



# FORMATIVE WRITING ASSESSMENT

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*Department of Literacy  
Instruction & Interventions  
Office of Academics*

**Grade 7**

# **Text-Based Writing Prompts:**

## **Administration and Scoring Guidelines**

### **Teacher Directions:**

Students will read a stimulus about a single topic. A stimulus consists of several texts written on a single topic. The stimulus may include informational or literary fiction or nonfiction texts and can cover a wide array of topics. After reading the stimulus, the students will respond to a writing prompt in which they will provide information on a topic, develop a narrative, or take a stance to support an opinion or argument. Students will be required to synthesize information from the text sets and must cite specific evidence from the texts to support their ideas. Students' informative/explanatory responses should demonstrate a developed and supported controlling idea. Students' opinion/argumentative responses should support an opinion/argument using ideas presented in the stimulus. Students will have 90 minutes to read the passages, and plan, write, revise and edit their essay. **Students should read the prompt first.** They should be encouraged to highlight, underline, and take notes to support the planning process.

### **Scoring:**

The attached text-based rubric should be used to score student responses. While the total possible points on the rubric is ten, it is recommended that three individual scores be given—one score for each of the three domains on the rubric. This will allow the teacher to determine specific areas of need within individual student responses, thus allowing for differentiation in the writing instruction that follows these formative writing tasks. The three domains are: Purpose, Focus, Organization (PFO), Evidence and Elaboration (EE), and Conventions of Standard English (CSE). Teachers should score **holistically** within each domain—PFO (4-points), EE (4-points), and CSE (2-points).

Each level of scoring within a domain is based on the overarching statement for the score found in the rubric. For example, on the grades 6-11 rubric for argumentation, the overarching statement for a score of 4 in the Purpose, Focus, Organization domain is, "The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness." The bulleted points that follow the statement must be considered as factors in the scoring, but should not be utilized as a checklist. Most, but not all, of the bulleted points will be evident in the student writing for a score at a specific level.

Teachers should keep in mind that a score of 3 on the rubric for a domain signals student proficiency in the addressed writing standard with a score of 4 representing mastery. In the CSE domain, a score of two represents student proficiency in the standard.

## **Seventh Grade: Argumentative Prompt #2**

Write an essay that explains why you agree or disagree with the idea that public workers should have the right to strike. Remember to use textual evidence to support your claim.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages
- Plan your essay
- Write your essay
- Revise and edit your essay

Be sure to:

- Include a claim
- Address counterclaims
- Use evidence from multiple sources
- Avoid overly relying on one source

Your written response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph essay. Remember to spend time reading, planning, writing, revising, and editing.

# What Is a Strike?

by Sharon Blumenstein

- A strike occurs when workers refuse to work until their working conditions have improved. Members of a workforce vote on whether or not they will strike. They can strike over a variety of issues: salary, benefits, unsafe working conditions, unpaid overtime, etc. Workers will strike if they cannot come to an agreement with their employer or change their employers' policies by using other means.
- Strikes are usually the most effective way that workers can use their strength as a group to improve their working conditions.
- With the exception of federal government workers, those employed in the U.S. have a legal right to strike.
- Even if workers strike, there is no guarantee that the employer will meet their demands. Workers are not paid during a strike. Furthermore, workers participating in a strike run the risk of losing their jobs if their employer decides to hire replacement workers.

## NOTES

### Am I on Track?



# New York School Bus Strike: Sign of National Pressure on Unions

While New York City is seeking to bring down its highest-in-the-nation school busing costs by putting the contract out to bid, the union is demanding that drivers and matrons be protected.

by Stacy Teicher Khadaroo, staff writer  
*Christian Science Monitor*

January 18, 2013

## NOTES

The New York City school bus strike is now in its third day—pitting the union’s concerns over job security and bus safety against the city’s need to bring down bus costs that are the highest in the nation.

It’s also another indication—along with the recent teacher strike in Chicago and the fights over union rights in Wisconsin and elsewhere—that unions nationwide are increasingly feeling “their backs are to the wall,” says Ed Ott, a distinguished lecturer in labor studies at the City University of New York’s  
10 Murphy Institute and the former head of the New York City Labor Council.

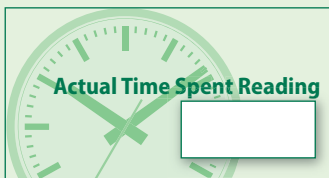
“Strikes were always considered the ultimate weapon, and you don’t use them lightly,” he says. “For this generation of union leaders, [the use of strikes] is a clear indication of the pressures they are feeling.”

About 152,000 students—11 percent of public school students in New York—rely on school buses, which cover 7,700 routes. Forty percent of the buses were running Wednesday, the city said, because they are not driven by members of the  
20 striking Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1181.

Other bused students have had to find alternative ways to school since Wednesday. The city has been providing metro cards and reimbursing families for driving or sending students in taxis, but that hasn’t quelled the frustrations of some parents who have had their work schedules disrupted. Some parents, on the other hand, support the strikers.

The nationwide attention that strikes, rooted in very local fights, tend to receive now is another indication of how unions have weakened in recent decades. “It’s sad that it’s  
30 seen as a novelty,” says Zev Eigen, associate professor of law at Northwestern University. It also means that unions have to pick their fights carefully, he says, because public sympathy will go down if a strike is not tied to a substantial issue of fairness.

## Am I on Track?



## ANCHOR TEXT

# Why Is It Rare for Public Sector Workers to Go on Strike?

by Mia Lewis

Strikes by public sector workers (teachers, trash collectors, firefighters, and the like) do not happen often. Is it because these workers have high salaries, plum working conditions, and generous benefits, and therefore nothing to complain about? Or are there particular reasons why strikes in the public sector are especially rare?

10 First of all, it is important to remember that while workers in the private sector have a legally protected right to strike (with the exception of a few job categories), those who are employed by the federal government do not. That means you won't see picket lines in the national parks, at the post office, or at the social security office.

20 State and city employees can only strike if there are state statutes that specifically allow them to—even then, some types of workers such as police and firefighters are permanently exempted and can never strike. While this may seem unfair, let's consider why the policy is in place. If workers in a widget factory strike for higher wages, their actions can't directly hurt anyone except themselves and their employers. However, the general public would be in danger if police and firefighters did not report to work.

This is what happened during a police union strike in Boston in 1919. Criminals went on a rampage after police refused to work. Public opinion on the strike was very negative. The incident was a big setback for unions and labor in general.

30 Today, public sector strikes are very rare even when they are legal. Take strikes by teachers, for example. A teachers' strike in Chicago in September of 2012 was the first in the city in 25 years. With difficult working conditions and not overly generous pay and benefits, one might expect the teachers' union to be on strike more often. However, public sector strikes are all

## NOTES

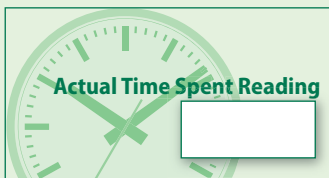
## NOTES

about politics and public opinion. Public sector employees serve the public, and so the public has an interest in seeing the strike come to an end. To win the strike, the teachers not only have to come out with a better contract, but they also have to be seen as righteous and worthy by the public.

Even if parents support teachers, they are unlikely to be sympathetic when they walk off the job and leave the kids—and parents—in a difficult situation. Even if the strike is over  
40 better teacher-student ratios and other changes that will benefit students, it is difficult for teachers to maintain public support once they are on strike.

Instead of striking, most public sector unions solve disputes with their employers through mediation or arbitration. Mediation takes place when an impartial party oversees the negotiation to resolve differences. Arbitration occurs when an independent outsider looks at evidence submitted by both sides and comes up with a solution that is binding for all. If a fair contract can be reached, it is certainly better for all parties  
50 involved, including the public.

### Am I on Track?



FINAL

English Language Arts  
Text-based Writing Rubrics  
Grades 6–11: Argumentation





<b>Grades 6–11</b>			
<b>Argumentation Text-based Writing Rubric</b>			
<b>(Score points within each domain include most of the characteristics below.)</b>			
<b>Score</b>	<b>Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)</b>	<b>Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)</b>	<b>Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)</b>
4	<p>The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear claim and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly maintained claim with little or no loosely related material</li> <li>• Clearly addressed alternate or opposing claims*</li> <li>• Skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>• Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end with a satisfying introduction and conclusion</li> <li>• Appropriate style and tone established and maintained</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides thorough, convincing, and credible support, citing evidence for the writer’s claim that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoothly integrated, thorough, and relevant evidence, including precise references to sources</li> <li>• Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques to support the claim, demonstrating an understanding of the topic and text</li> <li>• Clear and effective expression of ideas, using precise language</li> <li>• Academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>• Varied sentence structure, demonstrating language facility</li> </ul>	
3	<p>The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear claim and evident organizational structure with a sense of completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained claim, though some loosely related material may be present</li> <li>• Alternate or opposing claims included but may not be completely addressed*</li> <li>• Adequate use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>• Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end with a sufficient introduction and conclusion</li> <li>• Appropriate style and tone established</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides adequate support, citing evidence for the writer’s claim that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally integrated and relevant evidence from sources, though references may be general or imprecise</li> <li>• Adequate use of some elaborative techniques</li> <li>• Adequate expression of ideas, employing a mix of precise and general language</li> <li>• Domain-specific vocabulary generally appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>• Some variation in sentence structure</li> </ul>	

*Continued on the following page*

FINAL ELA Text-based Writing Rubrics, Grades 6–11: Argumentation  
Florida Standards Assessments

Score	Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric)
2	<p>The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience, and task but may include loosely related or extraneous material; and it may have a claim with an inconsistent organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused claim but insufficiently sustained or unclear</li> <li>• Insufficiently addressed alternate or opposing claims*</li> <li>• Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety</li> <li>• Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end with an inadequate introduction or conclusion</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the writer’s claim that includes partial use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weakly integrated evidence from sources; erratic or irrelevant references or citations</li> <li>• Repetitive or ineffective use of elaborative techniques</li> <li>• Imprecise or simplistic expression of ideas</li> <li>• Some use of inappropriate domain-specific vocabulary</li> <li>• Most sentences limited to simple constructions</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some minor errors in usage but no patterns of errors</li> <li>• Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling</li> </ul>
1	<p>The response is related to the topic but may demonstrate little or no awareness of the purpose, audience, and task; and it may have no discernible claim and little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absent, confusing, or ambiguous claim</li> <li>• Missing alternate or opposing claims*</li> <li>• Few or no transitional strategies</li> <li>• Frequent extraneous ideas that impede understanding</li> <li>• Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the writer’s claim, including little if any use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal, absent, erroneous, or irrelevant evidence or citations from the source material</li> <li>• Expression of ideas that is vague, unclear, or confusing</li> <li>• Limited and often inappropriate language or domain-specific vocabulary</li> <li>• Sentences limited to simple constructions</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various errors in usage</li> <li>• Inconsistent use of correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling</li> </ul>
0			<p>The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning.</p>

\*Not applicable at grade 6