

2022 MCAS Sample Student Work and Scoring Guide

Grade 6 English Language Arts

Question 12: Essay

Reporting Categories: Language and Writing

Standard: L.PK-12.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Standard: L.PK-12.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Standard: L.PK-12.3 - Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Standard: W.PK-12.2 - Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Standard: W.PK-12.4 - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Item Description: Write an essay that explains how an idea is developed in an article and a passage; use information from both texts to support the explanation.

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Essay Prompt

For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage(s). Your writing should:

- Present and develop a central idea.
- Provide evidence and/or details from the passage(s).
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Write an essay that explains how “Ways to Reuse Items” and *The Junction* each show that reuse is beneficial. Be sure to use information from **both** the article and the passage to develop your essay.

Continue to the following page to see the scoring guides for this question. Sample student responses begin on page 3. The annotations that appear above each sample response describe elements of the response that contributed to its score for Idea Development and Standard English Conventions.

Scoring Guide for Idea Development

Select a score point in the table below to view the sample student response.

Score*	Description
5A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea is insightful and fully developed Skillful selection and explanation of evidence and/or details Skillful and/or subtle organization Rich expression of ideas Full awareness of the task and mode
5B	
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea is clear and well-developed Effective selection and explanation of evidence and/or details Effective organization Clear expression of ideas Full awareness of the task and mode
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea is general and moderately developed Appropriate selection and explanation of evidence and/or details Moderate organization Adequate expression of ideas Sufficient awareness of the task and mode
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea may be present and is somewhat developed Limited selection and explanation of evidence and/or details Limited organization Basic expression of ideas Partial awareness of the task and mode
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central idea is not developed Insufficient evidence and/or details Minimal organization Poor expression of ideas Minimal awareness of the task and mode
0	The response shows evidence the student has read the text, but does not address the question or incorrectly responds to the question.

Scoring Guide for Standard English Conventions

Select a score point in the table below to view the sample student response.

Score*	Description
3A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent control of a variety of sentence structures relative to length of essay Consistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of essay
3B	
3C	
3D	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly consistent control of sentence structures relative to length of essay Mostly consistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of essay
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little control and/or no variety in sentence structure and/or Little control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or insufficient length
0	Sentences are formed incorrectly with no control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and/or insufficient length.

*In both Scoring Guides, letters are used to distinguish between sample student responses that earned the same score (e.g., 5A and 5B).

Idea Development—Score Point 5A

Skillful selection of evidence supports a fully developed essay about how the passages show the benefits of reuse. A variety of details are provided to support each of three body paragraphs, which discuss cost and environmental benefits, and provide a focused discussion on creativity and the idea that “reusing in an imaginative way” has multiple benefits. Although the introduction and conclusion simply restate the question, the evidence provided and related explanations show an awareness of how to integrate ideas to support the central idea. Use of familiar and audience-engaging language supports rich expression about the significance of the topic. Examples include “Now you choose,” “without a doubt,” “See how much you can help,” “This just goes to explain how creative you can get because the sky[']s the limit.” Overall, the writing makes connections between ideas and the task and provides meaningful evidence from both passages to explore and develop the central idea.

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 3A

A variety of punctuation skills and sentence structures are used. Sentence types used include direct address (e.g., “Still don’t believe me?”). Formal language is also utilized (e.g., “Irma Jean uses the fabric and creates new outfits from it which is an example of reusing”). Commas are used correctly in most places (e.g., “First, in the article . . .”; “Based on the text and my calculations, that would be . . .”). Quotation marks are also used properly throughout the essay. Despite minor errors, the complexity and level of mechanics used demonstrate grade-level control.

The article "Ways to Reuse Items" and the passage "The Junction", each show that reuse is beneficial in the following ways.

First, in the article "Ways to Reuse Items", it explains how reusing items can decrease cost for you. In paragraph 2, the article states that, "All this waste is costly... We could all stretch our dollars much further by using the same item many times rather than just once.... So whenever you choose to reuse, you're making your life greener and cheaper at the same time." To further prove my statement, in paragraph 7 the author uses research to suggest the value of reuse. "Drinking bottled water is a common and expensive habit. If you go through a \$7 case of bottled water every week, that's \$364 per year for something you could get out of the tap for less than \$1." This argument just gives you the plain facts straightforward, and you can clearly see just how cheap water could be if you just got it out of the tap instead of getting a pack of bottled water every week. It would cut down your costs. Still don't believe me? In the paragraph about napkins it says, "Many people use paper napkins all the time—even at home. A family of four that used one napkin at every meal would utilize and discard 4,300 napkins in a year—roughly \$65 worth. That same family could buy a dozen cloth napkins for \$10 and reuse them over and over. They'd save \$55 just in the first year, produce less trash, and save trees." Now you choose, do you want to possibly save \$55 a year by buying cloth napkins, or not just because it's easier to quickly dispose of paper napkins?

Next, without a doubt, reusing is also a win win for you too, not just because it's less expensive, but because it's also beneficial for the environment. In the article, the section "Ditching Disposable Items", explains that if you reuse items, you'd be helping the environment as well. An example of this is shopping bags. "According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, the average American family takes home close to 1,500 plastic bags each year. Those bags require more than 8,000 barrels of oil to manufacture, and only about 5% of them are recycled." Do you know how many plastic bags are being wasted and are causing pollution because only 5% of them are recycled! Based on the text and my calculations, that would be only 75 plastic bags being recycled and then 1,425 plastic bags being wasted each year which would cause tons of pollution which is really unhealthy for the environment! According to the shopping bag sections again though, "You can avoid all this waste by carrying a reusable bag. There are dozens of kinds to choose from, including canvas, nylon, and string bags-and there are even bags you can fold up and tuck into a pocket, purse, or backpack, so you'll never be caught shopping without one." See how much you can help, just by using a reusable shopping bag! Another example of reusing and how it's beneficial to the environment is from "The Junction". Paragraph 9 says, "I know that glass has already been used once, I say. But maybe we could use it too. The same way Irma Jean sews new outfits out of fabric that's already been worn by someone else." Irma Jean uses the fabric and creates new outfits from it which is an example of reusing.

Lastly, based on the article "Ways to Reuse Items" and the passage "The Junction", reusing in an imaginative way can give you great and useful results, and creative reuse is also fun! In paragraph 8 from the section "Creative Reuse", it states that "Often when you reuse an item, you're continuing to utilize it for the same purpose-for example, a cloth shopping bag makes yet another trip to the store; an old computer is upgraded; a sweater too small is donated to the thrift shop so a smaller person can wear it." People are most likely to utilize old items for their same purpose, but you don't have to do that. Instead, you can repurpose an item for another use such as mesh bags. According to the paragraph about mesh bags, "The mesh bags that onions come in at the grocery store can be given a new life. String a shoelace through the top to make a storage bag for bath toys, which allows them to drip dry when bath time is over. You can also use them to corral small kitchen tools, such as cookie cutter, before putting them through the kitchen dishwasher. Furthermore, in paragraph 10 it says, "This can be one of the more complicated ways to reuse items-but for people who love to let their imaginations run free, it's also the most fun". This just goes to explain how creative you can get because the sky's the limit and how fun it can be. Another example of a fun way to reuse is how Auggie and Gus used the stained glass from Hopewell church and used it to make stained glass windows for their house. It was fun and must have felt good to know you were doing something that was beneficial to the environment too by reusing in a fun way.

In conclusion, that is how the article "Ways to Reuse Items" and the passage *The Junction* each show that reuse is beneficial.

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Idea Development—Score Point 5B

The central idea about the benefits of reuse is supported fully throughout the essay. A clear introduction connects the idea that reusing items helps them extend beyond “after they can’t do their original job” to the thought that reuse “represents the fun” enjoyed by those who participate. This insight is revisited in the conclusion by establishing that reuse can “save money and help the planet” and can also “become a pure work of art and joy.” In the body paragraphs, the writer demonstrates a strong awareness of the task by explaining how the author of “Ways to Reuse Items” includes details to illustrate both the financial and environmental benefits of reuse: “This . . . shows the damage which we do to the environment, as well as the money we strip away from ourselves by performing these [useless] things that we have the capability to prevent.” A concise discussion about Auggie and Gus’s project shows skillful selection of details to support the ideas that “people should try and reuse” and “reusing the glass could be a good idea.” Although the conclusion includes less information than the introduction, it clearly connects both passages to the benefits of reuse. Overall, there is a balance of analysis and examples from both passages, showing a rich expression of ideas across a well-organized explanation of how the passages show that reuse is beneficial.

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 3B

The essay demonstrates consistent control given its length and its use of a range of punctuation marks. Capitalization is used correctly throughout the essay. Italics are correctly and effectively used for emphasis in “things that cost so much money that *doesn’t* have to be spent.” Commas are also used correctly throughout the essay. For example, “In paragraph two of the article, the author describes” and “These are all examples of people buying new things when they could upgrade old ones, throwing out useful items.” Sentences are varied in style, revealing command of grade-level usage and spelling.

In the passage "Ways to Resue Items" by Amy Livingston and the story "The Junction" by Holly Schindler, reusing items is very important in many ways. "Ways to Reuse Items" describes ways to continue using items after they have been used before, or even after they can't do their original job. This article explains how beneficial it is to you and the environment to reuse items. "The Junction" is a story about a girl who lives with her grandfather, and together they use broken stained glass from a damaged church and use it to decorate their own house, and it represents the fun that can come from reusing items instead of throwing them out.

In paragraph two of the article, the author describes everything people do everyday that helps pollute the Earth, as well as things that cost so much money that *doesn't* have to be spent. These are all examples of people buying new things when they could upgrade old ones, throwing out useful items that could still be super effective, and all these actions that people make which negatively affect the environment and cost lots of money. The author writes, "All this waste is costly, both for us and the environment. We could all stretch our dollars much further by using the same item many times, rather than just once. And because we'd be buying less, we'd cut down on our use of energy and natural resources as well. So whenever you choose to reuse, you're making your life greener and cheaper at the same time." This paragraph shows the damage which we do to the environment, as well as the money we strip away from ourselves by performing these uselss things that we have the capability to prevent. It also gives an example of the effects that make reusing worth it.

Later in the text of "Ways to Reuse Items," it reads, "Often when you reuse an item, you're continuing to utilize it for the same purpose. For example, a cloth shopping bag makes yet another trip to the store; an old computer is upgraded; a sweater that's too small is donate to the thrift shop so a smaller person can wear it." The text goes on to say, "But sometimes, an item just can't do its original job anymore. When that happens, there are two things you can do: either throw it out, or put it to a new use. An old Macintosh computer that can't handle today's software becomes an aquarium; a sweater with moth-eaten sleeves is cut down to make a vest." All these examples show how people could reuse items and how it is important to do so in order to help the environment and yourself.

This is what the two people in "The Junction" perform, which is called creative reuse. Auggie and Gus find broken stained glass of an old damaged church, and decide that they can do something with it. In paragraph nine of "The Junction," Auggie says, "I know tht glass has already been used once. But maybe we could use it, too." She goes on to say, "Maybe that glass might like to find a new home in a new window." This shows Auggie's awareness that people should try and reuse, and it explains her hope that reusing the glass could be a good idea to give the glass a place to decorate their house.

The two of them begin to put up the glass on their windows, and by the end their house is decorated beautifully because of Auggie's idea to reuse the glass. In the last three paragraphs, the author describes Auggie and Gus looking at their creation which they have accomplished by reusing the glass. "When we're done, we race each other to the end of the front yard. 'It's like looking straight into a kaleidoscope,' I say. 'The way all those brightly colored pieces shimmer in the sunlight.' Only it's not a kaleidoscope. It's where we live." This final part shows that reusing the glass was worth it. Their house is decorated, and they've saved plenty of money as well as helped keep the environment safe.

Not only do people save money and help the planet when they resuse items, but sometimes it could end up like Auggie and Gus's creation, and it can become a pure work of art and joy.

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Idea Development—Score Point 4

The essay focuses on three benefits of reuse (saving money, being creative, and showing beauty) and selects effective evidence from both passages to show how to counteract “humans’ massive amount of waste.” There is some repetition of language in multiple uses of the word “states”; however, the writing does express ideas clearly and connects to the task: “Reusing also is a [source] for creative thought. . . . a [beautiful] way to represent your effort. . . . You won’t regret it.” Pairing of quoted material in the body paragraphs reveals some effective organization, as do the functional transitions “To begin with,” “Furthermore,” and “In conclusion.” Although the details provided are stronger than the explanations given to support how reuse is beneficial, there is full awareness of the task and of the explanatory mode of writing.

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 3C

The essay demonstrates control of conventions across a variety of skills. There are some minor errors, primarily in spelling (e.g., “beatiful,” “sorce”), but a complex understanding of punctuation is demonstrated by use of single quotation marks inside quotes to indicate dialogue (e.g., The author states, “‘I know that glass has already been used once,’ I say.”). The beginnings of sentences before quotations are varied, showing appropriate grade-level awareness of sentence construction. Overall, the writing shows grade-level control of mechanics.

"We live in a throwaway society." This statment is refering to humans' massive amount of waste. The statment is as of yet true. This planet needs to start reusing. Both "Ways to Reuse Items" and "The Junction", show that reuse is beneficial. First off, reusing can save you loads of money. Reusing is also a creative practice. Lastly, the reusable choice can often give you beatiful results.

To begin with, reusing can save you money. According to "Ways to Reuse Items", in paragraph 6, it says, "If you give it a chance, before long it will become second nature to fill up your water bottle or reach for a cloth napkin instead of a paper one. And once you've watched your trash can become lighter while your wallet stays heavier, you'll never want to go back." In the same article it states, "If you go through a \$7 case of bottled water every week, that's \$364 per year for something you could get out of a tap for less than \$1." (paragraph 7) When it comes to paper napkins, a family of four would "discard 4,300 napkins in a year - roughly \$65 worth. That same family could buy a dozen cloth napkins for \$10 and reuse them over and over. They'd save \$55 just in the first year, produce less trash, and save trees." (paragraph 7)

Furthermore, reusing can be a creative inititve. In "The Junction" by Holly Schindler, Auggie and Gus come up with the creative idea of reusing stained glass in a window. The author states, "'I know that glass has already been used once,' I say. 'But maybe we could use it, too... Maybe that glass might like to find a new home in a new window.'" (paragraph 9) In "Ways to Reuse Items", the author comes up with a list of creative projects that involve reusing. "An empty milk jug also has lots of uses. You can cut off the top to make a storage bucket with a built-in handle." (paragraph 11) The author also states that mesh bags can be used to, "make a sarage bag for bath toys, which allows them to drip dry when bath time is over." (paragraph 11)

Finally, reusing is often beautiful. In paragraph 20 of "The Junction", Auggie describes Gus in the light of their new project by saying, "With his arms held out, the colored light dances off the sleeves of his white shirt so that he looks like a lit-up Christmas tree." Again in "The Junction", after Gus and Auggie make a new walkway out of the reused glass, Auggie says that, "It's like looking straight into a kaleidoscope, '... The way all those brightly colored pieces shimmer in the sunlight.'" (paragraph 31) When talking about possible projects, "Ways to Reuse Items" says, "So for instance, if you need a hat rack, you might spot a big branch out in the yard and think, "Aha!" An hour later, the branch is stripped of bark and mounted on your wall, and you have a unique hat rack that will be the envy of your friends." (paragraph 13)

In conclusion, both these passages clearly support the idea that reusing is beneficial. To start with, reusing habits save you money. Reusing also is a source for creative thought. Lastly, reusing is a beautiful way to represent your effort. The next time you can reuse something, do it. You won't regret it.

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Idea Development—Score Point 3

An appropriate selection of evidence from each passage contributes to a moderately developed essay. Focus on how “both texts describe great outcomes after the action of reusing” is evident, but explanations tend to be more general: “The characters in the book can now admire their beautiful work everyday.” Some repetition contributes to a more general essay (e.g., “good for the planet . . . the did-good feeling where you know you have been well to the planet”). However, the ideas show sufficient awareness of the task and work together to achieve an adequate expression of ideas about how “both show that reuse is beneficial because they describe ways. . . .” Organization is moderate, with two body paragraphs surrounded by an introduction and a summary in the conclusion.

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 3D

Despite some minor spelling errors and some grammatical awkwardness (e.g., “it is also cool and can be of envy of others”), overall sentence construction is correct. Although there are a few sentence fragments, some are placed for effect (e.g., “All because they didn’t let that old glass from the church go to waste”). When direct quotations are used, they are punctuated correctly. Overall, the essay is sufficiently developed to show control of conventions for the grade level.

"Ways to Reuse Items" and *The Junction* both show that reuse is beneficial because they describe ways that you *can* reuse instead of just explaining about how throwing things away after the first use is bad. This can let us see what we can do even as kids to help the planet and reuse. So that part gets your attention and then they tell us how it is beneficial because both texts describe great outcomes after the action of reusing.

And example of this is from the article "Ways to Reuse Items" is in paragraph #13 when it says, "So for instance, if you need a hat rack, you might spot a big branch out in the yard and think, 'Aha!' An hour later, the branch is stripped of bark and mounted on your wall, and you have a unique hat rack that will be the envy of all your freinds." When the author describes the credit that you receive after reusing, you can realize how reusing is not only beneficial because it is helping the planet, but it is also cool and can be of envy of others. And it is not even that hard, as shown by the article.

Another example of the benefits of reusing being personal to you and also good for the planet is in the passage from *The Junction* when the author describes the happiness you can receive from your success around your house *and* the did-good feeling where you know you have been well to the planet. In paragraph 32, the text states after the look of the beautiful new sidewalk has been compared with a kaleidoscope, "Only, it's not a kaleidoscope - it's where we live." The characters in the book can now admire their beautiful work everyday and it could make them smile. All because they didn't let that old glass from the church go to waste.

To conclude, many people recycle, but when you recycle most people do not really know where their cans and things are going. So they don't see why it is good for *them*. And why it helps *them*, personally. But from both of these texts, we can see that when you reuse, you are not only being a good help to the environment and causing less waste, but you get a new, creative piece of work around your home that you can see, and be proud of. As you can see, reusing has multiple benefits.

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Idea Development—Score Point 2

The central idea is present in a limited selection of details. Explanations tend to rely on summarizing the primary plot points: “So they can use the remaining little pieces of glass as a walk way” and “it says we could ‘stretch our dollars.’” There is little elaboration on these details and few transitions between the paragraphs, which contributes to a basic expression of ideas about how reuse is beneficial. The conclusion is somewhat abrupt, and the idea of reusing tissues is imprecise and not explained. Overall, the essay relays information about the effects that reuse has on money and spending but offers few explanations, demonstrating only a partial awareness of the task.

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 2

The essay contains several fragments, and repetition of language such as “they” and “It says” does not show consistent control. Some commas are incorrectly used (e.g., “Gus and his sister Auggie have a lot of old glass, from glass stained windows” and “How some people do spring wardrobe changes, and throw out clothes”). While the errors are minor, the lack of complexity demonstrates only mostly consistent control for the grade level relative to the length of the response.

"Ways to Reuse Items" and The Junction each show that reuse is beneficial. In the Junction, Gus and his sister Auggie have a lot of old glass, from glass stained windows. They were from somewhere or someone named Hopwell. They decide to use the glass to make windows, saving a lot of money because they used old glass rather than purchasing a new window. And they go to the store and by around 80 pounds of a concrete mixture for 3 dollars. So they can use the remaining little pieces of glass as a walk way.

In "Ways to Reuse items" (Line 1) It says how in modern society, we use reusable items only once. Like using a tissue only once then throwing it out. How some people do spring wardrobe changes, and throw out clothes because they were "So last year." All of this costs a lot of money, because you will have to buy more materials, because you only used them once when you could find a lot more use out of them. In line 2 it says we could "stretch our dollars" if we used an item more than once.

Both of these paragraphs show that if we reuse something, whether it be broken glass or tissues, we can save money.

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Idea Development—Score Point 1

There is minimal awareness of the task; the essay identifies minimal detail from the article and the passage to support “why I think reusing things are very good or [beneficial].” Only ideas from the article are referenced; the quote attributed to the passage is from the article. While there is some sense of the concept that you can be happier if you reuse, there is little writing to organize the ideas and few explanations to extend the evidence.

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 1

The writing lacks control of sentences (e.g., “it says you can recycle clothing and other things so you can wear it more or someone else can”). Repetitious language and sentence structures show little evidence of control for the grade level, particularly given the essay’s insufficient length.

In the text of "Ways to Reuse Items" and "The Junction" it gives us many reasons as to why reusing items is cheaper and more beneficial to the world. In the "Ways to Reuse Items" it says you can save almost \$364 per year just from water bottles! It also says you can save \$65 on napkins. That is a lot of money on things you can reuse. In "The Junction" it says you can recycle clothing and other things so you can wear it more or someone else can. It also says that it is hard to stop wasting but after you start you are more happy and healthy. That is why I think reusing things are very good or beneficial.

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Idea Development—Score Point 0

Rather than focusing on the task and the provided texts, the response minimally addresses waste and plastic use. There is no subject for “because it will be easier for the worlds use,” making no connection to how the article or passage shows that reuse is beneficial. Therefore, the response is not related to the prompt.

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 0

Punctuation and capitalization are completely missing, and meaning is often lost as a result. Unclear sentence construction (“because were burning stuff thats later”) and informal word choice (“gonna”) does not demonstrate grade-level control. The response does not show grade-level command of conventions or mechanics.

because it will be easier for the worlds use of plastic because were burning stuff thats later is gonna go on to become nothing at all so whats the point of wasting

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