

STATE OF TEXAS ASSESSMENTS OF ACADEMIC READINESS (STAAR™)

English I, II, and III Reading and Writing

**Victoria Young
Director of Reading, Writing, and
Social Studies Assessments
Texas Education Agency**

English I, II, and III Writing

- **Revision and editing assessed in separate sections of the test and equally emphasized—each section worth 24% of total test score**
- **Broader measure of writing for each course by requiring students to write two compositions addressing different purposes**
- **English I—literary and expository**
- **English II—expository and persuasive**
- **English III—persuasive and analytical**

English I, II, and III Writing

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- **Essays weighted equally—each 26% of total writing score**
- **One page—a maximum of 26 lines for each composition (25 “light lines” plus the heavy “border line” at the bottom of the writing space); no “double-lining” allowed**
- **No “gatekeeper” (no automatic fail of the writing test for receiving a score of 1 on a composition)**

English I, II, and III Writing

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- **Make-up testing allowed**
- **Dictionary policy expanded**
 - **students may use dictionaries on the entire test (multiple-choice section and compositions)**
 - **types of allowable dictionaries now include bilingual and handheld non-internet-capable electronic dictionaries**
- **Field test: one prompt and either a revising or editing passage and 6 items embedded in test**

English I, II, and III Reading

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- **Two short answer reading questions and 38 multiple choice on each assessment**
- **A total of 56 points on reading test: multiple choice worth 38 points (68% of total score) and short answer questions worth 18 points (32% of total score)**
- **Each short answer reading question based on a 0–3 rubric and weighted by 3, for a total of 9 points**
- **Students have 10 lines to answer each question: 9 “light lines” plus the heavy “border line” at the bottom of the box**

English I, II, and III Reading

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- **Make-up testing allowed**
- **Allowable dictionaries now include bilingual and handheld non-internet-capable electronic dictionaries**
- **One field-test reading selection and 8 items embedded in test**

STAAR Writing Performance

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- **Score Point 1—VERY LIMITED**
- **Score Point 2—BASIC**
- **Score Point 3—SATISFACTORY**
- **Score Point 4—ACCOMPLISHED**

STAAR Writing Prompts

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Expository, persuasive, and analytical prompts contain a stimulus and are scaffolded:

Read, Think, Write, Be Sure to–

Purpose: to help students “build” a concept of what they might write about and to provide students with important reminders that will help them be successful on the writing task

STAAR Writing Prompts—Scaffolding

- **Read:** A short synopsis of some kind or a quotation



- **Think:** The synopsis or quotation generalized and reworded



- **Write:** An even more focused rewording



- **Be Sure to-:** 5 bullets here (stating a clear thesis, organizing your writing, developing it, choosing words carefully, proofreading)

Expository and Persuasive Writing

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- **Prompts focus on issues/questions that don't require students to bring particular background knowledge or facts to the table in order to write a good essay**
- **The expository task requires students to clearly explain what they think about something**
- **The persuasive task requires students to take a position and present a consistent, sustained argument that supports it**

Clear Explanation vs. Compelling Argument

Expository and Persuasive Writing

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- **Audience awareness**
 - **Expository**—the student is **NOT TRYING** to convince the reader to think a certain way or to accept a single viewpoint as valid
 - **Persuasive**—the student is **TRYING** to convince the reader to think a certain way or to accept a single viewpoint as valid
- **Students may use 1st or 3rd person (though better to stay away from “one”); remember that prompts are written to elicit an explanatory or persuasive response that reflects students’ own thinking about their lives and the world**

Analytical Writing

- **A combination of expository writing and interpretation of one aspect of a literary or expository text (really a hybrid of writing and reading)**
- **Analytical prompts contain a literary or informational text (approximately 350–450 words), which students must analyze**
- **Score based on the student's ability to interpret the text and support it with relevant textual evidence (15C) AND quality of the writing (criteria under expository writing in 15A)**

STAAR English I Expository

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Read the information in the box below.

In 1955 medical researcher Jonas Salk introduced an effective polio vaccine. At the time polio was considered the biggest threat to public health, yet Salk refused to profit by patenting the vaccine because he was more concerned with preventing disease than with personal gain.

Although many people work to benefit themselves, some people choose to put others first. Think carefully about this statement.

STAAR English I Expository

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Write an essay explaining whether people should be more concerned about others than about themselves.

Be sure to—

- **clearly state your thesis**
- **organize and develop your ideas effectively**
- **choose your words carefully**
- **edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and sentences**

How Not to Begin an Essay

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People view things differently and see it in their own way. They also have different opinions, and each person thinks no one is right but themselves. Quotations are thought through very differently from everyone else. It all depends on the way you think and how you view things in life.

(This introduction takes up the first 5 of the 26 lines.)

STAAR English I Expository

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Score Point 2

Thinking about others before you is a nice thing to think of, but if you think of yourself first it makes you feel isolated. Caring about others before you isn't a bad thing, but thinking about yourself isn't bad either. To me I think of others before me. Some people have the good life, others don't. I'll rather put myself in danger than others being in danger as well. I'm only one person but risking myself could save more than one life. When your in a room where there seems to be a fire some people will think of

STAAR English I Expository

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themselves while others think of the rest. The doctor could risk himself of getting polio but he could save hundreds of lives that currently have polio. To me people that think of themselves before others are selfish and maybe greedy, but others that think of others are kind people.

Handwritten version is 25 lines.

STAAR English I Expository

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Score Point 4

Humanity has a funny way of contradicting itself sometimes. All children are taught to share and put others' needs before our own. Somewhere down the line we realize that the very people who preach these things to us don't follow their own rules. It is very important in society today to remember the bigger picture, which often includes doing things to help others with no benefit to yourself.

People use each other for personal gain all the time. A glorified outlook on this way of life is all around us. In media people are more concerned

STAAR English I Expository

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with which Hollywood star is going out with which millionaire rather than the thousands of people dying of hunger in third world countries. As consumers we see this life and wish to be like that.

Doing something for monetary gain is just like money itself: easily expendable and transient. But doing something to help others leads to emotional or moral gain. The memories and feelings you get from helping others won't ever go away. It's worth something to you. Worth more than money ever could be.

Handwritten version is 22 lines.

STAAR English I Literary

- **Literary prompts (English I) also contain a stimulus and are scaffolded.**
- **English I Knowledge and Skill Statement: Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas.**
- **STAAR based on SE 14(A): write an engaging story with a well-developed conflict and resolution, interesting and believable characters, and a range of literary strategies (e.g., dialogue, suspense) and devices to enhance the plot**
- **Literary responses can be real or fictional.**

STAAR English I Literary

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Look at the photograph.



Write a story about the power of imagination. Be sure that your story is focused and complete and that it has an interesting plot and engaging characters.

STAAR English I Literary

Score Point 2

Imagine. Imagine you're the pilot of a 747 American Airlines jet flying from Dallas to Miami. Your halfway there when the engine light starts blinking. You ask the co-pilot to go check out the problem. He comes back saying, "We've got an engine down." You call to the nearest airport and schedule an emergency landing, then calmly let your passengers know what's going on. Within minutes you're on the runway with firetrucks and ambulances racing behind you.

This is the power of imagination. A five year old pretending to be a pilot of a broken plane, or the pitcher of a major league baseball team. Imagination gives kids the chance to explore the world and new

STAAR English I Literary

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ideas freely. There are no limits, no boundaries, just open space free to explore. Without this powerful way of the mind, life would be boring and kids would never get the chance to experience the freeness and creativity of life.

Handwritten paper is 21 lines.

STAAR English I Literary

Score Point 4

The hair on the back of Kevin's neck stood on end. He could feel the goosebumps go down his arms and legs. The slightest change in wind made his feet tingle. He had climbed mountains before, but nothing quite like this. He stood on the edge of a great adventure.

He had been climbing through the dense forest of trees for six days and seven nights. The journey had been rough and he was now running on only one package of dried noodles. He looked out past the clouds to the small flickering lights that carried the black earth down the valley. He thought of his mom back home, worrying for him. She had given him a

STAAR English I Literary

giant bear hug before he left, along with a note about being careful. Oh how he missed her. It seemed like years since he had had one of her famous peanut butter and banana sandwich' s. This jump was for her. Cautiously he went up on his toes and felt the breeze in his hair. And then he fell.

He fell for what seemed like eternity. The wind whistled past his face and his hands and legs flailed in the air. He felt totally free, until he hit. He hit the ground hard. He slowly rose off the ground and looked onto his own back porch. There his mom stood smiling. "How was your adventure?" she said calmly. Kevin only grinned.

Handwritten paper is 26 lines.

In a Nutshell—Lower Score Range

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- **Typical problems we've seen in papers falling in the lower score range (1s and 2s)**
 - **Wrong organizational structure/form for purpose**
 - **Weak, evolving, or nonexistent thesis**
 - **Wasted space: repetition, wordiness, extraneous details or examples, looping/meandering, meaningless introductions and conclusions**
 - **Inclusion of too many different ideas for 1 page**
 - **General/vague/imprecise use of language or inappropriate tone for purpose**
 - **Essay poorly crafted**
 - **Weak conventions**

In a Nutshell—Higher Score Range

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- **Typical strengths we've seen in papers falling in the higher score range (3s and 4s)**
 - **Strong match between structure/form and purpose**
 - **Explicit thesis and sustained focus**
 - **“Narrow and deep” development—no wasted words or space → Think quality over quantity!**
 - **Introduction and conclusion short but effective**
 - **Specific use of language and appropriate tone for purpose**
 - **Essay well crafted**
 - **Strong conventions**

Adjacent Scoring for STAAR

TAKS compositions were scored using the “perfect agreement” model. Two readers read each paper, and if the scores did not agree, a third reader (and sometimes a fourth) read the paper to determine the final score.

STAAR compositions will be scored using the “adjacent scoring” model. Perfect agreement does not have to be reached. With this method, districts will receive a more accurate description of each student’s writing performance.

Adjacent Scoring for STAAR

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SCORE 1	SCORE 2	SUMMED SCORE	CSR RATING
0	0	0	Nonscorable Performance
1	1	2	Very Limited Performance
1	2	3	Between Very Limited and Basic Performance
2	2	4	Basic Performance
2	3	5	Between Basic and Satisfactory Performance
3	3	6	Satisfactory Performance
3	4	7	Between Satisfactory and Accomplished Performance
4	4	8	Accomplished Performance

STAAR Reading Design

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STAAR reading assessments will emphasize students' ability

- **to make connections within and across texts**
- **to think critically/inferentially about different types of texts (almost all test questions go beyond literal understanding)**
- **to understand how writer's craft affects meaning**
- **to understand how to use text evidence to confirm the validity of their ideas**

STAAR Reading Performance

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- **Score Point 0—INSUFFICIENT**
- **Score Point 1—PARTIALLY SUFFICIENT**
- **Score Point 2—SUFFICIENT**
- **Score Point 3—EXEMPLARY**

STAAR Short Answer Questions

Text Evidence

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- **Students must know that text evidence is always flawed when it is**
 - **only a general reference to the text**
 - **too partial to support the idea**
 - **weakly linked to the idea**
 - **used inappropriately because it wrongly manipulates the meaning of the text**
- **Students must know that to score a 2 or 3 on short answer reading, text evidence must be considered accurate and relevant (SP 2) or specific and well chosen (SP 3)**

STAAR Short Answer Questions

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- **English I short answer question for single selection: drama**

In this excerpt from *Anne of Green Gables*, do you think the stage directions enhance your understanding of the scene? Explain your answer and support it with evidence from the selection.

STAAR Short Answer Questions

- **Example #1 of SP 1 (partially sufficient): idea is specific but text evidence is only a general reference.**
In “Anne of Green Gables” I believe the stage directions enhance the understanding of the scene. Some evidence to prove it is all of the first paragraph. It enhances the understanding of the scene by introducing the main character, setting the scene, and setting the mood. Without the stage directions it’s all confusing. Some more text evidence is all of paragraph 8. It enhances the scene by introducing a man who is to adopt Anne and what his character is like. In conclusion I believe the stage directions enhance the scene because without them it’s very confusing. (Response is 7 lines handwritten.)

STAAR Short Answer Questions

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- **Example #2 of SP 1 (partially sufficient): idea is specific but text evidence is only weakly linked to the idea**

Yes it does enhance my understanding, it describes Anne to me. It lets me know that she's waiting for something or someone and that she might be unfortunate. "The child wears a too-large overcoat."

Response is 5 lines handwritten.

STAAR Short Answer Questions

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- **Example of SP 2 (sufficient): idea is specific and text evidence is relevant and accurate**

The stage directions help a lot because you can create better pictures in your head about what is going on. When the story says “[Anne clutches her bag. She is terrified]” shows Anne is scared without Anne having to say it.

Response is 5 lines handwritten.

STAAR Short Answer Questions

- **Example of SP 3 (exemplary): idea is perceptive and text evidence is specific and well chosen.**

The stage directions most definitely help to get an image of the scene in the play. In a short story or novel, authors use words to describe the setting that the characters are in, which helps to paint a visual image in the reader's mind. Descriptions like "a small figure, a child, sits on a battered suitcase" and directions as to who a character is turned talking to like "to Anne" help the reader see what is happening, just like descriptions in a novel or short story. The reader can definitely see the play being acted out in their minds, which helps them to understand the scenes better and connect with the characters just by reading. (Response is 9 lines handwritten.)

STAAR Short Answer Questions—Idea

- **Students must know that an idea is only partially sufficient when it**
 - **needs more explanation or specificity**
 - **represents only a literal reading of the text**
- **Students must know that to score a 2 or 3 on short answer reading, the idea(s) must be reasonable, specific, and go beyond a literal reading of the text (SP 2) or be perceptive, coherent, and discerning (SP 3).**

STAAR Short Answer Questions

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- **English II short answer question for paired selections: poetry and literary nonfiction**

How are the themes of “Those Winter Sundays” and “All My Babies are Gone Now” similar? Support your answer with evidence from both selections.

STAAR Short Answer Questions

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- **Example #1 of SP 1 (partially sufficient): idea needs more specificity and explanation**

The themes from “Those Winter Sundays” and “All My Babies Are Gone” are similar in that they are both looking into past moments in their lives. “What did I know of love’s austere and lonely offices?” “I wish I had treasured the doing a little more...”

(Response is 6 lines handwritten.)

STAAR Short Answer Questions

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- **Example #2 of SP 1 (partially sufficient): idea is specific but text evidence for one selection is too partial and for the other selection is only a general reference**

Both themes suggest the authors regret not spending time with their loved ones. In the poem, the author spoke to his father “indifferently” which shows lack of feeling. And in “All My Babies Are Gone,” the author mentions her regret of not living in the moment with her kids.

Response is 7 lines handwritten.

STAAR Short Answer Questions

- **Example of SP 2 (sufficient): idea is specific and text evidence is relevant and accurate**

Both authors show regret about their earlier life. In “Those Winter Sundays,” the author realizes that “No one ever thanked” his father for taking care of the family. In “My Babies Are Gone Now,” the author says, “I wish I had treasured the doing a little more and the getting it done a little less.”

Response is 6 lines handwritten.

STAAR Short Answer Questions

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- **Example of SP 3 (exemplary): idea is perceptive and text evidence is specific and well chosen.**

Both themes are similar in the sense that both the child and mother in the selections have a feeling of remorse of not being able to appreciate who they have in front of them and not being able to take advantage of time. “No one ever thanked him.” The child acknowledges the fact that his father “with cracked hands that ached from labor” would wake up “in the blueblack cold” to provide warmth for his family, yet no one seems to be grateful for it. Time flew by for this mother; she didn’t get to cherish her three treasures as she wanted because in the blink of an eye they turned into “three almost adults”.

Response is 8 lines handwritten.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Victoria Young
**Director of Reading, Writing, and Social
Studies Assessments**
Texas Education Agency
512-463-9536
victoria.young@tea.state.tx.us