



# Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT)

Fall 2013 Writing Topic and  
Annotated Sample Papers



**Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent**  
*"Making Education Work for All Georgians"*

## Fall 2013 GHSWT – Main Administration Writing Topic

### Writing Topic 131

#### Writing Situation

Students in several states perform community service as a graduation requirement for high school. These activities include serving meals to the elderly, visiting hospitals, tutoring younger students, building homes for families, doing yard work, or helping at senior citizen centers. At their next meeting, the school board in your district is going to vote on whether community service should be required for graduation.

#### Directions for Writing

Write a letter to convince the school board to support or reject the community service requirement for graduation. Include specific details and examples to support your position.

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## Paper 1

Dear School Board;

Community service would be a great idea for a graduation requirement. Helping out in such ways can do a lot for the community. This requirement will not only help the environment and our community, but it will also help the students work as a team. The ideas of visiting hospitals, tutoring students, building homes for families and doing yard work sound great.

At our school, every Friday we take an hour of our day and all the students either recycle, pick up trash, help out with yard work or tutor other students. We already do more than half of the requirements for community service, so it won't be a problem if community service was a requirement for graduation. A couple of kids have also went around the whole school doing a survey on whether community service should be a requirement for graduation and 98% of the students thought it was an excellent idea for both the school and the community.

To begin with, everyone needs a home. We can't build homes for everyone in the world, but we can definitely as a team build homes for the families that need them in our community. The elderly people need help too. They sometimes aren't able to make around that much so we need to provide

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**Paper 1 (page two)**

them with as much help as possible. If younger students need tutoring help, we should give them help so that they could do good at school.

Therefore, most students and parents support the community service requirement for education and think that a lot of people and the environment will benefit from this. Please consider these ideas. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

## Annotations for Paper 1

### Ideas Score: 2

The controlling idea (community service should be required for graduation) is minimally developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (students already do a lot of community service, many students support the community service requirement, and there are many needs in the community). The writer includes few details to develop these supporting ideas (e.g., “98% of students thought it was an excellent idea”). Notice that most of the examples in the final body paragraph come directly from the prompt; because the writer does not elaborate much on them, there is limited original student writing in this paragraph. This paper has effective focus, but none of the supporting ideas are sufficiently developed. It is an example of a high 2 in Ideas.

### Organization Score: 3

The writer demonstrates sufficient control of the components of Organization. The introduction is clear. The writer groups related ideas about how students already do a lot of community service, and how there are many needs in the community. Ideas within the body paragraphs follow a generally clear sequence, although they do not always build logically on one another. Some transitions link ideas in the response (e.g., “We already do,” and pronoun substitution like “they” for “the elderly”). The conclusion is brief, but it provides clear closure.

### Style Score: 3

Word choice is generally effective (e.g., “students thought it was an excellent idea for both the school and the community,” “we need to provide them with as much help as possible,” and “the environment will benefit from this”). There are some lapses into simpler language, however (e.g., “do good at school,” “can do a lot for the community” and “a lot of people”). The caring, can-do-it tone is appropriate to the persuasive topic and purpose. The writer’s voice is clear, and there is some variation in sentence length and structure. Overall, the writer demonstrates sufficient control of the components of Style.

### Conventions Score: 3

Most of the sentences in the paper are correct. The elements of usage are generally correct, but there are some incorrect word forms (e.g., “A couple of kids have also *went* around”). The elements of mechanics are generally correct, although there is an occasional misspelling (e.g., “deffinetly”). Overall, there not many errors in this paper, but there is also not extensive evidence of control (note that the handwriting is quite large). This paper is an example of a high 3.

## Performance Level: Meets the Standard



Paper 2

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Dear School Board,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

I am 16 years old and I attend Jenkins High School and I was writing you in concern about the Community Service requirements to graduate.

I feel that by us being high school students we go through enough already by having to meet test score requirements, having to earn a certain amount of credits, and now we have to ~~do~~ community service just to graduate is almost too much for one school year.

Also, most students have every day jobs so that they can make an everyday living, like you all and might not be to take time off from their day-to-day job or get off early enough to meet the requirements for community service.

Plus, all students don't have a direct means of transportation or have enough money to catch the city bus from one community service site to another like everyone else.

So in conclusion, what I'm really asking is that you take this community service thing into consideration and make some changes to some of these requirements for

Paper 2 (page two)

a student to meet just for graduation.  
Thank you.

Sincerely,

## Annotations for Paper 2

### **Ideas Score: 2**

The controlling idea (there should not be a community service requirement for graduation) is minimally developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (students already have a lot going on in school, some students have after-school jobs, and some students don't have transportation to get to community service events). These supporting ideas are only partially developed with general details like "having to earn a certain amount of credits." The paper has effective focus, but there is not enough information in the response to provide a sense of completeness.

### **Organization Score: 2**

The writer demonstrates minimal control of the components of Organization. There is a clear introduction, and some related ideas are grouped together (students already have a lot going on in school, some students have after-school jobs, and some students don't have transportation to get to community service events). Because there are so few details in each paragraph, however, there are not many ideas to group together, limiting the evidence of control in the component. The same holds true for sequencing. Some transitions link parts of the paper, but they tend to be simple (e.g., "Also" and "Plus"). The conclusion is brief but clear. This paper is an example of a high 2 in Organization. If the writer had included a few more ideas in each body paragraph, the Organization score would likely have been higher because there would be more evidence of grouping and sequencing demonstrated.

### **Style Score: 2**

Although there are some examples of effective language (e.g., "a direct means of transportation), word choice tends to be simple, ordinary, and repetitive (e.g., "a certain amount," "every day jobs," "this community service thing," "meet test score requirements" / "meet community service requirements"). These inconsistencies leave the tone clear in places, and flat in others. There is limited sentence variety.

### **Conventions Score: 2**

There are some correct sentences in the response, but there are also many attempts in which the writer loses control (e.g., the second paragraph is a single overloaded attempt). Usage is generally correct, but there are also some incorrect word forms (e.g., "to much"). Some elements of mechanics are correct, but there is quite a bit of missing internal punctuation (e.g., very few commas, "dont have," and "Im asking"). Overall, the response is a mix of correct and incorrect examples.

## **Performance Level: Does Not Meet the Standard**



### Paper 3

Community Service can be a selfless act or a punishment under certain circumstances. Performing Community Service on your own free will is a generous, charitable, but most importantly a personal choice. I think to force this upon students and make it a requirement in order to graduate, would be a bad decision.

For one, High School is difficult enough, and then there are the students who will flat out reject the idea. Community Service is performed by someone who has nothing to gain, but if the choice is forced upon the students, how can it still remain selfless?

As a high school student, I know that there is enough pressure on us to graduate already. We already have to achieve a certain amount of credits, there are exit exams, graduation tests, and writing exams. To add another requirement, performing Community Service, might be too much. I think it may increase the rate of failures.

You also have the ones who will reject the idea almost immediately. The ones that are so selfish that the idea of spending their weekends reading to the elderly or improving their community, is hilarious. They will laugh at this forced act of good moral and challenge it to the furthest extent. And when they realize that there is no way around it, when they do perform the Community Service, they do it with such hatred and half do everything, that you would rather they did nothing at all.

For those who choose to <sup>do</sup> Community Service on their own free will, it is a wonderful thing. In doing so they realize that

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Paper 3 (page two)

they have nothing to gain from it, and yet they could not picture themselves being anywhere else. When their choice is taken away and they must do what they were willing to do anyway, does it not taint the act at all? No one likes being told what to do <sup>or</sup> how to live their own lives. By voting to make community service a requirement in order to graduate, that is exactly what is happening.

Community service is a show of respect. It shows respect towards your community, your environment and the people in it. Yes, it is a wonderful thing to perform community service, but when it is forced upon someone and they do it begrudgingly, how can it still be wonderful? I do not agree with the requirement of community service because high school is hard enough without all the added pressure to succeed by parents, teachers, and the whole world. I believe the choice should be ours, if we decide to do it, because we are the ones doing it after all.

## Annotations for Paper 3

### Ideas Score: 4

The controlling idea (there should not be a community service requirement for graduation) is well developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (students already have many responsibilities, some students would resent the requirement so much that they wouldn't do a good job, and making it a requirement cheapens the whole notion of a charitable act). The writer develops these supporting ideas with specific examples, details and elaboration (e.g., "there are exit exams, graduation tests, and writing exams. To add another requirement ... might be too much. I think it may increase the rate of failures," and "they do it with such hatred and half do everything, that you would rather they did nothing at all). The first body paragraph is not elaborated quite as well as the second and third, but overall, the writer is consistently focused on the persuasive topic and purpose.

### Organization Score: 4

The writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of Organization. The introduction is clear and sets the stage for the development that follows. The writer groups related ideas about how students already have many responsibilities, how some students would resent the requirement so much that they wouldn't do a good job, and how making it a requirement cheapens the whole notion of a charitable act. Most of the ideas within body paragraphs build logically on one another (e.g., "For those who choose to do community service on their own free will, it is a wonderful thing. → In doing so they realize that they have nothing to gain from it..."). A variety of effective transitions link ideas within paragraphs (e.g., "To add another requirement," "And when they realize," and "In doing so"). The conclusion is slightly repetitive, but it provides clear closure.

### Style Score: 4

Word choice is consistently precise and effective (e.g., "flat out reject the idea," "challenge it to the furthest extent," and "when it is forced on someone and they do it begrudgingly"). Lapses into less effective language are infrequent ("a wonderful thing" used twice). The measured tone is appropriate to the persuasive topic and purpose, and the writer's voice is distinctive ("No one likes being told what to do or how to live their own lives"). Audience awareness is consistent (e.g., "does it not taint the act at all?"). Sentences vary in length and structure. Overall, the writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of style.

### Conventions Score: 4

Simple, compound, and complex sentences are consistently correct. Sentence errors are infrequent (e.g., "We already have to achieve a certain amount of credits, there are exit exams, graduation tests, and writing exams"). Usage is consistently correct with the exception of a few incorrect word forms (e.g., "their are" and "this forced act of good *moral*"). The elements of mechanics are clear and correct. Overall, the writer demonstrates consistent control of the elements of Conventions.

## Performance Level: Meets the Standard

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

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I think it should be up to the student to choose. It should not be a graduation requirement. I really think that if you did a poll to decide who support or not support community service required for graduation, 99.9% of the student's would vote against it being required for graduation.

If you really think about it would you like to do community service, would you like to walk the side of the road picking up trash.

Thank you for your time

## **Annotations for Paper 4**

### **Ideas Score: 1**

The writer takes a position (there should not be a community service requirement for graduation), but development is extremely limited in this very short paper. Control of the components of Ideas is not demonstrated.

### **Organization Score: 1**

The writer announces the topic at the beginning of the response and includes a few transitions. The paper is too short, however, to demonstrate any control of the components of Organization.

### **Style Score: 1**

Although there is some evidence of audience awareness in this response, it is too brief to demonstrate control of Style.

### **Conventions Score: 1**

There is not enough evidence in this very brief response to demonstrate control of the components of Conventions.

**Performance Level: Does Not Meet the Standard**



## Paper 5

Many highschool students do not understand the importance of community service. They do not realize the outstanding benefits to being involved and helping within their communities. Community service does not only display the generosity of the student, but will better their work ethic, attitude, and overall tolerance. It's a great extracurricular way to boost their college applications and their grades. Required community service is a must.

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The feeling that comes from assisting thoughts in need of help is absolutely unbelievable. It better people in more ways imaginable. During the summer, I go to Macon, GA for a month and become a cabin leader at youth church camps. Being in charge of 6-12 girls for weeks at a time teaches me even still, today. I learned so much of understanding, responsibility, and having compassion. Programs like these incorporate people together and promote spiritual and moral growth. Responsibility foremost and many other virtues are what assist being a successful person. Also, volunteer work improves work willingness and ethic, community service breeds well rounded people and can prepare students to exit adolescence and enter adulthood.

When applying to college, students fill out tedious applications stating their achievements, goals, etc. Community service looks excellent on a college application because it conveys that the applying student is willing to go over and beyond his/her duties as a human-being. Sports, clubs, and involvement in student government are great things as well but when universities

**Paper 5 (page two)**

See a student's ability to commit to the unnecessary  
it shows integrity and a good moral standard. This is another  
reason why service hours should be required to give the stu-  
dents an extra plus on their chances getting into the college  
of their choice.

I believe we should further educate our students  
to be both willing and responsible by very much enc-  
ouraging community service. They will truly reap the  
benefits of their efforts and better themselves. So to  
the committee, let us promote morals and excellence to  
our students!

## Annotations for Paper 5

### Ideas Score: 3

The controlling idea (there should be a community service requirement for graduation) is sufficiently developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (students can learn a great deal from community service, and it looks great on college applications). The writer develops these supporting ideas with relevant examples and details (e.g., the personal experience about being a camp counselor, and “Sports, clubs, and involvement in student government are great things as well but when universities see a student’s ability to commit to the unnecessary it shows integrity and a good moral standard”). There is not much specific information in the response leaving some reader concerns unaddressed (e.g., how do summer camp programs “promote spiritual and moral growth”?). Overall, there is enough information in the response to provide a sense of completeness.

### Organization Score: 4

The writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of Organization. The introduction is clear and sets the stage for the development that follows. The writer groups related ideas about how students can learn a great deal from community service and how it looks great on college applications. Most of the ideas within body paragraphs build logically on one another (e.g., “During the summer, I go to Macon, GA for a month and become a cabin leader at youth church camps. → Being in charge of 6-12 girls for weeks at a time teaches me ... so much of understanding, responsibility, and having compassion”). A variety of effective transitions link ideas within paragraphs (e.g., “Programs like these,” “are great things as well,” and pronoun substitution like “it” for “community service”). A clearer transition between the body paragraphs would make the overall plan even more seamless. The conclusion provides clear closure.

### Style Score: 4

Word choice is consistently engaging (e.g., “promote spiritual and moral growth,” “breeds well-rounded people and can prepare students to exit adolescence and enter adulthood,” and “truly reap the benefits of their efforts”). Lapses in control of language are infrequent (e.g., “They do not realize the outcoming benefits”). The writer’s voice is distinctive (“Required community service is a must”). Sentences vary in length and structure. Overall, the writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of Style.

### Conventions Score: 4

Simple, compound, and complex sentences are consistently correct. Lapses in sentence clarity are infrequent (e.g., “Responsibility foremost and many other virtues are what assist being a successful person”). Usage is consistently correct with the exception of a few incorrect word forms (e.g., “*thoughts* in need”). The elements of mechanics are clear and correct, but there is some missing internal punctuation (e.g., “a students ability). Overall, the writer demonstrates consistent control of the elements of Conventions.

## Performance Level: Meets the Standard

Paper 6

Community Service should be a requirement for graduation. There are many reasons to support this. Two of the biggest reasons are that community services look good on college applications, and that it could ~~proof~~ prove to be <sup>the</sup> healthy choice to make.

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I am a very active member of my school Beta Club. In this club, students with above average GPA can meet ~~with~~ and do various community services together. We do ~~all~~ types of volunteer work ~~to~~ from hurricane relief to afterschool tutoring sessions with elementary students. Mrs. ~~is~~ <sup>is always</sup> always telling us how it will pay off when we are making our college applications. She told us that any thing a student does for the community makes the student look good and in turn makes ~~the~~ the school look good. "Doing community service shows a college that a student works hard and won't slack off in his studies" says Professor Bill, a Biology teacher at UGA.

On average a female will outlive a male by at least five years. Doctors are not quite sure why this is, but one of the most well known theories is that one's self esteem takes a key factor in this. In this past year two out of six men have willingly done community service, while four out of six women were caught doing community service. Giving to the community is a wonderful way to raise one's self esteem. There is nothing like the smiling warm feeling you get helping someone less fortunate than you.

~~My father is a psychiatrist~~ I urge you to ~~vote~~ <sup>make</sup> community service a requirement for graduation. When you make your vote, remember, the future is in your hands.

## Annotations for Paper 6

### Ideas Score: 3

The controlling idea (community service should not be required for graduation) is sufficiently developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (it serves a variety of interests, and it improves students' self-esteem). The writer develops these supporting ideas with relevant details (e.g., makes the school look good, looks great on students' college applications, and "there is nothing like the warm feeling you get helping someone less fortunate than you"). These details are not well elaborated leaving some reader concerns unaddressed (e.g., the writer could make a more explicit connection between the community service statistics among men and women and their sense of well-being). Overall, the paper has effective focus and enough information to provide a sense of completeness.

### Organization Score: 3

The writer demonstrates sufficient control of the components of Organization. The introduction is clear, and the writer groups related ideas about how community service serves a variety of interests and improves students' self-esteem. Ideas within the body paragraphs follow a generally clear sequence, although they do not always build logically on one another. Some transitions link ideas in the response (e.g., "In this club," "why this is," and pronoun substitution like "she" for "Mrs. Mathews"). The conclusion is brief, but it provides clear closure.

### Style Score: 4

Word choice is consistently effective (e.g., "We do all types of volunteer work from hurricane relief to after school tutoring sessions with elementary students," "Doctors are not quite sure, but one of the most well known theories," and "Giving to the community is a wonderful way to raise one's self esteem"). Lapses in control of language are infrequent (e.g., "meet and do varied community services together"). The writer's voice is distinctive (e.g., "There is nothing like the warm feeling you get helping someone less fortunate than you"). Audience awareness is evident throughout the response ("I urge you" and "the future is in your hands"). Sentences vary in length and structure. Overall, the writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of Style.

### Conventions Score: 3

Most of the sentences in the paper are correct. There are slightly more errors in usage (e.g., some incorrect word forms like "my *school* Beta Club" and "less fortunate *then* you." The elements of mechanics are generally correct, but there are several misspellings (e.g., "varide," "touting sessions," and selfasteam"). Overall, the writer demonstrates sufficient control of the elements of Conventions.

## Performance Level: Meets the Standard



## Paper 7

Dear School Board,

I think community service as a graduation requirement is wrong. Because someone in a wheel-chair would not be able to meet that requirement. The person in the wheel-chair could have made honor roll of his or her school years. That requirement would keep them from graduating. Another reason is what if that person does not have transportation. And what if there <sup>parent</sup> say no. They are many reason I disapprove of community service as a graduation requirement but the three main ones are what if the person in a wheel-chair, what the person do not have transportation, and what if the person parents say no.

First, I would like to talk about a person in a wheel-chair. ~~That~~ would be disappointing if that person do not get their diploma. All because of some community service they were not able to do. How would that help them in college or in life?

Second, I would like to talk about a person without transportation. That would hurt them cause you can not do something if they are not there. They would problem like to do community service but they can not make it there. So that would keep them from graduating.

Last but not least, parents can influence that community service requirements. Parents can tell their no they can do any community service. They would not like to see their child putting up papers. So the parent can hurt them from graduating also. But the community service would play the most part of it.

The community service requirement is disapprove by me. Not that it matter what I say that may start other people to notice.

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**Paper 7 (page two)**

Do the community help the students study. I am not saying it  
wrong to everybody only to certain ones.

## Annotations for Paper 7

### Ideas Score: 2

The controlling idea (there should not be a community service requirement for graduation) is minimally developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (some students are not physically able to do community service, some students don't have transportation, and some parents don't approve of it). These supporting ideas are only partially developed, with few details (those in wheelchairs may want to serve but can't, and parents might not want their children picking up trash). The paper has effective focus, but there is not enough information in the response to provide a sense of completeness.

### Organization Score: 2

The organizing strategy is formulaic. Twice in the introduction the writer lays out his/her position and three supporting ideas. These supporting ideas, in turn, serve as the topic sentences of the body paragraphs. This repetition limits the amount of control the writer demonstrates in the components of grouping and sequencing. Transitions tend to be simple (e.g., "First," "Second," and "Last."). Although the conclusion is not repetitive, it neither particularly clear nor a good fit for the rest of the paper (e.g., "I am not saying it wrong to everybody only to certain ones").

### Style Score: 2

Word choice tends to be simple, ordinary, and repetitive (e.g., "First I would like to talk about," "Second I would like to talk about," "you can not do something if they are not there," and "So the parent can hurt them from graduating also"). The writer's voice is seldom clear ("That would be disappointing"). There is limited sentence variety. Overall, the writer demonstrates minimal control of the components of Style.

### Conventions Score: 2

There are some correct sentences in the response, but there are also several fragments (e.g., "All because of some community service their were not able to do," and the many attempts that begin with coordinating conjunctions like "So" and "But"). Some elements of usage are correct, but there are also several errors (e.g., "what if *there* parent *say* no," "*cause you* can not do something if *they* are not there," and "Not that it *matter* what I say"). The elements of mechanics are generally correct. Overall, the writer demonstrates minimal control.

## Performance Level: Does Not Meet the Standard



## Paper 8

Dear School Board,

Many people are homeless and lacking places to eat and/or sleep. Elderly people live in nursing homes without many caring and amicable people. Neighborhoods have been reduced to wastelands filled with trash and litter. All of these problems can be addressed by the community in the form of community service, however many people don't get involved in these activities on their own. Therefore, community service should be a requirement for students to graduate. In doing so, there will always be someone helping the community. Community service should be required for graduation because of its many benefits to the participants and community.

Community service is a way for citizens of a community to bond and have closer relationships with one another. The people involved socialize with one another while making their community a better place. Those that help develop relationships with people they may have ordinarily not have talked to. They can also enjoy the pleasure of helping someone else.

Community services such as Hands On Atlanta encourage the beautification of local parks, recreation facilities, schools, etc. People clean the areas around them in order to have a cleaner, brighter environment. In doing so, the environment thrives and flourishes. However, many people do not willingly help.

If community service was a requirement for graduation, many tasks would be accomplished in the community. When students are mandated to do community services, they may enjoy them and

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**Paper 8 (page two)**

want to do more work after graduation. They could also pass the willingness to help the community to their relatives and friends. Before long, the community could be all that it can be, do to the efforts of people in the community.

Sincerely,



## Annotations for Paper 8

### **Ideas Score: 3**

The controlling idea (community service should be required for graduation) is sufficiently developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (it helps members of the community bond and helps beautify the community). The writer develops these supporting ideas with relevant details (e.g., “The people involved socialize with one another while making their community a better place,” and “Community services such as Hands on Atlanta encourage the beautification of local parks, recreation facilities, schools, etc.). These details are not well elaborated, but the paper has effective focus and enough information to provide a sense of completeness.

### **Organization Score: 3**

This paper is an example of a high 3 in Organization. The introduction is effective because it describes a problem (a community in need) that the community service requirement can address. Therefore, it sets the stage for the development that follows. In the body paragraphs, the writer groups related ideas about how community service helps members of the community bond and how it helps beautify the community. Ideas within these paragraphs follow a generally clear sequence: ideas in the first body paragraph are somewhat repetitive, so they don’t exactly build logically on one another, but ideas in the second body paragraph do build logically on one another. Some transitions link ideas (e.g., “Therefore,” “In doing so,” and pronoun substitution like “they” for “students”). Transitions between body paragraphs, however, are not especially effective. The conclusion provides clear closure.

### **Style Score: 4**

Word choice is consistently engaging (e.g., “Neighborhoods have been reduced to wastelands filled with trash and litter,” “enjoy the pleasure of helping someone else,” and “In doing so, the environment thrives and flourishes”). This effective language makes the writer’s voice distinctive. Sentences vary in length and structure. Overall, the writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of Style.

### **Conventions Score: 4**

Simple, compound, and complex sentences are consistently correct with the exception of a run-on in the introduction (“All of these problems can be addressed by the community in the form of community service, however many people don’t get involved in these activities on their own”). Usage is consistently correct as are the elements of mechanics. Overall, the writer demonstrates consistent control of the elements of Conventions.

## **Performance Level: Meets the Standard**

Paper 9

Dear School Board,

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I think that we need to support the community service requirements, because most young adults are not very active in the community and it is good for them to get out there and do some work. Serving meals to elders is good because it lets them know that we still care for them and what they have accomplished. Visiting old people in nursing homes keeps them happy and active. Going to hospitals to visit people helps the sick and injured to gain moral and overcome their situation. I know I would hate to be sick and lie in a hospital bed without anyone there to give me company. Helping a person with their yard work can be hard, but it is sometimes rewarding because you may make a new friend in the process. Tutoring a younger student is also rewarding because not only is she or he learning, but you are getting more practice in on your school work. Gathering donations to help families in need of food, clothing, or shelter is good because you never know if or when you will lose your supplies. These are things that the young people do for the community and without the requirement most of these helpful things would not get done. That is why I think we should support the community service program.

Thanks,

## **Annotations for Paper 9**

### **Ideas Score: 2**

The controlling idea (there should be a community service requirement for graduation) is minimally developed. The writer introduces several supporting ideas, each an example of community service (e.g., visiting the elderly, tutoring younger students, and gathering donations for families in need). These supporting ideas are only partially developed (e.g., with details like “I know I would hate to be sick and lie in a hospital bed without anyone their to give me company”). Overall, there is not quite enough information in the response to provide a sense of completeness.

### **Organization Score: 2**

The writer demonstrates minimal control of the components of Organization. The introduction, though brief, is clear. Because there is such limited development for each supporting idea, there is only limited evidence of grouping related ideas and logical sequencing (i.e., there are not many related ideas to group together and sequence). Few transitions link ideas in the response; instead the writer often moves from one example of community service to another without a clear transition. The brief conclusion provides some closure.

### **Style Score: 3**

At first glance, this response might not appear long enough for the writer to demonstrate sufficient control in any domain. Note, though, that the writer’s handwriting is relatively small, so the response is longer than it might appear. Overall, the writer demonstrates sufficient control of the component of Style. Word choice is generally engaging (e.g., “most young adults are not very active in the community,” “Visiting old people in nursing homes keeps them happy,” and “Gathering donations to help families in need of food, clothing, or shelter”). The caring tone is appropriate to the persuasive topic and purpose, and the writer’s voice is clear.

### **Conventions Score: 3**

Most of the sentences in the response are correct. Usage is generally correct, but there are a few incorrect word forms (e.g., “to gain moral” and “without anyone their”). Most elements of mechanics are correct. Although this response is relatively brief, there is enough evidence of control to demonstrate a sufficient grasp of the elements of Conventions.

## **Performance Level: Meets the Standard**

## Paper 10

Dear School board,

I am writing this letter to share why I believe requiring students to be involved in community service is a wonderful idea. Most high school students will go about their high school career without ever lifting a finger to help those in need. Teenagers have a tendency to only care about themselves.

If community service was required in order to graduate, teenagers would get to experience what it feels like to contribute to another's needs.

The majority of graduating seniors have not decided what they want their career to be in the future. Many are still pondering through their thoughts trying to decide what they will enjoy doing for the rest of their life. When students become involved in community service, it gives them an idea of what they enjoy and what they don't. For example, a young lady may want to go to college to practice medicine. If she began community service by visiting hospitals and senior centers, it would help her decide if that was what she wanted to spend the rest of her life doing.

Many people in our community believe that teenagers are worthless and do no good. It is a common belief that teenagers just like to have fun and party. Although this is true for some students, I believe if we were required to participate in community service the public's opinion of teenagers and the teenagers themselves

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**Paper 10 (page two)**

would change. Most of us don't realize how fortunate we are to have food, good health, and a shelter over our heads. By going out and helping these people that are less fortunate and can't help themselves, we would no longer take our lives for granted. Hopefully we would realize how lucky we are to be able to take our own leaves and have a place to sleep.

All of the reasons mentioned above are great reasons why we need to be required to participate in community service. Community service would help us decide what we want our future to be like, help us realize how lucky we are to have the life we have, and most importantly, we will feel better about ourselves after doing something good for our community. Community service can only help our school and our students to become better people. Please take these reasons into consideration.

Thank you for your time,



## Annotations for Paper 10

### **Ideas Score: 4**

The controlling idea (there should be a community service requirement for graduation) is well developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (students can gain an understanding of what they might want to do for a career, and students should develop an appreciation for how good their lives are). The writer develops these supporting ideas with specific examples, details and elaboration (e.g., “For example, a young lady may want to go to college to practice medicine. If she began community service by visiting hospitals and senior centers, it would help her decide if that was what she wanted to spend the rest of her life doing”). There are just a few spots where additional elaboration would address reader concerns (e.g., a more specific contrast between the privilege students enjoy and the needs of the people the students would serve). Overall, though, the writer is consistently focused on the persuasive topic and purpose.

### **Organization Score: 4**

The writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of Organization. The introduction is clear and sets the stage for the development that follows. The writer groups related ideas about how community service can give students career insights and help students develop an appreciation for how good their lives are. Most of the ideas within body paragraphs build logically on one another (e.g., “Many people in our community believe that teenagers are worthless and do no good. → It is a common belief that teenagers just like to have fun and party”). A variety of effective transitions link ideas within paragraphs (e.g., “If community service was required,” “For example,” and “Although this is true”). A clearer transition between the body paragraphs would make the overall plan even more seamless. The conclusion is somewhat repetitive, but it provides clear closure.

### **Style Score: 4**

Word choice is consistently engaging (e.g., “without ever lifting a finger to help those in need,” “Most of us don’t realize how fortunate we are to have food, good health, and a shelter over our heads,” and “Hopefully we would realize how lucky we are to be able to rake our own leaves and have a place to sleep”). This effective language leads to a distinctive voice. Sentences vary in length and structure. Lapses in control of language are infrequent (e.g., “Many are still pondering through their thoughts”). Overall, the writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of Style.

### **Conventions Score: 5**

Simple, compound, and complex sentences are consistently clear and correct. Usage is consistently correct. The elements of mechanics are clear and correct with the exception of a few misspellings (e.g., “tendancy”). Overall, the writer demonstrates full command of the elements of Conventions.

## **Performance Level: Exceeds the Standard**

## Paper 11

To the \_\_\_\_\_ School Board:

Throughout the history of America, the government has been creating laws, regulations, and standards to better life by giving structure to living. Some of these fabrications are filtered down to state governments, who in turn filter their own regulations to county districts, who regulate the educational system. Lately, however, the laws and standards being instituted have become based more on opinion, that is to say the government's opinion of a good society. These laws and standards expunge certain rights. An example of this is the current consideration of community service as a high school graduation requirement.

First seen in the "Good Samaritan law," the government is once again attempting to instill their opinions of good character into the minds of the people. It is most likely felt that introducing the idea of community service as a graduation requirement will leave the impression in the minds of students that in order to succeed in life, they must help others. If this is true, and the government preaches good character and ethics, one would be inclined to ask where they get off attacking young and vulnerable minds with ~~their~~ their propaganda.

I will agree that community service is an upstanding thing to do, yet it remains irrelevant to high school curriculum. Forcing it upon student takes away their freedom not to. There is now and forever will be a line drawn between fact and opinion, and fact is what schools are designed for. Holding a position of power, no matter how small or large, is accompanied with responsibility. Just because the district can do something, doesn't always mean it should.

From the Desk of:

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## Annotations for Paper 11

### Ideas Score: 3

The controlling idea (community service should not be required for graduation) is sufficiently developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (while it can be of benefit to the community, it is not right for the government, i.e. the school system, to force the requirement upon students). The writer develops these supporting ideas with relevant details (e.g., education should be more about fact than opinion, and the idea of this requirement is based on the school system's opinion of what is best for students, and "Just because the district can do something, doesn't mean it should"). These details are not well elaborated, but the paper has effective focus and enough information to provide a sense of completeness.

### Organization Score: 4

It is somewhat rare for a paper of such relative brevity to demonstrate consistent control in Organization, but this paper is a case in point. The introduction pulls the reader in by immediately identifying a problem with the proposed requirement. There is just one paragraph in the body of the essay, but in it, related ideas about the problems of government coercion are grouped together. A particular strength of the paper is its sequencing. Essentially all of the ideas in the paper build on one another, from introduction to conclusion (e.g., "Holding a position of power, no matter how small or large, is accompanied with responsibility. → Just because the district can do something, doesn't mean it should"). The writer uses a variety of effective transitions (e.g., "Some of these fabrications," "Lately, however," and "If this is true"). The conclusion provides an effective summary of the writer's position without repetition.

### Style Score: 4

Again, it is somewhat rare for a paper of this length to demonstrate consistent control in Style, but this writer succeeds in doing so. Word choice is consistently precise and effective (e.g., "Some of these fabrications are filtered down to state governments," "expunge certain rights," and "one would be inclined to ask where they get off attacking young and vulnerable minds with their propaganda"). This effective language creates an authoritative tone and a distinctive voice. Sentences vary in length and structure. It is consistently clear that the writer is aware of his/her audience.

### Conventions Score: 4

Simple, compound, and complex sentences are consistently correct. Usage is consistently correct, with the exception of an occasional missing word (e.g., "irrelevant to high school curriculum"). The elements of mechanics are clear and correct. Overall, the writer demonstrates consistent control of the elements of Conventions.

## Performance Level: Meets the Standard

## Paper 12

Today's high school students live a hard life. Many of them feel overburdened by homework and the stress to succeed in extra-curricular activities. Some students find themselves devoting 100% of their time to school-related activities during the weekdays. Some even find themselves spending their weekends working on school activities. Many students just don't have the time to do community service.

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I woke up one Saturday morning tired from five days of rigorous track practice. My legs hurt and community service was the last thing I wanted to do. I hadn't gotten much sleep because I'd had a lot of homework that week. It was finally the weekend and time to relax, or so I thought. When I finally ~~thought~~ thought I was free from school work for a few days I realize I had to do community service. That is, if I want to graduate. The weekends are the only times most students can do it because of their school activities during the week. The weekends are supposed to be a break from school, but I find myself working as hard as ever. It's just too difficult to <sup>reasonably</sup> balance community service with all my school activities. ~~reasonably~~

My school requires 200 hours of community service to graduate. In order to stay on target of this goal, a student must do at least 1.2 hours of community service every week for the duration of the school year. For many students even the weekends are ~~part~~ packed full of family activities and other engagements, and they can't fit in any time for community service. This causes their hours to build up and they're left stressed with a lot of work to do in a very little time. It's unreasonable how much out-of-school work we're required to do while we have to continue studying as well.

## Paper 12 (page two)

Community service is done outside of school hours. It's a forced extra-curricular activity. When ~~you go~~<sup>one goes</sup> to school, ~~you~~<sup>one</sup> goes to get an education, not to be forced to do community service.

Community service cannot teach what cannot be taught in the classroom. The ~~reason~~ reason students find it so difficult is because it's done outside of school hours. All the problems students have with it could be solved by doing community service during school hours. If schools took one day out of every month or every other month to do community service, they could accomplish a lot and it wouldn't overwhelm the students.

Teens today have a heavy workload and hardly any free time. Our current community service requirements subtract ~~from~~<sup>the</sup> that little free time we have and can be hard to fit into our schedule. Schools should not require community service in order for students to graduate, but if it were done during school hours, the same goal would be accomplished and students wouldn't have to deal with it outside of school.



## Annotations for Paper 12

### Ideas Score: 5

The controlling idea (the community service requirement should be incorporated into the school day) is fully developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (students already have cramped schedules, and 200 hours of community service is difficult to fit in). The writer develops these supporting ideas with specific examples, details, and elaboration (e.g., the example of coming home after “rigorous track practice” only to face a community service requirement; the breakdown of 200 community service hours to approximately 1.2 hours/week, which is difficult to manage). This specific development sets up the writer’s solution: “If schools took one day out of every month or every other month to do community service, they could accomplish a lot and it wouldn’t overwhelm the students.” The information in the response addresses a variety of reader concerns and perspectives.

### Organization Score: 5

The overall plan (problem/solution) is effectively executed and appropriate to the persuasive topic and purpose. The introduction clearly sets the stage for the development that follows. The writer groups related ideas about cramped schedules, the difficulty of getting 200 hours of community service accomplished, and a proposed solution. The body paragraphs and ideas within them follow a logical sequence. A variety of effective transitions link all parts of the paper (e.g., “or so I thought,” “In order to stay on target,” and pronoun substitution like “they” for “students”). The conclusion provides an effective summary. Overall, the writer demonstrates a full command of the components of Organization.

### Style Score: 5

The writer uses a variety of carefully crafted phrases to engage the audience (e.g., “It’s just too difficult to reasonably balance community service with all my school activities,” “the weekends are packed full of family activities and other engagements,” and “When one goes to school one goes to get an education, not to be forced to do community service”). This effective word choice contributes to a distinctive voice. Sentences vary in length and structure. Control of language is sustained throughout the response.

### Conventions Score: 5

A variety of simple, compound, and complex sentences are consistently clear and correct, with appropriate end punctuation. The elements of usage and mechanics are consistently correct. There are very few errors in these components (“*Today*s high school students” and “When I finally thought I was free ... I *realize* I have to”). These minor errors are vastly outweighed by correct instances. Overall, the writer demonstrates full command of the elements of Conventions.

## Performance Level: Exceeds the Standard

Paper 13

Dear, Board of Education

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I have just read the school newspaper and seen the article about you voted on whether we need to do community service in order to graduate. I think this is a bad idea. We simply don't have enough time after school to do these things your asking us to do. Here are the things that I have to do on a daily basis and I'm sure as you read you will vote against this act.

Every day after school I go to work at the mall and work from three o'clock to nine o'clock at night. After I get home and take a shower I have to do all of my homework for the next day. I get to bed around eleven-thirty p.m. and then get up at five-thirty a.m. AS you can see my week days are cramed and can't fit anymore into it.

On the weekends I consider it my time to rest and maybe catch up on my homework or just do what I want. I don't think that after a long and hard work and school week I should be made to go and clean somebodys yard or take care of them. The weekends are for me and me only!

So why should I have to do it to graduate if the other classes before me haven't? I wouldn't mind doing some comm. 'ty service in the summer when I have time to do it. But your asking me to do it when I have enough to deal with already. I have

Paper 13 (page two)

Made my points and I hope you take them to heart when voting and  
keep us young adults in mind.

Sincerely,

## Annotations for Paper 13

### Ideas Score: 3

The controlling idea (community service should not be required for graduation) is sufficiently developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (students already have a lot going on, and, in their limited free time, students should be able to do what they want). The writer develops these supporting ideas with relevant details (e.g., “Every day after school I go to work at the mall and work from three o’clock to nine o’clock at night,” and “I dont think that after a long and hard work and school week I should be made to go and clean somebodies yard or take care of them). The examples and details are specific, but they are not well elaborated. Overall, there is enough information in the response to provide a sense of completeness.

### Organization Score: 3

The writer demonstrates sufficient control of the components of Organization. The introduction is clear. The writer groups related ideas about how students already have a lot going on, and, in their limited free time, students should be able to do what they want. Ideas within the body paragraphs build logically on one another (e.g., “After I get home and take a shower I have to do all of my homework for the next day. → I get to bed around eleven-thirty p.m. and then get up at five-thirty a.m.”). Some transitions link ideas in the response (e.g., “After I get home,” “As you can see,” and “On the weekends”). The conclusion provides clear closure. This paper has characteristics of higher score points in Organization (e.g., logical sequencing), but it is relatively limited in terms of evidence. Notice how the writer skips lines. This level of control over a longer sample of writing would likely result in a higher score.

### Style Score: 3

Word choice is generally effective (e.g., “As you can see my weekdays are cramed,” “I consider it my time to rest and maybe catch up on my homework,” and “I hope you take them to heart when voting”). This effective word choice demonstrates clear audience awareness and gives the reader a sense of the writer’s voice. There are not many lapses into simple or uncontrolled language, but this response is relatively limited in terms of evidence. Overall, the writer demonstrates sufficient control of the components of Style.

### Conventions Score: 3

Most of the sentences in the paper are correct. There are a few sentences that begin with coordinating conjunctions (e.g., “So” and “But”), so these are technically fragments. The elements of usage are generally correct, although there are some incorrect word forms (e.g., “*your* asking us” and “*somebodies* yard”). The elements of mechanics are generally correct, but there is some missing internal punctuation (e.g., “dont think”). Overall, the writer demonstrates sufficient control of the elements of Conventions.

## Performance Level: Meets the Standard

Paper 14

Dear Board of Education,

I believe that you should reject the community service requirement for highschool graduation. In today's society there is so much to be done to prepare for the world after high school. More and more kids have jobs now. There is also not enough time. When kids, who haven't had any experience to the working world balance a job, community service, and school, not to mention if they have an after school activity, things can become very stressful.

As ~~new~~ new items and gadgets are released, more and more kids want the new hot item, but their parents can't or won't pay for it. To have extra money to be able to pay for what they want, without the help of their parents, students get jobs. When they get a job, whatever it is, they may or may not be doing a job for the community, but they are learning to balance their work life and their home and school life. That is what I believe community service is trying to teach us.

There are nine hours in the school day, from 7:30 am when the bus arrives to take the students to school, until

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Paper 14 (page two)

3:30 pm when the bus has to take the students home. Not all students ride home on the bus. Many students stay after for clubs, sports, and to help their teachers. They do this the majority of days out of the week if they are involved in one or more activities. This only leaves about three to six hours of daylight left in which they have to do homework with. Many students that I know of have around-the-house chores that their parents make them do.

On the weekends students may or may not have more time, as some have even more working hours, but things like sports practice and games, and spending time with the family can stop them from community service. Some students even have extra classes on the weekend, from Drivers Education, Saturday school, and even Sunday school for religious purposes.

The requirement for community service, in my opinion should be an option or not required at all. Students have enough already that they need to do to prepare for the life after high school.

## Annotations for Paper 14

### Ideas Score: 4

The controlling idea (there should not be a community service requirement for graduation) is well developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (some students have jobs, many students participate in sports or clubs after school, and the weekends are usually booked as well). The writer develops these supporting ideas with specific examples, details and elaboration (e.g., “As new items and gadgets are released, more and more kids want the new hot item, but their parents can’t or won’t pay for it. To have extra money to be able to pay for what they want without the help of parents, students get jobs”). There are just a few spots where additional elaboration would address reader concerns (e.g., there are many examples in the final body paragraph (about weekend activity), but little elaboration on how time consuming these activities are). Overall, the writer is consistently focused on the persuasive topic and purpose.

### Organization Score: 4

The writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of Organization. The introduction is clear and sets the stage for the development that follows. The writer groups related ideas about how some students have jobs, many students participate in sports or clubs after school, and the weekends are usually booked. Most of the ideas within body paragraphs build logically on one another (e.g., “There are nine hours in the school day, from 7:30 am ... until 3:30 pm when the bus has to take the students home. → Not all the students ride home on the bus. → Many students stay after for clubs, sports, and to help their teachers”). A variety of transitions link ideas (e.g., “whatever it is,” “This only leaves,” and pronoun substitution like “they” for “students”). The conclusion is brief, but it provides clear closure.

### Style Score: 4

Word choice is consistently effective (e.g., “the new hot item,” “learning to balance their work life and their home and school life,” “around-the-house chores”). This effective language leads to a distinctive voice. Sentences vary in length and structure. Lapses in control of language are infrequent (e.g., “This only leaves about three to six hours of daylight left in which they have to do homework with”). Overall, the writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of style.

### Conventions Score: 4

Simple, compound, and complex sentences are consistently clear and correct with appropriate end punctuation. Few sentences lack clarity (e.g. “When kids, who haven’t had any experience to the working world balance a job, community service, and school, not to mention if they have an after school activity, things can become very stressful”). The elements of usage and mechanics are consistently correct. There are few errors in these components (e.g., “*wont* pay for it” and some misspellings like “realeased” and “untill”). Errors are minor and do not interfere with meaning. Overall, the writer demonstrates consistent control of the elements of Conventions.

### Performance Level: Meets the Standard

To whom this may concern, I'm  
is writing this letter  
to support the community service requirement  
for graduation. I think that all students  
in the United States should do community  
service. Not just for the reason of giving  
back to the community, also for the reason  
of learning responsibility. Every student in the  
United States have to grow up and have responsibility  
on their own. Why not start now. So when students  
get out on their own, they would all ready know what  
the world is like without help. Community Service  
can teach you how to take care of elderly, take  
care kids, help you learn how to cook, help you learn  
more about cleaning and etc. When it all comes down,  
community service is teaching you how to have responsibility  
on you own, and giving back to the community. So I  
ask, why not do community service?

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I want to thank you for taking your time out,  
and reading my letter. Again, I think it's a good ideal  
for community service, and I hope my letter helps alot.

Thank you

## Annotations for Paper 15

### **Ideas Score: 2**

The controlling idea (there should be a community service requirement for graduation) is minimally developed. There is essentially one supporting idea (teaches students responsibility). Development for this supporting idea is limited (e.g., helping others with cooking, cleaning, and childcare makes the students more responsible). Overall, there is not enough information in the response to provide a sense of completeness.

### **Organization Score: 2**

The writer demonstrates minimal control of the components of Organization. The introduction is brief but clear. Because the response is so brief, there is only limited evidence of grouping, sequencing, and transitions (e.g., “Every student in the United States have to grow up and have responsibility on their own. → Why not start now”). The conclusion is brief, but it provides some closure.

### **Style Score: 2**

There is some sense of the writer’s voice (e.g., “why not start now”), in addition to some audience awareness (e.g., “I want to thank you for taking your time ... and reading my letter”). The caring tone is appropriate (e.g., “When it all comes down, community service is teaching you how to have responsibilities on you own, and giving back to the community”). On the other hand, there are some issues with control of language (e.g., “I think it’s a good ideal”), and because the sample of writing is so brief, there is only limited evidence of control the components of style.

### **Conventions Score: 2**

There are some correct sentences in the paper, but there are also errors (e.g., “Not just for the reason of giving back to the community, also for the reason of learning responsibility”). There are quite a few usage errors (e.g., “Every student ... *have* to grow up,” “they would *all ready* no what the world is like,” and “on *you* own”). Some elements of mechanics are correct, but there are misspellings (e.g., “responability”). Overall, the writer demonstrates minimal control of the elements of Conventions.

**Performance Level: Does Not Meet the Standard**



## Paper 16

Have you ever been in high school? Have you ever experienced the workload of up to four different classes, each one with projects, homework every night, and tests every week. I go through it everyday, and I know that I have little time to other things during the week besides school. The courses that I take are extremely rigorous and require much time and effort in order to have success in each one, therefore, I have no extra time to deal with community service. I believe that community service is a great idea and a very honorable thing to do, but there is just no time.

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I know that most high schools across America, including my own, have many groups, clubs, and organizations in which community service hours are mandatory. I, myself, am in Beta Club, which requires at least ten hours of community service each year. There is also the Key Club and the Peer Leadership group where community service is done. It seems to me that there are plenty of places to volunteer for community service, some people, though, either do not want to do community service or cannot do community service because of their jobs. People with jobs usually have very little extra time for other things besides their job.

I have many other things that I enjoy doing; one of which, that takes up most of my time, is football. Around here, in GA, football is a year-round sport. Our football team often does community service, and we aren't even required to. I have very ~~hard~~ demanding classes which include pre-calculus, AP Calculus, AP Statistics, physics, and many more. These classes are extremely difficult and time-consuming. I am in Beta Club and I am in a peer leadership group, both of which add up to many community services hours; there is no way that I can do even more for graduation. I have my own yards to attend to along with my mother's and my

## Paper 16 (page two)

grandparents' yards. This upcoming summer I plan to have a construction job which will totally wipe out all of my free time.

When did ~~highschool~~ high school become a place where you have to go and do things away from school; it's not a job; it's high school. High school is about learning math, science, language, and things of that nature. Adding in community service is like having a mandatory extracurricular activity which are all by choice as of now. A drop in grades could result from required community service because of the even larger workload; there would be less time for studying. This could possibly put America in behind in our attempt to stay competitive, as George Bush stated in the 2006 State of the Union Address, with Japan and other foreign countries. There may even be an increase in students sleeping in class due to late-night studying.

Requiring community service for graduation is a bad idea. Students should have the choice to partake in community service. Even though community service is a great thing, there will be no time for it. We already have people who have DUI-s and <sup>who are</sup> <sup>convicted</sup> other small crimes having to do community service <sup>along with</sup> ~~and~~ all of the organizations such as Beta Club and Key Club doing community service that there would only be a small increase in the amount being done. ~~to~~ Overall, community service should not be a graduation requirement.

## Annotations for Paper 16

### **Ideas Score: 5**

The controlling idea (there should not be a community service requirement for graduation) is well developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (students are already involved in many activities; examples of this from the writer's life; high school should be about academic learning). The writer develops these supporting ideas with specific examples, details and elaboration (e.g., "Around here ... football is a year-round sport. Our football team often does community service, and we aren't even required to," and "there could be less time for studying. This could possibly put America behind in our attempt to stay competitive"). The writer creates depth of development in a unique way. For instance, in the third paragraph, the writer cites several specific examples of activities and responsibilities he juggles. Although the writer does not elaborate extensively on any of these, the sheer breadth of the schedule he describes clearly underscores that he has no time for community service. In total, the response contains extensive information that addresses several reader concerns.

### **Organization Score: 4**

The writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of Organization. The introduction is clear and sets the stage for the development that follows. The writer groups related ideas about how students are already involved in many activities, and how high school should be about academic learning. Most of the ideas within body paragraphs build logically on one another (e.g., "It seems to me that there are plenty of places to volunteer for community service. → Some people, though, either do not want to do community service or cannot do community service because of their jobs"). A variety of transitions link ideas (e.g., "Some people, though," "This could possibly put," and pronoun substitution like "we" for "our football team"). There are some places where transitions are lacking (e.g., in the second body paragraph, the writer moves abruptly from a discussion of peer leadership group to having to do yard work). The conclusion provides effective closure.

### **Style Score: 4**

Word choice is consistently effective (e.g., "the courses I take are extremely rigorous," "I have my own yard to attend to," and "This could possibly put America behind in our attempt to stay competitive"). This effective language leads to a distinctive voice. Sentences vary in length and structure. Lapses into simpler, repetitive language are infrequent (e.g., "have very little time for other things" and "I have many other things"). Overall, the writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of Style.

### **Conventions Score: 5**

Simple, compound, and complex sentences are consistently clear and correct, with appropriate end punctuation. The elements of usage and mechanics are consistently correct. Errors in the response are very infrequent and do not interfere with meaning. Overall, the writer demonstrates a full command of the elements of Conventions.

## **Performance Level: Exceeds the Standard**

Paper 17

The ~~School Board~~ is trying to make Community Service a requirement for graduation. I don't think they should because we already have to much to do. Second, it is community service which is "VOLUNTEER" work so we should have the choice. Lastly, some students might react negatively towards Community Service.

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First of all in school we have to do a lot of things just to graduate. Whether we are in college prep or career tech, we all have to get a certain amount of credits. we have to take 6 classes and it takes a lot of work to pass the classes. After school there are a lot of people who work right after school until around 9:00. So therefore a lot of people just do not have time to do community service.

Secondly did y'all think about how some students might react to having to do community service, or how it might affect us in a negative way. Some students might not graduate on time because of all the things we have to do. There would also be a lot of people who wouldn't be able to work after school because they would be doing community service. If ~~the~~ <sup>y'all</sup> ~~School Board~~ <sup>were</sup> to make community service a requirement there are parents who won't agree, and will constantly bug y'all and I don't think you want that.

Lastly, like I said before it is called "VOLUNTEER" work, which means that we have the choice on whether



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we want to do it or not. There shouldn't be someone telling us we have to do community service. Some people when joining a club ~~do~~ like the Delta Club or any other club, end up doing community service. Therefore there is absolutely no reason to make community service a requirement for graduation.

That is how I feel about making community service a requirement for graduation. It not only will affect us but it might affect you as well. Once again I say that this is volunteer work; so you shouldn't make us. There will be a lot of people who aren't going to like the idea. So, I ask you to not make community service a requirement for graduation.

## Annotations for Paper - 17

### Ideas Score: 3

The controlling idea (community service should not be required for graduation) is sufficiently developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (students have many activities, adding another could affect students negatively, and students should have a choice in the matter). The writer develops these supporting ideas with relevant details (e.g., “We have to take 6 classes and it takes a lot of work to pass the classes,” and “There would also be a lot of people who wouldn’t be able to work after school because they would be doing community service”). These details are not well elaborated, but there is enough information to provide a sense of completeness.

### Organization Score: 3

There are formulaic elements to the overall plan (e.g., the introduction outlines the position and supporting ideas, the transitions between body paragraphs are ordinal, and the conclusion is repetition). However, in the body of the essay, the student demonstrates effective control of grouping, and the sequencing tends to be logical (e.g., “First of all, in school we have to do a lot of things just to graduate. → Weather we are in college prep or career tech, we all have to get a certain amount of credit”). Transitions within the body paragraphs are effective (e.g., “Weather we are,” “After school,” and “which means that”). This paper doesn’t have as much repetition in the body of the essay as formulaic essays; therefore, the writer is able to demonstrate more control.

### Style Score: 3

Word choice is generally effective (e.g., “students might react negatively,” “Weather we are in college prep or career tech,” and “there is absolutely no reason to make community service a requirement for graduation”). There are some lapses into simpler language, however (e.g., “we have to do a lot of things,” “it takes a lot of work” and “There will also be a lot of people”). The writer’s voice is clear, and there is some variation in sentence length and structure. Overall, the writer demonstrates sufficient control of the components of Style.

### Conventions Score: 3

Most of the sentences in the paper are correct, but there are some sentences that begin with the coordinating conjunction “so”; these are technically fragments. The elements of usage are generally correct, but there are some incorrect word forms (e.g., “*To* much and *Weather* we are”). The elements of mechanics are generally correct. Overall, there are not many errors in this paper, but there is not extensive evidence of control. This paper is an example of a high 3.

## Performance Level: Meets the Standard

## Paper 18

Dear School Board,

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The new program being voted on about having community service as a requirement to graduate is a splendid idea. The program is a wonderful way to help students, now and in the future. It can teach them good morals, offer them good career choices, and it gives students a chance to see what is going on in their community. This program should not even have to be voted on. It should have been enacted a long time ago.

One reason this program should be voted in, is because it can give students morals that are hard to learn without some community service. It helps students to have respect for the elderly in our neighborhoods. It can also give students respect for themselves by knowing that they did something to help someone else. It can even give them respect for those less fortunate than them. This program will be able to teach the students moral values that they need to become a better citizen.

Another reason the program should be enacted is for the career opportunities it gives. By putting the community service on their applications it gives them a better chance of getting into the college of their choice, or in a career that is related to the community service the student did. By doing the community service they receive skills that they require in the field they would like to pursue. If a student plans to stay in the community they know of some good honest jobs to consider. The opportunities of this program can be valuable to the students in many ways.

**Paper 18 (page two)**

The program gives students a chance to see what is going on in the community. It shows them the good and bad sides of the community. If the students plan on voting on community issues the program shows them what is going on and can help them develop an opinion. This helps the students see if there are problems in the community and if they can fix them. It can even put them into politics.

This program will be wonderful if it is enacted. The only way this can happen is through the board, please ~~see the opinion~~ side with the opinion presented in this letter. The opportunities are worth it. The new program will be a gigantic success if voted for.

## Annotations for Paper 18

### **Ideas Score: 3**

The controlling idea (community service should be required for graduation) is sufficiently developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (gives students morals, gives students a window into career options, and helps students see what is going on in the community). The writer develops these supporting ideas with relevant details (e.g., “It helps students to have respect for the elderly in our community,” and “If a student plans to stay in the community they know of some good honest jobs to consider”). The development is not consistently specific, leaving some reader concerns unaddressed (e.g., how does community service help students have respect for the elderly?). Overall, there is enough information to provide a sense of completeness.

### **Organization Score: 3**

The writer demonstrates sufficient control of the components of Organization. The introduction is clear, and the writer groups related ideas about how community service gives students morals, gives students a window into career options, and helps students see what is going on in the community. Ideas follow a generally clear sequence, but they do not necessarily build logically on one another, as they would in higher score points. Some transitions link ideas in the response (e.g., “It can even” and “This helps the students”). The conclusion provides effective closure.

### **Style Score: 3**

Word choice is generally effective (e.g., “It should have been enacted a long time ago,” “It can even give them respect for those less fortunate,” and “help them develop an opinion”). There are some lapses into simpler, repetitive language, however (e.g., “good carrer choices,” “good and bad side of the community,” “what is going on in the community,” and “problems in the community”). The writer’s voice is clear, and there is some variation in sentence length and structure. Overall, the writer demonstrates sufficient control of the components of Style.

### **Conventions Score: 4**

Simple, compound, and complex sentences are consistently correct, with appropriate end punctuation. Usage is consistently correct. Most elements of mechanics are correct, though there are some missing commas after introductory clauses, in addition to an occasional misspelling (e.g., “carrer”). Overall, the writer demonstrates sufficient control of the elements of Conventions.

## **Performance Level: Meets the Standard**



Paper 19

To whom it may concern,

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I am writing in regard to the idea of keeping community service a graduation requirement. I do not think that it should be required because some student may have a job and so much is already put on them to graduate with all the academics and so much testing to see if they are even able to graduate. OK, yeah I do think that community service is a good thing and students should be more involved, but it would take away from extracurricular activities, homework time, social lives, study time, and give them less time to work and get a dose of the real world.

I ask you why should students be required to perform community service for graduation? Is it to get students more involved with something outside of school, if that is the case, then I also ask you what are the extracurricular activities for, and jobs? Or is it directed more toward those who do not participate in extracurricular activities, if this is the case, then I also ask you, why make it a requirement

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for all students, if it is directed toward those who do nothing at their own free will. Once again I ask you to reject the decision to keep community service a graduation requirement to all students, maybe just to few students as an extra academic or fine art for those who do not have anything to do afterschool because they do not participate in extracurricular activities.

Sincerely,

## Annotations for Paper 19

### Ideas Score: 2

The controlling idea (there should not be a community service requirement for graduation) is minimally developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (students have a lot going on; questioning the rationale for this requirement). Development for these supporting ideas is limited (e.g., jobs; tests; “Is [the idea] ... to get students more involved with something outside of school?”). The response has effective focus, but there is not enough information to provide a sense of completeness.

### Organization Score: 3

The writer demonstrates sufficient control of the components of Organization. The introduction is clear and lays out the writer’s rationale for opposing the community service requirement. In the single body paragraph, related ideas are grouped together: they are all about questioning the rationale of the community service requirement. Ideas in the response follow a generally clear sequence, and some transitions link ideas (e.g., “Is it to get,” “Or is it directed more toward,” and “Once again”). The conclusion is repetitive, but it provides some closure.

### Style Score: 3

Word choice is generally effective (e.g., “so much is already put on them to graduate,” “get a dose of the real world,” and “if it is directed toward”). There are, however, some lapses into simpler, somewhat repetitive language (e.g., “a good thing” and the phrase “extracurricular activities” is used multiple time). The rhetorical questions show clear audience awareness (e.g., “what are the extracurricular activities for[?]”). There is some sentence variety. Overall, the writer demonstrates sufficient control of the components of Style.

### Conventions Score: 2

The writer demonstrates minimal control of the elements of Conventions. There are some correct sentences in the paper, but there are also several run-ons (e.g., “Is it to get students more involved with something outside of school, if that is the case, then I also ask you what are the extracurricular activities for...”). The elements of usage are generally correct with the exception of some incorrect word forms (e.g., “some *student* may have a job and so much is already put on them”). Control of the elements of mechanics is mixed: formatting and spelling are generally correct, but several commas are used where periods (or semi-colons) should have been used. Therefore, the writer’s control of internal punctuation is limited.

### Performance Level: Meets the Standard

## Paper 20

Community service is a volunteer program that many people involve themselves in to help those less fortunate than them. Some people may choose to clean up a particular area, visit the sick in hospitals, or serve food at a homeless shelter. All of these acts not only benefit the community but also the person volunteering. This would be an excellent idea for students in high school to be involved in. Community service should be required for graduation, because it teaches students how to socialize in new situations, boosts one's self-esteem, and would ultimately increase the quality of the community.

High school should not only prep someone for knowledge in the classroom. It also should teach a student how to interact with new surroundings and people, because life after high school is different. A student with excellent socializing skills will easily adjust to this change. Community service will ~~be~~ put a student in a situation where they must socialize with different kinds of people.

Many people think that community service is for the community. This is true, but it is also for the volunteer. It boosts their self-esteem. This is why people say, "If you are feeling down, help someone." Students will learn the benefits of giving through community service and may want to continue to volunteer throughout their life.

The obvious reason why community service should

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Paper 20 (page two)

be required for graduation is that it will help out the community. The best thing the community could receive from someone is their free labor. People will be happier in a clean, giving, and safe environment. Community service increases the quality of the environment. A community that has to pay for most things to benefit the community will not be a comfortable place to live, because a lot of the little things that make the community so wonderful will not be payed for to get done.

Before graduation occurs in a student's life, they must be qualified for the world outside of high school. This includes being a good-hearted person and being open to new ideas and customs. Without these qualities the student is doomed for a life of regret and loneliness. Community service could help teach a student to be ready for the world around them. If community service was required before graduation could occur, then it would ~~teach~~ teach socializing and self-esteem. It would also help out the community.



## Annotations for Paper 20

### Ideas Score: 3

The controlling idea (there should be a community service requirement for graduation) is sufficiently developed. Supporting ideas are relevant (helps students meet different kinds of people, volunteering boosts students' self-esteem, and the community benefits). The writer develops these supporting ideas with relevant details and elaboration (e.g., "It should also teach a student how to interact with new surroundings and people, because life after high school is different," and "The best thing the community could receive from someone is their free labor"). The response does not contain many specific examples, leaving some reader concerns unaddressed (e.g., what, specifically, does the writer have in mind when he/she says "a lot of the little things that make the community so wonderful will not be payed for to get done")? Overall, there is enough information in the response to provide a sense of completeness.

### Organization Score: 4

The writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of Organization. The introduction is clear and sets the stage for the development that follows. The writer groups related ideas about how community service helps students meet different kinds of people, boosts students' self-esteem, and benefits the community. Most of the ideas within body paragraphs build logically on one another (e.g., "Many people think that community service is for the community. → This is true, but it is also for the volunteers. → It boosts their self-esteem"). A variety of transitions link ideas (e.g., "will easily adjust to this change," "This is why people say," and pronoun substitution like "they" for "students"). There is some repetition in the conclusion, but it provides clear closure.

### Style Score: 4

Word choice is consistently effective (e.g., "a life of regret and loneliness," "boosts their self-esteem," and "being open to new ideas and customs"). This effective language leads to a distinctive voice. Sentences vary in length and structure. Lapses into simpler, repetitive language are infrequent (e.g., "it will help out the community" and "It would also help out the community"). Overall, the writer demonstrates consistent control of the components of Style.

### Conventions Score: 4

Simple, compound, and complex sentences are consistently clear and correct with appropriate end punctuation. The elements of usage and mechanics are consistently correct as well. Errors in these components are minor and do not interfere with meaning (e.g., pronoun/antecedent disagreement like "a *student's* life /*they*" and misspellings like "payed"). In all components of Conventions, the writer shows control in a variety of contexts.

## Performance Level: Meets the Standard

**Score Key – 2013 GHSWT Sample Papers**

<b>Paper #</b>	<b>Ideas</b>	<b>Org.</b>	<b>Style</b>	<b>Conv.</b>	<b>Performance Level</b>
1	2	3	3	3	Meets the Standard
2	2	2	2	2	Does Not Meet the Standard
3	4	4	4	4	Meets the Standard
4	1	1	1	1	Does Not Meet the Standard
5	3	4	4	4	Meets the Standard
6	3	3	4	4	Meets the Standard
7	2	2	2	2	Does Not Meet the Standard
8	3	3	4	4	Meets the Standard
9	2	2	3	3	Meets the Standard
10	4	4	4	5	Exceeds the Standard
11	3	4	4	4	Meets the Standard
12	5	5	5	5	Exceeds the Standard
13	3	3	3	3	Meets the Standard
14	4	4	4	4	Meets the Standard
15	2	2	2	2	Does Not Meet the Standard
16	5	4	4	5	Exceeds the Standard
17	3	3	3	3	Meets the Standard
18	3	3	3	4	Meets the Standard
19	2	3	3	2	Meets the Standard
20	3	4	4	4	Meets the Standard