Informative/Explanatory Essay

30 Minutes

- Carefully read the essay topic and sources.
- Write an essay that addresses all concerns that relate to the topic.
- You MUST write on the given topic.
- You MUST include Specific Details, Examples and References to the sources.
- Your essay MUST be well organized.
Part IIb: Source-Based Essay

Time: 30 Minutes
Directions

The following assignment requires you to use information from two sources to discuss the most important concerns that relate to a specific issue. When paraphrasing or quoting from the source, cite each source used by referring to the author's last name, the title, or any other clear identifier. Allow 30 minutes for your essay.

Assignment
Read the two passages carefully and then write an essay in which you identify the most important concerns regarding the reformation of the French government in the revolutionary year of 1789 and explain why they are important. Your essay must draw on information from both of the sources. In addition, you may draw on your own experiences, observations, or reading. Be sure to cite the sources, whether you are paraphrasing or directly quoting.

The French Revolution was a period of social and political upheaval in France from 1789 to 1799 that developed from the dissatisfaction of the lower classes with the privileges and wealth of the upper classes and the church establishment in Paris (encouraged by the American Revolution). The Estates General, comprised of the clergy, the nobility, and the common people, met in May of 1789 at the invitation of King Louis XVI to seek solutions to the unrest of the populace. The following decree was one of the documents produced after that historic meeting, and the subsequent document was British essayist Edmund Burke's response to the proceedings in 1790.
Source 1

Decree Abolishing the Feudal System Passed in the National Assembly, August 11, 1789
The National Assembly hereby completely abolishes the feudal system. It decrees that, among the existing rights and dues... all those originating in or representing real or personal serfdom shall be abolished...

The president of the [French National] Assembly shall be commissioned to ask... the recall of those sent to the galleys or exiled, simply for violations of the hunting regulations, as well as for the release of those at present imprisoned for offenses of this kind, and the dismissal of such cases as are now pending.

All manorial courts are hereby suppressed without indemnification. But the magistrates of these courts shall continue to perform their functions until such time as the National Assembly shall provide for the establishment of a new judicial system.

Tithes of every description, as well as the dues which have been substituted for them... are abolished...

The sale of judicial and municipal offices shall be abolished forthwith. Justice shall be dispensed for free. Nevertheless the magistrates at present holding such offices shall continue to exercise their functions and to receive their emoluments until the Assembly shall have made provision for indemnifying them...

All citizens, without distinction of birth, are eligible to any office or dignity, whether ecclesiastical, civil, or military; and no profession shall imply any descent in rank...
Source 2

From Edmund Burke, Reflections on the French Revolution (1790)
You might, if you pleased, have profited of our example and have given to your recovered freedom a correspondent dignity. Your privileges, though discontinued, were not lost to memory. . . . In your old states you possessed that variety of parts corresponding with the various descriptions of which your community was happily composed, you had all that combination and all that opposition of interests; you had that action and counteraction which, in the natural and in the political world, from the reciprocal struggle of discordant powers, draws out the harmony of the universe. These opposed and conflicting interests which you considered as so great a blemish in your old and in our present constitution interpose a salutary check to all precipitate resolutions. They render deliberation a matter, not of choice, but of necessity; they make all change a subject of compromise, which naturally begets moderation. . . .

You had all these advantages in your ancient states, but you chose to act as if you had never been molded into civil society and had everything to begin anew. You began ill, because you began by despising everything that belonged to you. You set up your trade without a capital. If the last generations of your country appeared without much luster in your eyes, you might have passed them by and derived your claims from a more early race of ancestors. Under a pious predilection for those ancestors, your imaginations would have realized in them a standard of virtue and wisdom beyond the vulgar practice of the hour; and you would have risen with the example to whose imitation you aspired. Respecting your forefathers, you would have been taught to respect yourselves. You would not have chosen to consider the French as a people of yesterday, as a nation of lowborn servile wretches until the emancipating year of 1789.
Sample Response for the Informative/Explanatory Essay

Compare your essay to the Sample Essay that follows
use information from both sources to convey why the concerns discussed in the sources are important.
- display satisfactory organization of ideas, include adequate details, and link the two sources.
- exhibit a competent level of skill in the usage of the English language and the general capacity to employ an assortment of sentence structures.
- build sentences with several minor errors that generally do not confuse the intended meaning.
- cite both sources when quoting or paraphrasing.

A score 3 writer will
- create an adequate composition that basically addresses the audience and given task but conveys the importance of the concerns in only a limited way.
- use information from only one source or inadequately from both sources to convey why the concerns discussed in the sources are important.
- display some organization of ideas and include some supporting details.
- exhibit an adequate level of skill in the usage of the English language and a basic capacity to employ an assortment of sentence structures.
- build sentences with some minor and major errors that may obscure the intended meaning.
- cite sources when quoting or paraphrasing.

A score 2 writer will
- fail to explain why the concerns are important.
- use information from only one source poorly or fail to convey why the concerns discussed in the sources are important.
- display little organization of ideas, have inconsistent supporting details, and fail to link the two sources.
- demonstrate a less than adequate level of skill in the usage of the English language and a limited capacity to employ a basic assortment of sentence structures.
- build sentences with a few major errors that may confuse the intended meaning.
- fail to cite sources when quoting or paraphrasing.

A score 1 writer will
- display illogical organization of ideas, include confusing or no supporting details, and fail to adequately address the concerns raised by the sources.
- include confusing or irrelevant details and examples, and few or no supporting references.
- exhibit a limited level of skill in the usage of the English language and little or no capacity to employ basic sentence structure.
- build sentences with many major errors that obscure or confuse the intended meaning.

Score 6 Essay

When the representatives of the Third Estate declared themselves the National Assembly on June 13, 1789, the period of radical social change known as the French Revolution began. Chief among the grievances of the Third Estate, composed of commoners, were the traditional rights and privileges of the nobility known collectively as the "feudal system." The philosophes of the French Enlightenment had long blamed these rights and privileges for France's economic and social backwardness; moreover, they struck progressive thinkers as patently unfair and contrary to the natural equality of all men.

The National Assembly specifically targeted the special legal privileges enjoyed by the nobility and clergy. First of all, the condition of serfdom (that is, the legal status of being bound to the land) was abolished. The nobility's right to administer private justice, a right remaining from the Middle Ages, was revoked; thereafter, the law was to be administered impartially by professional civil servants beholden to none. In the same vein, the sale of judicial offices was interdicted, ending the corruption and cronyism related to this system, as well as the nobility's effective immunity to prosecution.
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Tithes, or private taxes paid to lords and the Church, were likewise abolished, as was the nobility’s exclusive right to hunt game; wild animals were henceforth to be regarded as public property and not the privilege of a few. Prisoners sent to row the galleys for the crime of poaching were to be freed. Finally, the National Assembly opened the way to true meritocracy (“All citizens, without distinction of birth, are eligible to any office or dignity”) and removed the prohibitions for the nobility to practice any trade save going into the military (“no profession shall imply any descent in rank. . .”).

Edmund Burke, a British conservative, harshly criticized the National Assembly’s actions. Hearing back to the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Burke, while not denying that there had been abuses of power, questioned the wholesale overthrow of the class system in France. Rather, says Burke, it would have been better to restore ancient liberties while keeping the structure of society intact: “You might, if you pleased, have profited of our example and have given to your recovered freedom a corresponding dignity. Your privileges, though discontinued, were not lost to memory.” Rather, the French sought to fashion society from whole cloth: “You had all these advantages in your ancient states, but you chose to act as if you had never been molded into civility and had everything to begin anew. You began ill, because you began by despising everything that belonged to you.” By keeping to traditional forms, this reformation of government, in Burke’s opinion, could forge a productive future and avoid anarchy. Specifically, Burke says that a balance of powers is necessary for a truly democratic society: “you had that action and counteraction which, in the natural and in the political world, from the reciprocal struggle of discordant powers, draws out the harmony of the universe.” However, the National Assembly chose to place everything under the control of itself. Unfortunately, the course chosen by the National Assembly would not only destroy the organs of government and “the reciprocal struggle of discordant powers,” but strip the nation of all respect for social forms and dismantle civil society itself: “Respecting your forefathers, you would have been taught to respect yourselves. You would not have chosen to consider the French as a people of yesterday, as a nation of lowborn servile wretches until the emancipating year of 1789.” Burke was correct in that France, deprived of its social structure as an anchor, quickly descended into anarchy and the Terror; however, he neglected one critical point: Feudalism and the elite stranglehold on the economy had by and large disappeared from England by 1688, whereas they remained present in France. No progress could be made without first dismantling this system.

Comments on the Sample Source-Based Essay That Received a Score of 6
This is an outstanding essay. The author has clearly explained why the topic is important, referencing both sources, and clearly, effectively, and logically organized the ideas shown therein. The author has linked these ideas together into a thematic essay on the subject of the actions of the French National Assembly and Edmund Burke’s reaction to them and has additionally brought in a great deal of outside information. The use of the English language is exemplary, with a wide variety of error-free sentences that clearly convey the intended meaning. Both sources are sufficiently and accurately cited.

Score 4 Essay
Every nation needs a government. However, people often disagree on how the nation is to be governed. One great disagreement in history took the form of the French Revolution. In the French Revolution, the National Assembly tried to abolish feudalism. First, they did away with real and personal serfdom. A serf is a sort of peasant. Also, those who were sent to the galleys for the crime of hunting were set free. They also did away with the manorial courts and forbid anyone to sell jobs in the justice system. The National Assembly also tried to erase the class system by saying that “All citizens, without distinction of birth, are eligible to any
Informative/Explanatory Essay

30 Minutes

- Carefully read the essay topic and sources.
- Write an essay that addresses all concerns that relate to the topic.
- You MUST write on the given topic.
- You MUST include Specific Details, Examples and References to the sources.
- Your essay MUST be well organized.
Part IIb: Source-Based Essay

Assignment
Read the two passages carefully and then write an essay in which you identify the most important concerns regarding the debates concerning the adoption of the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution. Your essay must draw on information from both of the sources. In addition, you may draw on your own experiences, observations, or reading. Be sure to cite the sources whether you are paraphrasing or directly quoting.

Source 1

"John DeWitt" (pseudonym), Anti-Federalist Paper #2, Massachusetts, October 27, 1787
That the want of a Bill of Rights to accompany this proposed System, is a solid objection to it, provided there is nothing exceptionable in the System itself, I do not assert... A people, entering into society, surrender such a part of their natural rights, as shall be necessary for the existence of that society. They are so precious in themselves, that they would never be parted with, did not the preservation of the remainder require it. They are entrusted in the hands of those, who are very willing to receive them, who are naturally fond of exercising of them, and whose passions are always striving to make a bad use of them. They are conveyed by a written compact, expressing those which are given up, and the mode in which those reserved shall be secured. Language is so easy of explanation, and so difficult is it by words to convey exact ideas, that the party to be governed cannot be too explicit. The line cannot be drawn with too much precision and accuracy. The necessity of this accuracy and this precision increases in proportion to the greatness of the sacrifice and the numbers who make it. That a Constitution for the United States does not require a Bill of Rights, when it is considered, that a Constitution for an individual State would, I cannot conceive. The difference between them is only in the numbers of the parties concerned they are both a compact between the Governors and Governed the letter of which must be adhered to in discussing their powers: That which is not expressly granted, is of course retained.

The Compact itself is a recital upon paper of that proportion of the subject's natural rights, intended to be parted with, for the benefit of adverting to it in case of dispute. Miserable indeed would be the situation of those individual States who have not prefixed to their Constitutions a Bill of Rights... those powers which the people by their Constitutions expressly give them; they enjoy by positive grant; and those remaining ones, which they never meant to give them, and which the Constitutions say nothing about; they enjoy by tacit implication, so that by one means and by the other, they became possessed of the whole... That insatiable thirst for unconditional control over our fellow-creatures, and the facility of sounds to convey essentially different ideas, produced the first Bill of Rights ever prefixed to a Frame of Government. The people, although fully sensible that they reserved every title of power they did not expressly grant away, yet afraid that the words made use of, to express those rights so granted might convey more than they originally intended.
they chose at the same moment to express in different language those rights which the agreement did not include, and which they never designed to part with, endeavoring thereby to prevent any cause for future altercation and the intrusion into society of that doctrine of tacit implication which has been the favorite theme of every tyrant from the origin of all governments to the present day.

**Source 2**

*Alexander Hamilton writing as “Publius,” Federalist Paper #84, “Certain General and Miscellaneous Objections to the Constitution Considered and Answered” (1788)*

It has been several times truly remarked that bills of rights are, in their origin, stipulations between kings and their subjects, abridgements of prerogative in favor of privilege, reservations of rights not surrendered to the prince. . . . It is evident, therefore, that, according to their primitive signification, they have no application to constitutions professedly founded upon the power of the people, and executed by their immediate representatives and servants. Here, in strictness, the people surrender nothing; and as they retain everything they have no need of particular reservations . . .

But a minute detail of particular rights is certainly far less applicable to a Constitution like that under consideration, which is merely intended to regulate the general political interests of the nation, than to a Constitution which has the regulation of every species of personal and private concerns. If, therefore, the loud clamors against the plan of the convention, on this score, are well founded, no epithets of reprobation will be too strong for the constitution of this State. But the truth is, that both of them contain all which, in relation to their objects, is reasonably to be desired.

I go further, and affirm that bills of rights, in the sense and to the extent in which they are contended for, are not only unnecessary in the proposed Constitution, but would even be dangerous. They would contain various exceptions to powers not granted; and, on this very account, would afford a colorable pretext to claim more than were granted. For why declare that things shall not be done which there is no power to do? Why, for instance, should it be said that the liberty of the press shall not be restrained, when no power is given by which restrictions may be imposed? I will not contend that such a provision would confer a regulating power; but it is evident that it would furnish, to men disposed to usurp, a plausible pretense for claiming that power. They might urge with a semblance of reason, that the Constitution ought not to be charged with the absurdity of providing against the abuse of an authority which was not given, and that the provision against restraining the liberty of the press afforded a clear implication, that a power to prescribe proper regulations concerning it was intended to be vested in the national government. This may serve as a specimen of the numerous handles which would be given to the doctrine of constructive powers, by the indulgence of an injudicious zeal for bills of rights.
Sample Response for the Informative/Explanatory Essay

Compare your essay to the Sample Essay that follows
Sample Score 6 Essay
The Bill of Rights—the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution—is a part of American jurisprudence that is today often taken for granted. The Bill of Rights grants such fundamental liberties as the freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and protection against unreasonable search and seizure. However, there was a vigorous debate in the early Republic over whether a Bill of Rights should be adopted. Ironically, it was Alexander Hamilton, author of the Federalist Papers and proponent of a strong central government—the side eventually victorious—that would argue against the adoption of such a bill.

"John de Witt," speaking for the anti-Federalists, raises sound arguments in favor of a bill of rights. Entering into a form of government, by its nature, entails giving up some of one's natural rights. (This train of thought was in keeping with Enlightenment figures such as John Locke.) These rights are so important and fundamental, that one must carefully delineate what powers are allotted to the government, and which retained, or, as he writes, "The line cannot be drawn with too much precision and accuracy." Furthermore, such legislation would prevent any confusion. Anticipating modern debates over the "original intent" of the Founding Fathers, "de Witt" points out that "Language is so easy of explanation, and so difficult is it by words to convey exact ideas, that the party to be governed cannot be too explicit." Thus, the new nation needed a bill of rights to eliminate any ambiguity.

One Federalist argument claimed that a constitutional bill of rights was unnecessary owing to the fact that states already had such verbiage affixed to their own constitutions. De Witt counters this by saying that if states had Bills of Rights, why not the Federal government? To do so would be a check on governmental overreach, and reassure people that they retained all rights not specifically allocated to the Federal government.

In rebutting this, Hamilton, writing for the Federalists, deploys two arguments. First, he makes an appeal to the dignity of the new nation: bills of rights were made between rulers and subjects, and are not suited to a free country of free citizens. This, however, is mere rhetoric, and Hamilton proceeds to the meat of the matter. He points out that the central government was intended to be weak, and thus a Bill of Rights is superfluous: "a minute detail of particular rights is certainly far less applicable to a Constitution like that under consideration... than to a constitution which has the regulation of every species of personal and private concerns." Worse, by explicitly mentioning exceptions to powers not even mentioned, they would "afford a colorable pretext to claim more than were granted." Thus, a bill of rights, Hamilton feared, could lead to emboldened citizens seeking to overstep their granted rights.

The debates over the American Bill of Rights are one of the ironies of history. The very statutes that today ensure our liberties—and which have been expanded by judicial opinion to include contingencies that would have been completely foreign to the Founding Fathers like immigration rights and interracial marriage—were once seen as superfluous and even detrimental to a democratic way of life. Ultimately—in this matter, at least—the Anti-Federalists would prevail, and the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution stand as one of the foundational documents of the Western concept of freedom and liberty.

Comments on the Sample Source-Based Essay That Received a Score of 6
This is an outstanding essay. The author has clearly explained why the topic is important, making reference to both sources, and clearly, effectively, and logically organized the ideas under discussion. The author has linked these ideas together into a thematic and impartial essay on the subject of the debate over the Bill of Rights. She or he clearly understands the issue, and has additionally brought in a great deal of outside information. The use of the English language is exemplary, with a wide variety of error-free sentences that clearly convey the intended meaning. Both sources are extensively and accurately cited. The author furthermore correctly understands the use of
advanced rhetorical techniques like irony and logical fallacies.

Sample Score 4 Essay
From the very beginning, the Bill of Rights, which gives Americans freedom of speech, the freedom of religion, and freedom to own guns has been the subject of the controversy. The two sides of the debate were the Federalists and Anti-Federalists. The Federalists did not want a Bill of Rights, while the Anti-Federalists did.

John de Witt says that when people form governments, they give up some rights. It is therefore important to say which rights are given up, for as he says, "The line cannot be drawn with too much precision and accuracy." He also says that people might be confused as to which rights were given up. A Bill of Rights would help to prevent this confusion. Also, if states had Bills of Rights, why shouldn't the Federal government? This would prevent people from taking too much power, since people naturally want to gain power over other people.

Alexander Hamilton disagrees with this opinion. First, he says that Bills of Rights were made between rulers and subjects. Since Americans are not subjects, they do not need a Bill of Rights. He also says that since the government would not have any powers the Constitution did not grant it, a Bill of Rights is not needed. He is even afraid that giving a Bill of Rights might make the government think it had more power than it really did.

Obviously, the Anti-Federalists won this debate. Still, I feel that that people should listen to Alexander Hamilton today. The government has taken too much power. The Bill of Rights is there to stop the government from over-reaching.

Comments on the Sample Source-Based Essay That Received a Score of 4
This composition satisfactorily explains why the concerns in the topic are important and supports the explanation with specific information and references to both sources. However, though the author is able to deploy information from both sources to discuss the source, he or she does not have a deep historical background. The essay is satisfactorily organized and uses adequate details. The use of English is competent, with some variety in sentence structures. Errors are minor, and do not interfere with general understanding. Finally, the essay writer fails to be completely objective.

Sample Score 1 Essay
Today, the government does a lot of things it shouldn't. The government wants to take away guns (2 Amendment) and make us buy health care even if we like the health care we have right now (1 Amendment). Also the CIA and NSA are spying on us and violating our rights against searching and seizing.

The Founding Fathers came up with the best system of government anywhere. They knew what they were doing. In the Bill of Rights to the Constitution, they insured that we would not have our rights taken away. The problem with America today is that people are not listening to what the Founding Fathers said.

I think that we should go back to the original intent of the Founding Fathers. The USA should be One Nation Under God, Indivisible, With Liberty and Justice.

Comments on the Sample Source-Based Essay That Received a Score of 1
This essay displays an illogical organization of ideas and badly mismanages supporting details. The author shows no understanding of the issues. What details it does bring in are completely irrelevant. It also fails to adequately address the concerns raised by the sources. The level of English usage is poor, at best, and confuses the intended meaning. Finally, it fails to deal with the sources objectively.
Informative/Explanatory Essay

30 Minutes

• Carefully read the essay topic and sources.

• Write an essay that addresses all concerns that relate to the topic.

• You MUST write on the given topic.

• You MUST include Specific Details, Examples and References to the sources.

• Your essay MUST be well organized.
**Part IIB: Source-Based Essay**

*Assignment*

Read the two passages carefully and then write an essay in which you identify the most important concerns regarding the debates concerning stem cell research. Your essay must draw on information from both of the sources. In addition, you may draw on your own experiences, observations, or readings. Be sure to cite the sources whether you are paraphrasing or directly quoting.

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**Source 1**

**An Analysis of Stem Cell Research**

Stem cell research is research using embryonic and "somatic" or "adult" stem cells for the purpose of advancing medicine. This research has been in existence since the beginning of the 20th century, and over the years many breakthroughs have come from it. In 1998, scientists discovered methods to derive stem cells from human embryos. In 2006, researchers made another breakthrough, which involved reprogramming some adult cells in certain conditions to assume a stem cell-like state. Stem cells themselves are useful in medical research because they are at the early state of reproduction, where the cell can either remain a stem cell or become a cell that would be involved in the formation of bones, brain cells, skin, the nervous system, organs, muscles and every other part of the body.

**Benefits of Stem Cell Research**

Theoretically, research points to stem cell research being of great value in medical advancement. At this time, it is not yet clear how much can be done with stem cell research, and the possible benefits are incalculable. It could lead to cures for diabetes or heart disease. It is also seen as a potential resource to help cure cancer, Parkinson's disease, or even to regenerate a severed spinal cord and allow someone to walk who has been confined to a wheelchair. Although this sounds miraculous, it will not happen without extensive work and time.

Currently, adult stem cell therapies are used in the form of bone marrow transplants for treating leukemia. In 2006, researchers created artificial liver cells from umbilical cord blood stem cells. And in 2008, a study was published of the first successful cartilage regeneration in a human knee using adult stem cells. The variety of ways in which stem cell research could aid in curing many diseases has just begun to be explored.
While there are questions regarding human embryo stem cells for research, there are a variety of ways to acquire stem cells. As noted in a 2008 Stanford publication, regarding human embryo stem cell research specifically, a majority of the researchers are not actually touching newly derived stem cells, but are instead using the lineage and data of stem cells that have already been researched by other scientists. They have made these cell lines available for others to work with and learn from. Along with advances regarding adult stem cell research, this could be a fruitful direction for medical inquiry to go.

Source 2

**Arguments against Stem Cell Research**

Stem cell research is a risky endeavor that does not have clear cut benefits and a lot of moral questions are involved. While it seems clear that certain diseases are being treated by stem cell therapies, there are too many questions regarding further study and use.

With human embryo stem cells, a major concern is where they are coming from. One suggestion is for these stem cells to be taken from embryos that have been created for reproduction via in vitro fertilization. These embryos could be donated for scientific research after it is confirmed that they are not going to be used for reproduction. While this seems like a simple solution, there’s also the question of the actual usefulness of those stem cells. With all stem cell therapies, in 2010, Consumer Reports noted the concern regarding transplanted cells forming tumors and becoming cancerous if the cell’s division continued uncontrollably. There are also concerns of immune rejection by the patient being treated. While immunosuppressant drugs are used in organ transplant surgery, would this work on a body with new cells injected into it? There’s also the additional question of whether the correct cell types can be induced in the stem cells, since the stem cells themselves are undifferentiated and can become many different kinds of cells.

While certain therapies have been successfully created, this research is still very untested. More conversations and clear education of the public is needed regarding this controversial form of medical therapy and the research behind it.
Sample Response for the Informative/Explanatory Essay

Compare your essay to the Sample Essay that follows
Sample Score 6 Essay

Stem cell research is a complicated topic to evaluate. While it is noted as having a lot of potential with regard to medical advancements, there are several elements of it that can cause moral quandaries, such as the use of human embryos in the research. At the same time, it is providing valuable therapies for diseases such as leukemia and could treat diseases like diabetes and heart disease. With that in mind and on reviewing the two passages, I find that I must argue in favor of stem cell research.

Since the passage against stem cell research makes several valid points, especially questioning the source of the stem cells used in the research, this is sure to inspire many readers to question the morality of the supporting argument. This concern does not actually have any evidence behind it, saying that only human embryo stem cells are being used, so it is difficult to know where this concern came from. In addition, the particular evidence noting that stem cell research itself is potentially harmful has no scientific basis and was simply based on concerns from the populace, as noted by Consumer Reports, than actual research. At the end of the third paragraph, this passage even questions whether scientists could differentiate the cells properly to make them become what is needed for that specific stem cell therapy. Would the stem cells become an actual brain cell or would it just become a bunch of organ cells and cause a tumorous growth? This is stated without any evidence to back up the concern at all. While it is clear that the reason stem cell research is interesting in any form is that the cells themselves can be formed into any other cell needed, this worry about differentiation seems to be idle speculation rather than something that would legitimately make this research impossible.

In contrast, the passage supporting stem cell research is full of dates and specific examples. While the against passage only notes an article from Consumer Reports, this passage notes research done in the 1900s, all the way through 2008. It points out some of the current research and medical benefits of stem cell research being used right now, including bone marrow transplants to treat leukemia and the generation of artificial liver cells just in 2006. It also notes that the major concern regarding the source of the stem cells should be less of a concern due to a report from Stanford, a major research institute, about how researchers acquire the data of human embryo stem cells. It appears that not every single researcher is getting a new set of embryo stem cells to work off of. Instead, the information about one set is shared among all of the researchers. Also, the passage pointed to a 2008 article about medical advancements using adult stem cells. If stem cell research should be argued against, there needs to be more thorough and specific evidence provided to support that argument.

It is clear that the arguments against stem cell research are antiquated and have been addressed by the medical community. Perhaps there is research regarding why stem cell research should not be pursued, but it is unspecified in these passages. Overall, while the supporting passage addresses many of the same concerns as the “against” passage, it is better organized and supported throughout with actual referenced research.

Comments on the Sample Source-Based Essay That Received a Score of 6

This is an outstanding essay. This response evaluates the arguments in the source text, develops an effective position supported by the text, and fulfills the criteria to earn a top score. This response establishes its stance at the conclusion of the first paragraph (I find that I must argue in favor of stem cell research) and provides a summary of support for that stance in the second and third paragraphs. In the second paragraph, the writer also weighs the validity of the evidence in the “against” argument, for example: “the particular evidence noting that stem cell research itself is potentially harmful has no scientific basis and was simply based on concerns from the populace, as noted by Consumer Reports, than actual research.”

The essay is well organized, opens with a definitive stance, offers a discussion of the pros and cons of stem cell research and the evidence provided, and
then provides a summary in support of the chosen stance. The writer provides multiple, specific examples and then elaborates on them, using an appropriately formal tone throughout. In addition, the writer adheres to proper grammar and usage.

**Sample Score 4 Essay**

It seems clear that we must not allow stem cell research. It may have been around since the early 1900s, but that does not outweigh the moral questions it raises.

I am against stem cell research for mainly the same reasons stated in the passage. Since stem cell research has been around, there is no clear answer regarding where the human embryo stem cells come from. This was not answered in the supporting passage.

What’s more, I also think the possibility that the cells could form tumors and become cancerous, as noted in the against passage, is pretty worrying. At the very least, more education and research into the risks of stem cells is very necessary.

Finally, while it may be true that the arguments for stem cell research list many favorable benefits, and those aspects of stem cell research seem intriguing, the arguments against the research are better than the ones for it. At the very least there needs to be more education on the dangers.

**Comments on the Sample Source-Based Essay That Received a Score of 4**

This response makes a simple argument, supports it with some evidence from the source text, and offers a partial analysis of the opposing argument.

The writer generates an argument against stem cell research and makes a clear statement of her position in the first paragraph (It seems clear that we must not allow stem cell research), in the second paragraph (I am against stem cell research for mainly the same reasons), and final paragraph (the arguments against the research are better than the ones for it). The writer does cite some evidence from the source text to support her position (Since stem cell research has been around, there is no clear answer regarding where the human embryo stem cells come from). The writer offers a partial analysis of the issue (At the very least, more education and research into the risks of stem cells is very necessary) and (It’s true; there are arguments for stem cell research that list a lot of favorable benefits); however, this analysis is simplistic and limited.

In addition, in the second paragraph the writer offers a partial evaluation of the validity of the “for” arguments (there is no clear answer regarding where the human embryo stem cells come from. This was not answered in the supporting passage).

Although this response has a general organization and focus, the supporting ideas are developed unevenly. The second and third paragraphs focus on the troubling aspects of stem cell research, and the writer offers a clear progression of ideas. He: main points are clear but not sufficiently elaborated upon. Her argument is based solely on what is offered in the passage (I am against stem cell research for mainly the same reasons stated in the passage).

The concluding paragraph offers a very basic comparison of the “for” and “against” arguments, but not much development is offered.

In addition, the writer adheres to proper grammar and usage.

**Sample Score 1 Essay**

Stem cell research is way too confusing and disturbing for a lot of people. While these scientists think that listing all of the accomplishments will mean that stem cell research should continue it's not clear at all whether that's true. If perhaps you had leukemia, then it would be ok for it to continue.

Also we don’t know where the human embryo stem cells come from also some of them could become cancerous and that isn’t a good idea either I thought Leukemia was some kind of cancer, that makes it even more confusing. Also the differentiation of cells. If you can’t get the right kind of cells for your therapy, then those cells are useless and are a waste.
Informative/Explanatory Essay

30 Minutes

- Carefully read the essay topic and sources.
- Write an essay that addresses all concerns that relate to the topic.
- You MUST write on the given topic.
- You MUST include Specific Details, Examples and References to the sources.
- Your essay MUST be well organized.
INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE

30 MINUTES

Directions: You have 30 minutes to read two position papers on a topic and then type a constructed response based on the topic. Use a word processor, but not the spell or grammar check. The response should discuss the important points in the topic.

Read the topic and sources below. It is good to spend time organizing your thoughts and planning your essay before you start to write. You MUST write on the given topic, and you MUST include references to the sources.

This response gives you a chance to demonstrate how well you can write and include sources in your writing. That means you should focus on writing well, and using examples and references, all while being sure to cover the topic presented. While how much you write is not a specific scoring criteria, you will certainly want to write several meaningful paragraphs.

Topic

Nuclear power uses nuclear processes to generate heat and electricity. The nuclear fission of elements produces the vast majority of nuclear energy. Nuclear fission power stations produce about 6 percent of the world’s energy and 15 percent of the world’s electricity. Nuclear fission is efficient, but fission and nuclear waste are radioactive, and there is danger, with short- and long-term health risks. The recent Fukushima nuclear accident at a fifty-year-old reactor has slowed but not stopped the construction of newer and safer reactors worldwide. Attempts, unlike to yield results before the middle of this century, are ongoing to develop nuclear fusion sources, the type of nuclear energy produced by the sun.

Read the two source passages below. Then type an essay that highlights the most important aspects of each and then explain why they are important. Your essay should refer to EACH of the sources and must CITE the sources as you refer to them or provide direct quotations. You may also use your own experiences and readings.

Nuclear Energy . . . the Best Road to Energy Independence
(Quinon, web access 10/12/2014)

You have heard about problems with nuclear energy from older reactors. What you may not have heard is that it is the most efficient way of using renewable energy to create electricity. It is better than coal, which is still the main way electricity is produced, and it is better than oil or gas or any other non-renewable energy source. You have heard a lot about solar power, but the truth is solar power will not be a commercially viable energy source in this century.

Nuclear power has caused fewer fatalities per unit of energy generated. Nuclear energy produces no greenhouse gases and does not pollute the environment. The new reactors put into service are much safer than the reactors built 50 years ago, and many of those older reactors have already been retired. I am very comfortable living just miles from a reactor that has been safely providing energy to this community for decades with no problems. There are no smokestacks, no trains hauling in coal, and no huge pipeline delivering gas or oil. In truth, the air here is cleaner than in most other parts of the United States because coal used to create electricity in most places is simply not used. Beyond that there are over 153 naval vessels propelled by nuclear power, vessels which never have to be refueled at sea and never
have to come into port for fuel. That is the benefit of an energy source that does not have to constantly be renewed.

I want to close this brief paper by mentioning the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor accident in 2011. The universal assessment of this tragedy is that it was essentially man made. That is, all investigations agree that the reactor should never have been built where it was, and that a reactor like that one over 50 years old should have already been retired. About 20,000 people were killed by the tsunami and its aftermath. There will undoubtedly be some aftereffects, but not at the level of the number of people killed in the tsunami. Using this accident to argue against nuclear power production is a failed argument.

**Nuclear Energy—a Ticking Atom Bomb**

(Patrick, web access 9/29/2014)

Nuclear energy is not all bad, and I can think of some specific situations when it might be appropriate. A ship at sea might be one of them, or perhaps a tiny reactor at some remote location away from a populated area, and where the earthquake and tornado risks are close to zero. But that is about it.

A large reactor built anywhere else is nothing more than a ticking bomb—a nuclear bomb. There have been three major accidents in the last 25 years, and the number of nuclear reactors is steadily increasing. No one really knows the death toll from these accidents or the long-term impact of radiation exposure, but the toll will be in the many tens of thousands, with many more impairments and diseases. And that is the problem with radiation—you often do not see most of the impact for decades. Just to understand the real safety issue, consider if someone blew up a coal generating power plant or a nuclear generating plant. Neither is good, but the impact of a destroyed nuclear plant would be devastation. Millions might be killed and thousands of square miles of land made barren for a century. And all that danger for a power system that serves a tiny portion of electric users.

We do not even have to look at the serious safety issues to question nuclear power. Recently former members of the agency that regulates the nuclear industry have said that nuclear energy is simply not economically viable. They point out that solar energy could fill the void that would be left by the absence of nuclear power. It is just a fact that solar energy could never fill a void left if coal and gas were not available to produce energy. So I guess there is a choice, but I will take the choice that will not lead to the death of millions.

Write a brief outline here.
Sample Response for the Informative/Explanatory Essay

Compare your essay to the Sample Essay that follows
I don’t agree that teacher’s should be paid more to do something that lasts for a year. Because they scored higher on a test that lasts for hours, and I don’t think it is possible to pay teachers by merit in most situations. I am going to write some things about each of these.

Just try to imagine this situation. There are two first grade teachers. One teacher scored much higher on a standardized test. Both teachers have to help their students learn about reading. But the teacher with the higher score for some reason or another can’t deal with these young children. They do not have the patience to work with them all day long. It could be that the teacher with the higher score does not know how to teach reading. The teacher with the lower score is just the opposite. That other teacher works well with the children they have the patience to deal with them and they know how to teach reading. I do not think we could find a person anywhere who would not think that this low scoring teacher is the one we would want in the classroom.

The idea of paying teachers by merit is a part of this question. I think paying teachers in that way would be great if there was any way to tell that a teacher was the reason students were doing better or poorer as they learned. But I do not think there is. I can think of classes I was in where I did better because of the students who were in my class. To be honest the teacher did not help that much. But if you pay by merit then the teacher would have been paid more, not because of the teacher, but because of the students. That is not right.

In conclusion, I disagree with the statement because there is not evidence that indicates that teachers with higher standardized scores are better teachers. If some teachers have higher standardized scores, it is probably something about them and not the scores they received. This idea of paying teachers this way is an idea that should not be used in schools.

Informative/Explanatory Essay

Compare your essay to the sample essay that follows. You may want to show your essay to an English expert for further evaluation.

Here is an essay that would receive a 5 or a 6.

The issues raised in these essays have mainly to do with safety, but also with the continued use of nuclear reactors for power generation. Both authors agree that a strength of nuclear energy is that it is a renewable energy source with low greenhouse emissions.

Each author agrees there can be health risks associated with nuclear power generation. However, the Quinson seeks to minimize the risks, noting that, “Nuclear power has caused fewer fatalities per unit of energy generated.” Personally, I don’t find that particularly reassuring because the Introduction notes that nuclear energy generates just 5% of the world’s energy. Patrick takes a more ominous tone pointing out the three major nuclear accidents that occurred in the last 25 years writing “... nuclear reactor ... is a ticking time bomb—a nuclear bomb.” (Patrick)

The authors quite unusually each downplay the role of nuclear power in energy production. Quinson points out that coal is far and away the fuel used most often to produce power. Patrick seconds this idea, noting that solar power could fill the void left by the absence of nuclear energy but never the void left by the absence of coal.

Quinson brings in an additional point that there are “over 150 naval vessels powered by nuclear energy.” (Quinson) Quite unusually, it seems to me, Patrick also believes a “ship at sea” (Patrick) might be an appropriate use of nuclear power.

Frankly, a somewhat confusing picture appears from these position papers. Quinson indicates that nuclear power is generally good, with some reservations. On the other hand Patrick says nuclear reactors are like nuclear bombs, most of the time. Each author likes nuclear power’s reliability and absence of greenhouse emissions. I am drawn to Patrick’s point
that if some catastrophic event occurs the results could be catastrophic. It's this final point that
convinces me that Patrick's position is most appropriate.

Discussion

This essay identifies the main issues and notes that the issue of nuclear safety is the
most prominent issue. The essay uses information from the two position papers, both by
paraphrasing and by quoting, and in each case cites the appropriate position paper. This
paper helps the reader see where the authors of the position papers actually agree and brings
the essay writer's own perspectives to the issue. The essay is long enough for a rater to place
it in the upper third, uses language well, and is free of any meaningful English errors.

This essay would receive a 3 or 4.

The best way to look at and see the main points about nuclear energy is to take each
author's position one at a time. It seems that you either think it's good or you think it is bad.
We can see that Quinson supports nuclear energy, while it looks like Patrick mainly opposes it.

As I see it Quinson mainly shows his support for nuclear energy by going to great lengths
to explain off the nuclear accident with that tusom in Japan. In this position paper, "Universa
assessment of this tragedy is that it was essentially man made." I mean that may be true but
it does not seem that should make much difference. The problem would not have happened if
the reactor was not there. So what difference does it make. But this position paper sticks to its
guns and add to "all investigations agree that the reactor should never have been built where it
was." Quinson also brings all the ships that use reactors to make them work, but even Patrick
seems to think that is OK too.

Patrick uses a title that shows opposition right away with the words "Nuclear Energy—A
Ticking Atom Bomb." But when you start to read the paper it is hard to tell for sure that Patrick
really is opposed. That's because of the fact that the first paragraph lists some ways that
nuclear energy could be useful.

That all changes in the second paragraph. That is when we read that there "been three
major accidents in the last 25 years." (Patrick) I remember reading about the one in Japan and
it seemed pretty bad to me. Then Patrick goes further, "No one really knows the death toll
from these accidents, and the long term impact of radiation exposure." I agree with that. I think
that people were effected by the radation from first atom bomb for decades and decades after
the bomb was dropped. That would have to be true for other nuclear accidents.

Quinson is really on the defensive from the very beginning, and Patrick starts out too with a
few positive things to say about nuclear power. But when you read on it seems that Quinson's
paper is based on what Quinson believes, and that Patrick's paper provides more factual
information.

Discussion

This essay lays out each position paper's point of view and frequently brings in the writer's
own experiences. The essay mentions information from both sources and usually cites the
source of the information. The essay summarizes the writer's opinion of the strength of the
argument in each position paper. The essay does not fully integrate a discussion of the issues.
While grammar and usage are generally fine, there are errors including sentence fragments,
wordiness, and grammar. The appropriate references, completeness of the essay, and usage
earn this essay a 4.
Informative/Explanatory Essay

30 Minutes

- Carefully read the essay topic and sources.
- Write an essay that addresses all concerns that relate to the topic.
- You MUST write on the given topic.
- You MUST include Specific Details, Examples and References to the sources.
- Your essay MUST be well organized.
INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE
30 MINUTES

Directions: You have 30 minutes to read two position papers on a topic and then type
a constructed response based on the topic. Use a word processor, but not the spell or
grammar check. The response should discuss the important points in the topic.
Read the topic and sources below. It is good to spend time organizing your thoughts and planning your response before you start to write. You MUST write on the given topic, and you MUST include references to the sources.
This response gives you a chance to demonstrate how well you can write and include
sources in your writing. That means you should focus on writing well and using examples and references, all while being sure to cover the topic presented. While how much you write is not a specific scoring criteria, you will certainly want to write several meaningful paragraphs.

Topic
Pumping gas is one of the most common of daily experiences. You drive up to the pump, swipe your credit card, select the grade, put the nozzle in the gas filler tube, and depress the lever. You may even be able to set the pump to operate “automatically,” and the pump stops when the pump’s sensors indicate that the tank is full. There are signs that tell you to turn off your engine and not to introduce any flammable items into the situation but no one to check to see that you follow the rules. At this writing, that cannot happen in New Jersey, Oregon, and some localities. In those states and localities a station employee must operate the pump.

Read the two source passages below. Then type an essay that highlights the most important aspects of the positions and explain why they are important. Your essay should refer to EACH of the sources and must CITE the sources as you refer to them or provide direct quotations. You may also use your own experiences and readings.

Self-Service—Even if You Can—Service Yourself Is Dangerous and Costs Jobs
(Andrews, web access 10/17/2014)
In all but two states a person can fill his or her own gas tank with fuel. Those states are New Jersey and Oregon. So a reasonable question is why these two states still have decades-old laws against fueling self-service. Before the discussion let me point out that the “traditional” gas stations in New Jersey and Oregon employ over 20,000 people. A little simple math indicates that we would add over 500,000 employees by eliminating self-service stations.

There are two clear reasons for a ban on self-service stations. The first is that these stations discriminate against the disabled. A disabled person is always discriminated against at self service stations. The only issue is the extent of that discrimination, and since many self-service stations combine fuel dispensing with a convenience store, there is often only one employee present. That person cannot leave the store and the disabled person is just out of luck. The typical self-service station always violates federal law, and why that practice is allowed to continue is unclear to me.

Some think that the absence of employees at non-self-service stations would lower costs. But this is not true. Self-service stations pay much more for liability insurance, at least equal to the cost of actual employees, than non-self-service.
First, that makes the point that self-service stations are inherently less safe than non-self-service stations. That is what all the statistics show as well, so the safety reason for banning self-service stations is hard to argue with. It also sharpens the issue of paying employees to pump gas. That seems a much better choice than paying an insurance company.

What may seem a “no-brainer” in favor of self-service stations turns out to be a no-brainer against them.

Self-Service—Can 48 States Really Be Wrong
(Callman, web access 9/28/2014)
You can make lots of arguments in favor of or against self-service filling stations. But I will start with the most obvious one. You can refuel your car, yourself, in all but 2 states, New Jersey and Oregon. In each one of those states the laws forbidding self-service gas stations are many decades old. It is simple: most people prefer to pump gas themselves and not hand over a credit card to a gas station employee.

So, yes, when you look at the big picture, you have to understand that 48 states really cannot be wrong. The citizens of these states have looked at all the issues, looked at all the pros and cons, and have reached a conclusion—self-serve stations are better than non-self-serve stations. There are undoubtedly many reasons, besides convenience, for their decisions. They have looked at them all.

The primary reason given for opposition to self-service stations is safety. But self-service opponents know that the safety requirements for self-service gas are more stringent than the requirements for employee-operated pumps. Besides that, it is just as easy for a poorly-paid gas station employee to cause an accident as it is for the self-service pump operator. There are some legitimate concerns about the very few disabled people who cannot get out of a car to fuel his or her vehicles. The truth is that very few of these people are driving and there is always a way to get help. The other day I was at a self-service station and a person who seemed to require a wheelchair just rolled down the window and asked another person to fuel the car. It worked great.

This is one of those times when the vast majority has it right. It is better to be able to fuel your vehicle yourself than to have to rely on an attendant, some of whom are not that attendant.

Write a brief outline here.
Sample Response for the Informative/Explanatory Essay

Compare your essay to the Sample Essay that follows
But it is so serving of themselves that we just can't pay attention to them. It would be giving the wrong people a ray over what is happening in our college where there are already enough questions about the quality of what goes on there. Why not just take the tuition money and let the students write their own grades.

To summarize my position I disagree with the statement about a college student being able to have any grade and class removed from their transcript. There are already many, many safeguards for students to stop the grade from appearing or to challenge a grade if it is incorrect or was because of some hardship. Things are bad enough as they are without removing this one last tiny bit of honesty in colleges and universities throughout the country.

**Informative/Explanatory Essay**

Compare your essay with the sample essays that follow. You may want to show your essay to an English expert for further evaluation.

**This essay would receive a 5, but probably not a 6.**

I never thought of self-serve gas stations as an issue that could lead to a useful analysis, but I see that's not true. The issue raises a number of fundamental questions. Both authors seem to agree that safety and dealing with disabled drivers, while Andrews alone raises the issue of jobs and Callman alone raises the issue of popular support.

I want to say immediately that Andrews points that requiring attendants would create about 600,000 jobs carries the day for me. Entry level jobs are hard to come by, and I believe his point that the extra liability premiums are certainly no more than the cost of the new jobs.

Pumps operated by station employees eliminates the issue of servicing disabled people. I am suspicious of Callman's statement about a disabled person getting another driver to refuel the car. It just seems too convenient, and I would not want to give my credit card to someone I did not know. Besides, and if an employee was present this arrangement would not be necessary. Besides, from what I know, it's illegal to only refuel your own car.

The safety issue seems to be a little less clear. Andrews makes the issue of higher liability costs, while Callman mentions increased safety requirements for self-service stations. It seems to make sense that stations with pumps operated by employees would be safer for patrons than self-pumped gas. But neither author gives us any information about comparative safety of either type of station.

Callman's populist argument about the majority being correct reads like an example of a faulty argument. That the practice is widespread is interesting, but it does not prove that self service stations are the best approach.

Andrew's argument for jobs, and Callman's silence on this issue, convinces me that requiring that attendants dispense all gasoline is a strong enough point on its own. It is clear to me that the extra cost of employees would be offset by the reduction in insurance costs.

**Discussion**

This essay clearly defines the main issues and points out which position papers refer to which issues. The essay quickly identifies the main issue and then fully reviews the other issues, bringing in the author's own perspective. The essay is long enough, well developed, and is free of meaningful errors in usage and grammar. The essay uses information from the two position papers but only by paraphrase and somewhat casually cites the appropriate position paper. It would be easy for a rater to place this essay in the upper third; however, the lack of any direct quotations and the somewhat casual citing would likely limit the highest possible score on this essay to a 5.
Informative/Explanatory Essay

30 Minutes

• Carefully read the essay topic and sources.

• Write an essay that addresses all concerns that relate to the topic.

• You MUST write on the given topic.

• You MUST include Specific Details, Examples and References to the sources.

• Your essay MUST be well organized.
Informative/Explanatory Constructed Response

Directions: Use a word processor, but not the spell check or the grammar check features, to type your response.

TOPIC

Tracking is a sweeping educational grouping system in which students are assigned to all subjects and classes by academic achievement. Tracking systems are most commonly found in secondary schools where students take each subject class with a different instructor. When the system is used, it is not unusual to find three general tracks—advanced academic, academic, and vocational. Typically, students in one track do not take classes with students from another track. Ability grouping is not the same as tracking. Ability groups are typically found in a single classroom. An assignment to an ability group can change as soon as a change in performance is noted.

Read the two source passages below. Then write an essay that highlights the most important aspects of them and explain why they are important. Your essay should refer to EACH of the sources and must CITE the sources as you refer to them or you must provide direct quotes. You may also use your own experiences and readings.

Source Passages

Fencing a Track to Success ... Tracking in the Schools,
from Robertson (web accessed 10/2/2014)

There is nothing worse than seeing students forced into academic classes that are inappropriate for them. Taking those inappropriate courses seldom prepares students for the real world and they frequently leave school with knowledge they can't use and without the skills and preparation that would enable them to pursue a fruitful career. While no system is perfect, tracking, properly used, helps students prepare for the real world they will live in.

A carefully implemented tracking system enables teachers to structure lessons to the specific needs of students in a class—lessons that challenge students, but challenge them at a level they are capable of achieving. For students in an upper track, it removes the lid placed on instruction for academically talented students that would be present if they were in class with students of lesser ability. At the same time, it ensures that students of lesser ability in a comparable class will also have a chance to achieve at their highest level of potential. Yes, the students most negatively impacted by a nontracked system will be denied the opportunity to achieve at the level expected of them. And look at the students who might be at the lowest educational track. They consist primarily of students who will pursue a career after high school, perhaps in some trade. Those students deserve the opportunities for a track aimed at career preparation. In a world of imperfect solutions, a well-managed tracking system is the best approach.
A Track to Nowhere—the Failure of Tracking,
from Plsmenn (web accessed 10/15/2016)

Educators try to dress up student tracking as an approach that benefits all levels of the achievement spectrum. The truth is that tracking only helps more able students from affluent families. In fact, tracking is just a way to assign poor and minority students to the lowest tracks, where one finds the least-qualified teachers. These low-tracked students never have an opportunity to escape the low track and are essentially given a one-way ticket to the same low track of society. Put more simply, tracking is just another form of race and class discrimination. It is more insidious than overt discrimination because it hides behind a cloak of what appears to be a useful educational practice.

Beyond that, even when initial tracks are fairly homogeneous, things change over time. Students learn at different rates and learning impediments decrease in some students. The similarities among students in a track tend to widen or disappear. Accounting for this increasing heterogeneity would require regular reevaluation of students and placement in different tracks when indicated. In practice, the best systems make the reassignment once a year. In most tracking systems it takes an extraordinary event for a student to move from one track to another.

If we are talking about a tracking system in a high school, students who stay in one track are more different at the end of high school than they are the same.

In addition to these serious problems, tracking systems often determine a student's peer group. Students in the low track suffer from social stigmatization. Since lower-class and minority students are overrepresented in low tracks with whites and Asians generally dominating high tracks, interaction among these groups can be discouraged by tracking. It is easy to see how for students a tracking system is a track to nowhere.

Use this space to write a brief outline before you type your essay:
Sample Response for the Informative/Explanatory Essay

Compare your essay to the Sample Essay that follows
machines that help people. I could not live without my fax machine or my garbage disposal. People undergoing open heart surgery could not live without a heart-lung machine or a respirator. Those are machines.

I guess what bothers me is that the statement is so silly. How can you make a general statement that machines hurt people. It just does not make any sense. The list of machines that help people is practically endless. Even the automobile casualties cited in the opinion are most often caused by human error, and it is certainly clear that ambulances, a car of sorts, are extremely helpful and certainly save more lives than those lost in automobile accidents.

An opinion as sweeping and general as the one found on this test can be proven false through many examples including the one described here in detail, and the few others alluded to. It just takes one true counterexample to prove the statement untrue and to conclusively support position that the statement “machines hurt people” is simply not true.

**Discussion**

This essay clearly states the author’s position about the opinion that “machines hurt people.” It provides some logic-based arguments that a sweeping statement can be proven false with a single counterexample, and offers several counterexamples to bolster that point. The essay lacks the development and detail necessary to place it in the upper third of essays and consequently earns a 3 or 4.

**This essay would likely receive a 2.**

The general statement that machines hurt people is simply not true. I just think of the heart lung machine. It is a machine and it does not hurt people. Really, what more is there to say. That simple counterexample proves that the statement is false. You do not need more than that.

But there are other examples. You do not even have to talk about a hospital and saving lives. I have clothes that need to be washed. I’d rather not do that by hand so I use a washing machine—I use that “machine.” I can absolutely tell you that a washing machine helps me. So there are two examples and there are plenty more of why I disagree with the opinion.

**Discussion**

There is nothing wrong with this very brief essay, and it makes the point. The intent of this essay is not to prove you can make a point, but that you can write a well-developed essay supported by details. This essay lacks the development, detail, and length to receive a score above 2.

Essays that would receive lower scores than a 2 would be shorter and less well developed, or would be completely off topic.

**RATED INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY ESSAYS EXAMPLES**

**Here is an essay that would receive a score of 5 or 6.**

The primary concerns about school tracking are its effectiveness as an instructional structure, its unfairness to minority students and the potential for locking students into a plan of study after they show growth. Both author’s seem to agree that tracking helps more able students. But the reasons for that view are quite different. Robertson points to the beneficial
impact of tracking, while writing that “tracking only helps more able students from more affluent families” (Pismenny), that author finds tracking to be discriminatory.

The differences grow as we move to the next point. The first position paper (Robertson) finds little wrong with tracking, even finding vocational benefits for students in the lowest track when the author points out that “students deserve the opportunities for a track aimed at a career.” (Robertson). Pismenny is having none of that and labels tracking programs as discriminatory and goes on to point out that tracking is “insidious” (Pismenny) because it presents itself as an effective educational practice.

Robertson is completely silent on the issue of locking students into a plan of study, while Pismenny highlights that point in a “Track to Nowhere,” which condemns tracking because it can take an “extraordinary event” for a students to move up to the next track.

A fair summary seems to be that tracking is a system that seems to work well for more able students from more affluent families. Each position paper makes that point. The main difference appears when Robertson, who supports tracking, finds the advantages of a lower track, while Pismenny opposes tracking and sees it as a discriminatory system that locks in students.

**Discussion**

This essay does what every high-scoring essay does. It identifies the three main issues. The essay addresses the three issues in turn, bringing information in from both sources into a discussion of each issue, and clearly associates the information presented with the source. It clearly shows the points of agreement and disagreement in the position. The essay is free of meaningful errors, uses an array of sentence types, and shows a notable language structure. The 269 words in this essay will make raters comfortable about placing the essay in the upper third. The difference between a 5 and a 6 will hinge on the raters’ perception that the analysis was sophisticated enough to receive a 6.

**This essay would likely receive a 3 or 4.**

There seem to be a range of positive things and negative things about tracking. The first paper by Robertson focuses mainly on the positive with an emphasis on benefits to higher achieving learners. Pismenny’s essay focuses on the faults, primarily noting that tracking is just one form of discrimination.

It is obvious that Pismenny does not support tracking. It’s the discriminatory nature of tracking that seems to cause this author the most trouble. It just seems to Pismenny that there are more potential problems to make the tracking thing worthwhile. That point is really hammered home when we read “It (tracking) is more insidious than overt discrimination because it hides behind a cloak of what appears to be a useful educational practice.” (Pismenny) That is powerful language. Another point Pismenny make is that students are forever stuck in the track they start with at the beginning of high school. They can never escape. It is obvious that tracking is one type of approach with many problems. After reading Pismenny’s position I am left wonder just whether there is enough there alone to say that tracking is bad.

Robertson’s essay supports tracking as much as we see Pismenny’s paper saying that it is bad. Robertson really like how much tracking helps better students. That position is really hammered home by the quote, “For students in an upper track, it removes the lid placed on instruction for academically talented students that would be present if they were in class with students of lesser ability.” (Robertson). Robertson also. The system for low track students by saying that it will help these students prepare for careers. In this age when jobs are not really