


Georgia  
**Milestones**  
Assessment System



**American Literature  
and Composition  
Item and Scoring Sampler  
2015**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Georgia Milestones American Literature and Composition EOC assessment is a criterion-referenced test designed to provide information about how well a student has mastered the grade-level state-adopted content standards in English Language Arts (ELA). These assessments consist of a variety of item types including selected-response, constructed-response, extended constructed-response, and extended writing-response items.

## TYPES OF ITEMS INCLUDED IN THE SAMPLER AND USES OF THE SAMPLER

The purpose of this sampler is to provide samples of the type of constructed-response items that will appear on the operational Georgia Milestones American Literature and Composition assessment. The items in this sampler may be used for classroom instruction purposes. The samples may be copied, and classroom teachers may find it beneficial to have students respond to one or more of the samples. Teachers can then use the information in the sampler as a guide to score responses written by their own students.

## ELA CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE ITEM TYPES

A **constructed-response** item asks a question and solicits the student to provide a response constructed on his or her own, as opposed to selecting a response from options provided. On the American Literature and Composition EOC, these items are worth two points, and partial credit may be awarded if part of the response is correct. On the EOC assessment, the **extended constructed-response** items elicit a longer, more complex and detailed response from the student. The four-point narrative item requires the student to respond to a prompt based on a passage he or she has read; the response will fully develop a real or imagined experience based on the text and will be scored for the Writing and Language domain.

The seven-point **extended writing response** items require the student to write an argumentative piece or develop an informative/explanatory response. As part of the extended writing task in an actual Milestones assessment, the student must first read two passages and then respond to three selected-response items and one constructed-response item. All of these items help focus the student on the main idea(s) and key details in the passages prior to writing the extended essay. Two of the selected-response items address each of the passages separately. One selected-response item and the constructed-response item address both of the passages together. All four items contribute to the Reading and Vocabulary domain. These items are followed by the extended-writing prompt, which requires the student to draw from reading experiences when writing the essay response and to cite evidence from the passage(s) to support claims and conclusions in the essay. The extended writing task is worth up to seven points.

The extended writing task and the narrative constructed-response item are considered “on-demand writing in response to text.” Students write their responses in a somewhat limited amount of time without the benefit of time allocated for revision and rewrites. For this reason, the scoring process takes into account that the student responses are to be viewed as first drafts and are not expected to be polished papers. The scoring process is approached in such a manner as to award students for what they do well according to the prompt and rubric. Errors are not counted unless they permeate the response and impact or interfere with overall understanding.

## ITEM ALIGNMENT

Each constructed-response item included in this sampler has been through a rigorous review process with Georgia educators to ensure alignment with the content standards. The content standard for each sample item is provided in this sampler in the item information tables.

## DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE

In addition to being aligned to the standards, the sample items included in this sampler were developed with a particular emphasis on cognitive complexity, or Depth of Knowledge (DOK). The DOK level is provided for each item in this sampler in the Item Information Table. DOK measures the level of cognitive demand required to complete an assessment item. The following descriptions show the expectations of the DOK levels in greater detail.

**Level 1** (Recall of Information) generally requires students to identify, list, or define, often asking them to recall who, what, when, and where. Consequently, this level usually asks students to recall facts, terms, concepts, and trends and may ask them to identify specific information contained in documents, excerpts, quotations, maps, charts, tables, graphs, or illustrations. Items that require students to “describe” and/or “explain” could be classified at Level 1 or Level 2, depending on what is to be described and/or explained. A Level 1 “describe” and/or “explain” would require students to recall, recite, or reproduce information.

**Level 2** (Basic Reasoning) includes the engagement of some mental processing beyond recalling or reproducing a response. A Level 2 “describe” and/or “explain” would require students to go beyond a description or explanation of recalled information to describe and/or explain a result or “how” or “why.”


**Level 3** (Complex Reasoning) requires reasoning, using evidence, and thinking on a higher and more abstract level than Level 1 and Level 2. Students will go beyond explaining or describing “how and why” to justifying the “how and why” through application and evidence. Level 3 questions often involve making connections across time and place to explain a concept or “big idea.”

**Level 4** (Extended Reasoning) requires the complex reasoning of Level 3 with the addition of planning, investigating, applying significant conceptual understanding, and/or developing that will most likely require an extended period of time. Students should be required to connect and relate ideas and concepts within the content area or among content areas in order to be at this highest level. The distinguishing factor for Level 4 would be evidence (through a task, a product, or an extended response) that the cognitive demands have been met.

# INTRODUCTION

## ITEM AND SCORING SAMPLER FORMAT

Sample constructed-response questions are provided in this sampler, along with any related stimulus information such as a passage or graphic. Following the test question is the scoring guide for the constructed-response question. The scoring guide includes the Item Information Table, the item-specific scoring guideline, and annotated sample student responses at each score point.

The Georgia Milestones assessment may be administered in paper-and-pencil format or online. As a result, this sampler includes samples of students' responses in both formats. This symbol  is used to note the format of a sample online item. It also indicates a sample online response.

**Example Constructed-Response Item Information Table**

<b>Standard:</b>	<b>Item Depth of Knowledge:</b>
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AMERICAN LITERATURE  
AND COMPOSITION  
Sample Constructed-Response Items

## PASSAGE 1

**The Chaperon****by Henry Cuyler Bunner**

I take my chaperon to the play—  
    She thinks she's taking me.  
And the gilded youth who owns the box,<sup>1</sup>  
    A proud young man is he;  
5 But how would his young heart be hurt  
    If he could only know  
    That not for his sweet sake I go  
    Nor yet to see the trifling show;  
But to see my chaperon flirt.

10 Her eyes beneath her snowy hair  
    They sparkle young as mine;  
There's scarce a wrinkle in her hand  
    So delicate and fine.  
And when my chaperon is seen,  
15 They come from everywhere—  
    The dear old boys with silvery hair,  
    With old-time grace and old-time air,  
To greet their old-time queen.

They bow as my young Midas<sup>2</sup> here  
20 Will never learn to bow  
(The dancing-masters do not teach  
    That gracious reverence now);  
With voices quavering just a bit,  
    They play their old parts through,  
25 They talk of folk who used to woo,  
    Of hearts that broke in 'fifty-two—  
Now none the worse for it.

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<sup>1</sup> **box**—a special, separate seating area in a theater.

<sup>2</sup> **Midas**—a king in Greek mythology who was given the power to turn everything he touched into gold.

And as those aged crickets chirp  
I watch my chaperon's face,  
30 And see the dear old features take  
A new and tender grace;  
And in her happy eyes I see  
Her youth awakening bright,  
With all its hope, desire, delight—  
35 Ah, me! I wish that I were quite  
As young—as young as she!



CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE ITEM

ELAGSE11-12RI3



1. What does the allusion to Midas in the third stanza reveal about the speaker?

Use evidence from the poem to support your answer. **Type your answer in the space provided.**

Scoring Guide

#1 Item Information

<p><b>Standard:</b> ELAGSE11-12RI3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.</p>	<p><b>Item Depth of Knowledge: 3</b> Strategic Thinking Student uses reasoning and develops a plan or sequence of steps; process has some complexity.</p>
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## ITEM-SPECIFIC SCORING GUIDELINE

Score	Description
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to understand how the allusion reveals the speaker's point of view in the poem</li> <li>• Includes specific examples/details that make clear reference to the text</li> <li>• Adequately supports examples with clearly relevant information</li> </ul> <p>The response:  <i>Presents the conclusion that the speaker's point of view of the young man she is with is that he has little to offer other than his wealth. The reference to Midas shows that the young man has wealth, but she also notes that 'he will never bow' in the same respectful manner as the older gentleman she is watching.</i></p>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives limited evidence of the ability to understand how the allusion reveals the speaker's point of view in the poem</li> <li>• Includes limited examples/details that make clear reference to the text</li> </ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives no evidence of the ability to understand how the allusion reveals the speaker's point of view in the poem</li> </ul>

## STUDENT RESPONSES

ELAGSE11-12RI3

Response Score: 2 points



1. What does the allusion to Midas in the third stanza reveal about the speaker?

Use evidence from the poem to support your answer. **Type your answer in the space provided.**

From reading the third stanza of this poem one is able to take note of the reference, or allusion, to Midas. This is used to create the image the chaperon has of her ward: he is extremely well-off. We are able to determine that she is aware of his wealth, but generally, does not seem to think too highly of him. "They bow as my young Midas here Will never learn to bow (The dancing-masters do not teach That great reverence now)" It is as if she mocks the fact that he will be able to have the best of everything in life, yet you would never know it from his lack of manners ("...Will never learn to bow..."). She notes that the other, older men are respectful toward her ("They bow..."), but, in the end, this boy may have nothing more than his wealth to offer.

The response shows that the student is able to explain what the third stanza's usage of Midas reveals about the speaker. "...used to create the image the chaperon has of her ward: he is extremely well-off... doesn't think too highly of him."

The response includes specific evidence from the poem to support the speaker's revelation. "They bow as my young Midas here Will never learn to bow (The dancing-masters do not teach That great reverence now)." This selection of the poem was used to explain how the boy has "the best of everything... you would never know it from his lack of manners." He does not bow, or show any reverence, like the older men do. She comes to the conclusion that "this boy may have nothing more than his wealth to offer."

ELAGSE11-12RI3

Response Score: 1 point

1. What does the allusion to Midas in the third stanza reveal about the speaker?

Use evidence from the poem to support your answer. **Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.**

WHEN READING THIS POEM I WAS ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE ALLUSION TO MIDAS MEANT THAT THE KID IS RICH. THE SPEAKER IS SAYING THAT THIS ONE KID HAS SO MUCH MONEY WE CAN COMPARE HIM TO THE GUY WHO COULD TURN STUFF INTO GOLD. "... AS MY YOUNG MIDAS HERE WILL NEVER LEARN TO BOW..." THE LADY THAT IS WATCHING HIM SAYS THAT HE IS RICH, BUT DOESN'T BOW. SHE THINKS THAT HE DOESN'T HAVE TO BOW BECAUSE OF HOW RICH HE IS.

The response shows that the student is able to provide an explanation of what the third stanza's usage of Midas means ("*...the allusions to Midas meant that the kid is rich*"), but the conclusion the student makes about what this reveals about the speaker is limited ("*She thinks that he doesn't have to bow because of how rich he is*").

ELAGSE11-12RI3

Response Score: 0 points

1. What does the allusion to Midas in the third stanza reveal about the speaker?

Use evidence from the poem to support your answer. **Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.**

After I read this poem I realized that the allusion about Midas means that the speaker is being really nice to the little boy so that she can have some of his gold.

The response provides an incorrect explanation of what the third stanza's usage of Midas reveals about the speaker ("*the speaker is being really nice to the little boy so that she can have some of his gold*").

Though there is reference to "gold," the conclusion about what this reveals about the speaker is incorrect (that she desires the boy's gold).

CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE ITEM

ELAGSE11.W.3



2. The speaker of the poem is intent on watching the interactions of her chaperon during her trip to the play. Imagine the conversations and events that might occur while they attend the play. Write an original story about the speaker and her chaperon’s conversation on their trip home from the play.

Use details and information from the poem in your story. **Type your answer in the space provided.**

Scoring Guide

#2 Item Information

<p><b>Standard:</b> ELAGSE11.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</p>	<p><b>Item Depth of Knowledge:</b> 4 Extended Thinking Student conducts an investigation, needs time to think and process multiple conditions of the problem or task.</p>
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## ITEM-SPECIFIC SCORING GUIDELINE

Score	Description
4	<p><i>The student's response is a well-developed narrative that fully develops a real or imagined experience based on text as a stimulus.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively establishes a situation and introduces a narrator and/or characters</li> <li>• Organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally</li> <li>• Effectively uses narrative techniques, such as dialogue and description, to develop interesting experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations</li> <li>• Uses a variety of words and phrases consistently to signal the sequence of events</li> <li>• Provides a sense of closure that follows from the narrated experiences or events</li> <li>• Integrates ideas and details from source material effectively</li> <li>• Has very few or no errors in usage and/or conventions that interfere with meaning</li> </ul>
3	<p><i>The student's response is a complete narrative that develops a real or imagined experience based on text as a stimulus.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes a situation and introduces one or more characters</li> <li>• Organizes events in a clear, logical order</li> <li>• Uses narrative techniques, such as dialogue and description, to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations</li> <li>• Uses words and/or phrases to indicate sequence</li> <li>• Provides an appropriate sense of closure</li> <li>• Integrates some ideas and/or details from source material</li> <li>• Has a few minor errors in usage and/or conventions with no significant effect on meaning</li> </ul>
2	<p><i>The student's response is an incomplete or oversimplified narrative based on text as a stimulus.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduces a vague situation and at least one character</li> <li>• Organizes events in a sequence but with some gaps or ambiguity</li> <li>• Attempts to use a narrative technique, such as dialogue and description, to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations</li> <li>• Uses occasional signal words to indicate sequence</li> <li>• Provides a weak or ambiguous sense of closure</li> <li>• Attempts to integrate ideas or details from source material</li> <li>• Has frequent errors in usage and conventions that sometimes interfere with meaning</li> </ul>
1	<p><i>The student's response provides evidence of an attempt to write a narrative based on text as a stimulus.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response is a summary of the story</li> <li>• Provides a weak or minimal introduction of a situation or a character</li> <li>• May be too brief to demonstrate a complete sequence of events</li> <li>• Shows little or no attempt to use dialogue or description to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations</li> <li>• Uses words that are inappropriate, overly simple, or unclear to convey any sense of event order</li> <li>• Provides a minimal or no sense of closure</li> <li>• May use few, if any, ideas or details from source material</li> <li>• Has frequent major errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning</li> </ul>

## AMERICAN LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

0	<p><i>The student's response is flawed for various reasons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blank</li><li>• Copied</li><li>• Too Limited to Score/Illegible/Incomprehensible</li><li>• Non-English/Foreign Language</li><li>• Off Topic/Off Task/Offensive</li></ul>
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## STUDENT RESPONSES

ELAGSE11.W.3

Response Score: 4 points

2. The speaker of the poem is intent on watching the interactions of her chaperon during her trip to the play. Imagine the conversations and events that might occur while they attend the play. Write an original story about the speaker and her chaperon's conversation on their trip home from the play.

Use details and information from poem in your story. **Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.**

"Well, that was quite enjoyable," stated my chaperon.

"Yes, I suppose it was," I said

My chaperon shakes her head and then proceeds to look out the window as we begin our ride home. I start to drift off. Seeing the same plays, over and over, is starting to get tedious. At this point I feel like they are all blending together into one massive, unimpressive stage act. The only thing that I bother to take note of is the people who attend these events.

"Did you find anything exceptional this evening?" asked my chaperon.

"Yes, I did." The moment when Mrs. Smoothie tried to shove her large rump into her seat. I believe that both Mr. Smoothie and Mr. Tracker had to assist her. Her face kept turning a darker shade of red with each push.

She gave me a stern look that indicated she was not amused.

She would have had no problem fitting into any seat. She stood tall and slender. If she did have any issue, my chaperon would have handled it with delicate ease. She is quite

beautiful and seamless, even for her rising age.

"How many times have we seen that play now?" asked my chaperon, changing the subject.

"Five" I replied.

"Well, an amazing play is never out of style," she said.

"Not unlike Mr. Amund..." I said half-laughing. Mr. Amund was the worst of them all. He was always at the end of the line (so she would have to spend more time with him), and he always brought her orchids. He had greased hair, a terrible lisp, and ALWAYS wore the same tuxedo.

"Mr. Amund needs to find a woman his own age," she said curtly.

"You deserve someone better than him anyway. You deserve a polite, caring, handsome man that you can call your own," I said.

"I already have my hands full with you. How would I ever find the time?" she asked as she smiled at me. I smiled back at her, put my head on her shoulder, and slept the

rest of The way home.

The response effectively establishes a situation, point of view, narrator, and characters. The student puts us in the car with the chaperon and the young lady after the play has ended. The point of view is seen mostly through the eyes of the young lady. The story consists of the chaperone, the young lady, and some people from the play.

The response creates a smooth progression of events. The story starts in the car and takes us back into the events of the evening and then ends back in the car.

The response effectively uses multiple narrative techniques to develop experiences and characters. The student uses dialogue throughout the story, description so the reader is aware of what is happening, pacing (we are aware that time is passing by as they are on the car ride home), and reflection (about some of the events of the evening).

The response uses techniques to sequence events. At the beginning we are aware that we are in the car. Through dialogue and description we are brought to the past. Mrs. Smoothie has trouble getting into her seat. From this we can guess that the time would be the beginning of the evening. We are brought back into the car, which would mean that they are still traveling home. The student then turns our focus back to the play and the men that are speaking to the chaperon. Through this we can assume that time has passed and it is either intermission or the end of the play. We are then brought back into the car for the final time.

The response uses precise words and phrases to convey a vivid picture of events ("*her face kept turning a darker shade of red...*").

The response provides a conclusion that follows. The car ride ends with the sharing of kind words and the knowledge that the young lady sincerely cares for the chaperon. "*...put my head on her shoulder, and slept the rest of the way home.*" We are aware that this is the end of the story.

The response integrates ideas from the source material. The student mentions going to a play, and the men that approach the chaperone.

The response has no errors in usage or conventions that interfere with meaning.

## ELAGSE11.W.3

Response Score: 3 points



2. The speaker of the poem is intent on watching the interactions of her chaperon during her trip to the play. Imagine the conversations and events that might occur while they attend the play. Write an original story about the speaker and her chaperon's conversation on their trip home from the play.

Use details and information from the poem in your story. **Type your answer in the space provided.**

"That was such a long, boring night," I said to my chaperon.

"Did you not enjoy yourself?" she asked.

I shook my head that I had. I had not enjoyed my night at the play. My mother makes me go to these things so I will be "out of her hair". She has the chaperon take me so that I won't be alone. "Hurry up!" yelled my chaperon. "It is freezing cold out, it's late, and we have to get you home."

I ran to catch up with her and then climbed into the carriage.

Once we were inside, I said, "You seemed to enjoy yourself tonight though..."

"I don't know what you mean, she said, with an uncomfortable look.

"I mean you seemed to enjoy the company of some of the older gentlemen at the party."

There was one man in particular that had seemed to have an impact on her. When he had approached her and started speaking with her, she became a young woman again. Her eyes became happy, her old features tender, and desire coursed through her body.

The man was a perfect gentleman. How amazing to have such manners; to be able to confidently approach a beautiful woman and know how to act.

"Well," she said with the slightest smile, "Nothing says you are the only one looking to be swept off of her feet". I smiled back. "But don't tell your mother, or she'll send someone else with you next time."

"My lips are sealed," I said.

## AMERICAN LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

The response establishes a situation, point of view, and characters. The student provides us with a situation where the narrator (young lady) is questioning her chaperone about one of the men she was flirting with earlier in the night.

The response organizes events in a logical order. The narrator gets into the carriage to go home, asks about the gentleman her chaperone was flirting with, and ends with a pact to keep a secret.

The response uses narrative techniques to develop the events and characters. The student uses dialogue to show character interactions. The narrator uses reflection as she is the one relaying the events.

The response provides an appropriate conclusion with the young lady agreeing to keep the chaperone's secret from her mother.

The response integrates some ideas/details from source material. We know who the characters are from the poem. The response brings up that the chaperon has men who like to approach her and woo her.

The response has no errors in usage or conventions with significant effect on meaning.

ELAGSE11.W.3

Response Score: 2 points

2. The speaker of the poem is intent on watching the interactions of her chaperon during her trip to the play. Imagine the conversations and events that might occur while they attend the play. Write an original story about the speaker and her chaperon's conversation on their trip home from the play.

Use details and information from the poem in your story. **Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.**

We finally got into the car after a long night. My chaperone sat next to me in the back. I hate it when she treats me like a baby.

"Why don't you go sit in the front? I want to be alone." I said.

"The front is for the driver. Only the driver. You are stuck with me."

she said. I rolled my eyes, folded my arms and moved to the

opposite side of the seat. I stared out the window and prayed

for a quick ride home. I looked over and saw that she was

starting to fall asleep. She has been my chaperon for years now and

I guess I never noticed that she was getting older. She does ~~not~~

like to act like a kid though when those men are around. Her

eyes light up and she flirts.

"May I help you?" she asked. She caught me staring at her.

"Oh, it's nothing," I said.



The response introduces a vague situation of the young lady and the chaperone getting in the car to drive home.

The response organizes events in a sequence but with some ambiguity. We are aware that they are in a car heading home, but do not know where they have been.

The response attempts to use narrative techniques, such as dialogue. There is some reflection from the narrator when he is discussing that the chaperone has aged.

The response provides a weak conclusion (the young lady is caught staring as she reflects on the chaperone).

The response attempts to integrate ideas from the source material. The student uses the fact that there are two characters, the young lady and the chaperone along with some details from the poem (the fact that the chaperone is older and flirts with men).

## ELAGSE11.W.3

**Response Score: 1 point**



2. The speaker of the poem is intent on watching the interactions of her chaperon during her trip to the play. Imagine the conversations and events that might occur while they attend the play. Write an original story about the speaker and her chaperon’s conversation on their trip home from the play.

Use details and information from the poem in your story. **Type your answer in the space provided.**

There is a young girl and a chaperon who go together to see a play. When they are there the young girl starts to watch the chaperon and how she acts around the men there.

“I like to watch how all those old men bow to her” I said. It always amuzed me how the old men go up to her and she starts to act like a little girl. They all bow down to her as if she is the rich one. I am the one with the money, like midas.

Time goes on and then the play is done. “It time you and I go home” says my chaperon. She and me get into the boat and leave. My houce is on island across the lake. On the way home she looks at the moon and I see that she is old. I wonder why men like her so much.

The response begins as a summary of events from the poem and then switches to events that take place after the poem ends.

The response is too brief to demonstrate complete sequence of events. The student writes "Time goes on..." This does not provide a clear sense of sequence.

The response shows some attempt to use dialogue but the dialogue is very brief and not integrated effectively in the narrative.

The response uses simple and unclear wording. The reader is forced to reread several sentences to get the correct meaning. The response provides few words that convey a picture of events, shifts in time or setting, or experiences.

The response provides minimal conclusion. They are on the boat and the young girl is looking at the chaperon. The ending is abrupt and feels unfinished.

The response uses few ideas from the source material, but has misinterpreted some of the ideas (the young girl as "Midas").

The response has frequent major errors in usage and conventions that interfere with the meaning.

## PASSAGE 2

## Unpacking the Student Loan Dilemma

This fall, almost 20 million students will enter the halls of colleges and universities throughout the United States. The vast majority of them carry dreams that a college degree will one day help them secure enjoyable and fulfilling employment along with compensation that would exceed what they might earn without a degree. However, if and when those students finally receive that important piece of paper and are thrust into the job market, on average, they will find themselves carrying a school loan debt of \$33,000. Those who have pursued graduate degrees will be burdened with far more. In fact, many of them will have to pay back six-figure amounts. Meanwhile, the job prospects that they expected to flood their inboxes are few and far between. The cost of postsecondary education has skyrocketed in recent years, while median salaries and available jobs have declined. For college graduates today, it is a new and challenging world.

According to a 2014 report, college students today are more indebted than at any time in American history. Even accounting for inflation, the average student debt is double what it was two decades ago. Over the past 30 years, college tuition has ballooned 538%, not counting additional fees, which are also increasing yearly. The average annual cost of tuition, room, and board is now about \$15,000 for a public institution, \$40,000 for a private nonprofit institution, and \$24,000 for a private for-profit institution. Given these figures, it's no wonder that student debt has increased over 300% just in the past decade.

With discouraging numbers like these, it would seem that many students would give up on the idea of postsecondary education. Yet research shows that college enrollment has actually accelerated. Students fear that their job prospects will be much more limited without a degree, and they believe that graduate degrees may greatly increase their chances for high-paying jobs. With this in mind, they apply for financial aid, looking to grants and scholarships to ease the burden. Still, when they graduate, they are generally in a more difficult situation than their parents were. As they search for job prospects, many return home to live with their parents for a while. Many recent graduates are uncertain if they will ever find the jobs they seek. However, they continue to hope that they will be able to stabilize, pay off loans, and even save money over time. Although they recognize that the challenge is there, they are working to achieve their dreams. And perhaps, for many, those dreams will come true. One thing is very probable, though: it will take them longer than it used to.

## PASSAGE 3

**Dealing with Student Debt**

Philip Rogers\* didn't know that his college debt was spiraling out of control until last autumn, when his federal deferment agreement expired and he began receiving bills. The previous spring, Rogers graduated from a private institution with a degree in sports management and \$63,000 worth of debt. Unable to locate a position in his preferred field, Rogers was compelled to take a job as a restaurant food server. Meanwhile, his debt is increasing rapidly with its 6% interest rate. Between a car payment and studio apartment rent, Rogers can only afford to make minimum payments, barely making a dent in the loan total. "I see myself never being able to retire," Rogers says. "I'll just be working forever to pay off this loan. I'm uncertain that I'll ever be in a position to have a family or buy a house, either."

Rogers is not alone in his dilemma. Most graduates today are burdened with substantial student debt. Some deal with the predicament by putting off payments—applying for deferment by continuing their education or requesting forbearance, a reduction of minimum payments or interest rates that only lasts for a maximum of three years. In most cases, however, interest continues to accumulate, often adding thousands to the original debt.

"I've had to move back in with my parents," Chloe Peterson\* says. "I thought I was doing well when I managed to graduate from a prestigious university with only a minimal loan. But then I attended graduate school for graphic design, and the debt really began to mount." Peterson flashes a series of invoices on her laptop. "I have to pay \$552 each month, and if I'm ever late, the interest will increase to 18%. So I'm back in my old bedroom, still trying to find a job."

What is the solution to this problem? Experts suggest tactics such as attending community college, staying in state, or taking online courses. When school loans are inevitable, students should research the different loan types to find the best one for them. "Loans are so easy for students to get, so choose wisely," one financial planner says. "And my best advice is this—don't take on a loan that is larger than you will be able to pay." Obviously, student loans can be both a blessing and a curse, but for most students, following recommendations like these can be money in the bank.

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\*Student names provided in this text are fictitious; their stories are meant only to illustrate common problems faced by recent graduates.

**CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE ITEM**

**ELAGSE11-12RI.6**

**3.** Which author’s style and content MOST effectively support his or her purpose?

Use evidence from BOTH texts to support your answer. **Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.**

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**Scoring Guide**

**#3 Item Information**

<p><b>Standard:</b> ELAGSE11-12RI.6 Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.</p>	<p><b>Item Depth of Knowledge: 3</b> Concluding and Explaining Student uses reasoning and develops a plan or sequence of steps; process has some complexity.</p>
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## ITEM-SPECIFIC SCORING GUIDELINE

Score	Description
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to determine and compare two authors' points of view or purposes in a text or texts and analyze how the use of style and content contributes to the authors' effectiveness in supporting the points of view or purposes</li> <li>• Includes specific examples/details that make clear reference to the texts</li> <li>• Adequately explains the authors' points of view or purposes and provides an explanation about the use of style or content with clearly relevant information based on the texts</li> </ul> <p>The response:  <i>Selects one author and presents why that author effectively uses style and content to support a purpose and presents briefly why the other text is not as effective in contrast. If supporting the first text, the response will focus on the word choice used to captivate the audience and/or how statistics reinforce the purpose. If supporting the second text, the response will focus on how the author uses real-life examples supported by facts to support the purpose.</i></p>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives limited evidence of the ability to determine and compare two authors' points of view or purposes in a text or texts and analyze how the use of style and content contributes to the authors' effectiveness in supporting the points of view or purposes</li> <li>• Includes vague/limited examples/details that make reference to the texts</li> <li>• Explains the authors' points of view or purposes and provides an explanation about the use of style or content with clearly relevant information based on the texts</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives no evidence of the ability to determine and compare two authors' points of view or purposes in a text or texts and analyze how the use of style and content contributes to the authors' effectiveness in supporting the points of view or purposes</li> </ul>

## STUDENT RESPONSES

ELAGSE11-12RI.6

Response Score: 2 points

3. Which author's style and content MOST effectively support his or her purpose?

Use evidence from BOTH texts to support your answer. **Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.**

The author of "Dealing with Student Debt" better demonstrated the increasing amount of student loans in America. He seemed to use more relatable examples whereas the author of "Unpacking the student loan dilemma" gave more numbers and statistics. It's much easier to relate to a problem if you show a how it really effects people as opposed to just showing a number and moving on. For example in "Unpacking the student loan dilemma" it states "over the 30 years, college tuition has ballooned 538%." Although this does give us some facts about the issue it doesn't really make you think as much as when "Dealing with Student Debt" author states "I'll just be working forever to pay off this loan. I'm uncertain that I'll ever be in a position to have a family or buy a house, either."



The student explains why the author of "Dealing with Student Debt" more effectively supports his or her purpose: *"He seemed to use more relatable examples whereas the author of 'Unpacking the student loan dilemma' gave more numbers and statistics. It's much easier to relate to a problem if you show a how it really effects people as opposed to just showing a number and moving on."*

The response uses details from both passages to support this choice: *"for example in 'Unpacking the student loan dilemma' it states 'over the 30 years, college tuition has ballooned 538%.' Although this does give us some facts about the issue it doesn't really make you think as much as when 'Dealing with Student Debt' author states 'I'll just be working forever to pay off this loan. I'm uncertain that I'll ever be in a position to have a family or buy a house, either.'"*

ELAGSE11-12RI.6

Response Score: 1 point



3. Which author's style and content MOST effectively support his or her purpose?

Use evidence from BOTH texts to support your answer. **Type your answer in the space provided.**

The author of passage 1 really made it loud and clear about how big of an issue this is. He gives statistical facts that support his claim and the numbers really open peoples eyes to the problem. The author of passage 2 only used examples of 2 people to show his claims. If I would have only read the second passage I would have no clue how bad of an issue this really was.

The student says that the author of passage 1 is more effective because "*he gives statistical facts to support his claim*" and that the author of passage 2 "*only used examples of 2 people to show his claims,*" but does not provide any specific details or facts from the passages.

ELAGSE11-12RI.6

Response Score: 0 points



3. Which author's style and content MOST effectively support his or her purpose?

Use evidence from BOTH texts to support your answer. **Type your answer in the space provided.**

The author of "Dealing with Student Debt" most effectively supports their purpose by starting out with a real student's story who had a big school loan.

The student states that the author of "Dealing with Student Debt" is more effective because the text uses a narrative tone. However, there is no explanation and no comparison made to the effectiveness of the author of the other passage.

You have read “Unpacking the Student Loan Dilemma” and “Dealing with Student Debt” and have answered some questions about what you have read. Now write your informational/explanatory essay on your answer document.

## Writing Task

4. The costs of a college education have increased substantially in the last several years, and this increase has led many students to take on large sums of debt in order to fund their education.

Think about this situation, and then write an informational/explanatory essay in your own words detailing how incurring substantial college debt is affecting many recent graduates.

Be sure to use evidence from BOTH texts in your informational/explanatory essay. **Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.**

### Before you write, be sure to:

- think about ideas, facts, definitions, details, and other information and examples you want to use;
- think about how you will introduce your topic and what the main topic will be for each paragraph;
- develop your ideas clearly and use your own words, except when quoting directly from the source texts;
- be sure to identify the sources by title or number when using details or facts directly from the sources; and
- use your scratch paper if needed, but you must write your essay on your answer document.

### Now write your informational/explanatory essay on your answer document. Be sure to:

- use information from the two texts so that your essay includes important details;
- introduce the topic clearly, provide a focus, and organize information in a way that makes sense;
- develop the topic with facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic;
- use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion;
- clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts;
- use clear language and vocabulary to inform about the topic;
- provide a conclusion that follows the information presented; and
- check your work for correct grammar, usage, capitalization, spelling, and punctuation.

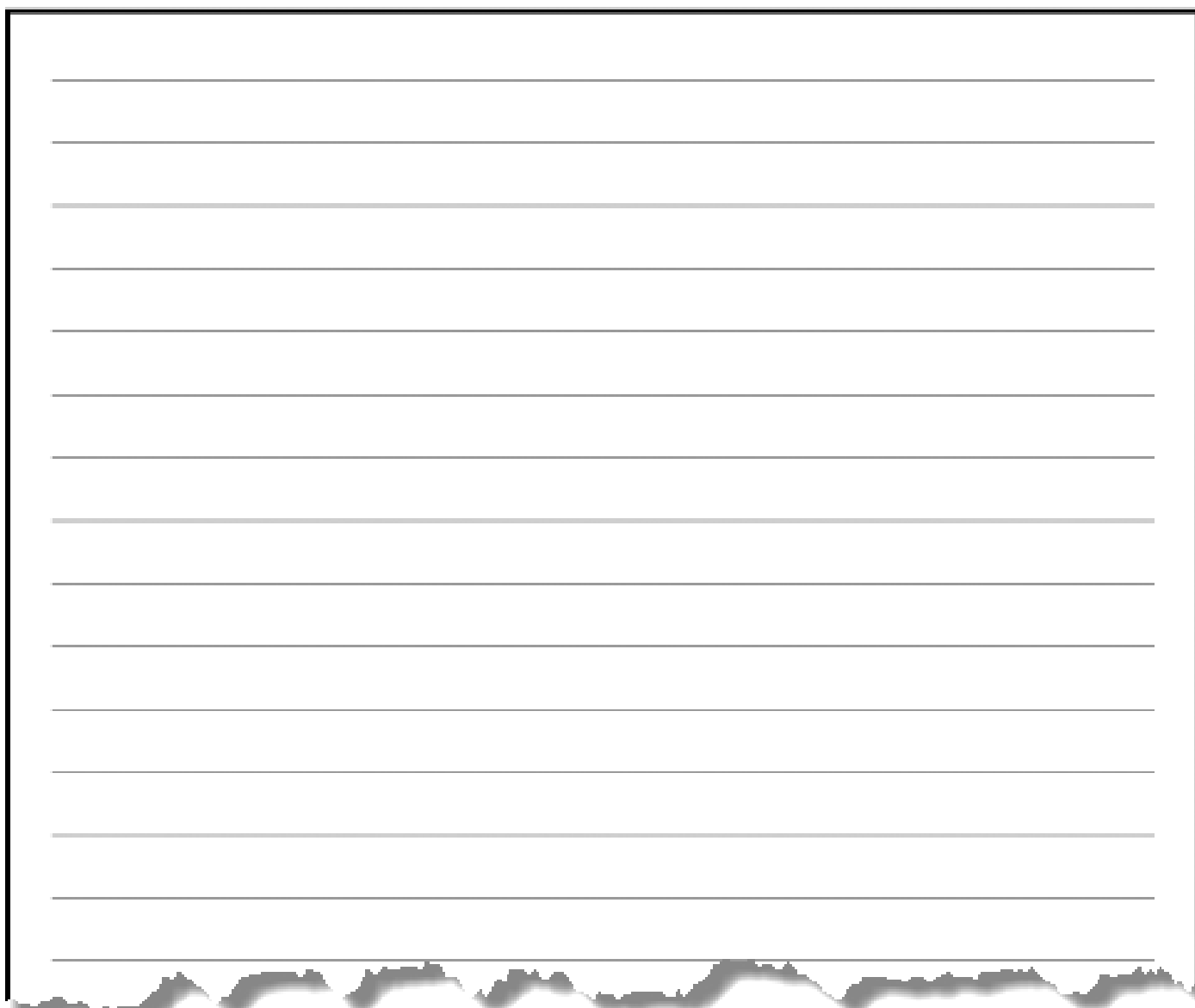
CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE ITEM

ELAGSE11-12.W2

- 4. The costs of a college education have increased substantially in the last several years, and this increase has led many students to take on large sums of debt in order to fund their education.

Think about this situation, and then write an informational/explanatory essay in your own words detailing how incurring substantial college debt is affecting many recent graduates.

Be sure to use evidence from BOTH texts in your informational/explanatory essay. **Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.**



SEVEN-POINT, TWO-TRAIT RUBRIC

Trait 1 for Informational/Explanatory Genre

Writing Trait	Score	Description
<p><b>Idea Development, Organization, and Coherence</b>  <i>This trait examines the writer’s ability to effectively establish a controlling idea and to support the idea with evidence from the text(s) read and to elaborate on the idea with examples, illustrations, facts, and other details in order. The writer must integrate the information from the text(s) into his/her own words and arrange the ideas and supporting evidence (from text that they have read) in order to create cohesion for an informative/explanatory essay.</i></p>	4	<p><i>The student’s response is a well-developed informative/explanatory text that examines a topic in depth and conveys ideas and information clearly based on text as a stimulus.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively introduces a topic</li> <li>• Groups related ideas together to give some organization to the writing</li> <li>• Effectively develops the topic with multiple facts, definitions, and details</li> <li>• Effectively uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information</li> <li>• Provides a strong concluding statement or section</li> </ul>
	3	<p><i>The student’s response is a complete informative/explanatory text that examines a topic and presents information based on a text as a stimulus.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduces a topic</li> <li>• Develops the topic with some facts, definitions, and details</li> <li>• Groups some related ideas together to give partial organization to the writing</li> <li>• Uses some linking words to connect ideas within categories of information, but relationships may not always be clear</li> <li>• Provides a concluding statement or section</li> </ul>
	2	<p><i>The student’s response is an incomplete or oversimplified informative/explanatory text that cursorily examines a topic based on a text as a stimulus.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempts to introduce a topic</li> <li>• Attempts to develop a topic with too few details, but not all of these are supported or relevant to the topic</li> <li>• Ineffectively groups some related ideas together</li> <li>• Uses few linking words to connect ideas, but not all ideas are well connected to the topic</li> <li>• Provides a weak concluding statement or section</li> </ul>
	1	<p><i>The student’s response is a weak attempt to write an informative/explanatory text that examines a topic based on a text as a stimulus.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May not introduce a topic or topic is unclear</li> <li>• May not develop a topic</li> <li>• May be too brief to group any related ideas together</li> <li>• May not use any linking words to connect ideas</li> <li>• Provides a minimal or no concluding statement or section</li> </ul>
	0	<p><i>The student’s response is flawed for various reasons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blank</li> <li>• Copied</li> <li>• Too Limited to Score/Illegible/Incomprehensible</li> <li>• Non-English/Foreign Language</li> <li>• Off Topic/Off Task/Offensive</li> </ul>

## SEVEN-POINT, TWO-TRAIT RUBRIC

### Trait 2 for Informational/Explanatory Genre

Writing Trait	Score	Description
<b>Language Usage and Conventions</b> <i>This trait examines the writer's ability to demonstrate control of sentence formation, usage, and mechanics as embodied in the grade-level expectations of the language standards.</i>	<b>3</b>	<i>The student's response demonstrates full command of language usage and conventions.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has clear and complete sentence structure, with appropriate range and variety</li> <li>• Shows knowledge of language and its conventions when writing</li> <li>• Any errors in usage and conventions do not interfere with meaning</li> </ul>
	<b>2</b>	<i>The student's response demonstrates partial command of language usage and conventions.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has complete sentences, with some variety</li> <li>• Shows some knowledge of language and its conventions when writing</li> <li>• Has minor errors in usage and conventions with no significant effect on meaning</li> </ul>
	<b>1</b>	<i>The student's response demonstrates weak command of language usage and conventions.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has fragments, run-ons, and/or other sentence structure errors</li> <li>• Shows little knowledge of language and its conventions when writing</li> <li>• Has frequent errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning</li> </ul>
	<b>0</b>	<i>The student's response is flawed for various reasons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blank</li> <li>• Copied</li> <li>• Too Limited to Score/Illegible/Incomprehensible</li> <li>• Non-English/Foreign Language</li> <li>• Off Topic/Off Task/Offensive</li> </ul>

## STUDENT RESPONSES

ELAGSE11-12.W2

Response Scores:

**Idea Development, Organization, and Coherence: 4****Language Usage and Conventions: 3**

4. The costs of a college education have increased substantially in the last several years, and this increase has led many students to take on large sums of debt in order to fund their education.

Think about this situation, and then write an informational/explanatory essay in your own words detailing how incurring substantial college debt is affecting many recent graduates.

Be sure to use evidence from BOTH texts in your informational/explanatory essay. **Type your answer in the space provided.**

Annually, students are becoming more concerned with a higher education and expanding their experience in the world. Unfortunately, with this rise in determination in education comes a rise in the price of college. Now, students are struggling with all aspects of the college experience, and are barely able to make ends meet. This is making it particularly difficult for many recent graduates, who have the ability to work but are not given the opportunity.

This dilemma takes root before a student even enters a college campus. Studies have shown that “the average annual cost of tuition, room, and board is now about \$15,000 for a public institution, \$40,000 for a private nonprofit institution, and \$24,000 for a private for-profit institution” (passage 1). These numbers are exponentially escalating, and they do not even include the actual college tuition. Many students are then faced with the issue of going to the college of their dreams and going to a college that fits in their budget, which may affect their education in the long run.

When enrolled in a college, students begin to see the first trickles of debt accumulating under their nose. This is not an uncommon phenomenon, as “most graduates today are burdened with substantial student debt” (passage 2). It is a wonder that the number of students looking to advance their education has increased when “student debt has increased over 300% just in the past decade” (passage 1). At this point in education, a student may choose between attending graduate school for a large chunk of change or attempting to secure a job with an undergraduate degree. A multitude of students, however, make the decision to accumulate more debt by continuing on to graduate school.



After graduate school, the culminating moment of eight years, students are left with nothing other than a piece of paper and a lack of job acceptances. It is said that “those who have pursued graduate degrees...will have to pay back six-figure amounts” (passage 1), meaning that students are digging themselves into a hole of debt by choosing to advance their education to postsecondary schooling. As seen in passage 2, many of these students, who are passionate and hardworking young citizens, are stuck in situations where they must pay back their loans on a time constraint and are not having success with the job industry. For example, in *Dealing with Student Debt*, Philip Rogers and Chloe Peterson were both successful individuals in college, but are unable to find jobs. This catches up with them, and now they either are working jobs that do not require a college education, or are not able to afford regular expenses.

Although it can be said that college and the college experience are worth their price tags, they deliver significant blows to any college students wallet, at any stage of their education. The visible debt that is affecting many of the recent graduates actually begins with their induction into a college. It then grows steadily but surely during their time in undergraduate school, and experiences an enormous jump if a student pursues postsecondary education. Finally, when tossed out into the working world, students are unable to find a job, are flailing in debt, and have a bleak future. Many of these recent graduates, who are bold and could make a significant impact on society, are not given the opportunity to do so because they are severely swamped in debt.

The response effectively introduces the topic and main idea (“... *students are struggling with all aspects of the college experience, and are barely able to make ends meet. This is making it particularly difficult for many recent graduates, who have the ability to work but are not given the opportunity*”). There is an organizational strategy to present information effectively and maintain focus and to make important connections and distinctions. The student thoroughly develops the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and enough facts; extended definitions; concrete details; quotations; or other information and examples that are appropriate for the audience (“*Many students are then faced with the issue of going to the college of their dreams and going to a college that fits in their budget, which may affect their education in the long run. . . . A multitude of students, however, make the decision to accumulate more debt by continuing on to graduate school*”). The response uses appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion, to link major sections of the text, and to clarify the relationship among ideas, and effectively uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary appropriate to the audience and complexity of the topic. The student establishes and maintains a formal style and an objective tone.

The response uses clear and complete sentence structure, with appropriate range and variety. The student makes an attempt to attribute direct quotations to their sources with parenthesis. There are no errors in usage and/or conventions that interfere with meaning.

## ELAGSE11-12.W2

## Response Scores:

Idea Development, Organization, and Coherence: 3

Language Usage and Conventions: 3

4. The costs of a college education have increased substantially in the last several years, and this increase has led many students to take on large sums of debt in order to fund their education.

Think about this situation, and then write an informational/explanatory essay in your own words detailing how incurring substantial college debt is affecting many recent graduates.

Be sure to use evidence from BOTH texts in your informational/explanatory essay. **Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.**

Most high school students' dream is to go to college and be successful. Some have scholarships and waivers for college payments. Some students have to pay for school without any special benefits. Many of them apply for student loans. The amount of students with student loans has increased severely. A myriad of these students are faced with a high risk of a large amount of debt.

The author of "Unpacking the Student Loan Dilemma" tells what is happening with student loans from a statistical perspective. According to the passage, "Over the past 30 years, college tuition has ballooned 538%, not counting additional fees, which are also increasing yearly." Students must also have books and the technology to complete the courses they are enrolled in. Therefore, if college expenditures are going to be high, they

should include all necessities of the students. Recent studies show that "The average annual cost of tuition, room, and board is now about \$15,000 for a public institution, \$40,000 for a private nonprofit institution, and \$24,000 for a private for-profit institution."

The author of "Dealing with Student Debt" explains the issue with student loans from a personal perspective. This passage suggests that many of these students feel they will never be able to pay off all of their loans. Philip Rogers is a private institution graduate who ended up with \$63,000 worth of debt. Rogers feels as if he will never retire. He also says "I'll just be working forever to pay off this loan. I'm uncertain that I'll ever be in a position to have a family or buy a house, either." College is a higher form of education that should lead students to a road of success.

These increased debt amounts could lead to a decrease in overall enrollment. This puts a heavy burden on a student's views on college. Success comes after the work. If someone is paying off loans, the work will just be done to be free of debt.

The student introduces the topic and main idea (*"The amount of students with student loans has increased severely. A myriad of these students are faced with a high risk of a large amount of debt"*). There is an organizational strategy to group information and provide focus, with an introduction, two body paragraphs (one for each source), and a conclusion. The response uses information from both sources to develop the topic, but the development relies heavily on quotations from the passages.

The response uses clear and complete sentence structure, with appropriate range and variety. There is an attempt to attribute paraphrases and direct quotations to their sources. There are no errors in usage and/or conventions that interfere with meaning.

## ELAGSE11-12.W2

Response Scores:



**Idea Development, Organization, and Coherence: 2**

**Language Usage and Conventions: 2**

4. The costs of a college education have increased substantially in the last several years, and this increase has led many students to take on large sums of debt in order to fund their education.

Think about this situation, and then write an informational/explanatory essay in your own words detailing how incurring substantial college debt is affecting many recent graduates.

Be sure to use evidence from BOTH texts in your informational/explanatory essay. **Type your answer in the space provided.**

College debt is affecting many recent graduates. Its affecting them financially. The student debt is double what it was two decades ago. “ Over the past 30 years, college tuition has ballooned 538%, not counting additional fees, which are also increasing yearly. ” The student debt has increased over 300% in the past decade also.

Same thing with student loans. Some students take the student loans that look good instead of researching what would happen after the fact they end up taking the student loan. For example Chloe Peterson graduated from Prestigious University with only a minimal loan. But then attended graduate school for graphic design, and the debt really began to go higher. “ I have to pay \$552 each month, and if I’m ever late, the interest will increase to 18%. ” That’s how college debt is affecting many recent graduates.

The student introduces a topic, but the introduction is simplistic (“College debt is affecting many recent graduates”). There is some development of the topic (“The student debt is double what it was two decades ago” and an example of the impact of a student loan on a particular student), but the development is limited, though the student seems to think there is a distinction between “student debt” and “student loans.”

The student makes no attempt to attribute paraphrases and direct quotations to their sources. There are some errors in usage and/or conventions such as fragments (“Same thing with student loans”).

ELAGSE11-12.W2

Response Scores:

Idea Development, Organization, and Coherence: 1

Language Usage and Conventions: 1

4. The costs of a college education have increased substantially in the last several years, and this increase has led many students to take on large sums of debt in order to fund their education.

Think about this situation, and then write an informational/explanatory essay in your own words detailing how incurring substantial college debt is affecting many recent graduates.

Be sure to use evidence from BOTH texts in your informational/explanatory essay. **Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.**

As a highschool student your main goals are to get into college and get a degree. When you get to college there is no one there to tell what to do, your grown. So when that student loan come in the first thing you do is spend it. Your most likely to blow through it on your wants. Or you may even spend it all on your needs. But in the end you will some how have to pay all the money off. Not everyones rich, so you end up in debt.

Most college students are in debt and don't finish until they are pretty much middle age

## AMERICAN LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

The student provides minimal information to develop the topic of spending while in college and college debt, but little of the details are from the sources. There is no organizational structure, such as an introduction or conclusion.

The response has fragments, and other sentence structure errors (*"Or you may even spend it all on your needs."*) There is no attribution to the sources, though most of the details do not seem to be from the passages. There are frequent errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning (*"So when that student loan come in ...there is no one there to tell what to do"*).

END OF SAMPLER  
QUESTIONS



END OF SAMPLER  
QUESTIONS

