

2025 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 others supported an individual's goals as described in the passage; use information from the passage to support the explanation.

This item can be found in the released item sets on the [MCAS Resource Center](#).

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.**

Based on *The Boy Who Invented TV*, write an essay that explains how people in Philo's life supported his passion for working with technological devices. Be sure to use information from 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 present and/or 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

The essay provides an insightful and fully developed explanation of how people in Philo's life supported his passion for working with technological devices. It is skillfully organized across multiple paragraphs with meaningful evidence about the people who helped Philo pursue his passion. The first body paragraph points out how investors trusted in Philo and provided financing for his model television: "He needed help with funding and he couldn't have done it without outside help." In addition, the second body paragraph states that Philo's father and Mr. Tolman taught him about history and technological advancements, allowing Philo to "become far greater than he could imagine." People also listened to Philo's "endless ideas" and provided a "supporting audience" with whom he could share information. There is a rich expression of ideas and a full awareness of the task and mode.

Standard English Conventions 3A

The essay demonstrates control of a variety of sentence structures, and quotations are correctly integrated: "The passage states, 'He started tutoring Philo, coming in early and leaving late.'" Minor errors, such as "Philo had many idea that he needed was feedback on," do not detract from meaning. Consistent control of standard English conventions is evident, relative to the length and complexity of the essay.

If there was a race to see who would make the first flying car first, would you join it? The passage "The Boy Who Invented TV" By Kathleen Krull tells the story about an extremely smart boy named Philo Taylor Farnsworth who made the first television set. He was a bright and creative child since a young age and as he got older he only shone brighter and brighter. He would end up learning about a device that could send images and sounds through screen and would work hard and soon be the first person to create that device, but he didn't only help himself, but he also needed help from outside sources. The people in Philo Taylor Farnsworth's life supported his passion for working with technological devices by funding him to help with his experiments and research, teaching him new ideas, and listening to his vast ideas.

The first way that people in Philo's life supported his passion for working with technological devices was by funding him. Philo needed money to come up with the first TV because he knew the funds would be costly. He would need help from people in order to do that. One example from the text that shows this is, "The two businessmen exchanged looks, then agreed to put up \$6,000 so Philo could build the first model. They gave him a year to make it work" (section 49). This shows that he was trusted enough to make the first television set by the end of the year. It also shows that he needed help with funding and he couldn't have done it without outside help. Another piece of evidence showing this is, "Still, Philo was able to find new investors, who gave him another year" (section 54). This conveys how much Philo needed investors and money to help him create the first television. Furthermore, it shows everything that he went through to get support and create the television. To conclude everything that has been stated so far, one way that people in Philo's life supported him was by funding him.

Another way that people in Philo's life supported his passion for working with technological devices is by teaching him things. Philo obviously couldn't learn everything on his own and would need various outside sources. He needed help from many people to help him become as brilliant as he did. One piece of evidence from the text that shows this is, "On clear summer nights, as they lay in the grass and gazed at the stars, his father told him about Alexander Graham Bell and the telephone, Thomas Edison and the phonograph" (sections 13). This shows that in order to learn more about history and technological advancements, Philo needed to learn from outside sources. This also shows that by having educational support it would mold him into the smart person he was known as. Another piece of evidence from the text that shows this is, "Mr. Tolman, the senior chemistry teacher, noticed that this freshman devoured books the way other students ate popcorn. He started tutoring Philo, coming in early and leaving late" (section 36). This illustrates how much help he needed to become as smart of a person that he became. It also illustrates how outside support would push him to become far greater than he could imagine. To conclude everything that has been stated, another way people in Philo's life supported his passion was by teaching him new things.

The last way that people in Philo's life supported him was by listening to him. Philo had many ideas that he needed feedback on. He had endless ideas and would always talk about them. One piece of evidence that supports this is, "Philo had been aching to discuss the idea he'd gotten in the potato field with someone who might understand. One day he finally told Mr. Tolman. All over the blackboard, he drew diagrams of his television" (sections 39). This shows that Philo's many ideas allowed him creativity and that his mind most likely had more ideas than he thought. Furthermore it illustrates how outside support can help him improve on his ideas. He would always need support and it didn't end at just telling one person so he would need to tell multiple. Another piece of evidence from the text showing this is, "Philo's latest hero was Albert Einstein, with his controversial new theory of relativity. Now Philo stood at the front of the room, enthusiastically explaining it to his classmates, step by step" (section 37). This shows how sharing ideas can help support Philo by giving him a chance to express himself. Furthermore it shows how he could create an encouraging attitude using his voice and having a supporting audience. In conclusion, one way that people in Philo's life supported him was by listening to his ideas.

To conclude my essay and everything that has been said in it, the people in Philo Taylor Farnsworth's life supported his passion for working with technological devices by funding him, teaching him new things, and by listening to his ideas. He needed outside support and he isn't the only one who needs it. How do the people in your life support you and your passion?

Idea Development—Score Point 5B

The essay is a fully developed explanation of how people in Philo's life supported his passion for working with technological devices. It is skillfully organized, and each body paragraph begins with a short, clear topic sentence that explains how a particular person helped Philo. The introduction and conclusion clearly express the main points of the essay. The quoted evidence about Pem, Mr. Tolman, and Philo's dad is well-chosen and skillfully explained. For example, a quotation about Mr. Tolman tutoring Philo is followed by analysis: "This implies that Mr. Tolman supports Philo's love for science and technology so he decides to help him so he can get even better at it." The essay demonstrates a full awareness of the task and mode.

Standard English Conventions 3B

The essay demonstrates consistent control of a variety of sentence structures and of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Punctuation is correct when citing text evidence, as in this example: "The text states, 'Pem helped out.'" The length and complexity of the essay provides an opportunity to demonstrate control of grade-level standard English conventions.

The passage "The Boy who invented TV", by Kathleen Krull, is about a boy, Philo Taylor Farnsworth, who as a child has a love for anything that was mechanical. At age eleven, he moves from Utah to a farm in Idaho with an electric generator which amazes him. While doing chores on the farm, he is inspired when he is plowing a potato field and sees parallel lines, which inspire him and give him a way to make the invention of the television. People in Philo's life who support his passion for technological devices are his friend Pem, his teacher, Mr. Tollman, and his father.

First, his friend Pem supports his passion for working with technological devices. Pem and Philo both liked technology. The text states, "'Wasn't it funny, Philo remarked to Pem, how they liked to watch the radio even though there was nothing to see?'" (Krull paragraph forty-five). This shows that like Philo, Pem is also interested in technology like the radio. Pem is interested in the radio, so when they talk about technology, Pem can understand him, and support him because Pem likes technology like the radio, and so does Philo and she supports his thoughts about technology. Pem also works with him on his TV. The text states, "Pem helped out. Their first lab was their dining room table in Hollywood. Pem learned to use a precision welder to make tube elements—everything had to be built from scratch." (Krull paragraph fifty-two). This proves that Pem supports Philo because she is helping him with his experiment. If she did not support him, she would not be helping him, but because she does she helps him with it.

Secondly, Mr. Tollman, Philo's science teacher supports him. Mr. Tollman tutors Philo because of his love and understanding for science and technology. The passage states, "He started tutoring Philo, coming in early and leaving late." (Krull paragraph thirty-two). This implies that Mr. Tollman supports Philo's love for science and technology, so he decides to help him so he can get even better at it. Mr. Tollman loves Philo's love for science and technology so he supports Philo and helps him. Also, Mr. Tollman supports Philo and wants him to go to college. The author states, "The only way he could think of helping was to encourage Philo to go on to college." (Krull paragraph forty-one). This demonstrates that Mr. Tollman supports Philo and wants him to go to college so he can get even better at technology. He supports Philo's love for technology and science, so he wants him to proceed with his love for the subjects and go to college.

Finally, Philo's dad supports his love for technological devices. His dad was always proud of him when he made a technological accomplishment. The author states, "Philo's father was enormously proud of him. From then on, he was the Farnsworths' electrical engineer." (Krull paragraph twenty-six). This shows that Philo's dad supported his love for technological devices because when Philo was able to fix another electrical generator breakdown all by himself and his dad was very proud of him. His dad supported his love for technology so when there was another electrical problem, he would have Philo fix it because he knew Philo loved fixing problems involving electricity and supported his love for technology and dealing with electricity. In addition, his dad also told him about inventors and their technological improvements with Philo. The text states, "Philo's father shared his wonder. On clear summer nights, as they lay in the grass and gazed at the stars, his father told him about Alexander Graham Bell and the telephone, Thomas Edison and the phonograph." (Krull paragraph thirteen). This demonstrates that Philo's dad would talk with Philo about inventors and what technology they made. He supports Philo's love for technology, so he talks about technology with him because he knows it is what Philo loves.

In conclusion, Pem, Mr. Tollman, and Philo's dad, are people in Philo's life who support his love for technological devices. Pem supports Philo by being interested in technology too and understanding his thoughts, and by helping him out with his TV experiment. Mr. Tollman supports Philo by tutoring him and helping him know more about science and technology, and encouraging him to go to college to proceed with his love for technology. Philo's dad supports him by letting him fix electrical problems because he knows Philo loves technology and electricity, and he talks about technology and inventors with Philo because he knows that is what Philo likes and supports him for his likes. Clearly, Philo has good people around him who support his interest in technology.

Idea Development—Score Point 4

The central idea of how people in Philo's life supported his passion for working with technological devices is well developed in the essay. The essay is effectively organized with functional transitions, such as "Secondly" and "Las[t]ly," and with a clear introduction and conclusion. The body paragraphs identify how certain people provided support to Philo and include well-chosen quotations. Explanations are effective in clarifying how the contributions of specific people helped advance Philo's work: "You see with out their donation he couldn't have built the first TV. He wouldn't have learned from the power surge!" There is a full awareness of the task and mode.

Standard English Conventions 3C

The essay shows consistent control of a variety of sentence structures and is developed enough to show control of standard English conventions relative to its length and complexity. It contains some errors in spelling, punctuation, and usage, as seen in the last sentence: "All in all their are many great poeople who helped Philo build the TV but the 3 most important are, his Dad, Pem, and the unnamed Businessman." Nevertheless, the overall meaning is clear.

Ever think about what life without TV might be like? Philo knows this well. Just a young boy who would invent TV. No one important. A small lad with big dreams and a love electronics. The Passage "The Boy Who Invented TV" shows that many people helped young Philo on his way including his father, Pern, and a few unnamed businessmen.

To start of Philo's dad was a big part of his scientific trect to TV la la land. To start his dad was a bit of a computer geek himself. section 13 shows this. " Philo's father shared his wonder. On clear summer nights, as they lay in the grass and gazed at the stars, his father told him about Alexander Graham Bell and the telephone, Thomas Edison and the phonograph. Inventors—these became Philo's heroes." If his father hadn't told him about the other famous scientists Philo might not have become one himself. Not to mention the fact that Philo's father really incoraged him to do his best. For example "After yet another breakdown, Philo set out to fix the machine himself. He took it apart, cleaned it, put it back together, and pressed the "on" button. It worked. 26 Philo's father was enormously proud of him. From then on, he was the Farnsworths' electrical engineer." This show how much his helped him become the man who would make TV. All in all Philo's dad was a big part in helping get into his passion for working with technological devices.

Secondly a childhood friend of his named Pern helped him out big time with the invention of the TV and the invention of Philo's fasination with machines. For example the text states, " Pern helped out. Their first lab was their dining room table in Hollywood. Pern learned to use a precision welder to make tube elements—everything had to be built from scratch." This shows that Pern really helped out Philo with his inventions. She also helped by just being there for him , Helping when needed, stoping him when needed, etc. So you can see quite clearly that Pern helped Philo greatly by keeping in science and just hanging out with him.

Lasly the scientists in the story helped Philo in his walk to the land of tech. In the story "The Boy Who Invented TV" it states, " The two businessmenexchanged looks, then agreed to put up \$6,000 so Philo could build the first model. They gave him a year to make it work." You see with out their donation he couldn't have built the first TV. He wouldn't have learned from the power surge! So the donation of these businessmen kept Philo working hard to build TV. As you can see the businessmen helped out Philo greatly.

So now thanks to Philo and all the others who helped them out, we will always have TV. You won't have to experience a world without it, I think. All in all their are many great poeple who helped Philo build the TV but the 3 most imporant are, his Dad, Pern, and the unnamed Businessmen

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Idea Development—Score Point 3

The central idea of how people in Philo's life supported his passion for working with technological devices is moderately developed in the essay. The body paragraphs focus on interactions with Philo's father, Mr. Tolman, and Pem. Appropriate evidence is selected, but the explanation of how each person influenced Philo is general: "Mr. Tolman tries to his greatest ability to help Philo with his television idea, and takes extra time out of his day to tutor him." The essay demonstrates an adequate expression of ideas and sufficient awareness of the task.

Standard English Conventions 3D

This essay shows control of a variety of sentence structures. The writing demonstrates consistent control of grammar, usage and mechanics, including italicizing the title of the passage, *The Boy Who Invented TV*, and using commas after the transition words "Firstly," "Secondly," "Finally," and "In conclusion." Minor errors do not impact the overall meaning of the essay.

In *The Boy Who Invented TV*, the people in Philo's life supported his passion for working with technological devices.

Firstly, Philo's father was supportive. The passage states "Noticing Philo's interest in anything mechanical, his father took the three-year-old boy to see a train at a station" (paragraph 8). Also, in the passage "Philo's father shared his wonder. On clear summer nights, as they lay in the grass and gazed at the stars, his father told him about Alexander Graham Bell and the telephone, Thomas Edison and the phonograph. Inventors—these became Philo's heroes" (paragraph 13). Philo's father always encouraged him and tried his best to help Philo learn. After Philo fixes the machine, his "father was enormously proud of him. From then on, he was the Farnsworths' electrical engineer" (paragraph 26). Philo's father made sure that Philo was recognized, for he wanted his son to be proud of himself.

Secondly, Philo's high school chemistry teacher, Mr. Tolman, tried his best to help Philo. For example, the text states "Mr. Tolman...noticed that this freshman devoured books the way other students ate popcorn. He started tutoring Philo, coming in early and leaving late" (paragraph 36). Additionally, the passage states "The only way he could think of helping was to encourage Philo to go on to college" (paragraph 41). Mr. Tolman tries to his greatest ability to help Philo with his television idea, and takes extra time out of his day to tutor him.

Finally, Pem helped Philo in subtle but important ways. In the text, it says "Pem helped out. Their first lab was their dining room table in Hollywood. Pem learned to use a precision welder to make tube elements—everything had to be built from scratch" (paragraph 52). Similarly, the passage states "When they needed a break, they went to one of the new talking movies" (paragraph 52). Pem took the time to learn to use a difficult tool to assist Pem in creating the television, and she also was there for him emotionally when he needed it.

In conclusion, Philo had loads of support for his passion with technology from many people throughout his life.

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Idea Development—Score Point 2

The central idea of how people in Philo's life supported his passion for working with technological devices is somewhat developed in the essay. Philo's teacher is recognized as being supportive, but the detail that he encouraged Philo to attend college is repeated several times, showing a basic expression of ideas. The essay also identifies Philo's friend, Pem, as another person who supported his passion, but the explanation of how she helped is limited. For example, the essay states that Pem would "sometimes help build his technological ideas with him" but does not provide additional details such as how she helped, by learning to use a welder and making tube elements. The essay begins with an introductory paragraph but ends somewhat abruptly, revealing limited organization. There is a partial awareness of the task and mode.

Standard English Conventions 2

The essay demonstrates mostly consistent control of standard English conventions. The essay contains scattered instances of missing capitalization (philo), minor spelling errors ("collage" and "encuraged"), and missing commas (pam Gardener the girl who was next door to him), but they do not detract from meaning.

Many people can support others dreams but did people support Philo's idea for a tv? Philo created the tv's and now we have somewhere to watch our favorite shows! When he made this idea did people support him? Yes, people also supported his passion for working with technological devices.

One person who supported philo was his teacher. Philo would tell his teacher his ideas and his teacher supported him. One day he told his teacher about the idea of televison and he couldn't really think of any other way to help him but collage. So his teacher encouraged him to go to collage. In the passage "The Boy Who Invented TV" it says " All over the blackboard, he drew diagrams of his televison. His teacher was boggled." in the same passage it also says " The only way he could think of helping was to encourage Philo to go on to collage" Philo's teacher helped him with all his crazy ideas on his tech devices and supported his passion for them.

Another person who help or supported Philo was pam Gardener the girl who was next door to him. She would sometimes help build his technological ideas with him. In the passge " The Boy Who invented TV" it says " Pam helped out. Their first lab was their dining room table" it also says " pam who took note about everything, labeled this experiment" Pam also supported his passion and helped Philo with his wild ideas about technological devices too.

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Idea Development—Score Point 1

The response addresses how people in Philo's life supported his passion for working with technological devices, but the central idea is minimally developed. The details about Philo's father, his neighbors, and his parents are insufficiently explained. For example, the detail that "his dad took him to a train station at 3 years old" is not developed. Additionally, evidence showing that the train engineer explained how trains work and how this information impacted Philo is not provided. The response lacks transitions between ideas and shows minimal awareness of the task. With only four sentences in the response, it demonstrates minimal organization.

Standard English Conventions 1

There is little variety in sentence structure in the response. The response contains few errors, but the writing is not sufficiently developed or of sufficient length to show control of grammar, usage, and mechanics. It is too brief to demonstrate more than minimal control of standard English conventions.

People in Philo's life supported him by, first his dad took him to a train station at 3 years old because he loved mechanical objects. His neighbors also let him use their phonograph to understand how it worked. His parents got a phonograph just for him to use. These are the ways that people helped Philo achieve his dreams.

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Idea Development—Score Point 0

The response references a boy and an invention, but it does not provide an explanation of how people in Philo's life supported his passion for working with technological devices.

Standard English Conventions 0

The response shows no evidence of control of sentence structure or standard English conventions. Capitalization and punctuation are missing, and it is insufficient in length.

the boy inventid a airplane it can fly and it can go around the world and over the ocean

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