review the sections of the *Vanier Student Writing Guide* related to organization.

✅ Take an essay or story you are already familiar with, or perhaps have written on already, and try to write an essay using the same criteria of the English Exit Exam (identify main idea, thesis, analysis of techniques and devices).

✅ To improve your expression:

  ✅ Review any graded essays. What errors in expression have teachers already advised you about?

  ✅ Check out any handouts of The Learning Centre in this area.

  ✅ Take note of the varied sentence structure in the sample student essays. You cannot just use simple sentences!

  ✅ The Learning Centre has various grammar texts that you may refer to.

  ✅ Make an appointment to bring in a sample essay for The Learning Centre to review with you so that you can learn from any mistakes.

Vanier College wishes you well on the English Exit Exam! Good luck!
Tip Sheet for the English Exit Exam

You are being tested on your reading, writing and critical thinking skills. You must show that you have attained college-level proficiency in all three.

A. Comprehension and Insight

- Be sure to indicate early in your essay what you consider to be the main idea of the selection. You are advised to state that idea in your very first sentence. Be sure you are reading and writing about what the author says, not what you think on the topic!
- You must also show you understand the techniques and devices used by the author. Mention in your introductory paragraph that you will cover this item in your essay. Dedicate at least one paragraph to this matter and consider it in detail.
- A critical/analytical understanding of the reading means you must NOT summarize. Offer some in-depth interpretation or analysis. Think what it will be about and get it in your thesis (see Organization of Response).
- Also note that a critical analysis does not mean you must criticize or find fault with the author’s work. You just have to analyze it and interpret it for the reader.
- You must write on the reading, and refer to it, explicitly. Quotations are not necessary, but direct references to what the author says are essential.

B. Critical Thinking (“Organization of Response”)

- Your thesis must be explicit, and must be in the first paragraph; it should express your interpretation/critical reading of the author’s message.
- Write a five or six paragraph essay, using the first paragraph to tell your reader what you will do, and then developing three points (four if you like) in the following paragraphs. Add a conclusion. Your conclusion could make the difference between a pass and fail.
- Be sure to refer to the reading to support everything you say, but do NOT use long quotations: the word count (750 words) refers to YOUR words. The words in your quotations won’t count towards your final work count, so do not use the essay/story to pad your answer.
- Write topic sentences based on your three points that introduce each paragraph, and stick to the topic. Don’t take chances: this is your graduation task, not a creative writing opportunity.

C. Writing (“Expression”)

- Your rough draft is shredded: your final draft must be complete and well written!
- Proofread carefully and correct your final copy.
- Ensure that all sentences are clearly written and free of spelling and grammar errors.
Time Management

The following steps have been designed to help you use your time efficiently. Please note that these are guidelines only, and each individual should adjust these suggestions according to his or her strengths and weaknesses in English.

AT HOME

Review your old essays and make a list of common errors. Memorize this list and be ready to write it in the rough draft booklet as soon as you sit down on the day of the exam, so that you consult it as you proofread your essay.

ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM:

1. Select a Reading (15 minutes)
   - Your exam booklet will include three texts that will be either short stories or essays. The exam guidelines will tell you which category a reading is (e.g. In Carrier's short story...).
   - Skim all three texts. This means you should read the introduction, topic sentences, and conclusion to see if you understand the piece.
   - Once you have made your decision, don't go back! You will not have enough time to pick a new reading and produce a second essay.

2. Read the Piece Thoroughly (45 minutes)
   - Read your selection carefully. Use a dictionary to look up words you do not understand.
   - Underline or highlight the main ideas, techniques, and examples.
   - Make notes in the margins.
   - If you do a good job here, the next step will be fairly straightforward because you'll know exactly where to look for your ideas!

3. Plan and Draft Your Essay (60 minutes)
   - Your plan is the bare bones of the essay; your outline should include a practice introduction, points for each topic sentence, and perhaps even the beginning of a conclusion.
   - Only the final copy will be evaluated, so do not waste time about writing a complete rough draft.

4. Write Your Final Copy (90 minutes)
   - Double space your final copy. This will be beneficial in the next step, proofreading.
   - Note that only your final copy will be evaluated. You must complete your final copy.
   - Write clearly and in pen – NOT PENCIL.

5. Proofread (30 minutes)
   - Everyone, regardless of their level of English, should proofread.
   - Use your dictionary.
   - Refer to the list of common errors that you wrote down in the rough book at the beginning of the test to look for the mistakes that would reduce your mark in expression (e.g. grammar, spelling, subject-verb agreement).
Techniques and Devices: Means Used by an Author to Get His/Her Point Across

**Allusion** is an indirect reference to usually well-known persons, places, events, or literary texts.

**Analogy** is a comparison of two concepts, usually one that is familiar and one that is not in order to argue or explain a point.

**Anecdote** is a short, simple story told by an author or character in a story, usually to illustrate a larger point.

**Analysis** examines the author's argument, showing its separate parts.

**Characterization** refers to the level or degree of detail an author employs to make his/her characters come alive; it may include outward appearance (tall, old, skinny, ugly, etc.), behaviour (dull, angry, happy, etc.), or their inner emotional, intellectual and moral qualities (centered, religious, intelligent, apathetic, etc.).

**Classification** is a way of organizing information according to categories.

**Comparison** is an examination of two or more items to establish similarities and dissimilarities.

**Conflict** is a struggle between opposing forces. It can be between two people, a person and something in nature or society, or even between impulses or parts of the self.

**Contrast** involves the examination of differences of associated things, qualities, events.

**Description** is the amount of detail used by the author to give a mental image of something experienced.

**Diction** involves the kinds of words used to achieve particular effects.

**Dialogue** is the conversation between any characters in a story.

**Example** refers to a particular single item, fact, incident, or aspect that illustrates a rule or a general statement.

**Imagery** refers to the author’s use of words that appeal to the senses. Most imagery is visual, or can be seen. (for example, “a black cat”)

**Irony** refers to the unexpected difference or lack of agreement between appearances and truth or between expectation and reality. Irony is apparent when an author uses language to create a deliberate contrast between appearance (what seems to be true) and truth (what the author really thinks).
Metaphor is a comparison that does not use “like” or “as”. (My love is a rose.)

Narration is the act of telling a story or sequence of events; it is how the author arranges aspects of the story such as place, time, events, and the characters and what they say or do. Not all narration is necessarily in chronological order.

Overstatement (Hyperbole) is exaggerated remark or comment used by an author, usually with a specific effect or intent in mind.

Personal experience is when the author tells the readers a story about his/her life, usually to make a larger point or as an explanation.

Personification involves the giving of human qualities to inanimate objects or animals.

Plot refers to what happens in the story - events and thoughts which make up the story’s basic structure and the order in which these events/thoughts are presented.

Point of view in fiction refers to the perspective used by the narrator to tell the story. It is through the narrator's perspective (through the narrator's eyes and mind) that readers learn what is happening in a story. An author might choose the first person, third person restricted, omniscient, or some other point of view.

Repetition involves the author stating the same words, phrases or ideas several times throughout a text, usually to emphasize a main idea or the main theme.

Satire may occur when someone or something is ridiculed or made fun of. This can be a difficult technique to spot or to explain, so don’t use this unless you are sure you understand what you are supposed to do.

Setting refers to the location of a story or novel in terms of place, time, social environment, and physical environment.

Simile is a comparison where “like” or “as” is used. (My love is like a rose.)

Slang is “street” or common (usually spoken) language used by an author instead of “formal” language: “kids” instead of “children” or “crappy” instead of “bad”.

Symbolism involves using something to represent something else. A “heart” is a symbol of “love”.

Theme is a larger truth that a story reveals; it is the author's main idea. A theme is rarely stated directly by the author. Instead, the reader must discover what they perceive the theme to be by examining and questioning details found in the story.
**Tone** refers to the author's attitude or position toward the action, characters, narrator, subject, and even to the reader. To determine the tone, the reader must examine the language the author uses and decide what effect the author's choice of words has.

**Understatement** is representing something as of much less importance that it really is.
**Possible Essay Formats for the English Exit Exam**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Format Based on Techniques</th>
<th>Essay Format Based on Themes/Main Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Author’s name</td>
<td>- Author’s name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Title of the essay/story</td>
<td>- Title of the essay/story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What you perceive to be the</td>
<td>- What you perceive to be the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>author’s main idea</td>
<td>author’s main idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Thesis stating which aspect of</td>
<td>- Thesis stating which aspects of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the author’s work you are</td>
<td>author’s work you are analyzing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>analyzing</td>
<td>- Brief preview of your body paragraph,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>including the techniques and devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you are analyzing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body (3 paragraphs)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Body (3 paragraphs)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Topic sentence; the paragraph’s central idea (will include a technique)</td>
<td>- Topic sentence; the paragraph’s central idea (will include one element of the text’s theme/main idea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- One aspect of the text used to support your thesis</td>
<td>- One aspect of the text used to support your thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Elaboration of this aspect including critical interpretation (explain what the author is doing)</td>
<td>- Elaboration of this aspect including critical interpretation (explain what the author is doing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Details/references (an example to illustrate)</td>
<td>- Details/references (an example to illustrate), plus one technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Restate (rephrase) your thesis</td>
<td>- Restate (rephrase) your thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Summarize what you wrote in the body paragraphs (plus the techniques)</td>
<td>- Summarize what you wrote in the body paragraphs (plus the techniques)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Make a final comment – finish with a strong concluding statement</td>
<td>- Make a final comment – finish with a strong concluding statement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Transitional Words and Phrases

## To indicate a conclusion or a result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word(s)</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Therefore</td>
<td>He is very unhappy. <strong>Therefore,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequently</td>
<td><strong>Therefore,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thus</td>
<td><strong>Consequently,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hence</td>
<td><strong>Thus,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Hence,</strong> he cries a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a result of</td>
<td>As a result of his unhappiness, he cries a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In other words</td>
<td>He cries all the time, he can’t sleep, and he doesn’t want to see his friends. In other words, he is very unhappy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## To introduce an illustration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word(s)</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For example</td>
<td>John often makes mistakes. <strong>For example,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For instance</td>
<td><strong>For example,</strong> yesterday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To illustrate</td>
<td>Wars are not simply acts of aggression. <strong>To illustrate,</strong> Jacob Weil shows…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namely</td>
<td>There are three types of breakfast, <strong>namely</strong> the quick breakfast, the leisurely breakfast, and the indulgent breakfast.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## To add a thought

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word(s)</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likewise</td>
<td>He needed to find a new job. <strong>Likewise,</strong> his wife was out of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarly</td>
<td><strong>Similarly,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In fact</td>
<td>Things were not going well. <strong>In fact,</strong> he needed to find a new job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreover</td>
<td>He needs to find a new job. <strong>Moreover,</strong> he is behind on his rent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furthermore</td>
<td><strong>Furthermore,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In addition</td>
<td><strong>In addition,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firstly/secondly/thirdly</td>
<td>Things are not going well. <strong>Firstly,</strong> he needs to find a new job. <strong>Secondly,</strong> he is behind on his rent. <strong>Thirdly,</strong> his wife is out of work, and <strong>finally,</strong> his dog is sick.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### To make a qualification or contrast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On the other hand</th>
<th>The narrator lives in a home with no electricity or running water.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>However</td>
<td>The narrator lives in a home with no electricity or running water. <strong>However</strong>, he is still a happy person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But</td>
<td>The narrator lives in a home with no electricity or running water, <strong>but</strong> he is happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevertheless</td>
<td>The narrator lives in a home with no electricity or running water, but he is happy <strong>nevertheless</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still</td>
<td>The narrator lives in a home with no electricity or running water. <strong>Still</strong>, he is happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td>The narrator is happy…<strong>or</strong> maybe he really isn’t.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nor</td>
<td>The narrator doesn’t let it show that he is unhappy, <strong>nor</strong> does he complain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the contrary</td>
<td>The narrator is not unhappy that he lives in a home with no electricity or running water. <strong>On the contrary</strong>, he is happy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### To introduce quoted proofs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>According to the author, “…”</th>
<th>According to the author, “John stayed awake all night and cried.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The author maintains, “…”</td>
<td><strong>The author maintains</strong>, “John stayed awake all night and cried.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In other words</td>
<td>He cries all the time, he can’t sleep, and he doesn’t want to see his friends. <strong>In other words</strong>, he is very unhappy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MINISTERIAL EXAMINATION OF COLLEGE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND LITERATURE

Booklet 1 — INSTRUCTIONS and ROUGH WORK

Read the selections in BOOKLET 3 — READINGS and then write an essay of at least 750 words about one of the three readings.

1. SIGN this BOOKLET in the space provided below after you have read these instructions.

2. BEFORE WRITING
   o READ all three selections in BOOKLET 3 — READINGS.
   o CHOOSE ONE READING on which you will write.
   o READ and FOLLOW the WRITING GUIDELINES for that Reading.

3. MARKING CRITERIA
   o READ the marking criteria on the following page. Your paper will be graded according to these criteria, so consider them carefully.

4. PLANNING YOUR ESSAY
   o Prepare and organize ideas for your essay in the Booklet: BOOKLET 1 — INSTRUCTIONS AND ROUGH WORK.

5. AFTER PLANNING
   o Write your essay in Booklet 2 — Final Copy.
   o Proofread your final copy.

6. LENGTH and TIME
   o LENGTH: At least 750 words (papers of fewer than 700 words may be penalized; papers of fewer than 600 words will fail).
   o TIME: 4 hours.

7. Students are permitted to use unilingual and bilingual dictionaries. Students are not permitted to use electronic dictionaries, a thesaurus, personal notes, course notes, handbooks, and books on essay writing.

8. Hand in your rough work and final copy at the end of the exam.

Only BOOKLET 2 — FINAL COPY will be graded.

Student's Signature: ____________________________________________

- 12 -
MARKING CRITERIA

CRITERION 1. COMPREHENSION AND INSIGHT

Markers look for

- recognition of a main idea from the selected reading,
- identification of techniques and/or devices employed by the author,
- evidence of critical or analytical interpretation of the selection, and
- references which demonstrate understanding of the reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CRITERION 2. ORGANIZATION of RESPONSE

Markers look for

- statement of a thesis about the text,
- structure development of the essay,
- use of detail to support the thesis, and
- unified paragraph structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CRITERION 3. EXPRESSION

Markers look for

- appropriate use of words,
- varied and correct sentence structures,
- correct grammar, and
- conventional spelling, punctuation, and mechanics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
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<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PASSING GRADE: A GRADE OF C IN EACH CRITERION IS A PASSING GRADE. PAPERS WHICH ARE GRADED D, E, OR F IN ANY CRITERION WILL FAIL.
READING 1 “A Scientist: 'I Am the Enemy'” by Ron Karpati

If you choose this essay to analyse, explore a central idea of Karpati's text. Develop a thesis statement which expresses your own point of view about this essay and structure your responses around your theses. Include comments on how the techniques and devices* clarify and develop this idea.

READING 2 “Finding Evidence” by Robert Hilles

What do you think is one of Hilles's central themes in this short story? Develop a thesis statement which expresses your own point of view about this story and structure your response around your thesis. What do you think is the significance of the story? How does the author's use of literary techniques and devices* bring out the main themes?

READING 3 “Finding a Nationality that Fits” by Isabel Vincent

What do you think is the main point of Vincent's essay? Develop a thesis statement which expresses your own point of view about this essay and structure your response around your thesis. How does the author use techniques and devices* to make her essay convincing?

* Techniques and devices you may wish to consider include the following: narration, description, dialogue, analogy, example, contrast, setting, comparison, persona, character, irony, imagery, simile, metaphor, repetition, and level of language. You are probably familiar with others as well.
I am the enemy! One of those vilified, inhumane physician-scientists involved in animal research. How strange, for I have never thought of myself as an evil person. I became a pediatrician because of my love for children and my desire to keep them healthy. During medical school and residency, however, I saw many children die of leukemia, prematurity and traumatic injury—circumstances against which medicine has made tremendous progress, but still has far to go. More important, I also saw children, alive and healthy, thanks to advances in medical science such as infant respirators, potent antibiotics, new surgical techniques and the entire field of organ transplantation. My desire to tip the scales in favor of the healthy, happy children drew me to medical research.

My accusers claim that I inflict torture on animals for the sole purpose of career advancement. My experiments supposedly have no relevance to medicine and are easily replaced by computer simulation. Meanwhile, an apathetic public barely watches, convinced that the issue has no significance, and publicity-conscious politicians increasingly give way to the demands of the activists.

We in medical research have also been unconsciously apathetic. We have allowed the most extreme animal-rights protesters to seize the initiative and frame the issue as one of "animal fraud." We have been complacent in our belief that a knowledgeable public would sense the importance of animal research to the public health. Perhaps we have been mistaken in not responding to the emotional tone of the argument created by those sad posters of animals by waving equally sad posters of children dying of leukemia or cystic fibrosis.

Much is made of the pain inflicted on these animals in the name of medical science. The animal-rights activists contend that it is evidence of our malevolent and sadistic nature. A more reasonable argument, however, can be advanced in our defense. Life is often cruel, both to animals and human beings. Teenagers get thrown from the back of a pickup truck and suffer severe head injuries. Toddlers, barely able to walk, find themselves at the bottom of a swimming pool while a parent checks the mail. Physicians hoping to alleviate the pain and suffering these tragedies cause have but three choices: create an animal model of the injury or disease and use that model to understand the process and test new therapies; experiment on human beings—some experiments will succeed, most will fail— or finally, leave medical knowledge static, hoping that accidental discoveries will lead us to the advances.

Some animal-rights activists would suggest a fourth choice, claiming that computer models can simulate animal experiments, thus making the actual experiments unnecessary. Computers can simulate, reasonably well, the effects of well understood principles on complex systems, as in the application of the laws of physics to airplane and automobile design. However, when the principles themselves are in question, as is the case with complex biological systems under study, computer modeling alone is of little value.

One of the terrifying effects of the effort to restrict the use of animals in medical research is that the impact will not be felt for years and decades: drugs that might have been discovered will not be; surgical techniques that might have been developed will not be; and fundamental biological processes that might have been understood will remain mysteries. There is the danger that politically expedient solutions will be found to placate a vocal minority, while the consequences of those decisions will not be apparent until long after the decisions are made and the decision makers forgotten.
Fortunately, most of us enjoy good health, and the trauma of watching one's child die has become a rare experience. Yet our good fortune should not make us unappreciative of the health we enjoy or the advances that make it possible. Vaccines, antibiotics, insulin and drugs to treat heart disease, hypertension and stroke are all based on animal research. Most complex surgical procedures, such as coronary-artery bypass and organ transplantation, are initially developed in animals. Presently undergoing animal studies are techniques to insert genes in humans in order to replace the defective ones found to be the cause of so much disease. These studies will effectively end if animal research is severely restricted.

In America today, death has become an event isolated from our daily existence - out of the sight and thoughts of most of us. As a doctor who has watched many children die, and their parents grieve, I am particularly angered by people capable of so much compassion for a dog or a cat, but with seemingly so little for a dying human being. These people seem so insulated from the reality of human life and death and what it means.

Make no mistake, however: I am not advocating the needlessly cruel treatment of animals. To the extent that the animal-rights movement has made us more aware of the needs of these animals, and made us search harder for suitable alternatives, they have made a significant contribution. But if the more radical members of this movement are successful in limiting further research, their effort will bring about a tragedy that will cost many lives. The real question is whether an apathetic majority can be aroused to protect its future against a vocal, but misdirected, minority.

Sample Student Essay
“A Scientist: ‘I Am the Enemy’” by Ron Karpati

Ron Karpati expresses his belief in the merits of medical testing on animals. His view is based on the idea that "life is cruel", the existence of no viable alternatives, and the belief that good comes of the testing. He also states that animal rights activists do not have reasonable arguments and that there is a limit to the amount of testing that should be done. He puts forward several good arguments in favor of testing, which he supports with scientific and medical examples, personal experience, and comparison of his position with that of the activists.

One of Karpati's arguments is that "life is cruel". Humans injure themselves and each other; as a result, they require medical assistance of some kind. Medical science, in its search for new ways to save lives, devises new drugs, new processes and new therapies to offer this assistance. It would be unsafe, and thus against the goal of medicine, to use these innovative techniques without first testing their effects in organic matter. This idea is made effectively through the use of reasonable examples such as a teenager in a pickup truck, or a toddler at the bottom of a pool. These examples show the reality of the need for advancing medical technology. This technology is even more necessary when it comes to injuries to the nervous system, as in a car accident. This cruelty in life, through unnecessary accidents, shows a need for medical technology, and a need for it to progress through research and experimentation.

A second argument that the author makes is that there are no viable alternatives to animal testing. He mentions four possibilities: test on animals, test on humans, stop testing altogether, or use a computer to simulate tests. In order to effectively make his point, Karpati uses these suggested possibilities to show that animal testing is the most viable way to progress in medicine.

According to the author, human experimentation fails most of the time, and is therefore not a viable method of testing new ideas. In not testing at all, man limits himself to technology already discovered and is forced to rely on accidental discoveries. One cannot produce results without tests. Without results, there is no advancement. Therefore, it is not a viable option to suspend all testing. Computer simulations, according to the author, are next to useless on their own. The animal body, including the human's, is too complex a biological system to simulate by computer without real organic tests. The only remaining option is to experiment on animals. The author's rational exploration of alternatives effectively shows his belief in the continuation of animal testing.
A third argument is that good comes of animal testing. Personal experience contributes to the effectiveness of the article. Karpati refers to instances when he has seen children "alive and happy" due to recent advances in medical technology. His argument is also made by statement of fact. He lists techniques and drugs that treat conditions such as "heart disease, hypertension and stroke" that are based on animal research. These techniques would not be as reliable if it weren't for animal testing. Using medical facts makes the argument objective, rather than subjective. According to the author, families are still together, avoiding tragedy, thanks to medicine achieved through the use of animal testing.

The author criticizes animal rights activists for ranting and raving about the deaths of animals, while caring little for the deaths of human beings all over the world. He also criticizes society for allowing the activists to turn animal rights into a political issue when the public is "convinced that the issue has no significance". In this criticism, the author attacks activists and makes his arguments more effectively by downplaying the ideas of the activists and showing that there is no rational stand to their arguments.

In addition to his support of animal testing, the author expresses a need for caution to avoid needless cruelty. This adds effectively to his arguments by showing the extreme case. While he believes that animal testing is a good thing, he also believes there is a boundary that should not be crossed.

The author's arguments are effectively carried to the reader through the use of examples, personal experience and comparison of two positions. His ideas that activists do not have reasonable arguments, that there is a limit to the amount of testing that should be done, that good comes of the testing, that there are no viable alternatives, and that the world is a cruel place relay his opinion that animal testing is a good practice, and should continue.
## Assessment Sheet

### Comprehension and Insight
- 1. Recognition of a main idea from the selected reading
- 2. Identification of techniques and/or devices employed by the author
- 3. Evidence of critical or analytical interpretation of the selection
- 4. References which demonstrate understanding of the reading

### Organization of Response
- 1. Statement of a thesis about the text
- 2. Structured development of the essay
- 3. Use of detail to support the thesis
- 4. Unified paragraph structure

### Expression
- 1. Appropriate use of words
- 2. Varied and correct sentence structures
- 3. Correct grammar
- 4. Conventional spelling, punctuation, and mechanics

### Control Code:

### Comprehension and Insight:

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### Passing Grade:
- C is a passing grade
- Papers graded D or E or F in any category will fail

Reader number: 1 2 3

Marker: ________________  Marker's Code: ________
After our house burned down we spent a year living in a one room shack before moving to my father’s last house. There was no running water, no electricity, no fridge, no TV. It was a cabin that had been built by a friend of my father and left abandoned for years. It smelled old and I liked that about it. One week after we moved in I was sick with the mumps and had to stay in bed. I played cards with my mother all week. Every once and a while she would get up and go to add wood to the stove or would sit by the one window in the room and look out at all the snow. I would wonder what she was thinking then but she would never say. She just looked out as if expecting to see herself walking slowly in the snow towards the house.

The wind would sound comforting at night as it wrapped itself around the cabin to protect us. I would sometimes wake from a dream and listen for the sound of night. Most of the time I would hear nothing but the soft breathing of those asleep in the room. Once I heard a voice I’m still not sure if it was my own voice or someone else’s voice penetrating my skull. It was not the words it spoke that I listened to but the sound of the voice a soft voice a gentle voice filling me until I was full and could no longer move. In the morning I went outside to look for foot prints in the snow but there were none. Each night for a week I would wake and wait for the voice to come again but nothing happened and soon I stopped waking seeing in my dreams for the first time the rest of my life.

I’m not sure anymore where my mother and father slept in that small cabin. I know there was only one bed and five of us. I see my father huddled on the floor in a blanket or sitting in a chair by the warm wood stove humming. He never lied to me. He didn’t speak much most of the time but he never lied either simply shaped his life with his hands and lived it. I see my mother standing behind my father near the stove. In the moonlight through the window I can see my father quite well but my mother is merely a dark form standing behind him and once and a while she carefully bends to kiss the top of his head and for an instant I can catch sight of the faint glow of the moonlight in her eyes.

The cabin was a lonely, hideous place for my mother. It was like a shrunken version of her childhood. But for me it was a wonderful warm place like the kind you dream of on the mornings you don’t want to wake up. The five of us lived so close together that each of our smells blended into one sweet aroma. My mother would wash our clothes in a large bucket and hang them out to dry in the summer. I would watch her hands moving through the water and I would marvel at how glorious and graceful they were. I was old enough to help but didn’t. I realize now that behind her eyes was a darkness that she would not dare let out and that I am lost in the darkness somewhere without a mother, without hope of getting out. I think of her madness that came after we moved to the new house not as something she was driven to but as a way to protect herself.

In the small house my father found the next year to rent, I woke one night and heard her in the other room crying and moaning softly to herself. I went and stood by her door to make sure that I was not dreaming and as I got closer the moans became words and I knew that inside her something was tearing her apart and I could do nothing but listen to her voices as if the whole world was speaking to me at once. I thought then about the cabin we had just left and how quiet it had been at night. I went back to my bed and wept. My eyes in the morning looked red but my mother’s were normal as if she’d had a long peaceful sleep. She said to me very softly as I sat at the table eating breakfast, “Daniel I want you to know I love you even if I cannot stay with you anymore.” “Why do you say that mother?” She did not reply acted as if she had heard nothing instead she went to the window and stared as if daring the world to come for her.
There was no road to the cabin just a narrow path. That winter we never shoveled
the path just packed down the snow with our feet. Each day after school I would walk the
mile from the bus feeling where my feet had pounded down the snow on the way to
school. Sometimes I would pause half way to the cabin and listen to the world muffled by
snow. It was so quiet I could hear the bush breathe as each tree was gently touched by the
wind. I would stand in the spot in an open field ringed on all sides by trees and feel how
lucky I was to find such quiet in my life. I would take off my mitts and run my warm
hands over my cold ears and cheeks. By this time my brother and sister would have
already reached home and my mother would be asking them about where Daniel was.
And I would feel as if for a short time I was no longer Daniel but someone else someone
who for the first time knew that in this isolated landscape it was very easy to lose
yourself and become what the landscape speaks to you what the snow and trees shape for
you with their calm endless dance. Before I would realize it I would be running to the
house with all my might as if there was a fire inside of me that I needed to put out. At the
door as I saw my mother’s face I would know that for an instant she had been concerned
but had let that pass too speaking in her head calm reassuring words.

Each day that summer, I walked two miles to go swimming. The lake water was
so cool that I would spend hours in it. My mother and brother and sister would come too
and we’d sit on the beach eating our lunch. Up the hill from the beach would be the
cabins of the wealthy people from town. They would come out each weekend to barbecue
and fill the lake with their slightly brown bodies. I loved the week days though when
most of them were still in town and we had the beach to ourselves. Once that summer a
small boy nearly drowned and my brother saved him diving quickly to grab him before
he was pulled under for good. The boy’s father came down later and spoke softly to my
mother and brother. As I stood watching them I listened to the hiss of the water striking
the beach and I thought about how death was ever present suddenly appearing like a
shadow when a cloud passes before the sun. I stood for a long time a little offshore and I
watched my world recede as if it were being pulled back like the thick eyelid over the
eye. Suddenly my father pulled up in his car and as he got out I saw for the first time that
he was old. As he stood his legs slightly bent, I felt my hands by my side and they were
empty. I was twelve that year and for the first time I started to wonder what I was doing.

For years after I would ride by that cabin on my bike. I would stop each time and
look in the window. The place always looked so dark inside as if it were still waiting for
us to come back. Sometimes I would sit in the old swing my father rigged up behind the
cabin. I would think then about my family and about the way we smelled when we lived
there. I thought too about that sad place so empty now even in winter all covered in snow
it found no warmth. Much later I realized that each of us carries such a place inside of us
and thinks about it when happy. Behind that cabin there was a garbage pile that others
who had lived there before had left. Our garbage was added to it and now it forms a
history. Sometimes the only history a people leave is their garbage piled so carefully
those who discover it much later will think they had a plan. When we lived in the cabin I
would sometimes rummage through the pile and pull out things I would not recognize
and I would ask my father about them. He’d smile at me and tell me what it was saying
“When I was a boy that had lots of those things.” For a moment I would want to be back
there with him seeing a world I would never know seeing my father small like me not
knowing what to do with his elbows at the table.

Last year I took my daughter to see that cabin but it was gone. All that remained
was the swing and the garbage pile and as I sat on the swing holding my daughter I knew
that I was on the edge of tears. I just stared at the garbage pile trying with all my might to
see myself standing in the midst of it or my father watching from the corner of the cabin
smiling. But I saw nothing except the garbage pile and I could not go near it. Just sat

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there with my daughter and listened to her laugh and breathe not yet knowing what it is
her father has lost.

Sample Student Essay
“Finding Evidence” by Robert Hilles

In the story "Finding Evidence" by Robert Hilles, the author talks about the gradual process of growing up and how childhood is valuable in shaping one's own identity. Growing up is a process that every human being must go through. It is usually marked by the realization of one's existence in the world. The "who am I" and "what am I doing" questions are always asked once one reaches puberty and questions his or her identity. Hilles uses plot to show the nature of growing up. He also utilizes setting to show how the environment influences the characters to grow up. Finally, symbolism shows the importance of childhood for the narrator as a grown up.

Firstly, Hilles uses plot to show the readers the nature of growing up. The narrator moves to a cabin with his family after their house has burnt down. It is a small traditional cabin, and it has no electricity, running water, refrigerator, or television. The narrator, however, enjoys his life in the cabin, as if their house burning down does not really affect him. As a child, he does not really understand why his mother is depressed living there. His mother tells him, “Daniel, I want you to know I love you even if I cannot stay with you anymore.” If someone says that, people usually will think that maybe this person is going to leave, or thinks as if he or she is going to die soon, yet the narrator cannot come up with any explanation since he is still a child. When his brother saves a drowned child however, he realizes that death can come at any time. He also realizes an idea that he has never thought of before, that his parents are old. He says, "Suddenly my father pulled up in his car and as he got out I saw for the first time that he was old." Finally, he starts to question his own existence, as he states, "I was twelve that year and for the first time I started to wonder what I was doing." Twelve is the age when one enters puberty, and at twelve years old, the narrator starts to realize his existence in the world. Plot gives a clear idea about how the narrator experiences his growing up.

Apart from plot, setting is also used by Hilles to show the influences the physical environment has in the characters as they grow up. The narrator's mother is affected by the environment around her. The narrator states, "The cabin was a lonely, hideous place for my mother. It was like a shrunken version of her childhood." Living in a quiet cabin with trees everywhere is like going back to nature, especially since the cabin is very old and traditional. Usually when one goes back to nature and lives in a quiet place, they will think about a lot of things. In this case, especially after the house has burned down, the narrator's mother thinks about how old she is during her stay in the cabin. She realizes her age and that death can come anytime. Going back to
nature for her is also about going back to the nature of life. Sometimes even an adult is forced to grow up by the reality in front of them. The physical environment affects the narrator as well. He enjoys nature. He likes to stop to listen to the world and enjoy the quietness around him. However, nature also forces him to grow up. After his brother saves a drowning boy, he says, "As I stood watching them I listened to the hiss of the water striking the beach and I thought about how death was ever present suddenly..." In this case, nature almost takes a little boy's life and the narrator realizes how cruel nature can be. That is when he also realizes the fact that he lives in the world and how death can occur anytime in people's lives. The physical environment in the story represents the nature of life, which forces the characters to grow up.

Finally, symbolism is utilized to show the value of childhood in growing up. In this story, the cabin represents the narrator's childhood memories. The narrator enjoys his life in the cabin. He likes the fact that his family lives close together. He says, "The five of us lived so close together that each of our smells blended into one sweet aroma." The cabin has memories of his childhood so that when the cabin is gone, the narrator is crestfallen. He states, "Just sat there with my daughter and listened to her laugh and breathe not yet knowing what it is her father has lost." His past is what makes him who he is, and losing his childhood memories means he's losing part of himself. The garbage pile, in addition, symbolizes history. The narrator explains, "Sometimes the only history a people leave is their garbage piled so carefully those who discover it much later will think they had a plan." When he comes to see the cabin with his daughter, he finds out that the cabin is gone and all that he can stare at is the garbage pile, which holds the history of his family living in the cabin. Symbolism shows how important childhood is, since it acts as a starting point in shaping one's own identity.

Plot, setting, and symbolism have successfully been used in the story "Finding Evidence" to prove Hilles's points about growing up. It is about the transition from childhood to adulthood, and how childhood is valuable as a starting point in shaping one's identity. Hilles's story basically evolves from childhood to adulthood, which shows the readers the gradual process of growing up. However, Hilles also adds that growing up can also occur to any person at any age when he talks about the narrator's mother. The goal of growing up is not only to reach adulthood. It is also to reach maturity.
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M signifies that the objective has been met
M+ signifies that the objective has been met well and clearly met
M- signifies that the objective has not been met

Ministerial Examination of College English

Comprehension and Insight:

Organization of Response:

Expression:

PASSING GRADE: C is a passing grade
Papers graded D or E or F in any category will fail.

Reader number: 1 2 3

Marker: ________________
Marker's Code: ________
We started to become Canadian the day my mother got her first pair of pants. They wear gray-green gabardine with a high waist, and came wrapped in tissue paper in an Eaton's box. My mother reluctantly modeled them for my brother and me, all the while declaring that she couldn't imagine ever feeling comfortable with the stretchy cloth hugging her hips. Portuguese women didn't wear pants, only the canadianas dared wear anything so revealing. But in the same breath she'd rationalize that she spent too much money not to wear them, and besides they'd probably be warm in winter.

That was in 1975, a few years after my family had made the big break and moved from the poor immigrant enclave of Kensington Market to the more upscale neighborhoods of North York, where pockets of European immigrants were just beginning to emerge. My father had been among the first wave of Portuguese immigrants to Canada in the early fifties, working a bleak stretch of railroad near Port Arthur - now Thunder Bay, Ont. - to earn enough money for my mother's passage across the Atlantic. My mother arrived sea-sick in Halifax in 1955, and took a slow train to Toronto, where she joined my father in a roach-infested flat on Nassau Avenue in the market.

My mother still speaks of those early sacrificios: living in a cold climate with cockroaches and mutely shopping for groceries, pointing out items to a local shopkeeper because she couldn't speak English. Her language skills were so tenuous that she once interpreted a greeting from an Orthodox Jew who lived in the neighborhood as an offer to buy my brother.

In those days, Toronto police used to disperse small crowds of Portuguese men who lingered too long outside cafes. Despite a burgeoning group of immigrants, there were few Portuguese speakers, even in the market.

But by 1975, the market became a Saturday-morning diversion for us, a place to shop for salted cod and fresh vegetables. To the hearty Portuguese immigrants who still worked in the factories and construction yards, and rented windowless basements in the market, we were on our way up. After all, there were very few Portuguese families north of Eglinton Avenue. Although we lived in a mostly Jewish and Italian neighborhood, we were finally becoming Canadian. Or so I thought.

I learned English in my first year of school. Multiculturalism was just beginning and hyphenated Canadians were beginning to flourish. I played with Italian-Canadians, Lithuanian-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians, but at that time nobody - especially suburban 7-year-olds-seemed able to pronounce "Portuguese-Canadians," so I told people I was Greek; it was easier to say. My brother went even further, changing his name to something faintly Anglo-Saxon, so his teachers and classmates wouldn't get tongue-tied around those sloshy Portuguese vowels and embarrass him. It seemed a very practical idea at the time, and I reluctantly followed suit.

But we still had problems, and didn't seem to belong. We never quite fit into the emerging Portuguese community, growing up around the parish of St. Mary's Church and the Toronto branch of the popular Benfica soccer club on Queen Street West. We were strangely aloof with our compatriots, most of whom had immigrated from the Azores, and whose guttural form of Portuguese we had difficulty understanding. My brother and I balked at heritage-language classes and remained passive spectators at the annual religious processions.

But if we had trouble dealing with our peers in downtown Toronto, in North York we were not much better off. My mother and aunts spoke disparagingly of the Canadianas, Canadian women who (they were sure) knew nothing about how to keep a clean house or cook a decent meal. My mother taught me how to cook and sew, and she and my aunts
teased my brother, saying someday he'd marry a Canadiana and would end up doing all his own housework.

For all her predictions, my mother was delighted to find out that she had been wrong. My brother, a physician, did marry a Canadian, but he doesn't do much of the housework. These days, my mother's biggest problem is pronouncing the name of her new grandson, Mathew Loughlin Maclean Vincent.

As I grew older I developed nostalgia for my Lusitanian past, and tried desperately to reintegrate into the community. But I soon grew to hate the hypocrisy of some of my compatriots, most of whom were immigrants who chose to spend several years working in Canada, only to retire to the Portuguese country-side and build their palatial retreats with the fat pensions they collected from the Canadian government. Like my father, who learned English quickly and severed ties with his homeland, I became a staunch Canadian. I could sing The Maple Leaf Forever before I was 10, and I spent my childhood years in French immersion. I became so good at masking my heritage that a few years ago when I applied for a job at a Toronto newspaper I was turned down because I was perceived as being too Anglo-Saxon.

"If you were ethnic, I'm sure they would have hired you on the spot," the wife of the paper's managing editor told me a year later.

But for most of my life being Portuguese seemed to me a liability. And then my mother bought that important first pair of pants. For a while it seemed that my life had changed. I was proud of my mother: she was becoming like all the other mothers in the neighborhood.

But my excitement was short-lived. A few days later, she decided they just wouldn't do. She carefully wrapped them back up in the tissue paper, placed them in the cardboard Eaton's box, and returned them to the store.

Isabel Vincent's short story "Finding a Nationality that Fits" clearly illustrates her struggles as an immigrant to fit in with the popular culture. Also present is her dilemma about what makes someone a Canadian, and her astonishment and sense of disappointment as she realizes the reality of her choice. Several anecdotes make her reality very clear to the reader. The setting helps to show the contradictions she was trying to deal with. She is telling us that one may have to sever his or her ties with his or her heritage in order to fit in to a different social environment.

In the first step of the plot, we see Vincent in her childhood clearly trying to become more of a Canadian. She could sing "the Maple Leaf Forever" before she was ten, and she spent her years in "French immersion schools," a common factor among many Canadian children. As the story unfolds, through its plot we come to understand how important it is for Vincent to fit in. She goes as far as taking on another nationality, claiming she is Greek, and changing her name in order to not be so obviously different. By taking such drastic measures Vincent aims at showing the struggles one goes through as he or she tries to fit into a different society.

As Vincent strives to become more of a Canadian, we get the feeling that she is facing some kind of dilemma. She is not completely sure of what makes someone a Canadian, as opposed to a non-Canadian. This is made clear through the use of an anecdote. Vincent tells the story of how they started to become Canadian when her "mother got her first set of pants." These pants, in Vincent's mind, are symbolic of acceptance of and integration into the Canadian society. After all, "Portuguese women do not wear pants." However, when her mother decides to return these pants, Vincent interprets this as her mother's refusal to become Canadian. This proves that Vincent is a bit confused as to what makes someone Canadian. She apparently believes that a Canadian woman is one who wears "pants."

To further illustrate Vincent's dilemma, we examine the time and social context in which this story takes place. It is 1975, and we are told that multiculturalism and hyphenated Canadians are becoming the new trends. However, Vincent does not recognize this as an opportunity to maintain her Portuguese nationality, while integrating into the Canadian society. Instead, she "plays with Italian-Canadian, Lithuanian-Canadian," all the while covering up her own national background in an attempt to be more Canadian even though the social climate is saying that one does not have to give up his or her nationality in order to be a Canadian. Hence we
get an understanding of Vincent's dilemma through the setting, because here she is claiming to be more Canadian by playing with children from different nationalities, none of whom are Canadian.

Finally, as the plot comes full circle, we get a sense of Vincent's shock and disappointment for decisions made earlier in her life. We are told that as she grew older she developed a sentimental longing for her heritage and she "tried desperately to reintegrate into the community." However, Vincent discovers that she does not share the same values as her "compatriots." Believing that she would be better off as a Canadian, she cuts her ties with her ancestral homeland and becomes a loyal Canadian.

Vincent's intention when writing this story was to show the struggles and dilemmas one faces as he or she tries to fit into a new and different society. She accomplishes this through the use of setting, plot and anecdote. The plot follows her efforts to establish an identity and the anecdotes she uses make the experiences come alive for the reader. The irony of her struggle is highlighted by the setting in the multicultural milieu that she grew up in. By using these various devices, we are given a clear understanding of what a person may go through as he or she moves from one country to another.
## ASSESSMENT SHEET

### Ministerial Examination of College English

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<td>3. evidence of critical or analytical interpretation of the selection</td>
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<td>✔</td>
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<td>4. references which demonstrate understanding of the reading</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ORGANIZATION OF RESPONSE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. statement of a thesis about the text</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>2. structured development of the essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. use of detail to support the thesis</td>
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<td>4. unified paragraph structure</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EXPRESSION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. appropriate use of words</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. varied and correct sentence structures</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. correct grammar</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>4. conventional spelling, punctuation, and mechanics</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</table>

M signifies that the objective has been met  
M+ signifies that the objective has been met well and clearly met  
M- signifies that the objective has not been met

Control Code:  

COMPREHENSION AND INSIGHT:  

A

ORGANIZATION OF RESPONSE:  

A

EXPRESSION:  

C

PASSING GRADE: C is a passing grade  
Papers graded D or E or F in any category will fail.

Reader number: 1 2 3

Marker: DS  
Marker's Code: ________